

Introducing mandatory eyesight testing for older drivers

Introduction

Thank you for responding to this consultation which is asking for your views on introducing mandatory eyesight tests for older drivers as part of the driving licence renewal process.

Closing date is 11 May 2026.

Accessibility statement

Read our [accessibility statement for SmartSurvey forms \[opens in a new window\]](#).

Data protection regulations

The Department for Transport (DfT) is running this consultation which is asking for your views on potentially moving away from the current self-declaration system for eyesight standards for drivers aged 70 and over and introducing mandatory eyesight tests for older drivers as part of the licence renewal process.

View our [DfT online form and survey privacy notice \[opens in a new window\]](#) for more information on how your personal data is processed in relation to this survey.

In addition we are asking about your relationship with driving and older drivers plus your age and gender in order to understand your connection to the topic.

Do not include personal information in your responses unless specifically requested.

Your information

1. What is your name?

Robert Pellow

2. What is your email address?

technical@ciht.org.uk

3. Are you responding on behalf of an organisation?

Yes

No (Go to 'Individual details')

Organisation details

4. Your organisation is best described as:

- a healthcare organisation for eyesight
- a healthcare organisation for issues other than eyesight
- a road safety organisation
- another type of organisation:

[Now go to 'Proposal']

Individual details

5. You are:

- a driver
- a family relation to an older driver
- a friend to an older driver
- a healthcare professional for eyesight
- a healthcare professional in areas other than eyesight
- an academic
- another category:

6. What is your current age in years?

- Under 17 years
- 17 to 24 years
- 25 to 49 years
- 50 to 59 years
- 60 to 69 years
- 70 to 79 years
- 80 years or over

Individual details: gender

7. Are you:

- female
- male
- another gender
- prefer not to answer

Proposal

We are seeking views on potentially moving away from the current self-declaration system for eyesight standards for drivers aged 70 and over and introducing mandatory eyesight tests for older drivers as part of the licence renewal process. This proposal includes:

- who, if anyone, should be responsible to inform the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) when a licence holder is diagnosed with a medical condition that may affect their ability to meet the vision standards for driving
- if mandatory eyesight testing should be introduced for older drivers and, if so, the age and frequency of that testing
- what the eyesight test should involve and who should be responsible for notifying the DVLA of the eyesight test outcome

[Full information is given in our consultation documentation \[opens in a new window\]](#).

8. Who do you think should be responsible for notifying the DVLA when a licence holder is diagnosed with a medical condition that may affect their ability to meet the vision standards for driving?

- No-one
- The driver
- Eye health professional
- Other healthcare professional
- Another person:

Anyone with knowledge of a shortfall. Note potential for vexatious reporting but at present it seems everyone thinks it's not their responsibility

9. Do you agree or disagree mandatory eyesight testing should be introduced for older drivers?

- Agree (Go to 'Eyesight testing reasoning')
- Disagree
- Don't know (Go to 'Eyesight testing age')

Against eyesight testing

10. Why not?



[Now go to 'Reference']

Eyesight testing reasoning

11. Why?

It's free to get sight checks but not fully undertaken. Effect limited (responsible drivers already do it, irresponsible drivers may not change their behaviour but provided there is detection combined with reporting of shortfalls it could motivate change, especially if evidence of recent sight test is mandatory to self-certificate for renewing licence for older drivers. Additional health benefit that some health conditions likely to be detected if people currently having no or very infrequent tests get checked (cataracts, glaucoma, cancer, MS all picked up in routine tests etc)

Eyesight testing age

Our current considerations include introducing mandatory eyesight testing for drivers aged 70 and above and every renewal thereafter.

We are subsequently considering whether to start testing at a younger age, yet to be determined. We think a proportionate approach is needed to balance road safety with individual autonomy. Visual capacity is fundamental to safe driving and age-related eye conditions often develop gradually and can go unnoticed by drivers.

We are asking for your views on these issues.

[Full reasons and arguments are given in our consultation information \[opens in a new window\]](#).

12. Do you agree or disagree that 70 years is the appropriate age for mandatory eyesight testing to start?

- Agree
- Disagree
- Don't know (Go to 'Often')

70 years reasoning

13. Why?

Often people do not realise their sight has deteriorated so testing is required. While it is more likely that eyesight deterioration can occur in older people it is not limited to over 70's so we suggest it should be extended to all drivers on renewal of licence i.e. every 10 years. Ophthalmic specialists should advise when deterioration likely to commence for evidence-based assessment.

Often

14. In your view how often should older drivers be required to have a mandatory eyesight test?

Every 3 years

Every 2 years

Every year

Another time period amount:

Frequency of testing reasoning

15. Why do you think this frequency is correct?

Licence renewal for the over 70s is every 3 years so it makes sense to tie the mandatory eye test to that cycle. People with sight problems or potential hereditary issues, e.g. glaucoma can avail themselves of annual eye tests in any case. In any event it must not be more than the specialist at the previous eye test advised

Increasing testing frequency

16. In your view should the frequency of mandatory eyesight tests increase as drivers get older?

- Yes
- No (Go to 'Eye testing')
- Don't know (Go to 'Eye testing')

Increasing testing frequency age

17. At what age, in your view, should the frequency of mandatory eyesight testing be increased?

- 70 years
- 75 years
- 80 years
- 85 years
- 90 years
- Don't know (Go to 'Eye testing')
- Another age:

Increasing testing frequency age reasoning

18. Why do you think frequency of mandatory eyesight testing should be increased at this age?

Everyone should be tested on the expiry of their licence (regardless of length of period of the licence) and this frequency should be increased if an issue has been detected. Eye specialists should dictate at what frequency testing needs to occur if a problem is detected.

Eye testing

19. What, in your view, should the mandatory eyesight test cover?

- Visual acuity (a measure of the eyes' ability to see sharpness of vision. This is usually measured by reading letters on a chart from a set distance, with glasses or contacts if needed)
- Visual field (this is measured using machinery which tests your central and side vision and identifies if you have vision problems)
- Identification of a visual condition
- Confirmation that drivers meet the legal eyesight standards for driving
- Another test:

For the purposes of the following question a qualified eye healthcare professional would refer to an ophthalmic practitioner or Optometrist, who typically conduct eye tests at Opticians.

20. Who, in your view, should be responsible for conducting the mandatory eyesight test?

- Qualified eye healthcare professional
- Other healthcare professional
- Other non-healthcare professional
- Don't know
- Another person:

21. Who, in your view, should be responsible for notifying the DVLA of the outcome of the mandatory eyesight test?

- Driver (licence holder)
- Whoever conducts the test
- Don't know
- Another person:

If for example a family member knows someone is unsafe to drive but they don't self disclose *and* those that did test believe the person has

given up driving, the family member may be the only person to identify the safety risk. It needs to be possible for family members to disclose – or others who know them personally – as distinct from legal compulsion to report. The test should be that if someone knows or believes a driver is driving illegally because of their eyesight it should be an offence to not disclose it. The same applies to other conditions e.g. epilepsy, dementia and Parkinson's (including where medication create disinhibition and delusion to drivers about their capability, combined with heightened appetite to risk because the effect on dopamine).

Reference

For the purposes of the following question a qualified eye healthcare professional would refer to an ophthalmic practitioner or Optometrist, who typically conduct eye tests at Opticians.

22. Outside of any potential mandatory eyesight testing requirements, who do you think should be responsible for notifying the DVLA when a licence holder may no longer meet the vision standards for driving?

- Driver (licence holder)
- Eye health professional
- Other healthcare professional
- Don't know
- Another person:

If for example a family member knows someone is unsafe to drive but they don't self disclose *and* those that did test believe the person has given up driving, the family member may be the only person to identify the safety risk. It needs to be possible for family members to disclose – or others who know them personally – as distinct from legal compulsion to report. The test should be that if someone knows or believes a driver is driving illegally because of their eyesight it should be an offence to not disclose it.

Final comments

23. Any other comments?

None