

Driving and brain tumours



Please note that this information is relevant to people holding a group 1 licence (for cars and motorcycles).

Rules relating to group 2 licences (large lorries and buses) are different.

You can find out more about group 2 licences from the DVLA/DVA- their contact details are given in this fact sheet.

DVLA = Driver & Vehicle Licensing Agency DVA = Driver & Vehicle Agency (N. Ireland)



If you'd like to talk to someone about how you're feeling, or would like to find out where you can get further support (including details of support groups), you can contact The Brain Tumour Charity's Information and Support Team:

Phone: **0808 800 0004**

(free from landlines and most mobiles)

Email: support@thebraintumourcharity.org

Live chat: thebraintumourcharity.org/live-chat

Website: thebraintumourcharity.org/getsupport

Closed Facebook groups:

thebraintumourcharity.org/facebook-support

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Introduction

If you've been diagnosed with a brain tumour, you MUST tell the DVLA or, if you live in Northern Ireland, the DVA. (DVLA = Driver & Vehicle Licensing Agency; DVA = Driver & Vehicle Agency.)

This is because it could affect your ability to drive safely. This will depend on the type, grade and location in the brain of your tumour and also on the treatment and side-effects you have.

It's very common to be told by the DVLA/DVA to give up your driving licence. This may be temporary, but some people unfortunately won't be able to drive legally again.

Not being able to drive is one of the things that people diagnosed with a brain tumour often report as most difficult to deal with, in terms of changes to their daily life. Loss of a licence is often seen as loss of independence.

There are a variety of services and practical schemes that may help overcome this feeling.

This fact sheet looks at why, when and how to tell the DVLA; what is likely to affect how long you can't drive; how to reapply for your licence; and questions you may have depending on the DVLA's/DVA's decision.

When should I tell the DVLA or DVA?

You must tell the DVLA as soon as possible if you've been diagnosed with a brain tumour. In Northern Ireland you must tell the DVA. It's a legal requirement to inform these organisations.

The DVLA/DVA will then start enquiries, about your fitness to drive, by sending a form to you and then to your doctor. These will ask about your health, your tumour, its treatment and any side-effects you're having.

You can be fined up to £1,000 if you don't tell the DVLA/DVA. You may also be prosecuted if you're involved in an accident as a result of your tumour or its treatment affecting your ability to drive.

Before you tell the DVLA/DVA, speak to your doctor about whether you're fit to drive under the DVLA/DVA rules.

Ask your doctor to print off the relevant page of "Assessing Fitness to drive – a guide for medical professionals" and ask them to highlight the appropriate standard and hand it to you. Then you can refer to it later.

gov.uk/government/publications/assessing-fitness-to-drive-a-guide-for-medical-professionals/

If your doctor thinks you're NOT currently fit to drive

They'll advise you to voluntarily give up (surrender) your licence to the DVLA/DVA at the same time as you tell the DVLA/DVA.

You must surrender your licence to the DVLA/

 your doctor tells you that you need to stop driving for 3 months or more, because of your tumour or its treatment.

Once you surrender your licence, you must stop driving.

If you don't surrender your licence and the DVLA/DVA enquiries find you unfit to drive, they will take away (revoke) your licence.

Having your licence revoked may feel more distressing than surrendering it yourself.

In addition, gaining permission from the DVLA/DVA to drive again (get your licence back) is more difficult if your licence has been revoked, rather than surrendered. It also takes longer before you can drive again.

If your doctor thinks you're currently fit to drive

You must still tell the DVLA/DVA that you have a brain tumour, but you can legally continue to drive until the DVLA/DVA have finished their enquiries.

If enquires show that you meet the standard to drive, then you can continue driving, though the DVLA/DVA may change your licence to a short-term medical review licence. This is most often for 1-3 years. At the end of that time you'll need to reapply to keep your licence.

If enquiries show that you don't meet the standard, then the DVLA/DVA will revoke the licence and give you information about how long you can't drive for. The process of reapplying for your licence after this time will be more complicated though (as mentioned above) because your licence was revoked.

At any time you're allowed to drive, you must also tell the DVLA/DVA:

- if your condition worsens
- about any medication or treatments you're given that could affect your driving.

How do I tell the DVLA or DVA?

DVLA (England, Wales, Scotland)

To tell the DVLA about your diagnosis of a brain tumour, you need to fill in Form B1. This is available online at: gov.uk/government/publications/b1-online-confidential-medical-information

Or you can contact the DVLA for a paper copy. (Please see contact information below.)

When you tell the DVLA about your diagnosis, using Form B1, you'll be asked to include the following information:

- Your full name, date of birth and driver's number.
- Name and contact details of your GP and consultant.
- Type and grade of tumour and date of your diagnosis.
- Any treatment you've had, plus dates, and any planned or possible further treatments.

For further information, contact:

DVLA Drivers Medical Enquiries (Eng., Wales, Scot)

Tel: **0300 790 6806** (medical enquiries and appeals) Monday to Friday 08:00 - 17:30 Saturday 08:00 - 13:00

Email: Please see links on the following webpage: **qov.uk/contact-the-dvla**

Post: Drivers Medical Enquiries, DVLA, Swansea SA99 1TU

Web: gov.uk/driving-medical-conditions gov.uk/brain-tumour-and-driving

DVA (Northern Ireland)

To tell the DVA (Northern Ireland), you must send both parts of your licence, along with a covering letter giving details of your condition, to:

DVA Drivers Medical Section (Northern Ireland)

Tel: 0300 200 7861 (medical enquiries and appeals) Monday to Friday 09:00 - 17:00

Email: dva@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

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

Web: nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/driver-licensing/medical-conditions-and-driving

They'll then send you the appropriate medical questionnaire to gain more details about your condition. It also includes a section for you to give permission for the DVA to contact your doctor(s), if required.

More information about this can be found at: nidirect.gov.uk/articles/medical-enquiries-drivinglicences

What if I use my licence for ID?

Many people use their driving licence as a form of ID. If you surrender your licence or have it revoked, you lose this means of ID. You may not have any other easy form of ID, e.g. a passport, or may not want to carry it around.

PASS ID cards are a nationally recognised and accredited photographic ID proof of age card available to all ages (18+). They cost £15.

pass-scheme.org.uk/

validateuk.co.uk/

PASS (Proof of Age Standards Scheme) is supported by the Home Office, National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC), the Security Industry Authority (SIA) and the Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI)



How long will I be unable to drive?

Effect of tumour and type of treatment

The length of time that you'll be unable to drive depends on:

- the type of your brain tumour you have
- the grade of your brain tumour
- where the tumour is in your brain
- the type of treatment you've had and when it was completed.

For many types of high grade tumour, you won't be allowed to drive for at least 2 years, while for lower grade tumours, it may be 1 year, but it can be less.

For example, with low grade tumours in the cerebellum or brain stem, or with grade 1 meningiomas, you can generally drive once you've recovered from treatment. This is as long as you've NOT had a **craniotomy**. In this case you can't drive for 6 months.

In all cases, there must be no other factors or after-effects of treatment that could affect your ability to drive, before you're allowed to drive again.

These time spans are from completion of **primary treatment.** This can include radiotherapy and chemotherapy that you may have after, or instead of, surgery.

Primary treatment

Primary treatment means any treatment aimed at **getting rid** of the tumour. It can include surgery, radiotherapy and chemotherapy.

When treatments such as radiotherapy and chemotherapy are given to **prevent the recurrence** of the tumour, they're known as adjuvant treatment.

Any treatment you're given to get rid of the tumour if it recurs, will be classed as primary treatment.

Your doctor can advise you whether the treatment you're having is primary or adjuvant.

Other factors that may affect how long I'm unable to drive

There may also be other factors that can affect whether you're allowed to drive, as well as your diagnosis and treatment.

Seizures

One of the major factors is the risk, or chance, of you having a seizure as a result of the tumour itself or its treatment.

Seizures are a common symptom of all brain tumours, particularly low grade tumours. Around 60% of people with a brain tumour will experience a seizure at least once.

For more information, see our Seizures (epilepsy) and brain tumours series of webpages/fact sheets: thebraintumourcharity.org/adult-signs-and-symptoms/seizures/

If you've had a seizure of any type, you won't be allowed to drive for a certain period.

The period when you're not allowed to drive will usually be for at least 1 year from your last seizure. For some low grade tumours it may be less, and for higher grade tumours, it's likely to be more. Some people may not be able to drive again, due to having repeated seizures. This is the case whether your consciousness is affected during your seizures or not.

For more information, please see:

gov.uk/guidance/neurological-disorders-assessing-fitness-to-drive

Visual disturbances

Some brain tumours cause visual disturbances, such as hallucinations or seeing flashing lights.

Others, such as pituitary tumours, can cause problems with seeing things around the object you're looking directly at. This is known as reduced peripheral vision.

Driving could put you and others at serious risk.

For more information, please see:

gov.uk/guidance/visual-disorders-assessing-fitness-to-drive

Though it's hard to hear, it may be that the combination of these factors and/or your diagnosis of a brain tumour, means you won't be able to legally drive again.

For emotional and practical help with this, see the section **What if I don't get my licence back?** later in this fact sheet.

If I had a brain tumour as a child, can I drive?

If you had a brain tumour as a child, with no recurrence, and don't have other side-effects as a result of your tumour, such as epilepsy or visual disturbances, you can have/keep a regular driving licence until the usual age of 70. Speak to your doctor or the DVLA/DVA, if you're not sure.

Summary

It's important to remember that this is a general guide - everyone's tumour is different and the DVLA/DVA will consider your individual situation and risk of further symptoms before allowing you to drive again. Public safety is their priority.

A good source of information about how long you're likely to be unable to drive is:

Assessing fitness to drive: a guide for medical professionals.

This can be found on the gov.uk website. gov.uk/guidance/assessing-fitness-to-drive-a-guide-for-medical-professionals

How do I get my licence back?

The DVLA/DVA will have sent you a letter when your licence was surrendered or taken away (revoked), which will have told you if there was a period of time you needed to wait before getting a new licence.

If you urgently need your licence back once this time has expired, you can call the DVLA/DVA Drivers Medical section to discuss. (Numbers are in the *How do I tell the DVLA/DVA?* section of this fact sheet)

Licence surrendered (voluntarily given up)

If you surrendered your licence, you can apply to have it back 8 weeks before the end of the period for which you've been disqualified to drive.

You need to check with your doctor first that they think you're fit to drive before applying to get your licence back.

To reapply for your licence in England, Wales and Scotland, you'll need to fill in a D1 application form AND the form for your medical condition, i.e. brain tumour (Form B1).

The D1 form and additional information you need to make an application (the D1 Pack) can be ordered online via the gov.uk website: **gov.uk/dvlaforms**

The packs are also available from the Post Office. The B1 form for your medical condition can be found on the gov.uk website: **gov.uk/health-conditions-and-driving**

In Northern Ireland, you need to complete the form DL1, available from main post offices and MOT test centres, as well as the form B1.

In all countries of the UK, you may need to send evidence of your fitness to drive. The letter you received from the DVLA/DVA, when your licence was taken away or surrendered, will tell you if this is the case.

If needed, the DVLA/DVA will check the information you provide against information from your doctor.

The final decision about whether you're fit to drive and can get your licence back will be made by the DVLA/DVA when you apply, NOT by your doctor.

Section 88

If you voluntarily surrendered your licence and have now applied for a new one, you may be able to drive under Section 88 of The Road Traffic Act 1988, while the DVLA are processing your application. (England/Scotland/Wales).

You must still complete the specified amount of time off driving to make sure of the stability of your condition.

In addition, in order to drive under Section 88, all of the following criteria must be met:

- Your doctor must have advised that you're fit to drive.
- You must have a valid driving licence and only drive vehicles that you're qualified to drive.
- You must meet any conditions that were specified on your previous licence.
- You've sent your fully completed application to the DVLA within the last 12 months.
- Your last licence was not refused or revoked for medical reasons.
- You're not currently disqualified from driving by a court, and were not disqualified as a high risk offender on or after 1 June 2013.

Similar rules apply in Northern Ireland - you may be able to drive under the Road Traffic (NI) Order 1981. nidirect.gov.uk/articles/reapply-your-driving-licence-when-medically-fit

Licence revoked (taken away)

If your licence was revoked, the same application process applies for getting a new licence, but you can't start driving until the DVLA/DVA decides if you're medically fit to drive.

This means you can't drive under Section 88 or the Road Traffic (Northern Ireland) Order 1981. (See previous section of this fact sheet.)

The DVLA/DVA will often check with your medical specialists about your individual circumstances before they (the DVLA/DVA) make a decision about your driving licence. This can be a long process.

Questions if I get my licence back

Will I get a full licence back?

When you get your driving licence back, it may be medically restricted. This means that, because of a medical condition, it's restricted so that it lasts usually 1, 2 or 3 years. Three years is the most common.

At the end of this time period you need to check with your doctor that you are still fit to drive.

If your doctor thinks you're fit to drive, you can apply for your licence to be renewed, via the process described above in the *How do I get my licence back* section of this fact sheet. These medically restricted licences are still counted as a full UK licence.

For more information about renewing a short-term licence, see:

England, Scotland, Wales gov.uk/renew-medical-driving-licence#other-ways-to-apply

N. Ireland nidirect.gov.uk/articles/medical-renewals

Having a medically restricted licence doesn't necessarily mean you can drive legally for the length of time that the licence covers.

If your tumour regrows, or you experience new or recurrent symptoms, such as a seizure, you must tell the DVLA/DVA. Your licence may need to be surrendered or revoked again.

You must also tell the DVLA/DVA about any changes in medicines or treatments that could affect your driving.

Will I have to retake my driving test?

Whether your licence was surrendered or revoked, you don't have to take your driving test again, once your licence is returned to you.

Will the cost of my car insurance increase?

The AA advises that you have a duty of disclosure to your insurer. You should therefore tell your insurers about your diagnosis as soon as possible, to avoid problems with any future claims.

Your insurance company can ask for more information about your medical condition to support your application for insurance. They may also ask for evidence that you're allowed to drive, such as your driving licence or a letter from the DVLA/DVA confirming you're permitted to drive.

Under the Equality Act 2010, they can't increase the cost of your policy if your medical condition doesn't affect the risk of making a claim.

Also, if you have a time-restricted licence (i.e. one that's valid for a few years), your insurers can't use this as a reason to put your premiums up or refuse to cover you.

If your insurers do increase your premium, they have to tell you why.

For example, they may temporarily put up your premium or increase the excess while you're 'getting used to a new disability or condition'. They can only do this if there's evidence that you're an increased risk during this period.

They also have the right to charge more if it will cost them more to provide a service.

For example, if you have your car adapted to enable you to continue to drive, a temporary increase in the premium may be charged while you learn to drive the new car. Or, an increase may be more permanent to offset the increased costs of any potential repairs.

It's worth contacting several insurance companies to get the best quotes for your car insurance.

How can I make driving easier?

Having a car adapted

Depending on the nature of any problems your brain tumour has caused, it may be possible to have your car adapted, so that you're still able to drive. Adaptations can include hand controls instead of foot controls, left-foot accelerators, adapted mirrors and wheelchair hoists.

There's special VAT relief for adapted vehicles bought or leased, e.g. under the motability scheme (see next page). The following websites have good information about choosing an adapted car or having your car adapted.

RiDC (Research Institute for Disabled Consumers)

A UK consumer research charity, which provides practical information based on independent research and the experiences of disabled consumers.

ridc.org.uk/content/mobility ridc.org.uk/content/motoring-after-brain-injury

Driving Mobility

A network of independent organisations covering the UK. They offer professional advice to people who have a medical condition or who are recovering from an accident which may affect their ability to use a motor vehicle. drivingmobility.org.uk/

Motability

A national UK charity, which helps people with disabilities and their families to become mobile.

If you receive either of the benefits below, you may be able to exchange your mobility allowance to join the Motability scheme and lease an adapted car, scooter or powered wheelchair:

- Higher Rate Mobility Component of Disability Living Allowance (DLA)
 or
- Enhanced Rate of the Mobility Component of Personal Independence Payment (PIP).

motability.co.uk/

Blue Badge Scheme

The Blue Badge Scheme is a scheme which allows eligible people to park closer to where they need to go.

It operates throughout the UK. The badge is also recognised in some European countries.

You can apply for a Blue Badge if you:

- receive Disability Living Allowance (DLA) at the higher rate for the mobility component
- are registered blind or severely sight impaired
- receive a Personal Independence Payment (PIP) that shows you can't walk more than 50 metres (scored 8 or more points in the 'moving around' area of your assessment).

You may also be able to get a Blue Badge if you:

- regularly drive a vehicle and have a severe disability in both arms and are unable to operate (or have considerable difficulty in operating) all or some types of parking meter
- have a permanent and substantial disability which causes inability to walk or very considerable difficulty in walking.

Some councils add extra concessions and fast track your application, if you have a terminal illness with a poor prognosis.

And from 30 August 2019, you may be eligible if you:

- have a hidden disability which causes you to display extreme and unmanageable behaviour and therefore present a danger to yourself and/or to others, even if you have support while you are out.
 See our Personality changes webpage and fact sheet: thebraintumourcharity.org/personality-changes
- receive a Personal Independence Payment (PIP) in which you score 10 or more points in relation to the 'planning and following journeys' activity because undertaking any journey would cause you overwhelming psychological distress.

In England, Wales and Scotland it's operated by your local authority. In N. Ireland it's administered by TransportNI. Contact the relevant organisation for an application form, or you can apply online.

You can find your local council's information via:

England or Wales

gov.uk/blue-badge-scheme-information-council

Scotland

mygov.scot/apply-blue-badge/

N. Ireland

nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/motoringand-transport/blue-badge-scheme

Conditions for the Blue Badge scheme differ in the following areas from concessions in the rest of the country: City of London, Westminster, Kensington & Chelsea, parts of Camden, and Gatwick and Heathrow airports.

Road (vehicle) tax exemption

You can get vehicle tax exemption for a car if you get the:

- higher rate mobility component of Disability Living Allowance (DLA)
- enhanced rate mobility component of Personal Independence Payment (PIP).

The car must be registered in your name or that of your nominated driver. It can only be used for **your** personal needs and can't be used for the nominated driver's personal use. You can only have exemption on one car at a time.

gov.uk/financial-help-disabled/vehicles-and-transport

What if I don't get my licence back?

For many people, driving is one of their most valued activities. Whether someone is able to drive or not can impact all areas of life including employment, how to pick up the children or get groceries, leisure activities, getting to a doctor's appointment and even where you live.

Not being able to drive is one of the things that people diagnosed with a brain tumour often report as most difficult to deal with, in terms of changes to their daily life. Loss of a licence is often seen as loss of independence.

Emotional help

It can be helpful to know this is a common way to feel.

Talk to your Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) or key worker they can provide psychological and emotional, as well as practical, support.

Find other people you can talk to about how they've dealt with it, e.g. via a support group or an online community, such as those provided by The Brain Tumour Charity. The Brain Tumour Charity has active Facebook support groups that you can access anywhere in the world and at any time. You can 'meet' others in a similar situation and discuss your worries, fears and share ideas. Or, if you're not ready to speak to others directly, you can simply read about the experiences of others.

thebraintumourcharity.org/facebook-support/

Practical help

Being driven by a carer

If you surrender your licence or don't get it back, you may find that your main carer becomes your driver.

You can still apply for the Blue Badge Scheme, even if you're not driving, and your carer can use it when they take you out. (See the *Blue Badge Scheme* section of this fact sheet.)

You can also display the badge in other cars or taxis when you're using them.

People in this situation have said that, if it's possible and after discussion with your 'carer driver', it can be helpful to change your car for one with more doors and more room for carrying equipment, such as a wheelchair.

Access to Work grants

If you are:

- in (or about to start) paid work or self-employment
- 16 or over, and
- your brain tumour means you're unable to use public transport

you may be able to apply for an Access to Work/Access to Work (NI) grant to pay for taxi fares to work.

Funding can cover up to 3 years, but you're normally reviewed every year to see if you still need the funding.

You might not qualify if you're claiming certain benefits, such as Incapacity Benefit, Employment and Support Allowance, Severe Disablement Allowance, Income Support or National Insurance Credits.

To see if and how you can apply, contact Access to Work:

England, Scotland & Wales

gov.uk/access-to-work

Helpline: 0800 121 7479 Textphone: 0800 121 7579

Mon - Fri, 8.00 - 19.30

Northern Ireland

Via an Employment Service Adviser in your local Jobs & Benefits office or JobCentre.

You can find your local offices via:

nidirect.gov.uk/contacts/jobs-benefits-offices

Community transport

Many areas also have community transport services for people who have difficulty using public transport, either through disability issues or because they live in a rural area with limited or no public transport services. These include door-to-door transport and trips to shopping centres.

UK

Community Transport Association ctauk.org/find-ct-provider/

England and Wales gov.uk/community-transport-services-shopmobility

Scotland

transport.gov.scot/concessionary-travel/

Demand Responsive Transport

These schemes tend to operate in local areas with few or no conventional bus services.

travelinescotland.com/drt-ct-info

Northern Ireland nidirect.gov.uk/articles/community-transport-andshopmobility

Charities

Across the UK there are a variety of charities that can also help with transport. For example, the British Red Cross offers transport support for medical appointments and essential daily needs.

Contact our Information and Support Line - we can look up the help that is available in your local area.

Public transport

If you've surrendered your licence or had it revoked on medical grounds, such as a brain tumour, there are various entitlements you may be eligible for, such as free or concessionary public transport fares.

For information see our Travelling by public transport webpage. thebraintumourcharity.org/living-with-a-brain-tumour/maintaining-your-independence/travelling-and-brain-tumours/

Appeals procedure

If the DVLA/DVA decides not to give your licence back and you don't agree, you can write to them to ask them to review your case. Include your reference number and any new medical evidence to support your claim.

If your request for a review isn't successful, you can make a formal appeal. The DVLA/DVA should have sent you details of the appeals process when they told you of their decision not to give your licence back.

If you decide to appeal:

- Before you appeal, you must let the DVLA/DVA know you're going to appeal
- It's advisable to get legal advice first
- If you don't win, you have to pay the DVLA's costs
- There's a time limit on when you can appeal (from the date of the DVLA/DVA's decision)

England & Wales - 6 months Scotland - 21 days N. Ireland - 3 months.

If you live in England or Wales, you need to appeal to your local magistrate's court.

If you live in Scotland, you need to appeal to the Sheriff's Court.

In N. Ireland, you must appeal to the Clark of Petty Sessions in the area where you live. Plus send a copy of the Notice to Appeal to the Departmental Solicitors Office in Belfast at least 14 days before the hearing.

It's important to remember that if you don't meet the driving rules for people with a brain tumour (including the epilepsy or visual impairment rules), the DVLA/DVA legally can't re-issue your licence.



Notes		

About this information resource

The Brain Tumour Charity is proud to have been certified as a provider of high quality health and social care information by The Information Standard - an NHS standard that allows the public to identify reliable and trustworthy sources of information.

Written and edited by our Information and Support Team, the accuracy of medical information in this resource has been verified by leading health professionals specialising in neuro-oncology. Our information resources have been produced with the assistance of patient and carer representatives and up-to-date, reliable sources of evidence.

We hope that this information will complement the medical advice you've already been given. Please do continue to talk to your healthcare team if you're worried about any medical issues. If you'd like a list of references for any of our information resources, or would like more information about how we produce them, please contact us.

We welcome your comments on this information resource, so we can improve. Please give us your feedback via our Information and Support Team on 0808 800 0004 or support@thebraintumourcharity.org

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About The Brain Tumour Charity

Going further for a cure

As the UK's leading brain tumour charity, we're here to accelerate a positive change in how people affected by brain tumours are diagnosed, supported and cured.

Brain tumours strike fast. And they can strike anyone, at any age. But what if we could move faster? What if we could stop brain tumours right in their tracks? It's no easy task taking on something this complex, but that's exactly what we're here to achieve. And we won't stop until we have.

We know that if we put our heads together, we're more than up to the challenge. So we're building a movement of people from every walk of life – all coming together to accelerate a cure.

Find out more and get involved: **thebraintumourcharity.org**













thebraintumourcharity.org

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