



Belfast Health
and Social Care Trust

Living with dementia - Can a person with dementia drive?



Information for relatives

Community Mental Health Team for Older People

If you or your family member receives a diagnosis of dementia, this can raise a number of questions around driving. Driving is important in:

- promoting independence
- freedom and control and in many cases affects a person's quality of life.

Can a person with dementia still drive?

Receiving a diagnosis of dementia does not automatically mean that you cannot drive. A person with a diagnosis of dementia in the early stages may be able to drive if he or she is considered safe to do so and **providing** certain legal requirements are fulfilled.



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What difficulties can arise for a person driving with dementia?

Dementia can affect a person's

- memory
- reaction time and
- problem solving ability.

As dementia progresses, a person will eventually lose their ability to drive. The stage when this occurs is individual to each particular person.

What does the law say?

When a person receives a diagnosis of dementia and decides they DO NOT want to continue to drive, they must inform the Driving and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) immediately and submit their driving licence to the DVLA.

When a person receives a diagnosis of dementia and decides they DO WANT to continue to drive they must inform the DVLA of their diagnosis immediately by telephone or post or email providing their

- name
- address
- DOB and
- driver number.

Someone else can give this information on the person with dementia's behalf with their permission.

The DVLA will then send a questionnaire asking them:

- to attend their GP and
- for a medical report to be completed and returned to the DVLA

A decision is then made by the DVLA as to whether the person requires a further driving assessment and whether they can or cannot continue to drive.

The driving assessments are conducted by a charity called Disability Action at various mobility centres throughout Northern Ireland. If you are referred by DVLA the cost is paid for by them. However, a private assessment can be arranged for a fee (even if you pay for the test the result will be given to the DVLA).

If a person with a diagnosis of dementia or their family or carers do not inform the DVLA of their diagnosis:

- they would be breaking the law
- their insurance would be invalid and
- they would be subject to a fine.

If a person with a diagnosis of dementia continues to drive and does not inform the DVLA despite advice from their doctor, their doctor can inform the DVLA if they feel the safety of the public is at risk. The doctor would discuss this with the person concerned before contacting the DVLA.

Who can inform the DVLA that a person has dementia?

The DVLA can be informed by:

- the person diagnosed with dementia
- a family member
- a doctor or healthcare professional involved in their care or
- any concerned member of the public.

How to ease the move from driver to passenger?

Giving up driving is not always an easy thing to do as the person is often fearful as to how their life will change.

Some tips for family and carers to help ease the transition as much as possible include:

- acknowledge how difficult it is for the person to stop driving
- highlight the benefits of not driving
- help to reduce the need to drive
- encourage other family members to drive when possible
- encourage and help familiarise the person with alternative forms of transport safely e.g. use of taxis, buses.

Information and support provided by other organisations

Alzheimer's Society

www.alzheimer's.org.uk/northernireland

Tel: 028 9066 4100

Driver and Vehicle Licencing Agency (DVLA)

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/driver-and-vehicle-licensing-agency

Tel: 0300 790 6802

Disability Action

www.disabilityaction.org

Belfast Headquarters Tel: 028 9029 7880

Dungannon Tel: 028 8775 2372

Derry Tel: 028 7136 0811

Carrickfergus Tel: 028 9336 9367

Information on public transport and bus passes for over 60 years or those with a disability // www.nidirect.gov.uk/free-bus-travel-and-concessions

How to contact us:



Community Mental Health Team for Older People Tel: (028) 9504 0346

operates from Monday to Friday
9am to 5pm

We also offer an extended telephone advice
and support service for people living with
DEMENTIA and their carers operating:
Monday to Friday until 8pm
Saturday to Sunday 10am to 2pm

If you need to speak to someone
outside these hours please contact:
Regional Emergency Social Work Service
(028) 9504 9999

[www.belfasttrust.hscni.net/services/
CommunityMentalHealthTeams](http://www.belfasttrust.hscni.net/services/CommunityMentalHealthTeams)

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