

[Later Life Ambitions' review on the introductory of mandatory eyesight testing for older drivers.](#)

Executive Summary

About Later Life Ambitions

Later Life Ambitions (LLA) is a coalition that brings together the collective voices of over a quarter of a million pensioners from all four nations of the United Kingdom.

LLA consists of four member organisations: the Civil Service Pensioners' Alliance (CSPA), the National Association of Retired Police Officers (NARPO), the National Federation of Occupational Pensioners (NFOP) and retired members of the Prison Officers Association (POA).

As a campaigning group, LLA has ambitious aspirations for the next generation of pensioners. From fair pensions to safe and sustainable care services, and from accessible housing to regular bus services to promote independence, LLA calls for bold and forward-looking action from political leaders and other decisionmakers.

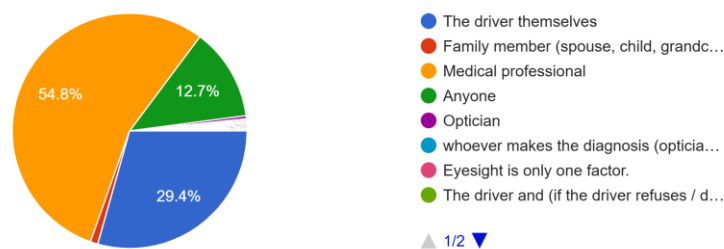
In the UK today, there are 12.95 million people in receipt of the State Pension¹; by 2030, there will likely be more than 13 million people in later life – each one with hopes, aspirations and needs. The issues pensioners face today will also impact on future generations of pensioners unless today's policymakers are willing to confront the challenges now. LLA welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Government's proposals for mandatory eye testing.

As part of this Call for Evidence, one of the LLA partner organisations, the Civil Service Pensioners Alliance sought the views of its members on several of the proposed changes, the results of which we have included below. The Government's response and any future legislative proposals must balance road safety with the protection of older people's independence and continued participation in society.

Consultation questions:

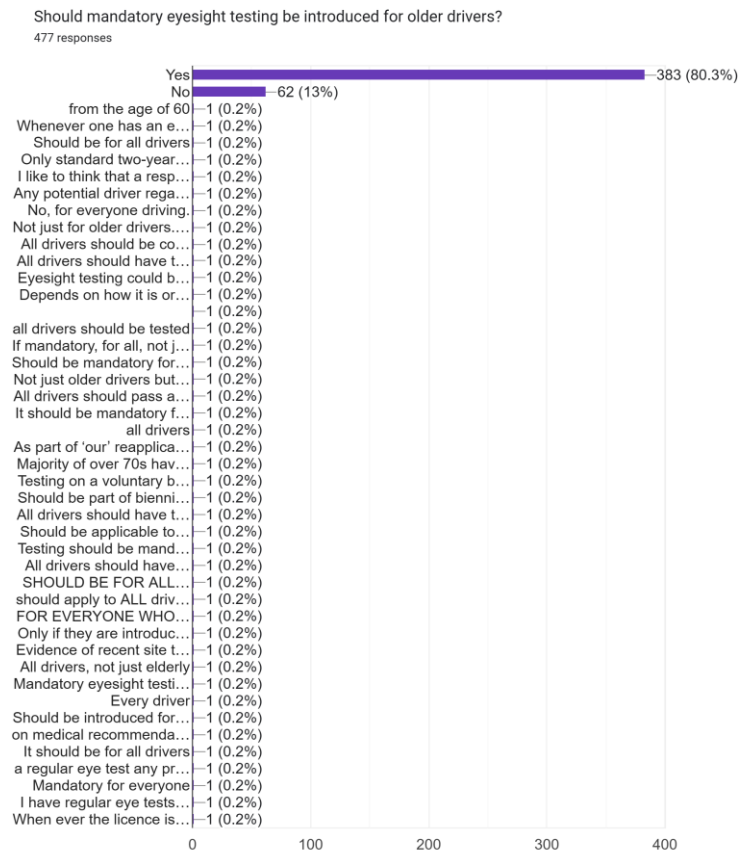
Question 1: Who do you think should be responsible for notifying the DVLA when a licence holder is diagnosed with a medical condition that may affect their ability to meet the vision standards for driving?

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480 responses



55% of CSPA respondents argued that it should be a medical professional; 29% said it should be the driver themselves; and 12.7% argued 'anyone'. While the driver has a primary legal duty, the medical professional should have a statutory duty to inform the DVLA directly if they assess the patient's vision as falling below the legal standard and the patient intends to continue driving. This reduces the administrative burden on the pensioner and prevents accidental non-compliance where a driver passes but forgets to submit the paperwork.

Question 2: Do you agree or disagree that mandatory eyesight testing should be introduced for older drivers?

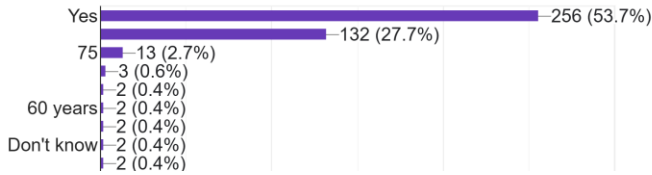


As of 5 May, over 80% of CSPA respondents thought that mandatory eyesight testing should be introduced. Only 13% of respondents gave a definitive no. However, a significant minority of respondents argued that all drivers should be tested, given that eyesight can deteriorate from any age.

LLA agrees with the Government's proposals with caveats. Objective evidence to support any testing proposal must be provided to improve road safety and public confidence. However, it should be implemented as a supportive measure to keep people driving safely for longer rather than a binary tool to remove licences.

Question 3: Do you agree or disagree that 70 years is the appropriate age for mandatory eyesight testing to start?

Is 70 years the appropriate age for mandatory eyesight testing to start?
477 responses



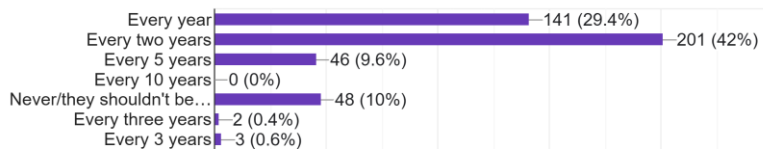
54% of respondents agreed, 28% said disagreed and a small minority (~3%) said 75 was a more appropriate age. A significant number of respondents argued, once again, that waiting until a driver is 70 before testing their eyesight for the purpose of driving seemed arbitrary.

Under the Road Traffic Act 1988, a UK driving licence currently expires at age 70, requiring renewal every three years thereafter. Therefore, introducing mandatory testing at 70 does not create a new bureaucratic hurdle.

Medical evidence suggests that prevalence of eye conditions that deteriorate so gradually a driver may not notice increases sharply in the eighth decade of life. For examples, conditions such as glaucoma, macular degeneration and cataracts become more common at 70. By mandating a test at 70, the Government can catch these conditions at a treatable stage, in some cases this could mean extending a pensioner's driving years through medical intervention rather than ending them.

Question 4: In your view, how often should older drivers be required to have a mandatory eyesight test?

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479 responses



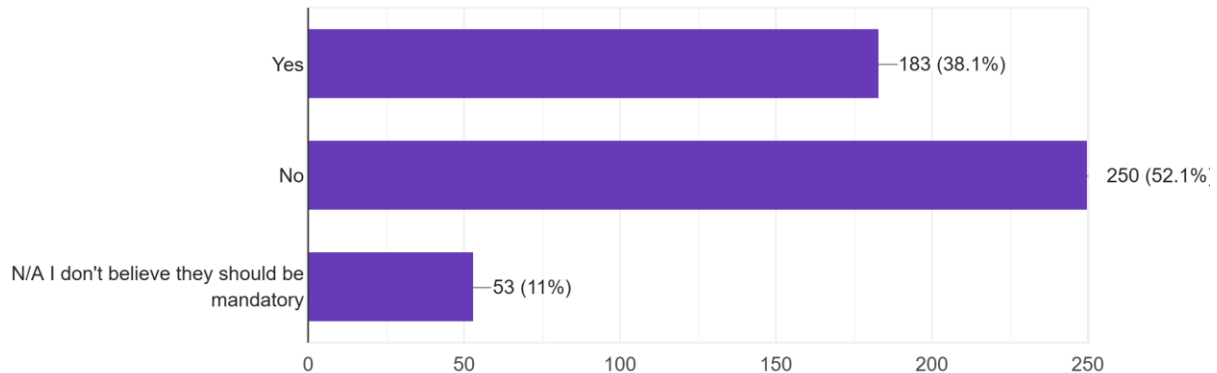
42% responded that tests should be held every two years; 29% said every year; and 10% suggested every 5 years. Similarly, 10% of respondents said there should not be a mandatory test at all. Many called for the eye test to coincide with license renewal or every three years; however, once again, many respondents suggested that all drivers should be subject to the same testing regime.

Question 5: Why do you think this frequency is correct?

LLA argues that any more frequent requirement than two years would be disproportionate, placing an undue logistical and financial burden on the elderly, many of whom have limited mobility or live in areas which are poorly served by public transport. A two-year cycle would ensure that the window of unmonitored risk is shortened, catching changes in visual acuity or peripheral field loss before they lead to an accident

Question 6: In your view, should the frequency of mandatory eyesight tests increase as drivers get older?

In your view, should the frequency of mandatory eyesight tests increase as drivers get older?
480 responses



52% said no; 38% agreed and 11% do think the tests should be mandatory at all. Increasing the frequency based solely on age – without clinical evidence of a specific condition or eyesight deterioration – is discriminatory. A two-year check is sufficient to monitor the gradual changes associated with ageing. More frequent testing risks a situation in which safe older drivers voluntarily surrender their licence due to fear of the testing process itself.

Question 13: Do you have any further comments?

LLA represents 250,000 individuals for whom a car is often a vital utility, not a luxury. We wish to emphasise three points: any mandatory testing should be free for those over 70; paper-based notification options must remain available for those digitally excluded; and there should be a 30-day grace period for those drivers who fail tests due to a correctable issue, such as a new prescription. Immediate revocation of licences could cause immediate social isolation and mental health decline.