



Briefing 15-37 August 2015

Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency: Driving Licence Changes (June 2015)

To: All Chief Executives, Main Contacts and APSE Contacts in Scotland, England and Wales
For information only to Northern Ireland

Key Issues:

On 8 June 2015, the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) abolished the paper counterpart to the photocard driving licence and introduced the new replacement Share Driving Licence service. This APSE briefing highlights:

- the important changes local authorities should be made aware of
- how to check driving licences online
- DVLA's plans for the future

Please note that licensing is devolved in Northern Ireland to the Driver & Vehicle Agency (DVA), and there are currently no plans to remove the paper counterpart.

1.0 Background

As part of the Cabinet Office's [Red Tape Challenge](#), the Department for Transport identified the "abolition of the paper counterpart to the driving licence" to be implemented in May 2015. The effect of the measure was identified as "to remove the requirement for drivers to hold a paper counterpart (D740) to their driving licence, removing the inconvenience of safely storing and producing it, and to provide a secure online enquiry facility to allow drivers' details to be checked by those with a legitimate need." Their aim is to "make our digital enquiry services so good and convenient that users choose them in preference to all other channels". This aligns with the DVLA's Strategic Plan commitment to simplify their services and UK Government's [Digital Services strategy](#) to allow you to use government services safely online ([GOV.UK Verify](#)).

2.0 Changes to driving licences

The paper counterpart is no longer valid

The D740 paper counterpart no longer has any legal status. All penalty points (endorsements) will only be recorded electronically.

Paper licences are still valid

Paper driving licences issued before the photocard was introduced in 1998 will remain valid. Courts will not write or print the details of any new offences onto paper driving licences from 8 June 2015.

EC/EEA issued licenses

Instead of a counterpart, drivers who register their EC/EEA vocational driving entitlement will be issued with a Confirmation of Registration document (D91), which can be presented to prospective employers. The DVLA will continue to record convictions applying to non-GB licence holders, but at the moment the View and Share Driving Licence services will only be able to be used with [GB driving licences](#). At present, licence checks of drivers with a D91 can only be carried out by calling 09061 393 837 at a premium rate.

3.0 How to check driving licences and other checking services

Checking driving information individually as a local authority

To check a driver's entitlements and endorsements online, you will need to ask them to sign into View Driving Licence at <http://www.gov.uk/view-driving-licence> to generate a check code (one-time use, valid for 21 days). They will require the following to do this (use option 2 if you don't have access to your driver licence number):

Option 1

- Driver licence number
- National insurance number
- Postcode

Option 2

- National insurance number
- Firstname(s) / Surname
- Postcode
- Gender
- Date of Birth

Once you have obtained this code and the last 8 characters of their driver's licence number, the employer can look up the necessary information at Check Driving Information at <http://www.gov.uk/check-driving-information>. There is no cost or minimum number of enquiries attached to using this service online. Please note that the View Driving Licence service is to be used by drivers to generate codes and it is a criminal offence to access the service when you are not the record owner ([link to DVLA webchat](#)).

Alternatively, the driver can call 0300 790 6801 to leave permission for you to check their driving record, then the person doing the check can call 0906 139 3837 to carry out the check (51p per minute charge). You can also check by post if you and the driver complete a [D888/1 form](#) and send it to Driver Licence Validation Service, DVRE 5, DVLA, Swansea, SA99 1AJ along with a cheque or postal order for £5 made out to 'DVLA, Swansea'. You can also check by fax if you contact the DVLA at drivers_fpe@dvla.gsi.gov.uk to register to use this service.

Checking driving information in real-time as a local authority

Local authorities also have the option to sign up to the DVLA's [Access to Driver Data \(ADD\) real-time service](#). Driver consent for ADD can either be captured through a D796 form through an electronic system (subject to DVLA approval). This is not a batch checking service but will allow for large volumes of enquiries to be input, but in a recent webchat the DVLA noted that organisations could "configure their interface with the ADD service to cater for larger batch volumes on a single click basis as long as they were fed through on an individual request basis". The initial costs are between £25,000 to £30,000 with approximately £6000 line rental per annum as well as a fixed cost per record check. Interested parties can contact the DVLA at AbolitionofCounterpart@dvla.gsi.gov.uk to be provided with a quote based on forecast volumes of use.

The new ADD service will replace the existing Electronic Driver Entitlement Checking Service (EDECS). Hugh Evans, Corporate Services Manager [confirmed](#) that "we [the DVLA] have written to existing customers of our electronic driver entitlement checking service (EDECS) requesting details of their proposed usage of the new ADD service and the volumes of transactions."

Hiring a vehicle

Previously you needed both the photocard and paper counterpart licence to hire a vehicle; now you may be asked to generate a unique code that will allow the hiring company to check your driving record. Full instructions on how to generate this code are featured above in the section 'Checking driving information individually as a local authority'.

4.0 Other useful DVLA services recently announced

DVLA Fleet Scheme

The DVLA Fleet Scheme is free to join and allows fleet managers to have access to vehicle data such as being able to see which vehicles need taxing and when vehicles are due for MOT renewal. You must have at least 50 vehicles registered to one address to join. This service is currently in public beta and can be accessed at <https://www.gov.uk/dvla-fleet-vehicle-info>. Please email fleetshd@dvla.gsi.gov.uk or phone 0300 083 0016 for more information on joining.

5.0 Plans for the future

The DVLA's most recent Strategic Plan 2014-15 to 2016-17 suggests that they will:

Build links with the medical profession

The DVLA wishes to explore opportunities to interact with the medical profession when making decisions on a driver's medical fitness to drive, and noted plans to introduce a holistic approach to resolving issues with drivers medical services. A recent [review](#) of the DVLA called the processes behind the current drivers medical assessment "long and complex" and noted the need for a clearer strategic approach that builds off the ongoing digital transformation.

Photograph confirmation

The DVLA also plans to explore the possibility of photograph confirmation via the Passport Office's Facial Recognition engine to combat fraud.

6.0 Useful resources

- [DVLA Abolition of the Counterpart briefing](#)

This briefing provided by the DVLA contains a series of frequently asked questions on pages 9 to 13 about the recent changes.

- **DVLA webchats on [21st May 2015](#), [26th March 2015](#) and [18th February 2015](#)**
The DVLA hosted three separate webchats on the abolition of the counterpart that allowed stakeholders to engage with the Head of Policy, Head of Data Sharing Policy, Driver Services Manager and Corporate Services Manager. The transcript of these three webchats are linked above. Additional questions were also answered [here](#).
- **[The DVLA YouTube channel](#)**
The DVLA has a YouTube channel with a series of videos explaining all of the changes to driving licences as well as tutorials on how to use the View Driving Licence Service and the Share Driving Licence service.
- **[DVLA Strategic Plan 2014-15 to 2016-17](#)**
- **[DVLA Business Plan 2015-16](#)**
- **Updated DVLA [Information on Driving Licences](#) document**
- **Infographics on [general abolition of the paper counterpart](#) and on [hiring vehicles abroad](#)**

7.0 APSE Comment

The DVLA has [acknowledged](#) that they “still have much to do to improve services for fleet and other commercial organizations and with driver licensing”. This commitment to delivering a system that is fit for use has been shown through the public and private beta testing of new systems, and the agreed delay in implementation at the request of industry stakeholders who had concerns about integrating the changes in the originally proposed timescale.

From a road safety perspective, APSE is supportive of the aims of the recent licence changes and how they will contribute to reducing instances of fraud. While the initial technical failures at the launch of the DVLA's new View Driving Licence system has left many with concerns about the robustness of the digital switchover, we believe it is a step in the right direction to ensuring the safety of drivers, their colleagues and the general public. The DVLA's Counter Fraud Intelligence Team noted "the driving licence was only ever intended to demonstrate a person's entitlement to drive but many organisations now accept it as a primary identity document. This makes it a valuable asset for a fraudster to obtain", so we hope that the move towards a digital future for the DVLA will assist in curbing this behaviour.

APSE does, however, have a few concerns. At a time when local authorities are trying to make cost savings, the initial expense of setting up the ADD system is one which local authorities may not have built into their service budgets, especially for those looking to replace the outgoing EDECS system.

It was identified during one of the webchats that while drink driving convictions would remain on a counterpart for 11 years, according to Rob Toft, Head of Data Sharing Policy, the "DVLA records and holds endorsements and convictions for as long as they remain valid and in line with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act, meaning that the maximum length of time an endorsement will be visible will be 5 years" and was confirmed in [the DVLA's blog](#) that this reduces to 2 and a half years if the offence was committed before the driver was aged 18. Lynette Rose, Head of Policy however noted that "an individual driver will be able to see current endorsements as long as they are in force". Our understanding of this means that local authorities potentially have access to less information online than they would have previously via the counterpart system.

APSE also has some concerns about access to the system via telephone, since their Contact Centre's opening hours will continue to be Monday to Friday, 8am to 7pm and Saturday, 8am to 2pm. While the majority of checks will be carried out within these hours, it may cause issues for consumers who aren't IT literate or when/where access to internet services is limited. Since the Strategic Plan has delivered around £110 million of savings for the DVLA, we would hope to see those Contact Centre hours extended through service reinvestment.

Although this is likely due to considerable technical hurdles, APSE would also like to see more options available for checking the convictions of EC/EEA licence holders with a D91 certificate other than simply by phone to resemble the flexibility of options currently offered to GB licence holders.

APSE would recommend that our members sign up for email alerts from the DVLA's 'Inside DVLA' blog - <https://insidedvla.blog.gov.uk/> - to keep up-to-date with the latest developments in licensing changes, upcoming betas, and to be notified of any future webchats where you can have any questions answered directly by the DVLA's service management team.

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