



## ADVICE FOR FAMILIES, FRIENDS & CARERS CONCERNED ABOUT A MATURE DRIVER

February 2026

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Concerned about a mature driver becoming more anxious about driving?

Seen more unexplained scrapes on their car?

Becoming uncomfortable with them being your children's taxi service?

Having scary moments with your partner at the wheel?

Each situation is unique in terms of the personalities involved, road safety knowledge and strategies on how to discuss emotive subjects.

We hope this information is helpful in taking another step forward, wherever you are on your journey.

These notes supplement information at [www.olderdriversforum.com/gloucestershire](http://www.olderdriversforum.com/gloucestershire) which includes a booklet available for download called '**Driving Safely for Longer**'. This includes more advice on driving ability, vehicle preparedness and journey planning.

At [www.olderdriversforum.com/gloucestershire-events/](http://www.olderdriversforum.com/gloucestershire-events/) there are a series of leaflets with seasonal road safety driving advice.

In planning conversations with the person, you are concerned about consider this as a three-stage process:

**Stage 1: Who** considers the driver's personality, and how best to engage with them. Also, who is best equipped in the family or friendship group to lead the conversation

**Stage 2: When** looks at the timing of that conversation

**Stage 3: What** is the advice and support to keep the driver driving safely for longer, and how to plan for when it is time to retire from driving

## 2. WHO

Professor Musselwhite, chair of psychology at Aberystwyth University, has developed a model that identifies three key mature driver personality types.

[www.aber.ac.uk/en/rbi/research/research-in-action/transport-and-mobility-challenges/](http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/rbi/research/research-in-action/transport-and-mobility-challenges/)

- ✓ **'Long Term Planners'.** Independent people with strong intellects who enjoy a challenge. Their driving is localised and supports their practical needs. They are triggered to think about fitness to drive and long-term planning following retirement from work. What is helpful for them is in gathering information, as they evolve their driving plan.
- ✓ **'Short Term Supported'.** Social people with most of their high annual mileage devoted to sustaining a busy way of life. Conversations about driving skills and planning for driving retirement are instigated through family and friends, people they trust. They welcome practical and emotional support, every step of the way.
- ✓ **'Reactive'**. Complacent about their declining cognitive and mobility skills they are not aware how this impacts ability to drive. They stubbornly continue their way of life. They also have little awareness of how they would carry on their life without a car. Whilst they are resistant to family comments, they may accept professional advice. Or, ultimately, are forced to change by police intervention.

Whilst this model is a generalisation, we hope it is helpful in considering your own situation.

The next part of **Who** concerns the most appropriate person to lead conversations.

- ✓ Consider the personalities involved and experience in discussing challenging topics
- ✓ Some families mistakenly assign the most authoritative person to deliver their concerns as an ultimatum, when a more compassionate, non-judgemental approach is required
- ✓ Hearing sensitive information from the right person will make a big difference. People such as their spouse, adult child, or trusted friend, with the rest of the family having a united front to help the mature driver make safe decisions

### 3. WHEN

Start as soon as possible to normalise road safety as part of day-to-day conversations.

Ways to achieve this are talking about road safety issues relating to the family such as:

- ✓ Concerns about the grandchildren's school run
- ✓ Mentioning the latest police awareness campaign
- ✓ Reviving family history around how relatives reduced and eventually retired from driving
- ✓ Drawing attention to news about a recent road collision. This is not to scare the driver of concern but to keep them informed

All of this will give opportunities for conversations about attitudes and responsibility around safe driving.

Be prepared that initial conversations might evoke strong emotions, and you will need to persevere to ensure helpful discussions and defuse negative feelings.

It is vitally important not to avoid difficult conversations, to avoid potential tragedies.

### 4. WHAT

Advice on how to keep driving safely for longer is covered in our booklet at [www.olderdriversforum.com/gloucestershire](http://www.olderdriversforum.com/gloucestershire).

What we focus on here is advice on driving retirement and how to develop an alternative mobility plan to maintain independence.

Most mature drivers are highly responsible and want to do 'their bit' to keep the roads safe. In time they may find driving more stressful. Maybe they have scary moments on the roads. This starts to form the picture that it is time for change.

The key elements to minimise stress are planning and timing.

This planning could start when downsizing and ensuring there is a good transport service infrastructure where they are moving to.

The next step is to develop a new mobility plan:

**Step 1: Calculate the real costs** of owning their car so you know what funds will be available for alternative transport. These costs are often underestimated as the depreciation of the car's value is often overlooked. Retiring from driving is likely to save money for most mature drivers

**Step 2: Research what travel concessions** are available. These include travel passes which give free or reduced cost of fares for off-peak local bus services and the senior rail and discount coach cards.

[www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/transport/apply-for-a-bus-pass](http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/transport/apply-for-a-bus-pass)

[www.senior-railcard.co.uk/](http://www.senior-railcard.co.uk/)

**Step 3: Brush up on digital skills** as accessing services that maybe required, such as online shopping will involve more use of the internet. AGE UK offer a digital champion service to help with this.

**Step 4: Make a list of regular journeys**, research and trial how each journey could be made without driving a car. What will be come clear from that process is there is a weekly pattern of regular journeys with spontaneous journeys being quite rare.

An important component in this planning is to be familiar with the community transport services that are available such as, in Gloucestershire, Community Connexions.

[www.communityconnexions.org.uk/door-to-door-transport/](http://www.communityconnexions.org.uk/door-to-door-transport/)

[www.goucestershire.gov.uk/transport/the-robin/](http://www.goucestershire.gov.uk/transport/the-robin/)

Inclusion-Gloucestershire also offer a travel training service for those with long term health issues. [www.inclusiongloucestershire.co.uk/](http://www.inclusiongloucestershire.co.uk/)

If you have limited local services talk to neighbours about setting up a car-sharing Whats App group, with those who have retired from driving contributing to fuel costs in return for an informal taxi service. The drivers must inform their insurance company of this arrangement.

**Step 5: Manage a gradual transition** to allow everyone involved to adjust to this new way of life.

**Step 6: Focus on the positives.** For some driving retirement comes as a relief as they are relieved from the constant anxiety of driving. By giving up driving they may spend more time with family and get out more often. They can develop a new friendship group with people they travel with, and their voluntary community driver could become their new best friend.

But not all mature drivers are so aware; people who Professor Musselwhite identifies as 'Reactive'. With them we need to recognise who they are and request professional intervention:

- ✓ For GPs it is a challenging topic as they have no specific training on this issue. However, the DVLA has published a comprehensive advisory document, and provide specialists that GPs can consult
- ✓ DVLA state it is vital that GPs receive family's evidence about long-term patterns of failing driving skills
- ✓ One option the GP will have is to refer the driver to Driving Mobility for an assessment [www.drivingmobility.org.uk](http://www.drivingmobility.org.uk)
- ✓ Whilst 'Reactive' personalities are reluctant to listen to family advice, they are often receptive to professional advice and will make their own decision to retire from driving.

Be prepared. You may well have to persevere! What you say or don't say can make the difference between safety or injury – life or death.

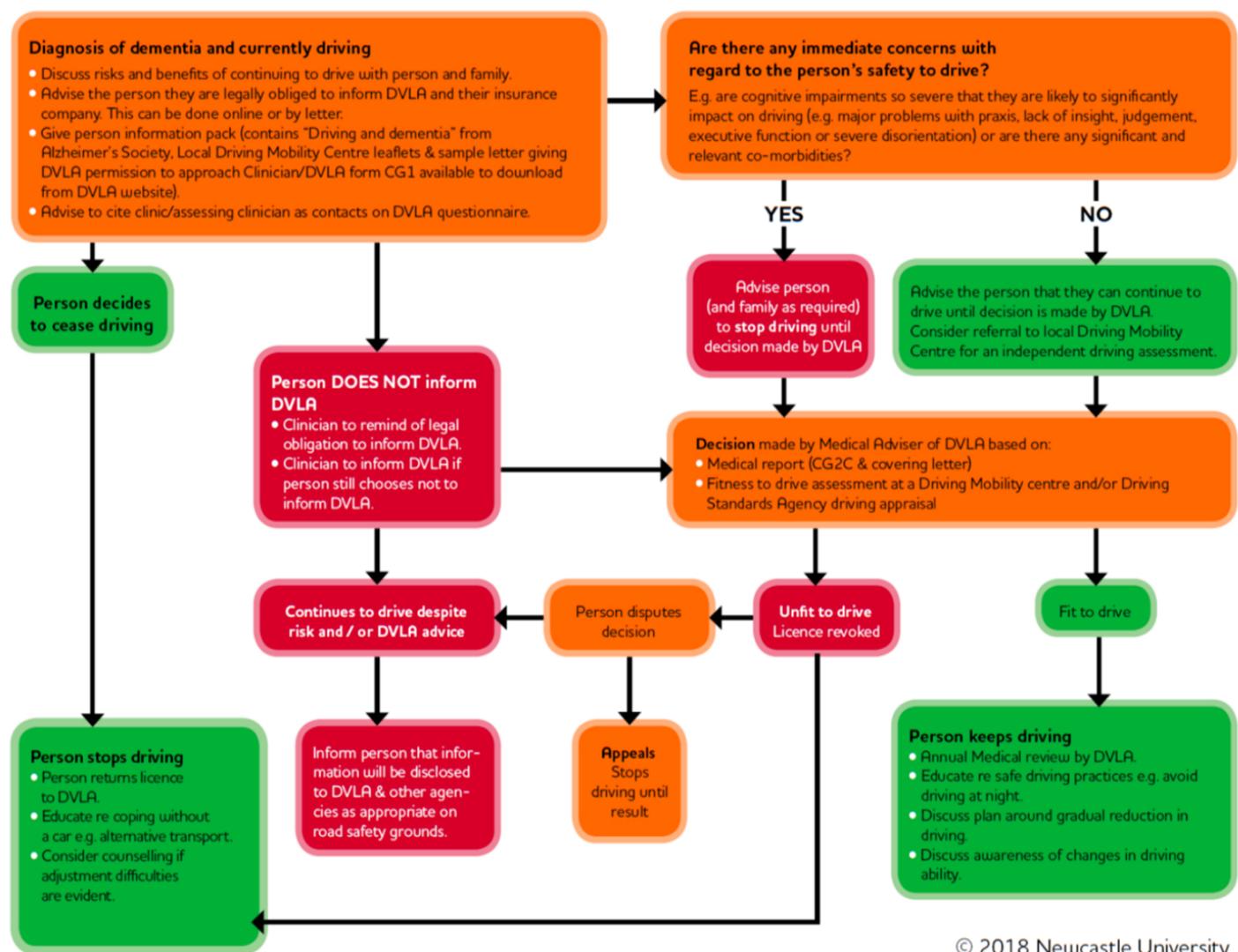
- ✓ Ultimately, if the professional's advice is not heeded, they have a public duty of care to report the matter to the DVLA
- ✓ Family and friends can also notify the DVLA, anonymously. Crimestoppers can also be used to make anonymous reports [www.crimestoppers-uk.org](http://www.crimestoppers-uk.org)

The GP's report to the DVLA will start a medical enquiry process as the DVLA will only revoke a licence if there is a medical reason, and not just because a person is a bad driver.

This enquiry could take months, and the driver of concern could continue to drive when they are not safe to do so.

**In that case, and as a last resort, the family may need to take away the keys and remove the car.**

Below is a flow chart which sets out the options GPs have concerning intervention.



© 2018 Newcastle University