



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP
Secretary of State for Transport
Department for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

Our Ref: SO28490

18 March 2022

Dear Secretary of State

I am writing to you regarding the revelations about the working practices at the DVLA, revealed in 'The Times' on 18th March.

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, applicants to the DVLA have been regularly subjected to delays ranging from six weeks to in some cases, several months. Often, in addition to being highly frustrating for all involved, these delays have led to employment insecurity for those whose livelihoods depended on the ability to drive.

I was therefore shocked to read the revelations that throughout the pandemic, hundreds, and at one point during the first lockdown, thousands of DVLA staff were left unable to work from home owing to their inability to access work systems.

With the requirement to stay at home at various points over the last two years, it was necessary to ensure that as far as possible, work be conducted virtually. The overwhelming majority of relevant businesses were able to implement and facilitate this over a very short period, adapting to a difficult situation.

The fact that employees of the DVLA, an essential public service, were therefore not granted the ability to continue their work virtually is completely unacceptable.

I recognise that partially, this was due to concerns regarding accessing licence holders' secure personal data. However, in other data sensitive roles, including those working for other Government departments such as HMRC, this issue was resolved quickly and did not disrupt service.

It is therefore imperative to ask why, despite clear issues related to backlogs, action was not taken to resolve virtual working issues at the DVLA.

Consequently, I support the call for a thorough and comprehensive investigation into how this situation was allowed to occur. Further, I ask that you ensure that measures are urgently introduced to clear the DVLA backlog, and ensure these level of delays are not allowed to occur again.

Kind regards,

Sarah Olney
Member of Parliament for Richmond Park & Liberal Democrat Spokesperson for Transport