



## The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Trailer and Towing Safety

**Wednesday 3 November 2021**

**16.00 – 17.00**

**Virtual meeting via MS Teams**

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### **Present**

**Members:** Karin Smyth MP, Sharon Hodgson MP, (Thomas Higginson) Nigel Mills MP, Lord Bassam of Brighton.

**Secretariat:** Alicia Dunne (NCC).

**Attending:** Freddie Cambanakis, DfT, Damien Currie, DVSA, Ian Hewlett (Camping and Caravan Club), Donna and Scott Hussey (Parents of Freddie Hussey), Jane Gurney (Tilly's Trailers), John Lally, (NCC), Isobel Laing, (Karin Smyth's office), Amanda Lowe (National Highways), Des Payne (British Horse Society), Thomas Price, (NFU), Ray Pinder (NTTA), Claire Rees, (DfT), Steve Simmons-Jacobs (Tilly's Trailers) Sarah Smithurst, MBE (NTTA), Martin Spencer (Caravan and Motorhome Club), Mark Winn, (DVSA), Sarah Wigmore (Approved Workshop Scheme), David Wood, (DVSA) David Whitehead (NCC).

### **Apologies**

Tim Booth (NaVCIS), Richard Fuller MP, Roger Gale MP, Kerry McCarthy MP, Jason McCartney MP Simon McGrath, Camping and Caravanning Club, Stuart Lovatt National Highways, Michael Sedgwick, DfT.

#### **1. Welcome and introduction from Chair**

Karin Smyth MP welcomed all to the meeting and thanked them for their continued support.

The Chair reported on the tragic news of the murder of Sir David Amess MP. Sir David supported the APPG from its inauguration in 2019 and his enthusiasm was never far away. The Group asked that the minutes record its sincere condolences to his widow, family and friends.

The Chair reported that since the last meeting work to keep safety issues at the front of the agenda particularly as holiday and travel restrictions through the ongoing pandemic of COVID-19 had seen an increase in leisure trailers over the summer and the DVSA summer safety campaign saw a renewed focus on the #towsafe4freddie initiative.



In mid-July Government announced a package of measures intended to help tackle the HGV driver shortage, one of which was to consult on how the pressures on the driving examiners could be relieved to accommodate more testing requirements for HGV drivers. This would involve removing the B+E test for post-1997 licence holders wishing to tow a heavier trailer. The consultation closed on 7 September after which Government announced that an automatic entitlement to tow a heavier trailer without the need to pass the B+E test would be granted to all, subject to secondary legislation. The Chair expressed her concerns with the developments and particularly that the suggestion of removing the B+E test seemed to come out of the blue with little reference to the statutory report on trailer safety or the previous work of the APPG. There were also concerns that despite the work of the APPG, and letters from the Chair to Minister, there was no indication that trailer safety was on the Government's agenda as the impact assessment had not been published before the legislation was laid.

## 2. **Approval of the minutes – 24 February 2021**

The minutes of the last meeting and AGM held on 24 February 2021 were approved unanimously.

## 3. **Update Reports**

- a) Changes to driving licences and trailer training accreditation  
Department for Transport and Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency

The Chair reported that she had been made aware there was some uncertainty over the future of the Statutory Instrument debate in Parliament and had requested an urgent meeting with the Minister. The representatives from both Dft and DVSA were not aware of such developments but agreed to advise the Chair and the group should this be correct. The Chair commented on the unusual and complex nature of this legislative process, and the lack of clarity from the Government as to when or if this SI would be brought to Parliament.

Mark Winn (DVSA) gave an interim report on the proposed changes to vocational trailer training as a result of the decision to remove the requirement for a B+E test. The entitlement will be added to all post-1997 licences but will only show on the physical licence after interaction with DVLA (address change, renewal etc).

DVSA are developing a Trailer Training Accreditation Scheme (TTAS) with support from industry stakeholders including training companies, insurers commercial business and representatives from the leisure sectors.

An accredited body will be appointed reflecting the needs of all those involved in towing either for work or for leisure to ensure that those new to towing have access to the tools they need to tow safely and securely. Training will be voluntary with emphasis on the safe driving for life programme and the continuation of "Whatever you're towing making it SAFE".

A further meeting of the TTAS group will take place on 11 November. Mr Simmons-Jacobs (Tilly's Trailers) asked if DVSA were in touch with the department at HSE responsible for transport and training matters? Mr Winn confirmed that HSE policy branch were aware of the TTAS.

The Chair noted that despite the clear concerns with the decision, this would allow the work of the APPG to widen out to all involved with towing – whether for work or for leisure – and not just those who previously required the B+E test.

b) Trailer Safety Report and roadside checks (DVSA DfT)

Dave Wood (DVSA) gave a presentation on the updated data collated as part of the Trailer Safety Report. A copy of the presentation entitled DVSA non-testable trailer & caravan roadside inspection survey can be viewed at the APPG website <http://www.trailerappg.org.uk/media/0t0hzhq5/appg-nov-update.pptx>

Freddie Cambanakis (DfT) reported that the roadside checks are to fulfil the requirements of the Trailer Safety Report as part of the 2018 legislation. The statistics which are high level will be analysed before the end of 2021 and presented to the Minister for a decision as to next steps and enforcement.

The Chair commented that the data provided a useful indicator specifically in relation to the nature of defects which remained of concern, and also to identify which sectors would benefit from a targeted safety campaign. The data also revealed that caravans checked at the roadside did not present a major problem for trailer safety.

Jane Gurney (Tilly's Trailers) reported that working with police stops in Norfolk and Suffolk it was encouraging to note observations with agricultural trailers.

Sarah Smithurst (NTTA) asked if more roadside stops might be necessary following the proposed changes to the Driving Licence. The Chair responded that the legislation provided for a review after 3 years, although it was not clear at this stage how the review would be measured.

c) Whatever you are towing make it SAFE- summer campaign report (DVSA)

Damien Currie (DVSA) gave a presentation on the summer campaign. The revised updated campaign can be viewed on the APPG website at <http://www.trailerappg.org.uk/reports-publications/>. The campaign achieved a 317% increase in access to information and guidance on towing and the highest engagement with DVSA on social media reaching up to 2.5m people and 200,000 engagements. with 2.5 million. Looking ahead the campaign would continue to review roadside data checks, provide seasonal safe towing messages, explore further research with trailer users focusing on business users and review the campaign messages to stress the importance of training.

Raymond Pinder (NTTA) commented that conscientious trailer owners are likely

to have engaged with the campaign over the summer and to seek out training courses, especially if they have purchased the trailer through a dealership. Reaching the remaining ownership was of concern. DVSA acknowledged that the challenge for the campaign was how to reach this sector of ownership via other channels and to adapt the content to ensure the messages were conveyed.

Donna and Scott Hussey shared the concerns raised especially in light of the driving licence proposals and how best to engage those individuals and businesses who did not place trailer and towing safety as a priority.

4. Strategic Road Network – training and awareness checks written report (NaVCIS)

Tim Booth (NaVCIS) who was unable to attend the meeting tabled a paper which was circulated to the Group in advance of the meeting. There were no questions or comment on the paper. Donna and Scott Hussey supported the contents report and the Chair thanked Tim for his report.

5. **Any other business**

DfT Reported Road Casualties Great Britain Annual Report

Martin Spencer (Caravan and Motorhome Club) questioned why the figures for the number of casualty-causing incidents involving vehicles towing caravans or other trailers – the RAS200007 table – had not been included in the latest data for 2019 released in September 2021 or in the previous report released in 2020? The data had hitherto indicated a slow but continuous slow decline in such incidents since 1990. He asked that the table be restored and the data for 2018 and 2019 released to enable the monitoring of towing safety of caravans to continue.

Freddie Cambanakis (DfT) confirmed that he would make enquiries and report back directly.

Raymond Pinder (NTTA) commented about compliance and maintenance of trailers and how new legislation impacting on trailers should carefully consider all elements of safety including compulsory insurance for trailers.

**Concluding comments**

In drawing the meeting to a close the Chair observed that the current uncertainties surrounding the proposals to change the driving licence entitlement for post 1997 licence holders were of great concern; the continuation and enhancement of the DVSA towing campaign informing and educating new and existing trailer owners was very welcome and that the work of the APPG will continue and likely increase following the proposed legislative changes.

The Chair thanked everyone for the attendance. The date of the next meeting will be circulated shortly – likely to take place in early new year. The meeting closed at 17.15.

