DRIVING AND PARKINSON'S

Everyday life

Find out more about driving when you have Parkinson's

PARKINSON'SUK **CHANGE ATTITUDES.** FIND A CURE. JOIN US.

Having Parkinson's doesn't always mean that you will have to stop driving. But there are some things you need to do if you would like to continue driving and stay safe on the roads.

This booklet answers the most frequently asked questions about driving when you have Parkinson's.

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.



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TELLING YOUR LICENSING AGENCY THAT YOU HAVE PARKINSON'S

There are many people who continue to drive after they are diagnosed with 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 ensure that people with health problems or disabilities can stay as mobile as possible and are safe to do so.

In this booklet we refer to the DVLA and the DVA as the licensing agency. There is also a separate section for driving licensing laws in Jersey and Guernsey in the 'Driving in Jersey and Guernsey' section.

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

In this section:

- Do I have to tell the licensing agency that I have Parkinson's?
- Do I have to tell my licensing agency if my doctor suspects that I have Parkinson's?
- If I do not tell the licensing agency about my condition, will my GP or specialist have to tell them?
- Do I have to tell my insurance company that I have Parkinson's?
- How does the licensing agency decide if I am able to drive?
- What happens if I am asked to attend a driving assessment?
- What decisions can the licensing agency make?
- Asking the licensing agency to reconsider its decision
- Making your appeal
- Free bus pass

Do I have to tell the licensing agency that I have Parkinson's?

Yes. When you are diagnosed with Parkinson's, you must tell the licensing agency straight away. If you do not inform the licensing agency about your condition, you are committing a criminal offence.

Having the condition doesn't necessarily mean that your licence will be affected, but you may need to have a medical or driving assessment.

Do I have to tell my licensing agency if my doctor suspects that I have Parkinson's?

You have a legal duty to tell your licensing agency about a condition that might affect you being able to drive safely. This means even if you have not been told you definitely have Parkinson's, you should still tell your licensing agency if you are having symptoms that may affect your driving.

They will usually ask you for more information and speak to your specialist before making a decision about you being able to drive.

If I do not tell the licensing agency about my condition, will my GP or specialist have to tell them?

Your GP or specialist has no legal duty to tell the licensing agency about your Parkinson's. But they may contact the licensing agency if they have 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.

Do I have to tell my insurance company that I have Parkinson's?

Yes. It is very important to let your insurance company know of any change in your health that may affect your ability to drive. It is a criminal offence to make a false statement or to withhold information in order to get motor insurance. It may also make your existing policy invalid.

You must also tell your insurance company about any adaptations you make to your vehicle.



How does the licensing agency decide if I am able to drive?

To decide whether you're fit enough to drive, the licensing agency will need to find out more about your condition. You will be asked to complete the PK1 'Medical Fitness to Drive' form for car and motorcycle licences or PK1V for bus, coach and lorry licences in England, Scotland or Wales. In Northern Ireland, you need to complete a DL1 form.

These forms are available from:

PK1 or PK1V (in England, Scotland or Wales) Drivers Medical Group, DVLA

0300 790 6806 www.gov.uk/parkinsonsdisease-and-driving

Car or motorcycle licence holders in England, Scotland and Wales can also tell the DVLA online at

www.driving-medical-condition.service.gov.uk

DL1 (in Northern Ireland) Drivers Medical Section, DVI A

0300 200 7861 dva@infrastructure-ni. gov.uk



The licensing agency may be able to make their decision from the information you give them. But if they need more information, the licensing agency will write to your GP or specialist.

You may also be asked 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 is free of charge, but you will have to pay your own travel costs.

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

What happens if I am 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 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 are able to react to situations and your physical 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 the licensing agency make?

Once the licensing agency has assessed your ability to drive, it will decide if:

- you can have or keep your licence without any restriction
- you can have a short licence (usually valid for one, two or three years). This decision is reviewed when the licence runs out. You may not be allowed to drive a minibus unless you can meet the medical standards, which are higher than for an ordinary car licence
- you must stop driving and give up your licence
- your licence should be restricted to particular vehicles with adaptations

If the licensing agency decides you cannot have a licence, they will give you a medical reason why, as well as details of if and when you can reapply. They will also 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 will be issued with a new licence.

If you have 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).

Asking the licensing agency to reconsider its decision

If you want the licensing agency to reconsider its decision because you feel they have misinterpreted or misunderstood the information about your condition, 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.

If the licensing agency does not change its decision, you can appeal to the Magistrates' Court in England and Wales, the Sheriff Court in Scotland or to Petty Sessions in Northern Ireland.

The appeal must be made to the Magistrates' Court within six months, within 21 days to the Sheriff Court and within three months to the Clerk of Petty Sessions, from the date your licence was taken away or refused. You must tell the licensing authority that you plan to appeal.

Making your appeal

The Magistrates' Court, Sheriff Court or Petty Sessions have the power to examine your case and to change the licensing agency's decision, if appropriate.

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 cannot consider any new evidence. If new medical evidence is available, it's best if you forward this information to the licensing agency for consideration out of court.

If you are 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 bus pass

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 Wales, you will need to apply for a Concessionary Travel Card. Visit **tfw.gov.wales/travelcards** to find out more. If you live in Scotland, contact your local authority or visit **www.transport.gov.scot**

In Northern Ireland you can get half-fare bus travel if:

- you've had your driving licence refused or taken away for medical reasons, or
- you receive the mobility component of the Disability Living Allowance, or
- you receive Personal Independence Payment (PIP)

For more information, visit www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/free-and-concessionary-bus-and-rail-travel

You may also be able to use community transport. You can find out more at www.ni-direct.gov.uk/articles/community-transport

DRIVING IN JERSEY AND GUERNSEY

Licensing laws in Jersey and Guernsey are almost the same as in the rest of the UK. The main differences are shown below.

Contact details for both Driver and Vehicle Standards in Jersey and Driver and Vehicle Licensing in Guernsey can be found in the 'More information and support' section.

In this section:

- Jersey
- Guernsey

Jersey

You have to tell Driver and Vehicle Standards if you have a medical condition that may affect your driving.

The application form for a licence contains a medical section. If you answer yes to any of the questions about an existing medical condition then a medical form will be sent out to you. Take the form to your GP or specialist to complete and sign, then return the form to your parish hall.

If you have any restrictions due to a medical condition, this will be printed on your driving licence.

Guernsey

In Guernsey, you have to tell Driver and Vehicle Licensing if you have any disability or illness that may affect your driving.

You need to fill in a medical report form that has to be signed by your GP or specialist. If you have an existing medical condition, you must renew your licence every five years.



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 is concerning, the DVLA has stated that the risk of falling asleep suddenly is low and that taking Parkinson's drugs should not automatically mean you have to stop driving.

However, if you experience any sudden or excessive daytime sleepiness, you should not drive and tell your GP, specialist, or Parkinson's nurse.

Find out more: see our information on help getting around and general information about benefits

In this section:

• Drugs and driving: the law

Drugs and driving: the law

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

While the drugs listed under this law are not Parkinson's specific drugs you may be prescribed them to treat symptoms associated 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:

- 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 have 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

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 and Scotland 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 are stopped for any reason or are involved in a traffic incident.



CONCESSIONS

In this section:

- The Blue Badge scheme
- Where can I find out more or apply for a Blue Badge?
- What extra rights does the Blue Badge give?
- Are there any restrictions?
- What if my application is refused?
- Vehicle tax
- Motability scheme

The Blue Badge scheme

A Blue Badge can sometimes be used to park nearer your destination than usual parking rules would allow and may give you extra rights. You may find the scheme helpful if you have problems walking.

Blue Badges are issued to a person – not a specific vehicle. They can be used in any vehicle in which you are travelling as a driver or a passenger, including a taxi or hire car. The badge should be clearly visible on the dashboard.

Where can I find out more or apply for a Blue Badge?

If you live in England, Scotland or Wales you can apply for a Blue Badge online at **www.gov.uk/apply-blue-badge.**You can also apply for a badge by contacting your local authority. You can find these details on the 'More information and support' page .

In Northern Ireland, Blue Badges are managed by the Department for Infrastructure. You can apply online at www.nidirect.gov.uk/services/apply-or-renew-blue-badge-online or call 0300 200 7818.

If you need to give details of your condition, make sure that you give a full, accurate account of the impact your symptoms have on you when you're at your best and at your worst. Also provide details of any falls or other accidents you've had.

What extra rights does the Blue Badge give?

Each local authority sets out the details of any extra rights. This may include being able to park on single or double yellow lines, parking free of charge at on-street meters and pay-and-display machines, and on-street parking bays. Ask your local authority for a written statement of their rules, but check their website regularly as the rules can change or be stopped.

Are there any restrictions?

The Blue Badge scheme does not give you any rights when parking on private roads, at most airports, or in off-street car parks, such as supermarket or local authority car parks.

What if my application is refused?

If your application is refused your council should tell you why. You can ask them to look again at your case if you don't think the information you provided was taken into account. There is no limit on how many times you can apply for a Blue Badge. If you are unsuccessful on your first attempt and your situation changes, you can try again.

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 Armed Forces Independent Payment
- the enhanced rate of the Personal Independence Payment (PIP)
- a War Pensioners' Mobility Supplement

You may also be exempt from payment at certain toll bridges and tunnels. Contact the Disability Service Centre or, in Northern Ireland, the Disability and Carers Service to get a Certificate of Entitlement.

Details can be found in the 'More information and support' section.



Motability Scheme

The Motability Scheme exists to help keep disabled drivers on the road. It enables disabled people to get a new car, powered wheelchair or scooter in exchange for their Higher Rate Mobility Component of Disability Living Allowance, the enhanced rate of the Mobility Component of Personal Independence Payment (PIP), the War Pensioners' Mobility Supplement or the Armed Forces Independence Payment.

For more information, contact Motability. Their details can be found on page 34.

Find out more: see our information on help getting around and general information about benefits.

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) and offer assessments on your ability to drive. Information and advice is free, but centres charge for assessments and driving tuition.

There are a number of centres in the UK which may offer:

- a free information service for disabled and older people, their families and professionals
- advice on choosing a vehicle, driving it and driving controls
- assessment and advice about getting in and out of vehicles and about safe loading of wheelchairs and other equipment
- advice on selecting and choosing wheelchairs (powered and manual) and scooters
- driving tuition for new drivers, those returning to driving and those changing to a different method of vehicle control
- fitting car adaptations for drivers and passengers with disabilities, such as steering aids and pedal adaptations

To find your nearest mobility centre in England, please contact:

Driving Mobility

0800 559 3636 info@drivingmobility.org.uk www.drivingmobility.org.uk

In Northern Ireland

Disability Action

028 9029 7880 hq@disabilityaction.org www.disabilityaction.org

In Scotland

Scottish Driving Assessment Centre

0131 537 9192

lothian.scottishdrivingassessmentservice@nhs.net www.smart.scot.nhs.uk/driving-assessment

In Wales

North Wales Mobility and Driving Assessment Service 01745 584 858 mobilityinfo@btconnect.com www.wmdas.co.uk

South Wales Mobility and Driving Assessment Service 02920 555 130

helen@wddac.co.uk 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 are able to continue driving safely.

If you are 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 to drive safely?

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

In this section:

- Alternatives to driving
- Other options
- Giving up your licence
- As a family member, friend or carer of someone with Parkinson's, what can I do if I have concerns about their driving?

Alternatives to driving

Giving up driving is a difficult decision, but it does not mean you will lose your ability to get out and about as you would normally do. There are lots of ways to get around including buses, taxis, trains or community transport.

Find out more: see our information on help getting around and general information about benefits.

If you do not drive regularly already, it may be cheaper to give up your car and use the money you save on public transport. There is 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 here, www.olderdrivers.org.uk/retire-from-driving/Cost-Calculator



Other options

You may also want to think about other options to help you to continue driving safely, such as having a driver assessment with a mobility centre. Staff can suggest adaptations to your car that could help you continue driving safely.

See the 'Mobility centres' section for more information.

Giving up your licence

If you do decide to surrender your licence, you need to complete a 'Declaration of Surrender for Medical Reasons' form, which is available from the DVLA. 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 and why you are giving up driving to:

Medical Section

Driver Licensing Division Castlerock Road Waterside Coleraine BT51 3TB

As a family member, friend or carer of someone with Parkinson's, what can I do if I have concerns about their driving?

It can be difficult to talk to someone about their driving. But if you believe they are a danger to themselves and other road users, it is 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 are 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?
- research 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 an environment where they feel comfortable. If the conversation becomes difficult or upsetting, come back it another time.

During the conversation

- explain why you are 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 have 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 have talked to them about their driving as it might have been something they've worried about themselves. But ultimately, it is up to the individual whether they continue to drive, even if you have shared your concerns.

If they continue driving, but you feel they are 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 and advise you on driving with a disability.

For DVLA enquiries regarding a medical condition contact:

Drivers Medical Group 0300 790 6806 www.gov.uk/emaildvla

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

Drivers Medical Group 0300 200 7861 www.nidirect.gov.uk/ articles/medical-renewals Driver and Vehicle Licensing – Guernsey 01481 243 400 traffic@gov.gg www.gov.gg/ drivinglicence

Driver and Vehicle Standards – Jersey 01534 448 600 dvsinfo@gov.je www.gov.je/travel/ motoring

Other organisations

Blue Badge Initial Enquiry Support Service 0844 463 0213 (England) 0844 463 0214 (Scotland) 0844 463 0215 (Wales) bluebadge@northgate-is. com

The Blue Badge Scheme (Northern Ireland)

0300 200 7818 bluebadges@ infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

Department for Transport (DfT)

The DfT aims to make provisions for all public transport users and motorists that are acceptable, accessible, and affordable.

It has a wide range of information and publications on disability and transport. **0300 330 3000**

0300 330 3000 www.dft.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

Disability Living Foundation

The Disabled Living
Foundation offers advice
and information on all types
of disability equipment. It
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.dlf.org.uk

Disability Service Centre (In England, Wales and Scotland)

0800 121 4433 Textphone **0800 121 4493**

Disability and Carers Service (In Northern Ireland)

0800 587 0912 Textphone 0800 012 1574

Disabled Motoring UK

Disabled Motoring UK provides help and advice to disabled drivers and passengers. It runs an information service for members, produces useful publications and negotiates travel concessions.

01508 489 449 info@disabledmotoring. org www.disabledmotoring. org

Motability

Motability helps disabled people with their personal mobility.

0300 456 4566Textphone **0300 037 0100 www.motability.co.uk**

Research Institute for Disabled Consumers (RiDC)

RiDC provides useful information on what to look for when choosing a car, helpful tips on techniques for getting in and out of vehicles and on financing your car.

RiDC also publishes booklets on equipment and car adaptations.
All are available free of charge from their website.
020 7427 2460
mail@rica.org.uk
www.rica.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

You can read our most up-to-date information at parkinsons.org.uk
You can order printed information by calling 0330 124 3250 or visiting parkinsons.org.uk/ orderingresources

If you'd like to speak to someone, our specialist adviser team can provide information about any aspect of living with Parkinson's.

They can talk to you about managing symptoms and medication, social care, employment rights, benefits, how you're feeling, and much more.

Call our team on: 0808 800 0303 or email hello@parkinsons.org.uk

We'll provide expert information over phone or email or put you in touch with an adviser locally.

If you'd like to meet other people living with Parkinson's in your local area, you can find friendship and support through our network of volunteers and local groups. Go to parkinsons.org.uk/localgroups or call our helpline to find out more.

Our forum is also a very active space to share and chat with others who really understand, at a time that suits you. Visit parkinsons.org.uk/forum

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.

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, 215 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London SW1V 1EJ.

If you'd like to find out more about how we put our information together, please contact us at healthcontent@parkinsons. org.uk or visit our website.

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.



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We are Parkinson's UK.
Powered by people.
Funded by you.
Improving life for everyone affected by Parkinson's.
Together we'll find a cure.

PARKINSON'S UK

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

Parkinson's UK, 215 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London SW1V 1EJ



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