

DVLA consultation on validity periods for restricted medical licences

Response from Brake, the road safety charity

14 February 2013

Brake

[Brake](#) is an independent charity working across the UK to make roads safer, prevent road death and injury, and care for victims. Brake carries out research into road users' attitudes and behaviour in relation to road safety, engages schools and communities to spread road safety education, disseminates international research, guidance and case studies to fleet and road safety professionals through its Fleet Safety Forum and Road Safety Forum, and supports communities campaigning for road safety. It is also a national, government-funded provider of specialist support for people bereaved and seriously injured in road crashes, running a national helpline and providing packs that are handed to bereaved families by police following every road death.

For more information contact Ellen Booth, senior campaigns officer, on ebooth@brake.org.uk or 01484 550067.

Summary

Brake witnesses, through its support services, the devastating consequences of failed policy and regulation in relation to fitness to drive. Although accurate statistics are unavailable, it is clear that unfit drivers do cause numerous crashes and casualties on UK roads every year, and that driving while unfit poses a significant risk to the safety of the drivers themselves and other road users¹.

Brake has already voiced concerns to the DVLA about the processes involved in drivers reporting that they may be unfit and in the DVLA responding to these reports in an appropriate and timely manner to ensure unfit drivers are removed from the public road swiftly until and unless they are safe again (see [Consultation response](#), DVLA changes to driver licensing laws, 24 February 2012). While Brake's comments were acknowledged, Brake has not received a full response from the DVLA on whether it is addressing these concerns, so would ask once again for the DVLA to examine these important issues.

Given its remit and level of expertise, Brake is not able to determine which, if any, medical conditions it would be safe to allow a longer period between assessments, however, it does have some concerns that extending temporary licences could hinder progress towards ensuring all UK drivers are fit to drive. Brake urges the DVLA to address the issues raised in the previous consultation response as a matter of urgency and suggests this should be a priority over extending maximum time limits on temporary licences.

Brake would welcome further details from the DVLA on how this system would be used, and what assurances would be sought on a driver's condition before being granted a longer licence.

¹ For example, see Poor driver eyesight costs UK £33m a year, RSA, 2012, and Medical conditions and their relationship with subsequent motor vehicle injuries, The University of Western Ontario, 2012.