

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?

2. What is your email address?

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?

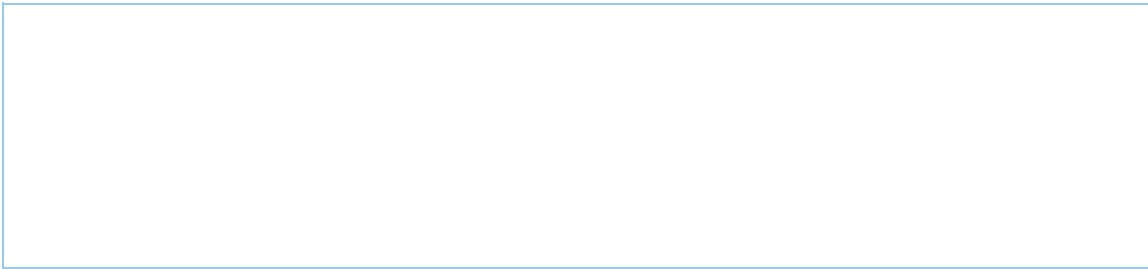
- No-one
- The driver
- Eye health professional
- Other healthcare professional
- Another person:

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']

11. Why?

Road Safety GB recognises that poor eyesight is a significant road-safety risk and supports exploring stronger, evidence-based approaches to ensuring drivers maintain adequate visual standards.

National data shows that collisions continue to occur where uncorrected or defective eyesight is a contributory factor, and serious cases have prompted coroners to highlight weaknesses in the UK's reliance on self-reporting of visual conditions. While most older drivers manage their fitness to drive responsibly, a small minority may not recognise gradual visual decline, which can increase risk on the road.

Introducing compulsory eyesight testing by qualified opticians at licence renewal would provide a more consistent and objective way to ensure drivers meet the required standard, helping to protect both drivers and the public.

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')

13. Why?

Road Safety GB supports introducing compulsory eyesight testing from age 60, with checks every two years until 70 and annually thereafter. This reflects our commitment to proportionate, evidence-informed measures that improve safety and reduce collisions.

Beginning mandatory testing at 60 aligns with NHS-funded eye examinations, making the policy fair and accessible. It also ensures age-related visual decline is identified early, reducing reliance on self-assessment, which is not always reliable for a small minority of drivers.

While Road Safety GB sees value in eventually applying regular eyesight testing to all drivers, we recognise that universal implementation would require significant operational planning. Starting at age 60, therefore, provides a balanced and practical first step that supports safer driving and reflects the experiences and needs of older drivers.

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:

15. Why do you think this frequency is correct?

We support introducing different eye-testing frequencies by age, starting with compulsory tests at age 60, then every 2 years until age 70, and annually thereafter. This approach reflects our commitment to proportionate, evidence led measures that reduce collisions and improve driver safety.

Beginning mandatory testing at 60 aligns with NHS funded eye examinations, ensuring the policy is fair, accessible and practical. Although vision problems can affect drivers of all ages, testing at 60 provides a realistic first step while acknowledging the increasing prevalence of age related visual decline.

Road Safety GB also believes that licence renewal arrangements after age 70 may need to be reviewed so they align with these eyesight testing requirements.

In the longer term, Road Safety GB would welcome future consideration of eyesight testing at photocard renewal for all drivers but recognises that implementing this immediately would require significant operational planning. Starting at age 60, therefore, provides a balanced, phased approach that strengthens safety while remaining practical and proportionate.

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?

Age related visual decline becomes more common and more rapid after 70, and many conditions develop gradually without obvious symptoms. Because self-assessment is unreliable for some drivers, annual testing at this stage provides an important safeguard, ensuring changes in vision are identified and managed promptly.

Testing every two years from age 60, when NHS eye tests are free, helps pick up issues earlier, while moving to annual checks after 70 is proportionate to the increased rate of visual deterioration. This approach helps protect older drivers by reducing the risk of collisions caused by uncorrected vision.

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:

Ensure long sighted people are also tested so they can see the dashboard.

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:

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:

Police officer when a roadside test has been failed.

23. Any other comments?

Road Safety GB stresses the importance of ensuring that any changes to eyesight-testing requirements are presented as a supportive safeguard rather than a punitive measure. Health professionals play an important role in reinforcing this message by helping patients understand that testing protects their independence and safety, as well as that of other road users.

We also recognise that some older drivers may eventually need to stop driving, which can significantly affect independence, well-being, and access to essential services. Road Safety GB encourages government departments to work together to ensure appropriate mobility support is available, such as accessible public transport, community transport schemes and practical advice, so that mandatory testing does not disproportionately impact those with limited alternatives.

Road Safety GB already supports older driver safety through specialist training for Approved Driving Instructors and provides information and advice on working effectively with mature drivers. We encourage the government to work with Road Safety GB and utilise this expertise when considering any future cognitive-testing approaches for older licence holders.