



## **Additional Information for General Practitioners asked to countersign a National Private Pilot's Licence Medical Declaration**

This document amplifies the 'Notes for the General Practitioner' which go with the National Pilot's Licence (NPPL) Declaration of Medical Fitness to fly. The first thing to emphasise is that you, the general practitioner, are not being asked to assess an applicant's 'Fitness to Fly'. Your countersignature confirms only that there is nothing in the applicant's medical history which would prevent him/her meeting the DVLA Group 1 or Group 2 driving standards. The general practitioner takes no responsibility for the appropriateness of these standards for private flying. That is the responsibility of the UK Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) which has determined these standards after considerable discussion with the organisations associated with recreational flying.

The UK CAA recognises that an accurate knowledge of a pilot's past medical history is the most important part in assessing a future risk of incapacitation which might lead to an aircraft accident. The CAA has been criticised by the Air Accident Investigation Branch when accidents have occurred because the pilot has not disclosed a significant medical history during the standard medical examination for a pilot's licence. The CAA has not in the past routinely sought confirmation of a pilot's medical history from the GP.

The National PPL was devised to reduce the amount of regulation associated with recreational private flying (flying in good weather, by day only, in aircraft with a maximum of four seats). It was agreed that the medical standards for this type of flying could be reduced, but with the counter balance that an accurate past medical history should be known. The DVLA driving standards were chosen as they are well known, and are appropriate for this type of flying (which invariably takes place in the lower atmosphere, so that hypoxia is less of an issue than in a passenger jet cabin). DVLA Group 2 (professional driving) fitness allows the carriage of passengers. The lower DVLA Group 1 standard of (private driving) fitness removes the third party risk to passengers by allowing only solo flying or flying with another qualified pilot. The prevalence of injury to third parties on the ground due to crashing light aircraft, from any cause, is extremely small. Thus the Medical Declaration for a NPPL contains a signature from the pilot confirming that he/she has read the notes about present *and future* fitness to fly, and a countersignature from you, the GP, that there is nothing in the medical history that would preclude him/her reaching the appropriate DVLA standard. In summary, there is no requirement for the GP to make an assessment of 'Fitness to Fly'. There is also no requirement to do or record a medical examination, though this is not precluded if you wish to check various health parameters.

National PPL Medical Advisors are available to give specific advice about flying if necessary. The applicant will provide the contact details, and will be responsible for the transmission of reports if that is required. The aim of this system is to allow you access to advice which will enable you to countersign the Declaration if that is appropriate, or to deny it if it is not. The Medical Advisor may also suggest special limitations which should be appended at the bottom of the declaration form. Examples of these might be:

- Special modifications to an aircraft in the case of a disabled pilot.
- More frequent medical assessments and reports due to ongoing disease (for example an annual exercise ECG in coronary artery disease).
- The requirement for a pilot to fly only at a specific club with permission from a named flying instructor (this might be suitable for borderline psychiatric cases).
- A requirement to fly only with another qualified pilot (safety pilot) with solo flying not permitted (in very borderline cases).

If you have any further comments or queries, please contact a NPPL Medical Advisor.