

Changes expected to driving assessments for older people (UK)

Proposals have been put forward to replace the way that older drivers are assessed on their driving capabilities.

The number of older drivers increases year by year and for many of them, their car is a lifeline. Older drivers do not pose excessive risk of injury to other road users compared to drivers of other ages, particularly young drivers. In addition older drivers tend to make adjustments to their driving in terms of where, when and how they drive.

In spite of these facts, there are plans afoot to change the present system of renewing a driving licence at 70. The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) is soon to produce proposals which will replace the way that older drivers are assessed on their driving capabilities.

Help the Aged is opposed to any change that would single out older drivers for compulsory and discriminatory medical tests. We would welcome submissions from senior forums and pensioner groups on their views about who should be assessed, at what age and how – and whether the present system of self-assessment should be modified or replaced with an alternative regime, such as the one being used in New Zealand.

Your views will help us to present our considered views to the DVLA later in the year.

In the meantime the Driving Standards Agency (DSA) has developed a road safety programme that specifically addresses concerns relating to older drivers. Arrive Alive Classic is aimed at drivers aged 50 and over, with a particular focus on the retired age group. The presentation is given completely free of charge, and everyone who attends is given a free information leaflet and copy of the Highway Code.