

DVLA notification by drivers or healthcare professionals

Applicants and licence holders have a legal duty to:

- notify the DVLA of any injury or illness that would have a likely impact on safe driving ability (except some short-term conditions, as set out in this guide)
- respond fully and accurately to any requests for information from either the DVLA or healthcare professionals
- comply with the requirements of the issued licence, including any periodic medical reviews indicated by the DVLA.

They should also adhere, with ongoing consideration of fitness to drive, to prescribed medical treatment, and to monitor and manage the condition and any adaptations.

Doctors and other healthcare professionals should:

- **advise the individual on the impact of their medical condition for safe driving ability**
- **advise the individual on their legal requirement to notify the DVLA of any relevant condition**
- **treat, manage and monitor the individual's condition with ongoing consideration of their fitness to drive**
- **notify the DVLA when fitness to drive requires notification but an individual cannot or will not notify the DVLA themselves**

Of course, this last obligation on professionals may pose a challenge to issues of consent and the relationship between patient and healthcare professional. The GMC and The College of Optometrists offer guidance on this which is summarised below. (Note that the GMC is currently considering updating this guidance.)

In law it is the duty of the licence holder or applicant to notify the DVLA of any medical condition that may affect safe driving. This notification by people with licences issued by the DVLA (because they live in England, Scotland or Wales) may be done via GOV.UK

Circumstances may arise in which a person cannot or will not notify the DVLA. It may be necessary for a doctor, optometrist or other healthcare professional to consider notifying the DVLA under such circumstances if there is concern for road safety, which would be for both the individual and the wider public.

The General Medical Council and The College of Optometrists offer clear guidance about notifying the DVLA when the person cannot or will not exercise their own legal duty to do so.

The GMC guidelines (reproduced with permission) state:

1. The driver is legally responsible for informing the DVLA about such a condition or treatment. However, if a patient has such a condition, you should explain to the patient:
 - That the condition may affect their ability to drive (if the patient is incapable of understanding this advice, for example because of dementia, you should inform the DVLA immediately) and,
 - That they have a legal duty to inform the DVLA about the condition.
2. If a patient refuses to accept the diagnosis, or the effect of the condition on their ability to drive, you can suggest that they seek a second opinion, and help arrange for them to do so. You should advise the patient not to drive in the meantime.
3. If a patient continues to drive when they may not be fit to do so, you should make every reasonable effort to persuade them to stop. As long as the patient agrees, you may discuss your concerns with their relatives, friends or carers.
4. If you do not manage to persuade the patient to stop driving, or you discover that they are continuing to drive against your advice, you should contact the DVLA immediately and disclose any relevant medical information, in confidence, to the medical adviser.
5. Before contacting the DVLA, you should try to inform the patient of your decision to disclose personal information. You should also inform the patient in writing once you have done so.

See the full guidance at the GMC website, [Confidentiality: reporting concerns about patients to the DVLA or the DVA](#).

The College of Optometrists offers similar guidance, available in full at its website under the [confidentiality section](#) of its Guidance for Professional Practice (use the subsection on 'disclosing information about adults without their consent').

This guidance includes the following (reproduced with permission of The College of Optometrists):

(C73) If you think the patient may be engaging in an activity where they pose a very real risk of danger to the public or themselves, such as the patient driving when they are not fit to drive, but you are not sure whether you should act, ask yourself:

1. what might the outcome be in the short or longer term if I do not raise my concern?
2. how could I justify why I did not raise the concern?

(C74) If you decide to proceed, you should:

1. first advise the patient that they are unfit to engage in the activity in question and give the reasons
2. advise the patient to tell the appropriate authority
3. put your advice in writing to the patient, if appropriate
4. keep a copy of any correspondence to the patient on the patient record

Notification can be provided by healthcare professionals in the above circumstances, in confidence:

medadviser@dvla.gsi.gov.uk

Telephone: 01792 782337

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