



Gloucestershire

**OLDER  
DRIVERS  
FORUM**



# Frequently Asked Questions

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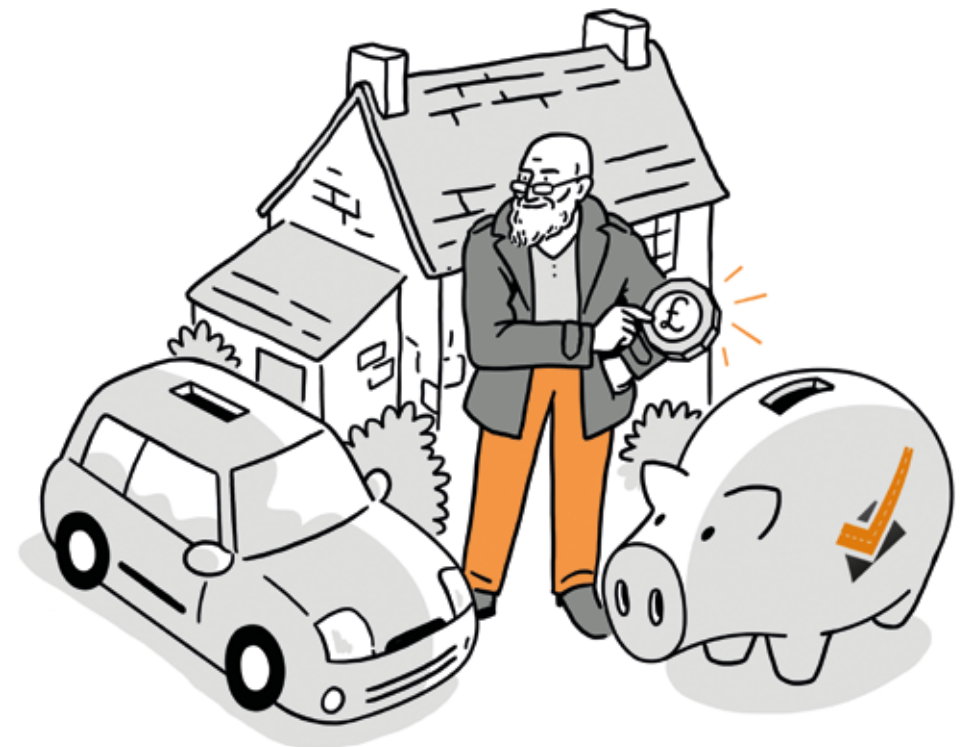
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## INTRODUCTION

The Older Drivers Forum are here to help

- ✓ With practical advice on how to keep driving safely for longer
- ✓ Plan an independent life without a car
- ✓ Families concerned about an older driver

**To attend a free community webinar**  
please email [odfglos@gmail.com](mailto:odfglos@gmail.com)



## Q&A's

### Q: What is the Older Drivers Forum?

**A:** ODF is the leading national organisation focused on older driver safety. It was founded in 2013 by Sergeant Rob Heard, then road safety lead for Hampshire and Thames Valley Constabularies, in partnership with Hampshire County Council. ODF is now active in seven counties and is accredited by the NHS.

In six counties it is run and funded by the police and county councils.

The Gloucestershire branch is the first voluntary sector initiative. This is supported by Rotary District 1100 as a commitment to vocational community activities, with Rotary-in-Nailsworth providing the Forum with charitable status.

### Q: How can I keep driving safely for longer?

**A:** There are three main elements to any driving scenario which the driver can influence.

- Driving ability
- Suitability of our vehicle
- Journey planning

## 1. DRIVING ABILITY

### Q: What should I be considering regarding driving ability?

**A:** We recommend that drivers:

- Have regular eyesight and hearing tests. Failing eyesight is one of the main reasons drivers retire from driving
- Keep up an exercise regime to ensure mobility is sustained and to keep reactions up to speed
- Check with the GP that there are no medical conditions that need to be reported to the DVLA or insurance company - currently there are 183 such conditions - or any medications that affect our ability to drive
- Regularly refresh their knowledge of the Highway Code
- Keep driving regularly to keep sharp, sharing the driving if they are a couple
- Take an annual driver MOT with a mature driver assessment

**Q: How do I arrange a mature driver assessment?**

**A:** In Gloucestershire these are offered by IAM Roadsmart. These assessments take one hour, use the driver's own car, and take place on roads familiar to them. The assessments cost £75.

To book an assessment go to  
[www.iamroadsmart.com/courses/mature-driver/review](http://www.iamroadsmart.com/courses/mature-driver/review)

**Q: What if I have cognitive or mobility issues?**

**A:** Then the assessment should take place at a DVLA accredited Driving Mobility centre.

These assessments start with a cognitive skills interview. The driving assessment use dual control cars and involves short journeys to reflect the shorter distances this type of driver tends to make. The centre gives advice on car aids that may make driving easier and safer. Most simple adaptations can easily be fitted to any car. As this assessment is more complex, they cost £115.

To book an assessment go to  
[www.drivingmobility.org.uk](http://www.drivingmobility.org.uk) or call 0800 559 3636

If you have a hidden disability, consider the Sunflower initiative  
[www.hiddendisabilitiesstore.com](http://www.hiddendisabilitiesstore.com)

## 2. VEHICLE SUITABILITY

**Q: What should I consider regarding suitability of my vehicle?**

**A:** We recommend that drivers:

- Drive the most modern car they can afford to benefit from the latest safety features
- Ensure the vehicle is suitably maintained if it is used infrequently
- Plan when taking ownership of a new car that there is comprehensive training on any new features they are not familiar with
- Access explanatory online services offered by car manufacturers
- Take extra care if transitioning from a manual to automatic. Learning to drive an automatic later in life can be challenging, as evidenced by the increasing number of pedal confusion accidents. For some it takes time to retrain muscle memory.

Advice on used cars for older drivers can be found at:  
[www.buyacar.co.uk/cars/used-cars/1823/best-cars-for-older-drivers](http://www.buyacar.co.uk/cars/used-cars/1823/best-cars-for-older-drivers)

### 3. JOURNEY PLANNING

**Q: What should I consider regarding journey planning?**

**A:** We recommend that drivers:

- Minimise more demanding roads. Use motorways or dual carriageways as much as possible as these are the safest classification of roads
- Plan routes that minimise T-junctions where a right turn is required. This is the setting for many older driver casualties
- Avoid rush hours which are the time of day older drivers are most vulnerable
- Avoid driving at night or in low sunlight if there is difficulty with headlight or sunlight-glare
- Only drive if feeling rested and well
- Check the weather forecast and decide in advance what weather conditions triggers the decision to postpone a journey. In bad conditions - particularly if it is foggy or raining heavily - no journey by car is worth the risk

Most fatal collisions take place within five miles of the person's home, with failure to look properly being one of the main reasons for accidents. If you are popping out for some shopping apply the same level of concentration as if you are setting off on a longer journey – mindful driving.

A guide to motorway services can be found at <https://wp.me/p3KeWX-X7>

### 4. PLANNING TO RETIRE FROM DRIVING

**Q: When should I be thinking of retiring from driving?**

**A:** Most older drivers are highly responsible and want to do their bit to keep the roads safe. In time you might find driving more stressful. Maybe you have a few scary moments on the roads. Maybe you notice that your passengers are less comfortable with you being at the wheel and, you are no longer asked to be your grandchildren's taxi service. This starts to form the picture that it is time for change.

**Q: How can I plan to maintain independence when I retire from driving?**

**A:** We recommend to:

- Start planning as early as possible
- Check if moving to a new home that there are alternative means of transport to maintain independence
- Make a list of regular journeys and develop an alternative mobility plan
- Manage a gradual transition



**Q: I am a relative/friend of an older driver and am concerned about their fitness to drive. What should I do?**

**A:** This may not be as difficult as it may seem with careful preparation in choosing the right time and place to start the conversation, and prior research around alternative transport arrangements.

Focus on the positives:

- By giving up driving they might find they spend more time with family and get out and about more often
- They may experience an improvement in fitness as alternative means of transport lead to more physical exercise
- Once the sums are done, they may find getting rid of the car saves money

But not all older drivers are so aware. This may be because they have undiagnosed dementia, or their dementia has moved to the next stage.

In that case families need to request professional intervention through the older driver's GP or Optometrist. If the professional's advice is not heeded, they can report the matter direct to the DVLA.

Once the decision is made to stop driving, then the vehicle in question needs to be removed immediately. Having the car sitting on the drive or in the garage can prove to be too much of a temptation.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

**Q: How can I get more information?**

**A:** Please go to the ODF website [www.olderdriversforum.com](http://www.olderdriversforum.com)

This has:

- Numerous videos and information on the above topics
- A document called 'Living without a car', which gives an overview of alternative transport and travel concessions in Gloucestershire



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