

12A

Driving

Information for people with or affected by motor neurone disease

For many, driving is both an essential means of getting around and an enjoyable activity. Losing the ability to drive can be difficult, not only due to practical issues, but also the emotional impact of losing the independence that driving can offer.

Having motor neurone disease (MND) does not automatically mean you have to stop driving straight away. However, you may have questions about your legal responsibilities, ability to drive and how to continue driving safely for as long as possible.

This information sheet answers concerns you may have about driving following a diagnosis of MND, including:

- 1: Can I continue driving?**
 - 2: How can a Blue Badge help me?**
 - 3: What other schemes can help me?**
 - 4: How can I find out more?**
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 This symbol is used to highlight **our other publications**. To find out how to access these, see *Further information* at the end of this sheet.


 This symbol is used to highlight **quotes** from other people with or affected by MND.

This information has been evidenced, user tested and reviewed by experts.


1: Can I continue driving?

Depending on your symptoms, you may be able to continue driving for a while with MND. However, you are legally required to disclose the diagnosis, and you may need to be assessed.

Even with permission to continue driving, you may decide to stop if you feel uncomfortable or no longer in full control of the vehicle. This can be a difficult decision, as it affects your independence and may feel very challenging.

 For more information about managing the emotional impact of MND, see our guides: *Emotional and psychological support* and *Changes to thinking and behaviour with MND*

If you are at all worried or find this a particularly emotional decision, get advice from your GP or your nearest regional Driver Assessment Centre. They can provide guidance about alternative options and driving with a disability. Adapted vehicles are available and may help you to continue driving safely and comfortably for as long as possible.

 For guidance on adapted vehicles and driving assessments, see: Information sheet 12B – *Choosing the right vehicle*

Who do I need to inform?

You must inform the DVLA in England or Wales, or DVA if you live in Northern Ireland, as soon as you are diagnosed with MND or any other condition that may affect your ability to drive.

Failing to inform them of your diagnosis is a criminal offence and you can be fined up to £1,000. You may also be prosecuted if you are involved in an accident as a result of being disabled and not having disclosed your diagnosis.

You will need to complete a form and a medical questionnaire, available from the DVLA, or DVA. See *Useful organisations* in section 4: *How do I find out more?* for contact details.

Your doctor or consultant may be asked for further information, and you may be asked to attend a medical or driving assessment, or both.

You will need to discuss with your GP whether you should continue driving while you wait for confirmation from DVLA or DVA.

Once the DVLA or DVA has enough information it can decide to issue:

- an unrestricted licence
- a licence restricted to a certain period of time
- a licence restricted to a particular vehicle with adaptations.

Car Insurance

You must inform your car insurance company of any diagnosis or change in your condition that may affect your ability to drive. Failure to do so is an offence and may make your insurance policy invalid.

Insurers need to take all reasonable steps to ensure they do not make it difficult for disabled people to use their services. They are not allowed to refuse car insurance to disabled drivers or charge extra, unless there is evidence to justify the decision.

If there is evidence that you are at an increased risk, for example while adapting to a new disability, they may increase the price or excess during this period. Insurers can request further medical evidence to help them assess the risk.

If you use an adapted vehicle to meet your needs, it may cost more to insure, as repairs are likely to be more expensive.



For guidance on adapted vehicles see:
Information sheet 12B - *Choosing the right vehicle*

2: How can a Blue Badge help me?

The Blue Badge scheme provides parking benefits for disabled people who travel either as a driver or a passenger. The scheme operates across the UK.

Unless there are specific local exceptions, you can use your Blue Badge to park:

- free of charge and without time limit at an on-street parking meter and in pay and display on-street parking areas
- in some places that are normally restricted, such as on a dotted yellow line
- at on-street areas reserved for valid Blue Badge holders
- on single or double yellow lines for up to three hours, unless there is a ban on loading or unloading in force.

The Blue Badge is intended for on-street parking only. Off-street car parks, such as those provided by a local authority, hospital or supermarket are governed by separate rules. They may have parking spaces for Blue Badge holders, but this varies, so check in advance.

Different rules apply in the City of London, the City of Westminster, the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and part of the London Borough of Camden. However, there are many disabled parking bays available to Blue Badge holders in these areas. Visit Blue Badge London's website at www.bluebadgelondon.org.uk to find suitable parking.

Do I qualify for a Blue Badge?

You may automatically qualify for a Blue Badge if you:

- receive the higher rate of the mobility component of Disability Living Allowance (DLA)
- receive the enhanced or standard rate of Personal Independence Payment (PIP)
- receive a War Pensioners Mobility Supplement
- are registered blind.

If you receive other disability-related benefits, such as Attendance Allowance, you will not qualify automatically and will need to be assessed.



For information about the benefits you may be entitled to, see: Information sheet 10A – *Benefits and entitlements*

In the past, many local authorities allowed the applicant's GP to help assess whether you qualify for a Blue Badge. They now use independent assessors if you do not meet the criteria to qualify automatically. An independent assessor will be used if you:

- have a severe disability in both arms
- have a permanent and substantial disability which causes inability or considerable difficulty in walking.

How do I apply for a Blue Badge?

The Blue Badge scheme is run by your local authority, or Transport NI if you live in Northern Ireland. Contact them directly for an application form, or visit their website to apply online. See *Useful organisations* in section 4: *How do I find out more?*

Once you have completed the form send it or submit online, together with:

- a digital or signed photograph
- proof of your award for DLA or PIP (if you receive it)
- proof of your identity and proof that you are a resident in the local authority in which you are applying.

To use your Blue Badge, display it face-up on the dashboard or inside front panel of your car, so it can be seen through the windscreen. When not in use, you are advised to remove your Blue Badge from view for security.

To find out where Blue Badge parking is permitted, contact the local authority for the area you are visiting. In Northern Ireland, contact your local Transport NI office.

3: What other schemes can help me?

How can the Motability scheme help me?

If you receive certain disability-related benefits to help you with mobility, you may be able to exchange this allowance towards an adapted car, wheelchair or mobility scooter through the Motability scheme.

Vehicles without adaptations can also be provided by Motability dealerships. See *Useful organisations* in section 4: *How do I find out more?* for contact details.



“The Motability car has given Dad a new lease of life and so much freedom, so the benefits really do outweigh the costs.”

You may be eligible for the Motability scheme if:

- you receive the higher rate mobility component of Personal Independence Payment (PIP) or Disability Living Allowance (DLA)
- your PIP or DLA award has 12 months or more remaining.

Other disability-related benefits, such as Attendance Allowance, cannot be used to lease a car through the scheme.



For information on the Motability scheme see:
Information sheet 12B - *Choosing the right vehicle for you*

What is community transport?

Many areas have community transport services for people who find using public transport difficult, including:

- community car schemes – volunteers drive their own cars to transport individual passengers
- group transport for disabled people – vehicles, often accessible mini-buses are hired for group outings
- door-to-door dial-a-ride services for disabled people – you are picked up from your home and dropped off at your destination, usually with other passengers going to different places
- Shopmobility - loan or hire wheelchairs and mobility scooters to help disabled people to get around the shops when they visit local towns.

Contact your local authority or, Transport NI in Northern Ireland, for information on accessible transport in your area. Alternatively, search for *accessible transport* on the Community Transport Association website at: www.ctonline.org.uk

If you commute to work and are unable to drive, or you find using public transport difficult, the Access to Work scheme may be able to help with funding for taxi services. Contact a disability advisor at your local Jobcentre Plus to find out more.



For more information about Access to Work, see:
Information sheet 10E – *Work and MND*

What is Road Tax Exemption?

You will be exempt from paying road tax (also referred to as car tax, vehicle excise duty or road fund licence) if you are disabled and receive the higher rate of the mobility component for DLA, or the enhanced rate of the mobility component for PIP. Road Tax Exemption can only be claimed for cars used for the person who receives exemption.

If you receive DLA or PIP, you will need to claim for Road Tax Exemption using an exemption certificate. These are available from the PIP helpline, or DLA helpline. See *Useful organisations* in section 4: *How can I find out more?* for their contact details.

If you have a nominated driver you should ask for their name to appear on the exemption certificate as well. The vehicle in question has to be registered in one of the names that appear on the certificate.

As a general rule, if you become disabled after your retirement date, you will not receive the exemption. Full details available on the DVLA leaflet V188.



For more information on Road Tax Exemption, see:
Information sheet 12B – *Choosing the right vehicle for you*

If you receive the standard rate for PIP, you should qualify for half price road tax, which you claim through the Post Office when renewing your licence. Take your PIP award letter with you.

What are toll concessions?

Some toll charges at river crossings, bridges and tunnels, offer a reduced rate for disabled people. You may need to be part of the Blue Badge scheme to qualify, or provide proof of entitlement, or you may need to pay in advance.

It is worth checking what might be available on your journey before you travel. To see a list of those taking part in toll concessions, search for *medical conditions, disabilities and driving* at: www.gov.uk

What is congestion charge exemption?

With a Blue Badge, you can register for exemption from the London congestion charges, whether or not you are the driver of the vehicle. There is a £10 charge to register, and this will need to be renewed at the same time as your Blue Badge. As long as this is done within 90 days of your Blue Badge expiry date, you will not need to pay for renewals.

Contact Transport for London for more information. See *Useful organisations* in section 4: *How do I find out more?* for contact details.

4: How do I find out more?

Useful organisations

We do not necessarily endorse the external organisations listed here. These have been provided to help you search for further information if necessary. Details are correct at the time of print, but may change between revisions. If you need help to find an organisation, contact our MND Connect helpline (see *Further information* at the end of this sheet for details about our helpline and how they can support you).

Black Cabs of London

Information about taxis in London, including accessibility and booking information.

Telephone: 0871 871 8710

Website: www.the-london-taxi.com

Blue Badge Initial Enquiry Support Service

For information about the Blue Badge scheme.

Telephone: 0844 463 0213 (England)

Telephone: 0844 463 0215 (Wales)

Email: bluebadge@northgate-is.com

Website: www.gov.uk/apply-blue-badge

Blue Badge London

Details of Blue Badge parking in Central and Inner London.

Website: www.bluebadgelondon.org.uk

Community Transport Association

Supports community transport and has a search function to find local schemes.

Address: Highbank, Halton Street, Hyde, Cheshire, SK14 2NY

Telephone: 0845 130 6195

Email: advice@ctauk.org

Website: www.ctonline.org.uk

Department for Transport – The Blue Badge scheme

A guide produced by the Department for Transport on the Blue Badge scheme.

Website: www.gov.uk (search for *Blue Badge rights*)

Disability Living Allowance (DLA) helpline

Contact this helpline with queries or claims about a road tax exemption certificate. DLA is being replaced with PIP – see also *Personal Independence Payment Helpline*.

Address: Warbreck House, Warbreck Hill, Blackpool, Lancashire FY2 0YE

Telephone: 08457 123 456

Textphone: 08457 224 433

Email: dcpu.customer-services@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

Website: www.gov.uk/dla-disability-living-allowance-benefit/overview

Disabled Motoring UK

A charity which provides a mobility information service to the general public.

Address: National Headquarters, Ashwellthorpe, Norwich, NR16 1EX

Telephone: 01508 489449

Email: info@disabledmotoring.org

Website: www.disabledmotoring.org

DVA (Northern Ireland)

Find out if your health condition will affect your driving and if you will be able to keep your driving license. Contact details for Northern Ireland.

Address: Drivers Medical Section, Castlerock Road, Waterside, Coleraine, BT51 3TB

Email: dva@doeni.gov.uk

Website: www.nidirect.gov.uk/motoring

DVLA - Drivers Medical Group

Find out if your health condition will affect your driving and if you will be able to keep your licence.

Address: Swansea SA99 1TU

Telephone: 0300 790 6806 (if you are a car or motorcycle licence holder)

Telephone: 0300 790 6807 (If you hold a bus or lorry licence)

Fax: 0845 850 0095

Email: eftd@dvla.gsi.gov.uk

Website: www.dft.gov.uk/dvla/medical.aspx

Drive Mobility (formerly Forum of Mobility Centres)

Details on driving assessments and locations of regional mobility centres, (commonly referred to as driver assessment centres).

Address: c/o Unit 11, Network Park, Duddeston Mill Road, Birmingham B8 1AU

Telephone: 0800 559 3636

Email: info@drivingmobility.org.uk

Website: www.drivingmobility.org.uk

GOV.UK

The online government website provides information on road tax exemption and the Access to Work scheme. It also refers you to the correct organisations to deal with specific circumstances, eg the DVLA (see above).

Website: www.gov.uk/vehicle-exempt-from-car-tax

Website: www.gov.uk/access-to-work

Motability

Details about vehicle leasing or hire purchase through the Motability scheme.

Address: City Gate House, 22 Southwark Bridge Road, London SE1 9HB

Telephone: 0300 456 4566

Email: through the website contact page

Website: www.motability.co.uk

MyHailo

A key fob that you can buy, which can be pressed to call for help refuelling your car at selected petrol stations in the UK.

Address: Contacta, Office 13, Dana Trading Estate,
Transfesa Road, Tonbridge TN12 6UT

Telephone: 01732 223 900

Email: through the website contact page

Website: www.myhailo.co.uk

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) Helpline

Contact this helpline with queries or claims about a certificate of entitlement for road tax exemption.

Address: DWP PIP1, Warbreck House, Warbreck Hill, Blackpool, Lancashire FY2 0UZ

Telephone: 0345 601 6677

Textphone: 0345 601 6677

Website: www.gov.uk/pip

Rica

Unbiased guidance for people with disabilities on choosing a car, car adaptations, an online car search, and information on mobility scooters and powered wheelchairs.

Address: Unit G03, The Wenlock, 50-52 Wharf Road, London N1 7EU

Telephone: 020 7427 2460

E-mail: mail@rica.org.uk

Website: www.rica.org.uk

References

References used to support this document are available on request from:

Email: infofeedback@mndassociation.org

Or write to:

Information feedback, MND Association, Francis Crick House, 6 Summerhouse Rd,
Moulton Park Industrial Estate, Moulton Park, Northampton NN3 6BJ

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Further information

You may also find the following information sheets useful:

10A – *Benefits and entitlements*

10E – *Work and MND*

10G – *Support for families with children*

12B – *Choosing the right vehicle for you*

12C – *Travel and transport*

We also produce the following guides:

Living with MND – our main guide to MND and how to manage its impact

Caring and MND: support for you – comprehensive information for unpaid and family carers, who are supporting someone living with MND

You can download most of our publications from our website at:

www.mndassociation.org/publications or order in print from the MND Connect helpline. The helpline team can also answer questions about this information, and direct you to our services and to other support:

MND Connect

Telephone: 0808 802 6262

Email: mndconnect@mndassociation.org

MND Association, Francis Crick House, 6 Summerhouse Rd,
Moulton Park Industrial Estate, Moulton Park,
Northampton NN3 6BJ

MND Association website and online forum

Website: www.mndassociation.org

Online forum: <https://forum.mndassociation.org> or through the website

We welcome your views

We'd love to know what you think we're doing well and where we can improve our information for people with or affected by MND, or Kennedy's disease. Your anonymous comments may also be used to help raise awareness and influence within our resources, campaigns and applications for funding.

To feedback on any of our information sheets, access our online form at:
www.surveymonkey.com/s/infosheets_1-25

You can request a paper version of the form or provide direct feedback by email:
infofeedback@mndassociation.org

Or write to:

Information feedback, MND Association, Francis Crick House, 6 Summerhouse Rd,
Moulton Park Industrial Estate, Moulton Park, Northampton NN3 6BJ

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