

Old drivers on the move

Margaret Hodge is absolutely right about the absurdity of the lax rules on driving in old age (When is it time to call it a day? That's the age old problem, 23 January). She writes that older people should be properly checked – and they can be. At the age of 80, I arranged (for a modest fee) for an assessment through the Institute of Advanced Motoring. At 83, I arranged a further assessment and recently, after my 86th birthday, I did the same. The assessment involves driving for about an hour with an experienced assessor beside you. Afterwards you get an overall rating and some words of advice. For the first two sessions I was rated “safe and competent” but my recent rating was better – “excellent” – largely because of my taking advice to improve use of my wing mirrors. It is gratifying to identify a skill that has actually improved between 80 and 86. If the assessor had thought I was unfit to drive, I would have been told so. Such assessments should be mandatory at 80 and every three years subsequently. The elderly should pay for them if they want to continue driving.

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I fear this new campaign to encourage older drivers to hand in their car keys (Letters, 22 January) will result in 5, adding to the perils for pedestrians.

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The Guardian, 2019