



AGE AND THE MACHINE

Fitness to drive for elderly is entirely down to self-assessment. So how do we make sure that the growing number of elderly drivers are safe and that they know when it's time to give up the car keys?



You've all seen the stories. The goofy grandad driving round in circles for days on the M25 or driving the wrong way down the M11, or grandma's lost hours in the 200-mile round trip to the local Sainsburys. All too often they are treated as a bit of fun for the tabloids. The whacky races of a dotty octogenarian. But the reality is that those driving with a loss of cognitive abilities – let's call it dementia – are a very real and increasing danger on our roads.

The current system of self regulation looks set to stay, but with very little advice or help on when to stop.

Presently you simply have to re-apply for a driving license at the age of 70, then every three years after that. There are no medical requirements and no test.

At the same time, giving up driving is often seen as giving up independence, freedom and giving in to increasing years. Understandably, people are reluctant to do it.

I still think there is no case for compulsory retests or anything like that. I've always believed that those who wish to continue driving beyond the age of 70 should only be prevented from doing so if there are compelling reasons. What we should do is make elderly drivers and their families more aware of the risks they face, and offer them driving assessments to help them understand the standard of their driving.

We must also remember that research shows that there are plenty of drivers who give up too early.

These are some of the reasons that we are introducing a new product in June – the Mature Driver's Assessment. The assessment offers a second opinion to help put people's mind at rest – or rethink their options. At the end of the assessment each driver will receive a report identifying their performance in up to 12 key driving competencies, ending with a final assessment of them being 'excellent' or 'competent', 'needing development' or showing 'cause for concern'. There will also be recommendations on how to improve or seek advice on giving up.

I hope everyone will embrace the Mature Driver's Assessment. It's not about stopping older people from driving – it's helping them and their families to make the right choice at the right time.

Simon Best
Chief Executive



Targeting Scotland's young drivers

The IAM has joined with the Scottish Borders Council, Police Scotland and John Cleland (Cleland Volvo/Jaguar) to provide a Skill for Life course to young drivers in the Borders region of Scotland.

This new project builds upon an earlier scheme funded and supported by John Cleland and will put 350 young drivers through the IAM test.

The young drivers, aged between 17 and 25, receive an intensive 8 week Skill for Life course delivered by IAM observers and IAM approved ADI's.

This comprises of:

- 3 hour theory session
- 6 x 1.5 hours practical sessions, plus passive learning as there is a 2:1 ratio in each car for the on road session.
- The practical sessions are set every other week with expected independent practice taking place by the young driver on areas highlighted during the on road sessions.
- Test day is on week 8 of the course with a final practice session in the morning followed by the test by an IAM examiner in the afternoon.



The first course started in April with test days set for 20th and 27th May 2014.

One young driver, Calum Brydon-Leigh was identified as test ready after 4 1/2 hours training and has since gone on to pass his test and become an IAM member.

@IAM

For summer we are planning to discuss driving and riding holidays and destinations, so in the coming weeks we will ask people where they will be travelling, and to share their travel stories. The hashtag for this is **#IAMtravelling** and you can find IAM on the handle **@IAMgroup**.

We are running a campaign with IAM Drive & Survive called **#IAMproud**. To take part in this campaign and join the discussion you can follow **@IAMdrivesurvive** or simply search for the hashtag **#IAMproud**.

- Click [here](#) to like us on Facebook
- Click [here](#) to follow us on Google+
- Click [here](#) to follow our IAM Charity LinkedIn group
- Click [here](#) to follow our IAM Drive & Survive LinkedIn group
- Click [here](#) to follow the main IAM organisation LinkedIn page.

SUMMER BIKING

We are running a motorcycling campaign this summer to promote Bikesafe and Skill for Life. There will be more information on Facebook and Twitter soon. In the meantime, we're looking for volunteers to help evaluate the campaign. Please contact ben.schofield@iam.org.uk if you can help.

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