



Gloucestershire

# **OLDER DRIVERS FORUM**



## **Driving Safely, for Longer**



Division of



Charity number 1124977



## INTRODUCTION

The Older Drivers Forum are here with practical advice to help:

- ✓ Keep driving safely for longer
- ✓ Plan an independent life without a car
- ✓ Families and carers concerned about a mature driver

**This booklet is a summary of our core advice.**

This includes details of mature driver reviews on page 6.

Further seasonal driving tips and more information for concerned families are available.

Email [odfglos@gmail.com](mailto:odfglos@gmail.com) for these latest fact sheets.



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

**A: The Older Drivers Forum (ODF)** is the leading national organisation campaigning for mature driver safety. It was founded in 2013 by Rob Heard MBE, then roads safety lead for Hampshire Constabulary.

The Gloucestershire Forum (ODFGlos) was founded in 2018 by Alexandra and Nigel Lloyd-Jones and is the first voluntary sector initiative.

ODFGlos operates under the charitable status of the Gloucestershire Older Persons Association. Charity number 1124977.

ODFGlos is part-funded by the Gloucestershire County Council and public donations.

**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
- Vehicle preparedness and suitability
- Journey planning

## 1. DRIVING ABILITY

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

**A:** We recommend that mature drivers:

- **Have annual eyesight and hearing tests.**  
90% of all information used to drive is visual.  
Good vision is crucial
- **Keep up an exercise regime** to ensure mobility is sustained and to keep reactions up to speed
- **Check with a GP and optician** there are no medical conditions that impact fitness to drive and need to be reported to the DVLA and insurance company, or any medications being taken that affect driving ability
- **Keep driving regularly** to keep sharp
- **If a couple, then share the driving** so both maintain driving skills
- **Refresh their knowledge of the Highway Code**
- **Take an annual driver MOT** with a mature driver review

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

**A:** In Gloucestershire these are offered by IAM RoadSmart. The reviews take one hour, use the driver's own car and take place on familiar roads, and normally cost £85.

However, ODFGlos have secured Gloucestershire Road Safety Partnership funding and can offer these free-of-charge to Gloucestershire residents who are 65 and over.

Email [odfglos@gmail.com](mailto:odfglos@gmail.com) with your year of birth and postcode to request a voucher.

**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 uses 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, it costs around £155. However, if referred by a GP then there maybe a discount.

To book an assessment call 0800 559 363 or go to [www.drivingmobility.org.uk](http://www.drivingmobility.org.uk)

## 2. VEHICLE PREPAREDNESS AND SUITABILITY

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

**A:** We recommend that mature drivers:

- **Ensure the vehicle is suitably maintained** if used infrequently. For example, tyre pressures should be checked every two weeks
- **Check that you have essential equipment** in case of breakdown or someone is taken ill. The *Whats3Words* app helps identify a location with three words. This is invaluable for the emergency services on rural roads with few obvious landmarks
- **Consider fitting driver aids** such as a panoramic rear-view mirror which helps eliminate blind spots
- **Drive the most modern car** that can be afforded to benefit from the latest safety features
- **Plan that there is comprehensive training on any new features** when taking ownership of a new car

Advice on used cars for mature 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

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

**A:** We recommend that mature drivers:

- **Check on [www.crashmap.co.uk](http://www.crashmap.co.uk)** to identify collision hot spots and consider alternative routes
- **Minimise driving on more demanding roads.** Use motorways or dual carriageways as much as possible as these are the safest classification of roads
- **Be prepared for the unexpected on rural roads.** Never drive faster than you can see and have time to react and come to a safe stop
- **Minimise routes where a right turn at a T junction is required.** This is a common setting for collisions involving mature drivers. The street view on online maps is helpful in identifying these
- **Avoid driving at rush hours.** These are statistically high risk times for crashes
- **Avoid driving in low sunlight and at night,** if distracted by sunlight or headlamp glare
- **Report potholes or any other road issues** at <https://fixmystreet.gloucestershire.gov.uk>
- **Tell family or a friend if going on an unfamiliar journey**
- **Decide in advance a weather postponement plan.**  
In severe weather no journey is worth the risk

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

## 4. PLANNING TO RETIRE FROM DRIVING

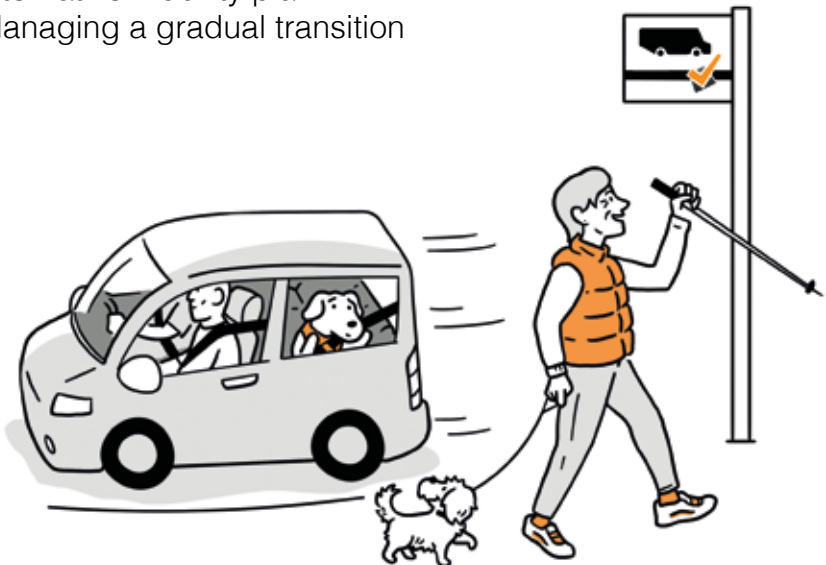
### **Q: When should I be thinking of retiring from driving?**

**A:** Most mature 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 a picture that it is time for change.

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

**A:** We recommend:

- Start planning as early as possible
- Checking if moving to a new home that there are alternative means of transport to maintain independence
- Making a list of regular journeys and developing an alternative mobility plan
- Managing a gradual transition



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

**A:** This may not be as difficult as it may seem. Carefully choose the right person to lead the conversation; the time and place to start that conversation; and with 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 mature 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 mature driver's GP or Optometrist. If the professional's advice is not heeded, they can report the matter can be reported 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 be too much of a temptation.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Please go to the Forum's website

<https://www.olderdriversforum.com>

This has:

- **Lots of useful information**, including how to renew your licence and the law around medical conditions
- **A schedule of our popular monthly zoom webinars**. These usually take place on the last Saturday of the month, at 10:00 and last for one hour  
<https://olderdriversforum.com/gloucestershire-events/>
- **There is also the facility on the website to ask questions**

Also follow us on:

- **Facebook**  
<https://www.facebook.com/ODFGloucestershire>
- **X** [odfglos](#)
- **BlueSky** [odfglos](#)



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