



Memorandum

To: APPG Chair
From: Tim Booth
Dated: 1 November 2021
Subject: NaVCIS – Supporting Roadside Checks

Over recent months NaVCIS have supported checks across a wide number of Police Force areas.

These include:- Derbyshire / Northamptonshire / Cambridgeshire / Norfolk / Suffolk / Leicestershire / Gwent / Staffordshire

Where NaVCIS have supported these checks the purpose has been to examine a wide cross section of light trailers – up to 3,500kgs

Meeting with DVSA staff at many of these checks it was reported that they were carrying out monthly checks, whereby they were required to check at least 20 touring caravans. It was clear that these checks had been completed and that very few serious faults had been identified with these trailers. During these checks few – if any, had been carried out on more 'commercial' types of light trailers (up to 3,500kgs) on the network.

From the checks where NaVCIS supported Police Forces, and a wider cross section of trailer combinations were subject to checks, it was very apparent that there were significant issues with the use of commercial trailers.

Many of the trailers were poorly loaded or the loads were insecure.

Trailers had defective tyres (the oldest tyre identified was manufactured in 1998)

Trailers had defective / inoperative braking systems and often the breakaway cable was not attached / was missing completely or was badly damaged.

Offences relating to lighting issues were few.

One significant area where offences were repeated were in relation to combinations where the drivers were working to deliver new cars to customers. The trailers in use were either completely enclosed (shelled) trailers, or large skeletal car transporter trailers.

On examination many of the users were found to be operating without the use of a tachograph. Where large shell trailers were in use then no towing mirrors were being used. Some only had social / domestic insurance cover. Of course, this has been a developing market with the increase of vendors offering a car to home delivery service. The most exclusive vehicle found to be in one of the units checked was a £250,000 Lamborghini!

The results of the checks presented clear evidence that many of the drivers of the combinations were not aware / familiar with the risks associated with the use of a trailer on the network. Many of the drivers were holders of 'pre1997' entitlements, and there appeared to be a better knowledge of driver responsibilities with those who had been required to take a test before gaining an entitlement to tow such a combination. Of note is the fact that current proposals for licence changes will allow drivers to qualify automatically for this group without the need for any instruction or competence test.

Tim Booth NaVCIS