

FOI Request (received 11 June 2025) - Reference: DFI/2025-0258

Under the Freedom of Information Act, Disability Discrimination Act, and relevant regulations, I request the following information:

What is the average processing time for medical assessments required for DVA (Driver and Vehicle Agency) driver's licenses?

Specifically, I'd like to know the average timeframe from submission of medical documentation to license decision.

Response (issued 03 July 2025)

Thank you for your correspondence dated 11 June 2025 requesting, under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the following information held by this office.

What is the average processing time for medical assessments required for DVA (Driver and Vehicle Agency) driver's licenses? Specifically, I'd like to know the average timeframe from submission of medical documentation to license decision.

I can confirm that the Agency does not routinely survey average processing times for the medical assessment process, so the information you have requested, although it is held in the driver licensing data base, is not readily accessible.

When a driver makes a declaration that they are suffering from a medical condition, or concerns are raised from another source such as a medical practitioner, we will commence medical investigations to establish their medical fitness to drive against published standards. The time taken to determine an application where medical assessment is required will depend on the nature of the medical condition, the time taken to provide information to us, and whether any further information or medical examination is required as part of the assessment process.

Our current medical service provision contract requires each stage of the medical assessment is completed within 14 days of our medical advisors receiving medical information. However, the medical advisors may require further information from the driver's medical practitioner or need to refer the driver for specialist assessment. This makes it difficult to establish an average timeframe from submission of medical documentation to licence decision.

To provide you with the requested information we would need to identify every record where a driving licence applicant had declared a medical condition requiring the completion of a medical form, and assess the time taken to complete each case to determine an average timeframe.

To determine whether we could meet your request, an estimate had to be made of the time it would take to obtain the requested information from our records. In making our calculations, we considered the costs we would reasonably expect to incur in carrying out the following activities in complying with your request:

- determining whether the information is held.
- locating the information.
- retrieving the information; and
- extracting the information.

Determining whether the information was held did not impact greatly on the cost calculations. However, locating, retrieving and extracting the information from our records would be both time-consuming and costly as the information you requested is contained in documents attached to the driver licensing database. From 01 January 2025 to 30 June 2025, we issued 8,537 medical forms. Please note that this figure may include multiple forms for a single driver where more than one medical condition was declared. Providing the level of detail required to address your request would necessitate a check on all of these records relating to drivers who had been asked to complete medical forms within the sample period.

Retrieving and extracting this information, in line with your request, would involve significant amounts of staff time. In the sample exercise carried out, ten minutes were needed to provide the requested information from each record. For the purposes of this exercise, we estimate that processing the information you have requested would take approximately 1,423 hours to complete.

Therefore, answering your request would greatly exceed the appropriate limit, laid out under s12(1) of the Freedom of Information Act. Under the Act, the appropriate cost limit for the Department for Infrastructure is £600. For the purposes of the legislation, costs are calculated at a flat rate of £25 per hour. If answering a request would require greater than 24 hours at the flat rate, that request would be subject to consideration under s12 and the public authority would not be obliged to comply.

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