



January 27th 2021

Nadhim Zahawi MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
(Minister for COVID Vaccine Deployment)
Department of Health and Social Care

Dear Minister

- **Tens of thousands of driver and rider trainers unable to work throughout three national lockdowns - a valuable industry, businesses and households struggling to survive**
- **An increase in RTAs per volume of traffic during the COVID crisis contributed to by a lack of adequate of training and testing as multiple lockdowns effectively shut down the sector**
- **Over 38,000 driver and rider trainers and examiners who can helps us cut road risk - but risking exposure to COVID 19 in their every day role**
- **Let's get driver and rider trainers back to work (and their important road safety role) safely**

As Chief Executive of the UK's largest professional body for driver and rider trainers, I am writing to urge you to consider driver and rider trainers as a priority group to receive vaccinations in phase two of the rollout, particularly when considering occupational prioritisation based on an increased risk of exposure.

Earlier vaccination would help trainers (in particular driver trainers who face a raised risk, given the close proximity in which they work with their clients in-vehicle) get back on the road after lockdown and carrying out their vital road safety role – as well as working to help stabilise and sustain this valuable industry.

Although throughout the COVID-19 pandemic some driver and rider trainers have been able to play a crucial role in helping to keep goods, services and people moving (working at risk to themselves to help meet the demand of getting key workers, from delivery drivers to doctors, on the road safely), the industry has been largely shutdown in each lockdown.

Whilst COVID-19 has presented the greatest public health challenge the UK has ever seen, it is also crucial to public safety that we resume a level of driver and rider training and testing as soon as possible to ensure we are delivering safe and competent riders and drivers to our roads.

An increase in road traffic accidents per volume of traffic, particularly amongst those in occupational driver roles (thousands of whom were recruited during the crisis, but many not having had access to adequate levels of training and testing) is a risk we cannot ignore - or allow to continue.



We also have to remember that as well as the cost to human life; RTAs also place an additional burden on our already overstretched frontline resources and the public purse.

Whilst the industry has worked hard to establish working procedures designed to mitigate the risk of infection, vaccination of those providing training and testing services would clearly reduce that risk even further.

It would also help an industry on its knees return to work more quickly, be less reliant on government support - and able to restart making that much needed contribution to our economy again, not least by helping to get people, goods and services moving safely.

Lastly, it is perhaps worth adding to our 'pitch' that our industry has the potential to help unlock some of the burden of COVID has placed on frontline resources by recruiting from within our ranks of professional drivers and riders to support key services and the movement of key resources (such as vaccine distribution and support, alleviating the pressure on police and fire crews to drive ambulances etc).

Clearly driver and rider trainers also have a crucial role to play in helping the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency deal with the estimated backlog of 400,000 driving tests, particularly in terms of preparing candidates for test.

My thanks, and the thanks of the driver and rider training industry overall, for your kind consideration in this matter.

Best wishes

Carly Brookfield
CEO, Driving Instructors Association