

Concerned about an older relative's driving?



Tips from IAM RoadSmart on how to talk to them about it

Spotting the signs of a loved one's driving deteriorating as they get older can be difficult. At what point should you tackle the issue and suggest it might be time for them to stop? As part of its older drivers' campaign, raising awareness of the issues faced by many thousands of mature drivers across the UK, IAM RoadSmart's head of technical policy and advice, Tim Shallcross, has put together some top tips based on his own experiences.

- Try to have a conversation about it sooner rather than later; it's a very good idea to raise the subject while there's nothing wrong with their driving – "How will you feel if eventually you have to give up driving? How would it affect you?" for example.
- Take the opportunity from time to time to be a passenger with them to see how their driving is - and look out for any changes over time.
- Signs of deteriorating driving include looking but not seeing at junctions, reduced ability to judge speeds, poor reversing – and dents on the car. For more signs to look out for, see IAM RoadSmart's short video [here](#).
- Even if you do have concerns, your relative might well be able to carry on driving safely for many years with a little tuition and guidance. Point out that as we age, the risks associated with driving change and that it might be good to get an independent view such as a [Mature Driver Review](#). Stress that it is not about giving up driving, just reducing the risks.
- Remember how much of a life changer this could be – imagine what it would be like for you if you suddenly had to give up driving. The impact might well be greater for your relative than for you if they can't walk or cycle easily. Be sympathetic but firm if you are sure their driving is below standard.
- Don't have a large family discussion – your relative may well feel everyone is ganging up on them. One to one is best, two to one at most.
- Stick to the facts. Have there been near misses you are aware of? Don't condemn the driving outright, talk instead about safety for them and others.
- Identify beforehand the pressures that keep him or her driving – does their partner or spouse drive? How far away are essential amenities? What alternatives are there?
- If necessary, introduce the idea of internet shopping and other online services that are available.

- Know when to stop and try another day. It's pointless getting into an argument where tempers get frayed. Leave your relative to think about it for a while and often they will realise that what you're suggesting makes sense.