

The Rt. Hon. Lilian Greenwood MP  
Department for Transport,  
Great Minster House,  
33 Horseferry Road,  
London,  
SW1P 4DR

5 May 2026

Dear Ms Greenwood,

### **Mandatory eyesight checks for drivers – ensuring reforms are delivered**

On behalf of The College of Optometrists and the Association of Optometrists (AOP), we are writing to welcome the Government's Road Safety Strategy, which is a vital step forward in making our roads safer.

The Government's proposed introduction of mandatory eyesight checks for drivers over the age of 70, which we strongly support, signals a decisive break from complacency in the face of preventable tragedies and a long-overdue step toward modernising road safety. There is an unacceptable toll of road casualties and deaths associated with motorists not meeting visual standards for driving<sup>i</sup>.

Community optometry can, and must, be the solution. With more than 7,000 neighbourhood optical practices across the UK, optometrists and the wider practice team of eye care professionals are ideally placed to deliver optometrist-led sight tests quickly, consistently and at locations convenient to drivers. Resourcing and embedding optometry within the implementation of these reforms would therefore be swift, accessible, and cost-effective.

To ensure the system delivers on its potential, we recommend five core principles:

1. **Mandatory for all drivers to be responsible for providing evidence of a valid sight test** at licence application and renewal to ensure accurate and objective assessment of visual acuity and eye health.
2. **Strong emphasis on regular sight tests between licence renewals** supported by clear public messaging, enabling early detection and treatment of eye conditions.
3. **Referral to DVLA when standards are not met** by optometrists advising drivers of their legal duty to notify DVLA, with follow-up assessment arranged where necessary.
4. **Continued public awareness and education** promoting drivers' responsibility to ensure they meet the legal vision standards and to notify DVLA of relevant eye conditions at any point, not just at renewal.

**5. Improved reporting guidance for optometrists** – providing a clear DVLA-defined mechanism for direct disclosure where drivers pose a serious risk to public safety.

We have outlined these principles as part of our joint consultation response on mandatory eyesight for drivers, which we will submit in due course.

However, whilst this decision is a mark of progress, we also strongly believe there is solid rationale to go further, ensuring that these new restrictions are not just applied to the over 70s - but on all drivers at the point of licence application or renewal. Visual impairment can affect individuals at any stage of life, and a universal approach would ensure fairness, consistency, and greater overall impact on road safety. There are also a significant and growing costs of poor vision for the NHS across the UK, that would be improved by the early detection and treatment of eye conditions through a wider, roll-out of mandatory sight testing.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you or your officials to discuss how these outcomes can be achieved and ensure that reforms are delivered smoothly and sustainably.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,



**Adam Sampson**  
Chief Executive  
Association of Optometrists



**Ian Humphreys**  
Chief Executive  
The College of Optometrists

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<sup>i</sup> Between 2014–2023, there were 62 deaths and 2,648 casualties recorded as having a direct link to defective eyesight. RAS0706: Reported road collisions and casualties by road safety factor and local authority, Great Britain.