

Joint Statement on Improving Driver Vision Standards Across the UK

5 September 2025

UK road safety is under renewed scrutiny. As the Government prepares its new road safety strategy, we believe now is the time to modernise the UK's approach to driving vision and make our roads safer for everyone.

We welcome and endorse the recent statement from the Association of Optometrists and the College of Optometrists calling for stronger vision standards for drivers. This is supported by the UK representative and professional bodies, the Association of British Dispensing Opticians (ABDO), and FODO – The Association for Eye Care Providers (FODO) together with Optometry Northern Ireland, Optometry Scotland, and Optometry Wales; the eye care representative bodies in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

Together, the eye care community across the UK and its constituent nations all support the call for safer driving vision standards.

Why now

There is currently no routine professional vision check required for passing the driving test or for renewal after age 70. The system relies on self-declaration and a basic number-plate check, which are not sufficient to keep people safe [1][2].

A recent coroner's Prevention of Future Deaths report has again highlighted that the current system for ensuring drivers meet legal visual standards is ineffective, unsafe, and unfit for purpose [2].

Survey data shows one in four people are concerned that someone they know is driving with poor vision, and that some motorists would continue to drive even if told they do not meet the legal standard [3].

UK Ministers are considering measures as part of a new road safety strategy, including mandatory eyesight checks for older drivers. Introducing proportionate vision checks at application and renewal is a preventative step that will save lives [4].

What we are calling for

1) Mandatory evidence that a driver meets the legal vision standard at provisional licence application and subsequent renewals.

- 2) A system designed with optometrists and dispensing opticians, the frontline experts in testing sight, correcting vision, and detecting eye disease.
- 3) Ensuring that public protection is based on professional assessments of drivers' vision carried out appropriately and fairly by registered optometrists and dispensing opticians in the community.
- 4) Public communications to raise awareness especially among high-risk groups and to remind drivers of the importance of good vision which can make the difference between life and death on the roads

How community optometry can help

- *Equity of access:* Thousands of practices across England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales can deliver efficient, local checks.
- *Prevention and early treatment:* Regular sight tests pick up correctable issues and can detect serious eye disease early, keeping people on the road safely for longer.
- *Consistency and fairness:* A universal standardised requirement is clearer, fairer, and safer than self-reporting, the aim being to support all drivers to have good vision and older drivers to keep driving safely as long as possible [5].

Closing

Across the four UK nations, the eye health professions support the AOP and College of Optometrists in urging the introduction of regular mandatory vision checks for drivers and are committed to helping deliver a system that protects the public while supporting drivers to remain safe and independent on the road.

Signed on the 5 September 2025 by (alphabetical order):



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Max Halford'.

Max Halford
Clinical and Policy Director
The Association of British Dispensing
Opticians



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Hewlett'.

David Hewlett
Director of Policy and Strategy
FODO – the Association for Eye Care
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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brian McKeown'.

Brian McKeown
Chair
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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eilidh Thomson'.

Eilidh Thomson
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Optometry Scotland



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Owain Mealing'.

Owain Mealing
Chair
Optometry Wales

References

- [1] DVLA – [Driving eyesight rules](#)
- [2] Judiciary – [Report to Prevent Future Deaths \(17 April 2025\)](#)
- [3] AOP – [One in four concerned about someone they know driving with poor vision \(27 Nov 2024\)](#)
- [4] College of Optometrists – [Mandatory sight tests for drivers over 70 considered as part of new Government road safety overhaul \(12 Aug 2025\)](#)
- [5] College of Optometrists – [The College and Association of Optometrists call for mandatory sight tests for drivers \(1 Aug 2025\)](#)