

*Helping people with physical disabilities, with special educational needs and those with hearing difficulties.*

## **Special Needs and the Theory Test – what help is available and how do you book it**

**When you book your Theory Test you should say if you've got any special needs, in many cases, additional support may be available to help you during the test.**

**Special needs accommodations available when taking the theory test** – If you have hearing difficulties or learning difficulties causing problems with reading or writing and required additional help with schoolwork or taking examinations at school or college, then you may be able to get additional support with the Multiple Choice Theory Test; this may be:

- Deaf candidates can request an on-screen BSL interpreter or they can request a face-to-face BSL interpreter (no proof of hearing difficulty is required but this must be booked in advance – tick the box when booking the test).
- Computer voiceover, (English or Welsh spoken test using a head set is available for any test candidate, no proof of special needs is required but this must be booked in advance – tick the box when booking the test).

Proof of special needs is required for all of the following accommodations:

- Extra time to take the test (up to double the normal time).
- The option of a face to face reader/recorder is available but may be difficult to arrange due to COVID restrictions; this is where a person, provided by the theory test provider sits next to the candidate and reads the questions and answers on the computer screen word for word, they then record the answer given by the candidate (they are not permitted to explain the meaning of the English language). Additional COVID-19 precautions may include a transparent screen between the candidate and the reader.
- Oral Language Modification (OLM) – in exceptional cases, where the candidate has severe difficulty understanding the meaning of the language used for the test, the reader can explain the meaning and reword the questions to make them easier to understand; technical terms (e.g. anti-lock braking system) may not be reworded.
- Private environment / separate room may also be available on request if the candidate can demonstrate that they would be seriously distracted by other people in the same room. A separate room may also be needed if other candidates would be distracted by the special needs accommodations being used.
- The only special allowance made when taking the Hazard Perception Test is the facility to pause the test between clips for people who suffer with motion sickness.

**To apply for a Special Needs Theory Test** – if the candidate needs extra time, a face to face reader/recorder, if an OLM test is required or if a separate room is necessary proof of Special Needs will need to be provided. The same procedure should be followed for Deaf candidates requiring a BSL interpreter but no proof of hearing difficulty is required.

The Association of Disability Driving Instructors CIC

A Community Interest Company Limited by Guarantee – Company No 8570552

A full member of Driving Mobility

**Tel:** [0844 800 7355](tel:08448007355) **Web:** [www.disabilitydrivinginstructors.com](http://www.disabilitydrivinginstructors.com) **Email:** [admin@disabilitydrivinginstructors.com](mailto:admin@disabilitydrivinginstructors.com)

Requests for additional support when taking the theory test and notification of special needs must be made via the on-line booking service: <https://www.gov.uk/book-theory-test>  
DVSA are currently advising candidates to notify them of any special needs when they book the theory test, but you can start the booking process before you are ready to take the test and state that you will decide when and where you wish to take the test later.

If you ask for extra time, need someone to read the questions/answers as they appear on screen and record the answers, need someone to reword the questions (referred to as Oral Language Modification – OLM), or need a face-to-face BSL interpreter then the booking cannot be completed on-line and DVSA will contact candidates by phone or email to discuss the accommodations requested. Deaf candidates needing a BSL interpreter do not need to provide proof of hearing difficulties but requests for other accommodations will need to be supported with proof of special needs, this could be – a letter from School / College (stating what Special Needs provision was made when taking tests/exams) or from GP (detailing the medical condition and Special Needs requirements) on headed paper should be sufficient. If you have had a Driving Mobility Assessment a report from the Occupational Therapist conducting the assessment should also be acceptable. DVSA have confirmed that they will also accept online dyslexia screening products assured by the British Dyslexia Association (BDA) as proof of Special Needs – this would be suitable for those out of education or those who have not been formally diagnosed. See the BDA website: <https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/dyslexia/how-is-dyslexia-diagnosed/dyslexia-screening> this contains a link to the Quick Screen Dyslexia test from Pico Educational Systems Ltd (<https://qsdyslexiatest.com/>) an online dyslexia screening products assured by the BDA.

For OLM tests, evidence of severe difficulties in language comprehension will be required by DVSA. This evidence would normally state that OLM has been required when taking exams at school or college and would take the form of a statement of educational needs from an educational professional or a report showing comprehension scores (which would need to equate to below 8 years of age) to warrant the service. For those out of formal education a report from any educational establishment attended or from a medical professional explaining the severe difficulties in language comprehension will be considered.

DVSA will consider the application and the evidence provided, they will then confirm back in writing that they have agreed to the request, this letter will give a reference number that must be quoted when booking the test. The best way to book the test is to contact the Customer Care Team by phone, quoting the reference and requesting extra time, a reader/recorder or an OLM test, whichever is needed; if you have difficulty getting through by phone send an email with a contact number and ask them to ring back (put 'special needs accommodations' in the subject box). Payment for the test is taken once the booking is completed.

If a reader/recorder or OLM test is needed or if a face-to-face BSL interpreter is required the test would take place in a side room so that there is no interference or distraction from other people taking the test and so they are not distracted. If the side rooms are not available then the test centre could be closed off for the duration of the test. DVSA have put aside dedicated test slots for Special Needs tests requiring total test centre closure; waiting times for these tests may be longer.

If any specific requirements are needed due to physical disability (e.g. wheelchair access to the building, a height adjustable desk or if a bespoke design of computer mouse is needed) these should be arranged when booking the test.

#### **DVSA Theory Test Booking Service**

- [theorycustomerservices@dvsa.gov.uk](mailto:theorycustomerservices@dvsa.gov.uk)
- Telephone: 0300 200 1122
- Monday to Friday, 8am to 4pm

#### **British Dyslexia Association:**

- web: <https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/>
- Tel: 0333 405 4555