Information on medication, mental health conditions and driving

This leaflet provides general information about drugs, mental health conditions and driving for service users and carers.

Driving rules can change very quickly. For the most up to date information, always check: https://www.gov.uk/health-conditions-and-driving

By law, it is the duty of the person holding or applying for a license to notify DVLA of any illness or medication which may affect fitness to drive safely. Where the person cannot, or will not do so, the healthcare professional may be required by law to contact the DVLA.

Medicines and driving - facts

- Some medicines can affect driving skills by causing drowsiness, poor judgement, or dizziness, poor concentration, blurred eyesight, blackouts, muscle stiffness or weakness, problems with arm and leg movements and generally cause less alertness.

- It is against the law to drive if you are affected by any medication, drugs or alcohol in a way that prevents you from driving safely.

- You also commit an offence if you have certain levels of illegal drugs in your blood even if they haven’t affected your driving.
Medicines and driving – facts

- It is now also an offence to drive if you are above the allowed blood limits specified by law for certain medications, especially if you have not been prescribed these by a healthcare professional. You can get more information about this from: [https://www.gov.uk/drug-driving-law](https://www.gov.uk/drug-driving-law).

- Examples of medicines included in the drug driving ban are: amphetamines, like dexamfetamine, clonazepam, diazepam, lorazepam, flunitrazepam, oxazepam or temazepam, methadone, morphine or opiate and opioid-based drugs, like codeine, tramadol, oxycodone, dihydrocodeine or fentanyl. Talk to your doctor about your fitness to drive if you have been prescribed any of these medications.

- You can still drive after taking any of these medications if they have been prescribed for you by a healthcare professional and you have taken them as advised and the medicines are not causing you side effects that prevent you from driving safely.

- You may be fined, banned from driving, sent to prison or be given a criminal record if you drive with levels of these medications above the allowed limits and you have not been prescribed them.

- If you are driving and are taking any of these treatments, carry information with you to show that these medicines were prescribed by a healthcare professional, just in case you need to provide this.

- Other medicines used to treat mental health problems such as some antipsychotics, antidepressants or sleeping tablets, and others you can buy yourself without prescription, may also affect your driving and increase the risk of road traffic accidents.

- If you are affected by any medication in a way that makes it unsafe to drive, it is against the law to continue to drive.

- Remember that you should not stop any medication without speaking to your doctor first.

- Drivers with a mental health illness are usually safer drivers when they are well and taking medication regularly. However, if you are not taking your medication as prescribed, your condition or medication may affect your fitness to drive.
Medical conditions and driving – facts

- Some medical conditions and mental health problems can affect a person's fitness to drive and in some cases need to be notified to the DVLA.

- Serious medical conditions such as diabetes mellitus, heart conditions, epilepsy, eyesight problems and others are subject to specific DVLA rules for fitness to drive.

- Speak to your doctor or contact the DVLA if you are not sure whether your medical condition can affect your driving skills.

Mental health conditions and driving – facts

- There are also rules for mental health conditions and drug and alcohol or substance misuse and dependence.

- You must inform the DVLA of the following mental health conditions:
  - Attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
  - Autism and Asperger syndrome
  - Bipolar disorder (manic depression)
  - Dementia
  - Excessive sleepiness (Narcolepsy)
  - Illegal and prescription drug and alcohol misuse and dependence
  - Learning disabilities,
  - Personality disorders
  - Psychotic illness and schizophrenia

- For other mental health conditions, you need only tell the DVLA if the condition affects your ability to drive: These include:
  - Depression
  - Anxiety disorders

- You can be fined if you don't tell DVLA about a medical or mental health condition that affects your driving. You may be prosecuted if you're involved in an accident as a result.

- Speak to your doctor if you are unsure whether your mental health condition can impair your driving skills.
Alcohol and Mental Health

- Alcohol can also make your condition worse and increase the side effects of medication making it unsafe to drive.

- It is best not to drink and drive.

- Remember also that there are strict alcohol limits for drivers.

- Speak to your doctor or pharmacist for advice if you are not sure of the effects of alcohol on your medication or contact the DVLA for more information.

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The Mersey Care Medicines Information Service regularly updates this information leaflet.