

Independence and mobility key for older drivers, report finds

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The majority of older drivers want to continue driving as long as they are able to safely, according to a report written by a University of Warwick academic.

The [report](#), called Keeping Older Drivers Safe and Mobile, was commissioned by the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM).

More than 2,600 drivers and ex-drivers between the ages of 55 and 101 were surveyed in the report which was written by Dr Carol Hawley from Warwick Medical School, University of Warwick.

Although the report found 84% of driver respondents rated their [driving](#) ability as good to excellent and 86% rated their confidence as a driver as good to excellent, there were some factors which would persuade them to give up their car keys.

Dr Hawley said: "According to the survey most current drivers would consider giving up driving if they had a health condition or a health professional advised them to stop driving.

"General practitioners, doctors and opticians/optometrists are the most influential people to give advice on giving up driving."

Given the reasons why older people value driving, it is no surprise that older people are reluctant to give up their vehicles.

Some 82% said that driving was 'very or extremely important' to them, and women were significantly more likely to rate driving as 'extremely important' than men.

The top five reasons why [older drivers](#) wanted to keep driving were:

Reason	Frequency	Percentage of survey
1. Independence	22	18.0
2. Convenience	416	17.7
3. Mobility/getting around	203	8.7
4. Freedom	202	8.6
5. Lack of public transport	148	6.3

Despite their determination to keep driving, the majority were in favour of measures to increase their safety on the roads including retesting and checking of various aspects of drivers' health and competence to remain behind the wheel.

Almost 60% said drivers should retake the driving test every five years after age 70, 85% said drivers should pass an eyesight test every five years once they have reached 70, and more than half said that drivers aged around 70 should be required to have a medical examination.

Sarah Sillars, chief executive officer of the IAM, said: "A driving

licence is a passport to freedom for all ages but particularly so for older drivers. As grandparents it's about helping their family access jobs, education and childcare as well as keeping themselves independent and mobile. The psychological impact of a giving up a driving licence shouldn't be underestimated.

"Reaction times and physical mobility are affected by age and all drivers need to make an informed decision about when to give up. We need to make it as easy as possible for mature drivers to make that choice armed with the full facts and all the support they need.

"While some might need to accept the decision they cannot keep driving safely on the road, we believe some are pushed into giving up before they really need to. A professional opinion counts for a lot, and there are many organisations that offer advisory voluntary assessments that will give an older driver the confidence they need to enjoy many more years of happy motoring – including ourselves."

Provided by University of Warwick

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