

Leading the way on driver safety at DVLA



I'm Emma Melrose and I've had the privilege of being Head of [Drivers Medical](#) at DVLA since February. And I don't use the word privilege lightly. It's an extremely important role, at the heart of ensuring driver safety in Great Britain. I head up a large team of people making [decisions](#) about people's fitness to drive every single day.

My career spans lots of different leadership positions in retail, contact centre telecoms, media and IT outsourcing, before moving to the public sector and DVLA in 2015. I'm passionate about providing excellent customer service and coming back into an operational environment has been energising. I enjoy leading people, and this role allows me the pleasure of doing this as well as playing an important role in supporting the mobility of the UK population.

A fresh pair of eyes

My first 6 months in Drivers Medical have been a steep learning curve, but I'm lucky enough to have been supported by a fantastic team of knowledgeable and enthusiastic colleagues. I was immediately struck by the importance of being the only group of people in GB doing what we do. Around 600 colleagues handled about 750,000 customer cases last year. Getting out and about to understand the important roles that my team do has allowed me to understand what we do well and identify areas for improvement.

Meeting experts in the field

Two months in, I attended the [Secretary of State's Honorary Medical Advisory Panels](#) where I sat amongst leaders in the field of medicine. I was humbled as I listened to the medical experts taking time to consider any impacts on the driving population and the complexities that we need to consider. I've also had the pleasure to meet with a number of our medical charity stakeholders, which has given me the opportunity to consider and understand the challenges their members and our customers face.

It's a balancing act

We in the Drivers Medical team are responsible for road safety while ensuring the wellbeing of those affected. Our purpose is to make efficient, accurate and timely decisions for drivers who have contacted us about a medical condition that may impact on their ability to drive.

Each one of these customers has their own story to tell, a situation that presents difficulties in their lives. It is so important that we treat them with compassion and empathy.

What's next

Over the coming months, I will be working with my colleagues in other areas of DVLA to review our existing services. This will tell us where we are doing well but will also tell us where we need to make improvements that benefit us and our customers.

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