



Driver & Vehicle Standards Agency

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Sue Duncan
by email: sue.duncan@adinjc.org.uk

our ref:

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Dear Sue

Thank you for your email of 15 July covering links to Samuel Williams' report, *No Longer Temporary: The Driving Test Backlog and the Failure to Restore Examiner Capacity*. Mr Williams sent links to his report to the Secretary of State, and in line with usual procedures we have responded to him on her behalf.

We appreciate the considerable effort that has gone into producing this analysis. The report is detailed, draws on a significant body of published data, and demonstrates a clear commitment to improving understanding of the challenges facing the driving test system.

We recognise the importance of independent research and scrutiny as we continue our work to reduce driving test waiting times. While we might not agree with every conclusion reached in the report, many of the issues Mr Samuels highlighted are areas that we continue to keep under close review.

In particular, we agree that workforce capacity is fundamental to sustainable recovery. Increasing the number of trained and deployable driving examiners remains a key element of our strategy. This is why we have continued to invest in recruitment, training capacity, retention measures and workforce planning, alongside work to ensure we deploy examiner resource where it can have the greatest impact.

Mr Williams' report concluded that examiner capacity is the principal driver of recovery. There is certainly merit in this argument. But our view is that recovery is dependent on a range of interconnected factors. Alongside workforce growth, these include how we manage demand, effective deployment of resources, operational productivity, improved access to appointments and measures designed to ensure that available test slots are used fairly and efficiently. We therefore see these interventions as complementary rather than mutually exclusive.

Mr Williams made some interesting observations about performance measures and transparency. As the Secretary of State noted in her recent evidence to the Transport Committee, no single metric can fully describe the experience of learners seeking a driving test. That is why we have recently begun publishing monthly test-centre-level waiting time and appointment availability data, providing a much more detailed picture of conditions across the country. We will continue to consider how published information can evolve to support greater transparency and improve public understanding of progress.

We also note Mr Williams' recommendations concerning forecasting, governance and recovery reporting. Robust planning and evidence-based decision making are essential to the successful delivery of recovery plans, and these are matters we continue to strengthen through ongoing programme management and oversight arrangements.

As you know, we remain committed to reducing driving test waiting times and restoring them to more acceptable levels. While significant challenges remain, we are implementing a broad package of measures aimed at increasing testing capacity, improving customer access and creating the conditions for sustained recovery.

Thank you again for taking the time to share Mr Williams' work with us.

Yours sincerely

Corporate Liaison