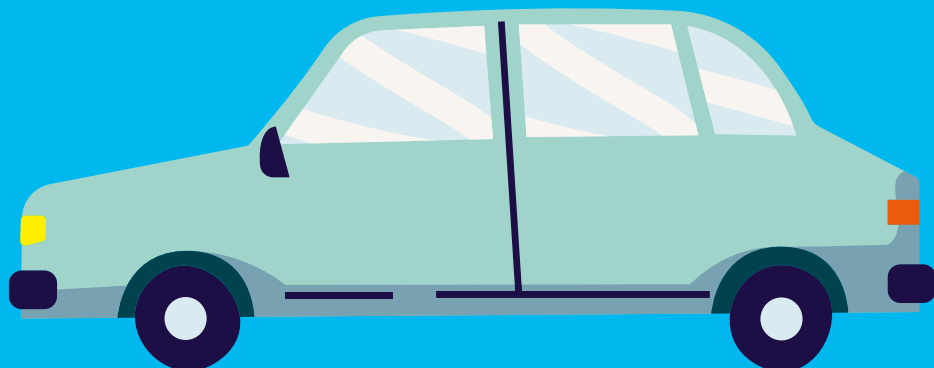


Driving and Parkinson's

Everyday life

Find out more about driving
when you have Parkinson's



Being diagnosed with Parkinson's doesn't always mean that you'll have to stop driving immediately. But there are some things you need to do if you'd like to continue driving and stay safe on the roads. This booklet explains the steps you need to take.

It includes details about how Parkinson's medication may affect your driving. There is also information about choosing to stop driving, and where you can find useful information and support.

The information in this booklet is correct as of May 2023.



Contents

Telling your licensing agency that you have Parkinson's	4
How do I tell my licensing agency that I have Parkinson's?	5
How does my licensing agency decide if I'm fit to drive?	7
What decisions can my licensing agency make?	9
Free or reduced travel	11
Will Parkinson's medication affect my ability to drive?	12
Drugs and driving: the law	13
The Blue Badge scheme	15
Applying for a Blue Badge	15
Using a Blue Badge	16
Other concessions	17
Mobility centres	19
Choosing to stop driving	20
Alternatives to driving	21
Giving up your licence	22
Advice for family and friends	23
More information and support	25

Telling your licensing agency that you have Parkinson's

The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) in England, Scotland and Wales and the Driver and Vehicle Agency (DVA) in Northern Ireland make every effort to keep people with health problems or disabilities on the road, if they're safe to do so.

In this booklet we refer to the DVLA and the DVA as the licensing agency.

The contact details for different licensing agencies can be found in the 'More information and support' section.

In this section:

- How do I tell my licensing agency that I have Parkinson's?
- How does my licensing agency decide if I'm fit to drive?
- Free or reduced travel

How do I tell my licensing agency that I have Parkinson's?

When you're diagnosed with Parkinson's, you must tell your licensing agency straight away. If you don't let the licensing agency know about your condition, you're committing a criminal offence.

If your GP suspects you've got Parkinson's but you haven't been diagnosed, you still have a legal duty to tell your licensing agency if you're experiencing symptoms that may affect your driving.

In England, Scotland and Wales, you can report your condition online at **www.gov.uk/parkinsons-diseaseand-driving**.

You can also report your condition by completing the 'Report your Medical Condition (PK1)' form if you have a car or motorcycle licence. If you have a bus, coach and HGV licence, you'll need to complete a PK1V form.

These forms are available from the DVLA by calling their Medical Enquiries team on **0300 790 6806**.

In Northern Ireland, you can tell the DVA by phone on **0300 200 7861** or by emailing **dva@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk**. They will then send you a medical questionnaire for your specialist to complete.

You can also inform the DVLA and DVA in writing. Contact details are available in the 'More support and information' section.

Can my GP tell my licensing agency on my behalf?

Your GP or specialist has no legal duty to tell your licensing agency about your Parkinson's. But they may contact your licensing agency if they've told you to stop driving and they don't think you have. In this case, the General Medical Council advises that a doctor must inform the licensing agency.

Telling your insurance company

It's very important to let your insurance company know if you're diagnosed with Parkinson's. If you don't, it may make your existing policy invalid if you need to make a claim.

How does my licensing agency decide if I'm fit to drive?

Once you've told your licensing agency you have Parkinson's, they may be able to make their decision from the information you've given them. If they need more details, they will write to your GP or specialist.

They may ask you to go for a medical examination that will usually be with your own GP or specialist.

The medical examination will be arranged to take place as near as possible to your home. It's free of charge, but you'll have to pay your own travel costs to get to the appointment.

If you hold an HGV licence, you'll be asked to provide details about your condition and your licensing agency will ask your GP or specialist to complete a medical report. You may also be asked to do a driving assessment. If you're issued with a licence, it may be reviewed every year.

Waiting for a decision can sometimes be a lengthy process. You can usually continue to drive as long as your GP or specialist feels you're well enough. You shouldn't drive if you're told not to by your licensing agency or by your GP or specialist.

What happens if I'm asked to attend a driving assessment?

In a small number of cases, you may be asked to complete a driving assessment.

This may be at a mobility centre (see the 'Mobility centres' section) or at a Driving and Vehicle Standards Agency test centre.

At the assessment, trained staff will consider how your condition affects your driving. They also examine your vision, how quickly you're able to react to situations and your ability to operate the controls safely during a drive with an assessor.

Depending on your needs, an assessor may recommend adaptations to your vehicle that will help you to keep you driving safely.



What decisions can my licensing agency make?

Once the licensing agency has considered your application it can decide:

- you can have or keep your licence without any restriction
- you can have a shorter licence, valid for one, two or three years. This decision is reviewed when the licence runs out.
- your licence will only allow you to drive a vehicle with specific adaptations
- you must stop driving and give up your licence

If you've been told that you must adapt your car, you can get an independent assessment of your needs through a mobility centre (see the 'Mobility centres' section). You must tell your insurance company about any adaptations you make to your vehicle.

If your licensing agency decides you must give up your licence, they will give you a medical reason why. They'll also send you details of if and when you can reapply, and return any fees sent with the application form.

If your licence is refused or taken away for medical reasons and you then become well enough to drive again, you can reapply for your licence. Check with your GP, specialist or Parkinson's nurse that you can meet the medical standards for driving before reapplying. If the licensing agency decides you can drive after their enquiries, you'll be issued with a new licence.

Asking your licensing agency to reconsider its decision

If you want your licensing agency to reconsider its decision, you should contact them explaining why you feel the decision is wrong.

The licensing agency can look at its decision again, but will expect you to provide fresh medical evidence. You may need to ask your GP to refer you to a specialist who can provide this in a letter, and you may have to pay for it.

Making an appeal

If your licensing agency doesn't change its decision, courts have the power to look at your case. They can reverse a licensing agency's decision, if appropriate.

An appeal must be made within a certain time after your licence was taken away:

- In England and Wales, within six months to the magistrates court.
- In Northern Ireland, within three months to Petty Sessions.
- In Scotland, within 21 days to the Sheriff Court.

A licensing agency doctor will attend the hearing as a witness and the licensing agency will be represented by a barrister. Normally, the court can only look at existing evidence and can't consider any new evidence. If new medical evidence is available, it's best to forward this to the licensing agency for consideration out of court.

If you're considering going to court, you should think about getting legal advice. You can get free advice from the Disability Law Service or Disabled Motoring UK. (See the 'More information and support' section).

Free or reduced travel

If you live in England, Wales or Scotland and your driving licence has been refused or taken away for medical reasons, you may be entitled to a free bus pass, whatever your age.

If you live in England, contact your local council to find out who issues disabled bus passes in your area. You can find out more at www.gov.uk/apply-for-disabled-bus-pass

In Northern Ireland you can travel for free on buses and trains if you're 60 or over. If you're under 60, you can travel for half price if you've had your driving licence refused or revoked on medical grounds. To see if you qualify, visit www.translink.co.uk/usingtranslink/ticketsandtravelcards/concessionuk/articles/community-transport

In Scotland, if you're 60 or over, or disabled, you can use national and local buses for free at any time of day and may also be entitled to discounted rail travel in some areas. Visit www.entitlementcard.org.uk or contact your local authority to find out more.

In Wales, you'll need to apply for a Concessionary Travel Card. Visit www.traveline.cymru/concessionary-travel-pass to find out more.

Find out more: see our information on help with getting around.

Will Parkinson's medication affect my ability to drive?

Some Parkinson's drugs can make you very sleepy. Sometimes this happens suddenly and without warning. This may be more likely in people with advanced Parkinson's who are taking multiple medications or are increasing their medication, particularly dopamine agonists.

Although this can be worrying, taking Parkinson's drugs shouldn't automatically mean you'll have to stop driving.

But if you experience any sudden or excessive daytime sleepiness, you shouldn't drive and tell your GP, specialist, or Parkinson's nurse.

In this section:

- Drugs and driving: the law

Drugs and driving: the law

It's illegal in England, Scotland and Wales to drive if you're unfit to do so because you're taking legal drugs. Legal drugs are prescription or over-the-counter medicines.

While the drugs listed under this law aren't Parkinson's specific medication, you may be prescribed them to treat symptoms linked with your condition, such as anxiety, or for other health problems.

Talk to your GP about driving if you've been prescribed any of the following drugs:

- amphetamine (such as selegiline)
- clonazepam (a drug commonly prescribed for people who have restless legs syndrome)
- diazepam
- flunitrazepam
- lorazepam
- methadone
- morphine or opiate and opioid-based drugs
- oxazepam
- temazepam

You can drive after taking these drugs if:

- you've been prescribed them and advised how to take them by a healthcare professional
- they aren't making you unfit to drive, even if you're above the specified limits in your blood, if you've been prescribed them

You could be prosecuted if you drive with certain levels of these drugs in your body and you haven't been prescribed them.

The law doesn't cover Northern Ireland, but you could still be arrested if you're unfit to drive. Talk to your GP, specialist or Parkinson's nurse if you have any concerns.

You may find it useful to carry a copy of your prescription with you when you're driving, just in case you're stopped for any reason or are involved in a traffic incident.

Find out more: see our information on drug treatments for Parkinson's.



The Blue badge scheme

The Blue badge scheme helps you park closer to places, services or facilities you may want to visit or use. You may find the scheme helpful if you have problems walking. The Blue Badge is linked to a person, not a vehicle, so you can use it with any car that you're driving or travelling in as a passenger. This includes taxis and hire cars.

In this section:

- Applying for a Blue Badge
- Using a Blue Badge
- Other concessions

Applying for a Blue Badge

You can check to see if you're eligible for a Blue Badge and apply for, or renew your application online at www.gov.uk/apply-blue-badge (except Aberdeen City Council where you should apply via the council's website), or www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/blue-badge-eligibility-criteria in Northern Ireland. Contact your local council for more information or if you need help with an application.

If your local authority or council refuses to issue you with a Blue Badge, you have no formal right of appeal. But as many authorities and councils have internal procedures for dealing with reviews, it's worth writing to ask for a review. You should do this within one month of the date on the decision letter.

In Scotland, there is a formal review process and you can ask for a review of the decision within 28 days of receiving it.

Find out more: see our information on help with getting around.

Using a Blue Badge

With a Blue Badge, you can park:

- for free – at on-street parking meters and in Pay and Display bays (unless signs show a time limit for badge holders)
- without time limit – in streets where you would usually only be able to wait
- for limited periods – on single or double yellow lines for a maximum of three hours in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and in some local authority areas in Scotland, where there aren't restrictions on loading or unloading

Rules may vary between local authorities, so you should contact them to find out about specific rules in the area.

Whenever you use a Blue Badge, you should make sure it's displayed the right way up and is clearly visible through the windscreen. You should also check the Blue Badge hasn't expired.

Other concessions

Vehicle tax

You don't have to tax your vehicle if you get:

- the higher rate mobility component of the Disability Living Allowance, or
- the enhanced rate of the Personal Independence Payment (PIP or Adult Disability Payment in Scotland, or
- a War Pensioners' Mobility Supplement, or
- the Armed Forces Independent Payment

You may also be exempt from payment at certain toll bridges and tunnels.

You can claim tax exemption when you apply for vehicle tax. If you're claiming for a vehicle for the first time, you will need to do so at a Post Office.

Motability

The Motability Scheme allows disabled people to exchange a 'qualifying benefit' to lease a car (including cars adapted to carry a driver or passenger seated in their wheelchair), powered wheelchair or mobility scooter.

Qualifying benefits include:

- the higher rate mobility component of Disability Living Allowance
- the enhanced rate of the mobility component of Personal Independence Payment (PIP) or Adult Disability Payment in Scotland
- War Pensioners' Mobility Supplement and Armed Forces Independence Payment

To find out more about Motability, call **0300 456 4566** or visit their website **www.motability.co.uk**

Mobility centres

Mobility centres provide information and advice on driving for anyone with a disability who uses a car, as a driver or a passenger. They can also assess your ability to drive and fit adaptations to a car, such as steering aids. Information and advice is free, but centres charge for assessments and driving tuition.

To find your nearest mobility centre, please contact:

Driving Mobility (in England)

0800 559 3636

info@drivingmobility.org.uk

www.drivingmobility.org.uk

The Northern Ireland Mobility Centre (NIMC)

028 9029 7877

mobilitycentre@disabilityaction.org

www.disabilityaction.org

DriveAbility Scotland

0141 648 8470

info@driveabilityscotland.org.uk

Wales Mobility and Driving Assessment Service

01745 584 858 (North Wales)

02920 555 130 (South Wales)

www.wmdas.co.uk

Choosing to stop driving

Driving allows you to be independent and maintain a sense of freedom. But there may come a time when you no longer feel you're able to continue driving safely.

If you're thinking about giving up driving, or someone has suggested you do so, consider the reasons why. For example, do you feel less confident driving and worry more about making a journey in the car than you used to? Or are your Parkinson's symptoms making it harder for you to drive safely?

You can talk to your GP, specialist or Parkinson's nurse about any concerns you have about your driving.

You may also want to think about other ways to help you to continue driving safely, such as having a driver assessment with a mobility centre. (See the 'Mobility centres' section for more information.)

In this section:

- Alternatives to driving
- Giving up your licence
- Advice for family and friends

Alternatives to driving

Giving up driving can be a difficult decision, but it doesn't mean you'll lose your ability to get out and about as you would normally do. Other ways to get around include buses, taxis, trains or community transport.

If you don't drive regularly, it may be cheaper to give up your car. The Older Drivers Forum has a useful calculator that can help you to work out how much you spend running a car and how much you might save if you started using public transport. It can be found at www.olderdrivers.org.uk/retire-from-driving/Cost-Calculator

Find out more: see our information on help with getting around.



Giving up your licence

If you do decide to give up your licence, you need to complete a 'Declaration of surrender for medical reasons' form, which is available to download at www.gov.uk/government/publications/declaration-of-voluntary-surrender or by calling the DVLA (see the 'More information and support' section). You also need to return your licence with the form to:

Drivers Medical Group

DVLA
Swansea
SA99 1TU

In Northern Ireland, you should post both parts of your driver licence, along with a covering letter explaining you have Parkinson's to:

Drivers Medical Section

DVA
Castlerock Road
Waterside
Coleraine
BT51 3TB

Advice for family and friends

It can be difficult to talk to someone about their driving. But if you believe they're a danger to themselves or other road users, it's important to raise the issue with them.

Before you do talk to someone, it may be useful to:

- consider how you might feel if someone talked to you about your own driving. This can help you approach the conversation more sensitively.
- go out for a drive with the person you're concerned about. If they make mistakes, are they isolated incidents or repeated often throughout the journey?
- discuss your concerns with other people – do they agree with your own worries?
- look at options that may help someone to continue driving safely, such as a driver assessment, or other ways of getting around in their local area.

Try to pick a time with the person when they will be happy to talk and in a place where they feel comfortable. If the conversation becomes difficult or upsetting, come back to it another time.

During the conversation:

- Explain why you're concerned about their driving. Encourage the person to think about whether their driving could be a risk to themselves or others.
- Share any information you've found about ways they can get around without a car, or how they may be able to carry on driving safely.
- Suggest that they discuss the issue with their GP, specialist or Parkinson's nurse.

Some people may be relieved you've talked to them about their driving as it might have been something they've worried about themselves. But ultimately, it's up to the individual whether they continue to drive, even if you've shared your concerns.

If they continue driving, but you feel they're a danger on the road, you can report them to the DVLA in England, Scotland and Wales, or DVA in Northern Ireland. They can investigate someone who has a medical condition that may stop them from driving safely. Your concerns will be treated in the strictest confidence.

A person's GP or specialist can also talk to a licensing agency without consent if they feel their patient is unfit to drive but continues to do so.

More information and support

Licensing agencies

Your licensing agency can provide information on all aspects of driving.

For DVLA enquiries about a medical condition in England, Scotland and Wales, contact:

Drivers Medical Group

0300 790 6806

www.gov.uk/contactthedvla

For DVA enquiries regarding a medical condition in Northern Ireland, contact:

Drivers Medical Group

0300 200 7861

dva@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

Licensing laws in Jersey and Guernsey are almost the same as in the rest of the UK. For more information, contact:

Driver and Vehicle Licensing – Guernsey

01481 221 000

dvl@gov.gg

www.gov.gg/drivinglicence

Driver and Vehicle Standards – Jersey

01534 448 600

dvsinfo@gov.je

www.gov.je/travel/motoring

Other organisations

The Blue Badge Scheme (Northern Ireland)

0300 200 7818

bluebadges@infrastructureni.gov.uk

Disability Law Service

Disability Law Service offers free legal advice to people with disabilities and their carers.

020 7791 9800

advice@dls.org.uk

www.dls.org.uk

Living Made Easy

The Disabled Living Foundation has details on car and van conversions, hoists and lifting equipment, car seats, vehicles for hire, accessories and much more.

0300 999 0004

info@dlf.org.uk

www.livingmadeeasy.org.uk

Disabled Motoring UK

Disabled Motoring UK provides help and advice to disabled drivers and passengers.

01508 489 449

info@disabledmotoring.org

www.disabledmotoring.org

Motability

Motability helps disabled people with their personal mobility.

0300 456 4566

Textphone **0300 037 0100**

www.motability.co.uk

Research Institute for Disabled Consumers (RiDC)

RiDC publishes booklets on equipment and car adaptations, and advice about choosing a vehicle.

020 7427 2460

mail@rida.org.uk

www.rida.org.uk

Parkinson's nurses

Parkinson's nurses have specialist experience and knowledge of Parkinson's. They can:

- support people coming to terms with their Parkinson's diagnosis
- help people to manage their medication, so they get the best results and fewer side effects
- make referrals to other professionals such as speech and language therapists and physiotherapists

Some nurses are based in the community, such as your GP surgery. Others are based in hospital settings and clinics.

Talk to your GP or specialist for more details on speaking to a Parkinson's nurse.

Parkinson's UK information and support

Whatever your journey with Parkinson's, you're not alone.

From the moment you or someone you care about is diagnosed, we have information and support for you.

Speak to one of our friendly expert advisers, including specialist Parkinson's nurses, care advisers, and benefits and employment advisers. We've got information and advice on all aspects of living with Parkinson's.

Get help managing your diagnosis. Our information packs, webinars, courses and support groups can help you and your loved ones understand your Parkinson's diagnosis and better manage your symptoms.

Read our up to date, reliable health information. Our website, booklets and magazines can help you better understand Parkinson's. They're full of tips and advice on managing your condition and supporting a loved one.

Find ways to get active, stay active and live well with Parkinson's. Whatever your fitness level, we'll help you find the right activities for you.

Connect with other people with Parkinson's, families, friends and carers. Across the UK, in your local area or online. We'll help you meet others who understand what you're going through, because they're going through it too.

Find out more

- Call our helpline on **0808 800 0303** or email **hello@parkinsons.org.uk** to speak to an expert adviser.
- Visit **parkinsons.org.uk/information-and-support** to read our information or find support that's local to you.
- Call **0330 124 3250** or visit **parkinsons.org.uk/order-print-booklets** to order free printed information.

Thank you

Thank you very much to everyone who contributed to or reviewed this information.

Thanks also to our information review group and other people affected by Parkinson's who provided feedback.

All of our information is checked by experts and other people with Parkinson's, so you know it's information you can trust.

Feedback

If you have any comments or feedback about our information, please call **0800 138 6593**, email **feedback@parkinsons.org.uk**, or write to us at Parkinson's UK, 50 Broadway, London, SW1H 0BL.

If you'd like to find out more about how we put our information together or be part of the team that reviews our health content, please contact us at **healthcontent@parkinsons.org.uk** or visit our website at **parkinsons.org.uk/health-content**.

Can you help?

At Parkinson's UK, we are totally dependent on donations from individuals and organisations to fund the work that we do. There are many ways that you can help us to support people with Parkinson's.

If you would like to get involved, please contact our Supporter Care team on **0800 138 6593** or visit our website at **parkinsons.org.uk/donate**.

Thank you.

These pages have been left intentionally blank.

We're Parkinson's UK,
the charity that's
here to support every
Parkinson's journey.
Every step of the way.

Free confidential helpline **0808 800 0303**
Monday to Friday 9am to 6pm,
Saturday 10am to 2pm (interpreting available)
Relay UK **18001 0808 800 0303** (for textphone users only)
hello@parkinsons.org.uk | parkinsons.org.uk

Parkinson's UK, 50 Broadway, London SW1H 0DB



Last updated: May 2023. Next review due 2026 | Order code: INFOB1011

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