

Medications and driving

You may be taking certain medications that affect your driving abilities. This help sheet will explain the law around medications and driving and advise you on how to determine whether you are safe to drive or not.

If you are a driver and you are taking prescribed medication, the law says it is **YOUR** responsibility to consider if your driving is, or might be, impaired by it.

What prescribed medications are included?

- Opioid painkillers: including morphine (such as MST, Oramorph, Zomorph); methadone; oxycodone (such as OxyContin, OxyNorm, Longtec, Shortec); and fentanyl (such as Durogesic, Matrifen, Abstral, Pecfent)
- Benzodiazepines: diazepam (such as Valium); lorazepam; clonazepam; temazepam; oxazepam; flunitrazepam
- Ketamine
- Amphetamines such as methylphenidate

What does the law say?

Police in England and Wales have the power to test and prosecute drivers who are suspected of having certain medications in their body over a set limit.

This also applies to people who are attempting to drive or are in charge of a vehicle.

If a roadside (saliva) test shows a person has taken one of the medications listed above, they may be required to provide a blood sample to see if the levels of medication are above the set limit. If found to be above the limit, the person may be prosecuted.

The law protects patients who are taking medications that have been prescribed for them. Police will not prosecute a patient who tests positive for these medications so long as:

- Their driving is not impaired and
- They can provide evidence that they are taking medication as directed by a healthcare professional or they are taking medication in accordance with the patient information leaflet accompanying the medicine

For example, if you are taking morphine for pain relief, the police will not prosecute you if:

- Your driving is not impaired and
- You can provide evidence that you are taking the morphine as directed by your doctor

What is our advice?

Keep taking your medication as advised by your healthcare professionals (hospice doctor, GP and/or clinical nurse specialist (CNS) and check the leaflet that comes with your medication for information on how it might affect your driving ability.

It is already (and remains) an offence to drive whilst impaired through drugs (either through medical or non-medical drug use).

Do not drive if you feel that your driving is actually impaired e.g. if you experience sleepiness, dizziness, poor coordination, visual problems, slowed/impaired thinking or confusion.

This is most likely when:

- You have just started taking a medication listed overleaf
- The dose of your medication has recently changed

