



NASP expresses deep concern and disappointment at lack of extension to theory test certificates

NASP is extremely disappointed and concerned by the announcement today that theory test certificates cannot be extended.

News on the [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) website is showing that the government has made a decision not to extend the theory test certificate beyond 2 years.

Whilst we respect that the regulatory challenges inherent in extending the life of theory test certificates have not made this possible, and also respect the potential safety implications of a candidate having too long a time lapse between their last theory test, we are still deeply frustrated and concerned that it has not been possible to extend theory test certificates. Especially as ministers in Northern Ireland have considered it the correct thing to do for their new drivers and have issued an extension for eight months. Thousands of learner drivers are not being treated fairly especially as extensions were granted for photo card driving licence renewals and MOTs during lockdown.

NASP have, on numerous occasions, asked DVSA to consider if it would be possible to offer those who have imminently expiring certificates a free re-test and expedite them through the booking system, once it is fully operational again, so they can access a test before their practical test - if an extension to the certificate were not possible.

As critical workers have been able to access special provision to enable them to take a theory test in a timely manner, NASP have also asked whether it would not be fair to allow those pupils affected the same

opportunity - even if meant them travelling to more distant centres (as critical workers have) to facilitate their theory test.

We also proposed pupils with specific educational needs should be given consideration for a retest as soon as possible, at no extra cost.

Sadly, our proposals were rejected. We recognise that DVSA did put our concerns forward to Ministers to consider an extension, however, for the reasons given, this was not possible.

NASP shares the frustration and concern that trainers, pupils and other industry bodies have expressed to us, not only the disappointment that certificates cannot be extended but also the exceptional time it has taken to reach this decision.

NASP will be insisting that DVSA now take steps to ensure all those affected have priority when booking another theory test to allow them to be able to take the practical test at their individual newly rearranged time slot, without being even more disadvantaged than they have been. Pupils should not have to delay their practical tests again due to lack of an opportunity to retake their theory test in a timely manner just because government does not want to allow them the opportunity to extend their certificate.

In lieu of an immediate solution to help those particular pupils impacted, NASP highlights the importance of helping pupils to prepare for the theory test, given the statistically high number of attempts. At this time, with limited services and a backlog of users (and given how valuable the theory test is in assessing a pupil's perception of risk) it is more important than ever that pupils are fully prepped for this important assessment and are able to make best efforts to succeed on their next attempt.