

Driving and carrying passengers

Introduction

This guidance is designed to help keep you, your passengers, and any other road users safe whilst driving as part of your role with Independent Age. This guidance applies to Independent Age volunteers.

Independent Age have a duty of care under health and safety law where driving is concerned to ensure the safety of our staff, volunteers, passengers, and anyone else (e.g. other road users) who may be affected by our activities.

We also want you to feel comfortable and confident whilst driving or carrying passengers. You should never feel like you are forced to give or accept a lift whilst driving on behalf of Independent Age.

What this guidance covers

This guidance:

1. Legal requirements
2. Your responsibilities
3. Fitness to drive
4. Driving safely
5. Carrying passengers on behalf of Independent Age
6. What to do in an emergency
7. Covid-19 considerations.

Driving and carrying passengers on behalf of Independent Age

1. Legal requirements

If you are driving on behalf of Independent Age you will need to confirm to us that you are:

- **Legally** entitled to drive the vehicle you are using
- Using a vehicle that is safe and roadworthy
- Competent to drive it safely

- Using it for suitable purposes.

You will need:

- An MOT (for all vehicles older than 3 years)
- A driving licence
- A valid insurance certificate –Some insurance companies may need you to add occasional business use to your policy. Check with your insurance provider to see what their requirements are.

If you have any concerns or queries about the insurance cover you require, please raise these with your Independent Age contact in the first instance. If your insurance provider does require you to add additional cover and there is an additional cost, then speak to your Independent Age contact about claiming back any costs through the volunteer expenses process.

2. Your responsibilities

When driving on behalf of Independent Age you should ensure you and your vehicle are fit for purpose. You should plan journeys ahead of time and always drive according to road traffic laws.

We have a duty of care to ensure you are safe and competent to drive on our behalf. Having a **motoring conviction** or **endorsements** on your licence will not automatically mean you cannot drive on our behalf, but these must be reported to your Independent Age contact.

3. Fitness to drive

Your fitness to drive can be affected by lots of things: health conditions, illness, medical treatment or medication and the environment you're driving in. Independent Age need to know you are fit to drive whilst driving on our behalf.

- Do not drive when affected by alcohol, drugs, or medicines
- Do not drive when affected by illness
- Do not drive when you are too tired to do so safely.

Speak to your Independent Age contact if you are unsure about your fitness to drive. Also see **www.gov.uk/driving-medical-conditions** for further information.

4. Driving safely

You should ensure that your vehicle is serviced in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications and before any journey you should check the roadworthiness of your vehicle.

You must always drive within the speed limit in accordance with road traffic laws and never use a mobile phone whilst driving.

Plan your journey ahead of time and try to use sat nav devices whilst stationary.

5. Carrying passengers on behalf of Independent Age

You should have been made aware by your Independent Age contact if the person you're intending to take in your car has any difficulties getting in and out of a car. Please always apply safe moving and handling practices. You should not attempt to load a wheelchair into your car without first receiving appropriate training.

Please ensure your car is free from any clutter that may hinder someone getting in and out safely and be mindful of the seat height and position to make getting in and out as easy as possible.

Please check with your passenger if they have everything they need for the trip; medication, keys, money and that they have locked up.

All passengers must use seat belts while travelling in your car unless they have an exemption certificate on medical grounds.

You and your passenger should refrain from smoking in the car whilst driving on behalf of Independent Age.

6. What to do in an emergency

If your passenger becomes **critically ill** while they are out with you, call 999; or if you feel confident and not at risk take them directly to the nearest Accident & Emergency Department. You should inform your Independent Age contact as soon as it is safe to do so.

If your passenger **does not feel well** when you take them home please let your Independent Age contact know, particularly if this person lives on their own, or their carer is not there on your arrival.

If you are involved in a **car accident** you should inform the emergency services and follow any guidance they provide. Please inform your Independent Age contact as soon as it is safe to do so. If possible, we will arrange for your passenger to be taken home, assuming no injuries have been sustained.

7. Covid-19 considerations

Current guidance can be found on the government website <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-transport-and-travel-guidance> and should be reviewed before carrying passengers on behalf of Independent Age.

We are taking a cautious approach to restrictions being lifted and asking everyone to be considerate to those they may carry in their car.

We suggest:

- You only carry one person, and they maintain as much distance as possible (consider seating in the back of the car)
- You keep the windows open as much as possible
- You both wear a mask when inside the car.

If you need more help

Please don't hesitate to get in touch with your Independent Age contact if you have any concerns or questions.