

Driving and employment with Type 1 diabetes

A perspective from Diabetes UK

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Driving and diabetes - key points

- Rules on driving and diabetes decided by EU largely then translated into legislation and guidance by Department of Transport and the Secretary of State's diabetes and driving panel run by DVLA
- Diabetes UK works to influence the EU, DVLA and the panel
- Most of the restrictions are for people treated with Type 1 diabetes and Type 2 when treated with insulin - you have to let DVLA know if you are diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes / start to use insulin
- You will be issued with a restricted (usually three years) licence that has to be renewed each time

The current rules

- In November 2011 changes, due to an EC directive, led to stricter licensing rules for drivers of cars and motorcycles (Group 1 vehicles) for people treated with insulin
- At the same time the ban on people treated with insulin from driving lorries and passenger carrying vehicles (Group 2 vehicles) was lifted
- Diabetes UK regularly talks with DVLA to ensure that application process is fair and to work to resolve issues raised by people with diabetes

Recurrent severe hypoglycaemia

- People will not be issued licences – or will have them revoked (taken away) if they have recurrent severe hypoglycaemia
- This is defined as more than one episode of hypoglycaemia (two or more) during a period of 12 months that required assistance from another person
- Severe hypoglycaemia whilst you are asleep no longer counts and you do not need to report this to DVLA since Jan last year.

Awareness of hypoglycaemia

- People will also not be issued licences – or will have them revoked (taken away) if they have lack of awareness of hypoglycaemia
- This is defined by the DVLA (for car drivers) as total lack of awareness – meaning you do not get any warning symptoms of the onset of hypoglycaemia
- For lorry drivers you can not have impaired awareness – the standard is higher

Testing (blood) glucose for driving

- The legislation passed in November 2011 also states that drivers with diabetes treated with insulin have to undertake “appropriate blood glucose monitoring”
- This was changed recently to “glucose testing” and since Feb this year people can now use an interstitial fluid continuous glucose monitoring system (Flash or CGM) though the blood glucose level must be confirmed with a finger prick blood glucose reading in some circumstances so test strips and meter still need to be carried.
- People have to test glucose at least two hours before getting in the car and every two hours on a longer drive – if you use Flash you need to confirm with a finger prick if you are going to act on the result because the glucose level is low.

Getting your licence back if revoked

- Since Jan 2018 if you have not had more than one episode of severe hypoglycaemia in the last three months you can reapply for your licence
- DVLA will check with your medical team and you should be reissued a licence
- If someone loses their licence due total lack of awareness of hypoglycaemia they can reapply as soon as they have regained their awareness (if they are able to get back some awareness and doctor agrees)
- You may only get a one year licence in the first instance after you have had one revoked

Employment and diabetes

- People with Type 1 diabetes are not limited by their condition in their employment choices (except armed forces)
- However some people do experience discrimination and attempts to limit the roles they can take on
- Diabetes UK believes this is unacceptable

The future
of diabetes



DiABETES UK
KNOW DIABETES. FIGHT DIABETES.



Last year the Future of Diabetes survey found that:

- 37% of those in employment said that diabetes had caused them or their family member difficulty at work
- 16% said they felt they had been discriminated against by their employer because of their diabetes
- 7% had not told their employer that they had diabetes
- While 40% said they felt supported enough at work, 25% said they would like flexibility to take breaks to eat, test their blood glucose or take medication, and 24% said they would like time off work for diabetes-related appointments

What are the problems?

- Lack of employer understanding
- Failure to make reasonable adjustments
- Manager's attitude can be a deciding factor as to whether the person living with diabetes can make a job work for them
- A lack of flexibility in allowing employees with diabetes to take breaks to eat, test or administer medication, or to attend medical appointments and diabetes education courses.
- Unhealthy work environments, encouraging sedentary behaviour, poor diet and lack of routine.

What we are calling for

- **Care planning, which includes support for the psychosocial aspects of living with diabetes such as the interaction with working life, should be a routine part of diabetes care**
- **The public sector to lead by example across the UK. This would include making sure employees can attend appointments and education and encouraging peer support where appropriate.**
- Employers to be more aware of needs of people with diabetes and encourage greater understanding.
- Employers should allow and encourage employees to attend medical appointments and diabetes education courses, including through paid leave and/or flexible working patterns, so this practice is normalised in the workplace.
- Employers should seek to ensure that normal working practices allow employees to take breaks to eat, test and take insulin and other medications.
- Employers should understand the emotional burden of living with diabetes and encourage employees to seek support as appropriate.

Legislation and advice

- Legislation sets out the principles that employers should follow in their treatment of employees and job applicants with a disability. In England, Wales and Scotland, this is the Equality Act 2010.
- Although many people with diabetes may not consider themselves to have a disability, workers with diabetes will often be protected by these provisions.
- Our [Employment and diabetes advocacy pack](#) provides information and guidance about possible discrimination and people's rights as an employee with diabetes.
- We also provide information for people with diabetes about employment on our website <https://www.diabetes.org.uk/guide-to-diabetes/life-with-diabetes/employment> and a ten point guide for employers

Diabetes UK advocates -

- Individual assessment for role – no blanket bans.

Impact of improved treatment and technology

- Carb counting and MDI
- Diabetes education courses
- Blood glucose monitoring
- Flash glucose monitoring
- Driving
- Travel

Some of the problems and issues we have dealt with and supported

- Ambulance blue light driver
- London fire fighter
- Coastguards
- Pilots
- London Transport
- Boxer



MUHAMMAD ALI has become the first diabetic professional boxer in the UK last year after the British Boxing Board of Control finally handed the 25-year-old a licence.

The Bolton-based ace has had type one diabetes from the age of four and was previously denied a professional licence in 2015 by the BBBoC but it never stopped him fighting to become a professional

Got a question about diabetes? Contact our Helpline.

helpline@diabetes.org.uk

Campaign with us

Want to help improve the lives of people with diabetes? Want to get more involved in campaigning locally and nationally for better diabetes care and support?

[Join Diabetes Voices today](#)



Any questions?