

# Consultation Response

Drinkaware's response to  
the Department for  
Transport's consultation on  
proposed changes to  
penalties for motoring  
offences

May 2026

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## RESPONSE

### Question 1

**In your view, should the legal alcohol limit for drink and drive offences in England and Wales be lowered or stay the same?**

Drinkaware would welcome a reduction in the legal alcohol limit, provided this change is introduced as part of a comprehensive package of enforcement, education and effective supporting measures that deter people from drink driving.<sup>1,2</sup>

### Question 1a

**What legal limit do you think is appropriate?**

The available evidence indicates that reducing the legal blood alcohol limit from 80mg to 50mg (0.05 BAC) per 100ml of blood (equivalent to reducing the breath limit from 35 to 22 micrograms per 100ml of breath), can improve road safety outcomes. This is most likely to be effective when implemented alongside robust enforcement, public awareness and complementary supporting measures.<sup>3,4</sup>

### Question 1b

**Why do you think this legal limit is appropriate?**

While long-term road safety outcomes have improved, drink driving now accounts for a growing share of fatalities. Between 2021 and 2023, an average of 16.7% of all road deaths per year in Great Britain involved a drink-driver. This three-year rolling average is the highest since 2004-2006 (17.5%) and indicates a sustained reversal of earlier progress.<sup>5</sup> This trend underlines the need for action focused not only on deterrence, but on preventing people from drinking and driving in the first place.

England and Wales retain one of the highest legal limits in Europe (80mg), whereas most EU countries operate at 50mg or lower.<sup>6</sup> Scotland introduced a 50mg limit in 2014,<sup>7</sup> and Northern Ireland legislated for the same in 2016 (though not yet implemented).<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Haghpanahan, H., Lewsey, J., Mackay, D. F., McIntosh, E., Pell, J., Jones, A., Fitzgerald, N., & Robinson, M. (2019). An evaluation of the effects of lowering blood alcohol concentration limits for drivers on the rates of road traffic accidents and alcohol consumption: A natural experiment. *The Lancet*, 393(10169), 321–329. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(18\)32850-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(18)32850-2)

<sup>2</sup> Chavez, C. L. J., Peltier, M. R., Mokwuah, A. A., Bin-Mahfouz, A., Verplaetse, T. L., Zakiniaiez, Y., Kohler, R., Garcia-Rivas, V., Banini, B. A., Raval, N. R., Pittman, B., & McKee, S. A. (2026). Legal blood alcohol concentration limits and alcohol-attributable traffic mortality rates: An analysis across 165 countries. *eClinicalMedicine*, 93. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eclinm.2026.103794>

<sup>3</sup> Killoran, A., Canning, U., Doyle, N., & Sheppard, L. (2010). *Review of effectiveness of laws limiting blood alcohol concentration levels to reduce alcohol-related road injuries and deaths*. [Report]. NICE. <https://www.nice.org.uk/media/default/About/what-we-do/NICE-guidance/NICE-guidelines/Public-health-guidelines/Additional-publications/Blood-alcohol-content-effectiveness-review.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> World Health Organization. (2019). *The SAFER technical package: five areas of intervention at national and subnational levels*. Geneva: World Health Organization. <https://iris.who.int/server/api/core/bitstreams/841f9cc7-7f09-482d-a23d-0bad9ee652ef/content>

<sup>5</sup> Department for Transport (2025). *Road safety statistics: data tables*. Derived from RAS0101 and RAS2001. GOV.UK. [online] Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/reported-road-accidents-vehicles-and-casualties-tables-for-great-britain#ras20>.

<sup>6</sup> European Transport Safety Council (ETSC). (n.d.). *Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) Drink Driving Limits across Europe*. <https://etsc.eu/issues/drink-driving/blood-alcohol-content-bac-drink-driving-limits-across-europe/>.

<sup>7</sup> Scottish Government. (2018, December 21). Drink-drive limit: policy. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/drink-drive-limit-policy/>.

<sup>8</sup> Northern Ireland Assembly, The Committee for the Environment. (2015, March 19). *Report on the Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill (NIA 35/11-15)*. <https://www.niassembly.gov.uk/assembly-business/committees/2011-2016/environment/reports/report-on-the-road-traffic-amendment-bill-nia-3511-15/>

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Evidence from Scotland indicated that lowering the limit alone did not lead to a clear reduction in road traffic accidents or casualties, with factors such as insufficient enforcement and limited public awareness suggested as potential influences.<sup>9,10</sup> This highlights that legal limits are not sufficient in isolation. Indeed, the 2010 North Review concluded lowering the limit to 50mg could prevent up to 168 deaths in the first year of implementation, when combined with effective enforcement and supporting measures.<sup>11</sup> It is also important to recognise that Scotland operates in a different alcohol policy environment, including broader population-level measures such as minimum unit pricing. These contextual differences mean the impact of lowering the limit cannot necessarily be directly extrapolated to England and Wales without accompanying interventions.

Data from England and Wales in 2022 showed that among drivers involved in a road traffic collision, who failed a breath test, 18.8% were just over the legal limit (36–50 micrograms per 100ml of breath), while over 80% were substantially above it, including 42.8% who were more than double the legal limit.<sup>12</sup> This pattern may suggest that lowering the legal limit would have a limited impact on harm, as people who fail breathalyser tests tend to be far over the current limit rather than marginally above it.<sup>13</sup> However, this highlights that current arrangements are most effective at identifying extreme intoxication, while doing less to influence behaviour earlier in the drink driving decision-making process.

Lowering the limit to 50mg should therefore not be viewed primarily as a measure to catch marginal cases, but as a potential way to prevent people from reaching dangerous levels of intoxication before driving, by sending a clearer signal that drinking and driving do not mix. It also highlights that policies specifically targeting high-risk or dependent drinkers, and repeat offenders, are likely needed in addition to a lower legal drink-drive limit and any other reforms.

International evidence indicates that legal BAC limits operate as behavioural reference points as well as enforcement thresholds.<sup>14</sup> Lower limits may contribute to reinforcing the social norm that drink driving is unacceptable,<sup>15</sup> a shift that is particularly important given evidence that drink driving now accounts for a growing share of road deaths. That many drivers detected are significantly over the limit<sup>16</sup> as a result of the above, also reinforces the need for stronger and more visible enforcement, alongside any change in the legal threshold. Drinkaware recognises that lowering the drink-drive limit alone would be insufficient.<sup>17,18,19</sup> It would be most effective if considered as part of a wider, integrated approach. This would include consistent enforcement activity, sustained public awareness campaigns (such as THINK!), clear behavioural messaging, and targeted support for dependent drinkers and repeat drink-drive offenders.

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<sup>9</sup> Haghpanahan et al. 2019. Note 1.

<sup>10</sup> Lewsey, J., Haghpanahan, H., Mackay, D., McIntosh, E., Pell, J., & Jones, A. (2019). Impact of legislation to reduce the drink-drive limit on road traffic accidents and alcohol consumption in Scotland: a natural experiment study. *Public Health Research*, No. 7.12. <https://doi.org/10.3310/phr07120>.

<sup>11</sup> North, P. (2010, June). *Report of the review of drink and drug driving law*. <https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20100921035231/http://northreview.independent.gov.uk/report>

<sup>12</sup> Department for Transport. (2025). *Reported road accidents, vehicles and casualties tables for Great Britain*. GOV.UK <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/reported-road-accidents-vehicles-and-casualties-tables-for-great-britain#ras20>

<sup>13</sup> University of Bath (2026). *Stricter drink-drive limits, enforcement and high-risk offenders*. [online] University of Bath, IPR blog. <https://blogs.bath.ac.uk/iprblog/2026/01/23/stricter-drink-drive-limits-enforcement-and-high-risk-offenders/>

<sup>14</sup> National Institute for Health and Care Excellence. (2010). *Blood alcohol content: effectiveness review*, NICE, London. Available at: <https://www.nice.org.uk/media/default/About/what-we-do/NICE-guidance/NICE-guidelines/Public-health-guidelines/Additional-publications/Blood-alcohol-content-effectiveness-review.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> Chavez et al., 2026. See Note 2.

<sup>16</sup> Department for Transport, 2025. See Note 12.

<sup>17</sup> Haghpanahan et al. 2019. Note 1.

<sup>18</sup> Chavez et al., 2026. See Note 2.

<sup>19</sup> World Health Organization, 2019. See Note 4.

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As part of implementation, it is important to consider concerns about the potential impact of lowering the limit on rural pubs,<sup>20</sup> where customers are more likely to rely on driving. Given that rural roads account for a disproportionate share of fatal collisions (60%),<sup>21</sup> Drinkaware recommends that government work with charities and industry partners to support rural venues by promoting low and no-alcohol options, diversifying food and non-alcohol offerings, and helping people make informed choices about alcohol consumption.<sup>22</sup>

## Question 2

**In your view, should the legal alcohol limit for drink and drive offences in England and Wales be lower for novice drivers than for other drivers?**

There is merit in considering a lower limit for novice drivers as part of a graduated and evidence-informed approach to road safety.<sup>23,24</sup> Novice drivers typically have less experience identifying and responding to risk, and even small amounts of alcohol can impair driving performance.<sup>25,26,27</sup> Given these vulnerabilities, introducing a lower limit for this group could provide an important additional safeguard, helping to reduce collisions during these early stages of driving.<sup>28,29</sup>

## Question 2a

**What legal alcohol limit do you think is appropriate for novice drivers?**

The Government's proposal for a 20mg (0.02 BAC) limit for novice drivers is consistent with international practice and recommendations.<sup>30</sup> Evidence from Europe and countries such as Australia, which apply zero or near-zero BAC limits to learner and provisional drivers, show that a lower limit has been associated with reductions in drink-driving incidents and improved road safety outcomes.<sup>31,32</sup>

## Question 2b

**Why do you think this legal alcohol limit is appropriate?**

Over 90 countries set BAC limits for novice drivers between 0% and 0.05%, with many adopting zero-tolerance thresholds based on the lowest levels that breath-testing equipment can reliably detect

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<sup>20</sup> Sumpter, C., Mohan, A., McKell, J., Lewsey, J., Emslie, C., & Fitzgerald, N. (2020). How did a lower drink-drive limit affect bar trade and drinking practices? A qualitative study of how alcohol retailers experienced a change in policy. *Drug and Alcohol Review*, 39(2), 170–179. <https://doi.org/10.1111/dar.12999>

<sup>21</sup> Department for Transport. (2025). *Reported road casualties Great Britain, annual report: 2024*. GOV.UK. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/reported-road-casualties-great-britain-annual-report-2024/reported-road-casualties-great-britain-annual-report-2024>

<sup>22</sup> Sumpter et al., 2020. See Note 20.

<sup>23</sup> Johns Hopkins International Injury Research Unit. (2024, June). *Evidence Synthesis on Drink Driving and Blood Alcohol Concentration Policies*. Baltimore, MD. <https://publichealth.jhu.edu/sites/default/files/2024-06/bigrrapid-responsedrink-driving-and-bac-policiesfinaljune-2024.pdf>

<sup>24</sup> Wagenaar, A. C., O'Malley, P. M., & LaFond, C. (2001). Lowered legal blood alcohol limits for young drivers: Effects on drinking, driving, and driving-after-drinking behaviors in 30 states. *American Journal of Public Health*, 91(5), 801–804. <https://doi.org/10.2105/ajph.91.5.801>

<sup>25</sup> European Commission (2009). *Novice drivers*. [online]. [https://road-safety.transport.ec.europa.eu/european-road-safety-observatory/statistics-and-analysis-archive/young-people/novice-drivers\\_en](https://road-safety.transport.ec.europa.eu/european-road-safety-observatory/statistics-and-analysis-archive/young-people/novice-drivers_en)

<sup>26</sup> Peck, R.C., Gebers, M.A., Voas, R.B. and Romano, E. (2008). The relationship between blood alcohol concentration (BAC), age, and crash risk. *Journal of Safety Research*, 39(3), pp.311–319. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsr.2008.02.030>

<sup>27</sup> Martens, C.H., Ross, L.E. and Mundt, J.C. (1991). Young drivers' evaluation of driving impairment due to alcohol. *Accident Analysis & Prevention*, 23(1), pp.67–76. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0001-4575\(91\)90036-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/0001-4575(91)90036-5)

<sup>28</sup> Peck et al., 2008. See Note 26.

<sup>29</sup> World Health Organization, 2019. See Note 4.

<sup>30</sup> World Health Organization, 2019. See Note 4.

<sup>31</sup> Babor, T. F., Casswell, S., Graham, K., Huckle, T., Livingston, M., Österberg, E., Rehm, J., Room, R., Rossow, I., & Sompaisarn, B. (2022). *Drinking and driving: Prevention and countermeasures*. <https://academic.oup.com/book/45328/chapter/38922217>

<sup>32</sup> Lewsey et al., 2019. See Note 10.

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(approximately 0.001–0.02 BAC).<sup>33,34</sup> 17 European countries apply stricter limits for novice drivers than for the general population<sup>35,36,37</sup> and countries with strong road-safety records, including Australia, require a 0.00% BAC for all learner and provisional drivers.<sup>38</sup> This reflects the evidence that even small amounts of alcohol can impair driving performance, particularly among inexperienced drivers,<sup>39,40</sup> and aligns with evidence and recommendations that lower thresholds for novice drivers can reduce harm.<sup>41 42,43,44,45</sup>

Younger drivers face a disproportionately higher risk of drink-drive collisions, relatively speaking, than older drivers. In Great Britain in 2023, drivers aged under 20 had the highest rate among all age-groups (83 drink-drive collisions involving a car drink-driver per billion miles driven), followed by those aged 20-24 (48 per billion miles), compared with just 7 among drivers aged 50-59, and 4 among drivers aged 60 or over.<sup>46</sup> This elevated level of risk reflects the combination of inexperience and reduced ability to recognise or respond to hazards.

Lowering the limit for novice drivers can provide a clear behavioural message during the early stages of driving, reinforcing that driving requires full attention and responsibility and has the potential to influence long-term attitudes to alcohol and driving.<sup>47</sup> Adopting this approach UK-wide would ensure consistent messaging and avoid confusion.

To maximise impact, any change should be supported by targeted education, awareness and complementary measures that promote safer driving behaviours. This could include the use of telematics (or ‘black box’) technology, which can incentivise safer driving to reduce insurance costs, and provides feedback to help drivers correct risky behaviours,<sup>48</sup> integrating content on alcohol and impairment into driver training and education, as well as national campaigns (such as THINK!), which also play an important role in reinforcing these messages, particularly when tailored to novice drivers.<sup>49</sup>

## Question 14

**Are there any other changes to current law and practice regarding drink and drug testing that you would like to suggest?**

Drinkaware believes there is value in reviewing current law and practice to ensure it remains effective and proportionate, particularly in light of recent trends in drink-driving fatalities. The number of drink-drive fatalities has increased by 7% over the last 10 years and between 2021 and 2023 an average of 16.7% of

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<sup>33</sup> Babor et al., 2022. See Note 31.

<sup>34</sup> European Transport Safety Council (ETSC). (2022, December 13). *Progress in reducing drink-driving and other alcohol-related road deaths in Europe*. ETSC. <https://etsc.eu/progress-in-reducing-drink-driving-and-other-alcohol-related-road-deaths-in-europe/>

<sup>35</sup> European Transport Safety Council, 2022. See Note 34.

<sup>36</sup> European Transport Safety Council (ETSC), *EU to introduce a two-year zero-tolerance alcohol limit for all novice drivers*, available at: <https://etsc.eu/eu-to-introduce-a-two-year-zero-tolerance-alcohol-limit-for-all-novice-drivers/>

<sup>37</sup> Johns Hopkins International Injury Research Unit, 2024. See Note 23.

<sup>38</sup> Alcohol and Drug Foundation. (2026, February 27). *Blood Alcohol Concentration*, <https://adf.org.au/reducing-risk/alcohol/bac/>.

<sup>39</sup> Peck et al., 2008. See Note 26.

<sup>40</sup> Martens et al., 1991. See Note 27.

<sup>41</sup> World Health Organization, 2019. See Note 4.

<sup>42</sup> Alcohol and Drug Foundation, 2026. See Note 38.

<sup>43</sup> Peck et al., 2008. See Note 26.

<sup>44</sup> Martens et al., 1991. See Note 27.

<sup>45</sup> Babor et al., 2022. See Note 31.

<sup>46</sup> Department for Transport (2025). *Road safety statistics: data tables. 2023. Data table RAS2022*. [online] GOV.UK.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/reported-road-accidents-vehicles-and-casualties-tables-for-great-britain#ras20>.

<sup>47</sup> Webster, E., Mohan, A., Fitzgerald, N., Uny, I., & Begley, A. (2020). *Drink Driving Taking stock, moving forward*. Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety (PACTS). <https://www.pacts.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/PACTS-Drink-Driving-Taking-stock-moving-forward-Report-6.0.pdf>.

<sup>48</sup> RAC. (n.d). *Help for parents of young drivers*. <https://www.rac.co.uk/insurance/black-box-insurance/help-for-parents>

<sup>49</sup> Bullmore, J., Watkins, S., & Burnett, L. (2014). *Department for Transport: How thirty years of drink drive communications saved almost 2,000 lives*. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7d9241ed915d497af703b2/Drink\\_Drive\\_IPA\\_Paper\\_2012.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7d9241ed915d497af703b2/Drink_Drive_IPA_Paper_2012.pdf).

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all road deaths per year involved a drink-driver, the highest three-year rolling average since 2004-2006.<sup>50,51</sup> Any changes should form part of a balanced and evidence-informed road safety strategy.

## Question 14a

**How do you think current law and practice regarding drink and drug testing could be improved?**

From Drinkaware's perspective, improvements to law and practice around drink and drug testing are most effective when they combine clear enforcement with sustained public education and support for long-term behaviour change. Drinkaware would suggest consideration of the following areas:

### 1. Visibility and consistency of enforcement

Evidence shows that the perceived likelihood of being caught is a key deterrent to drink driving, with drivers adjusting their behaviour based on their assessment of enforcement presence and detection risk.<sup>52,53</sup> While decisions about enforcement levels are operational matters for police forces, maintaining visible and proportionate enforcement activity may help reinforce public understanding that drink driving will not be tolerated.<sup>54</sup> Clear communication about enforcement activity, alongside transparent messaging about the risks and consequences can help strengthen deterrence and support improved road safety.

### 2. Public education and communications

Legislation and enforcement are most effective when supported by sustained public awareness and education.<sup>55</sup> National campaigns such as THINK! have demonstrated the impact that clear, evidence-based messaging can have in shaping public attitudes and reducing harm.<sup>56</sup> Drinkaware has a long-standing role in delivering national and targeted campaigns that help people understand alcohol-related risk and make safer choices, including around drink driving.<sup>57,58</sup> Through its digital tools, partnerships and campaigns, Drinkaware is able to reach large numbers of adults, including those drinking above the low-risk guidelines who may not always engage with traditional road safety messaging.<sup>59</sup> Continued collaboration between government, road safety organisations and charities such as Drinkaware can help ensure that messages about drink driving remain relevant, accessible and credible to a wide range of audiences.

### 3. Technological improvements

There is merit in exploring how technological developments, such as mobile evidential breath testing instruments, could support more efficient and timely testing processes, particularly in roadside settings.<sup>60</sup> Any developments should be subject to careful evaluation to ensure they are accurate, proportionate and make effective use of resources. Alongside enforcement technology, clearer communication to the public about how testing works and why it is used can help maintain confidence in the system and reinforce compliance.

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<sup>50</sup> Department for Transport. (2025). *Reported road casualties in Great Britain involving illegal alcohol levels: 2023*. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/reported-road-casualties-in-great-britain-involving-illegal-alcohol-levels-2023/reported-road-casualties-in-great-britain-involving-illegal-alcohol-levels-2023>

<sup>51</sup> Department for Transport, 2025. See Note 5.

<sup>52</sup> Sloan, F. A., McCutchan, S. A., & Eldred, L. M. (2017). Alcohol-Impaired Driving and Perceived Risks of Legal Consequences. *Alcoholism, Clinical and Experimental Research*, 41(2), 432–442. <https://doi.org/10.1111/acer.13298>.

<sup>53</sup> Webster et al., 2020. See Note 47.

<sup>54</sup> O'Hara, S. E., Paschall, M. J., & Herd, D. (2022). Determining a dosage threshold of drink-driving enforcement operations: A systematic review. *Drug and Alcohol Review*, 41(7), 1610–1620. <https://doi.org/10.1111/dar.13519>.

<sup>55</sup> Haghpanahan et al. 2019. Note 1.

<sup>56</sup> Bullmore et al., 2014. See Note 49.

<sup>57</sup> Drinkaware. (2020, March 11). *Drinkaware launches new campaign against drink driving*. <https://www.drinkaware.co.uk/news/drinkaware-launches-new-campaign-against-drink-driving>

<sup>58</sup> Gov UK. (2024, November 20). *THINK! partners with Heineken to promote drink driving awareness campaign ahead of Christmas*. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/think-partners-with-heineken-to-promote-drink-driving-awareness-campaign-ahead-of-christmas>

<sup>59</sup> Drinkaware (2025). *1.5 million completions of Drinkaware's Drinking Check*. <https://www.drinkaware.co.uk/news/15-million-completions-of-drinkawares-drinking-check>

<sup>60</sup> Webster et al., 2020. See Note 47.

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#### 4. Rehabilitation and behaviour change

Enforcement alone is unlikely to be sufficient to prevent repeat offending, particularly among high-risk drivers, where behaviour is often linked to persistent patterns of heavy drinking or alcohol dependence.<sup>61</sup> The Drink Drive Rehabilitation Scheme has demonstrated reductions in reoffending, highlighting the value of education-based and rehabilitative approaches.<sup>62</sup> Continued investment in such schemes, alongside consideration of tailored support for individuals with alcohol dependence or mental health needs, could further strengthen long-term outcomes.<sup>63</sup>

### Question 15

**In your view, should random breath testing (mirroring the powers in Northern Ireland) be introduced in England and Wales?**

Provided it can be implemented effectively and fairly, random breath testing could be considered as part of a wider approach accompanied by clear education and public awareness campaigns that explain the rationale and reinforce deterrence.<sup>64</sup>

### Question 15a

**Why did you give this answer?**

International evidence shows that visible enforcement, including random or targeted breath testing can have a deterrent effect,<sup>65</sup> particularly when focused on high-risk times and locations.<sup>66</sup> Recent UK experience supports this. During the December 2024-January 2025 festive period, police carried out 58,675 roadside tests as part of the proactive testing campaign Operation Limit, with 9.7% of drivers testing positive for alcohol and 42.2% for drugs, leading to 2,782 arrests. Nearly 15% of drivers tested after a collision were over the limit, the highest level since 2019.<sup>67</sup> Seasonal campaigns like Operation Limit show the value of visible enforcement, but relying mainly on roadside tests during certain times can make enforcement feel predictable.<sup>68</sup>

For Drinkaware, the key point is that enforcement is most effective when supported by clear public communication and consistent messaging.<sup>69</sup> Random breath testing should therefore sit within a broader approach where drivers understand why testing happens and what the risks of drink driving are. Lasting behaviour change is most likely when awareness, enforcement and legislation work together. As with any policy change, ongoing evaluation is important to understand its impact and public confidence.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Killoran et al., 2010. See Note 3.

<sup>62</sup> Smith, L. R., Buckle, G., Keigan, M., Buttress, S., & Stone, J. (2004). *The drink/drive rehabilitation scheme: Evaluation and monitoring*. Final report. <https://www.trl.co.uk/publications/tr1613>.

<sup>63</sup> Webster et al., 2020. See Note 47.

<sup>64</sup> Freeman, J., Parkes, A., Truelove, V., Lewis, N., & Davey, J. D. (2021). Does seeing it make a difference? The self-reported deterrent impact of random breath testing. *Journal of Safety Research*, 76, 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsr.2020.09.013>.

<sup>65</sup> Webster et al., 2020. See Note 47.

<sup>66</sup> Freeman et al., 2021. See note 64.

<sup>67</sup> National Police Chiefs' Council. (2025, March 28). *Nearly 60,000 drink and drug tests conducted in seasonal roads policing crackdown*. <https://news.npcc.police.uk/releases/nearly-60-000-drink-and-drug-tests-conducted-in-seasonal-roads-policing-crackdown>

<sup>68</sup> National Police Chiefs' Council, 2025. See Note 67.

<sup>69</sup> Green, D. (2024). Anytime, anywhere: Understanding random breath testing deployments at the local level. *Journal of Criminology*, 57(1), 83–99. <https://doi.org/10.1177/26338076231199542>.

<sup>70</sup> Elder, R. W., Shults, R. A., Sleet, D. A., Nichols, J. L., Thompson, R. S., & Rajab, W. (2004). Effectiveness of mass media campaigns for reducing drinking and driving and alcohol-involved crashes: A systematic review. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 27(1), 57–65. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amepre.2004.03.002>.

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## Question 16

If you have any other evidence to provide or comments to make about the current penalty framework for drink and drug driving offences, please provide them here.

### Partnering with Drinkaware

If changes to the drink-drive limit were introduced, there would be an opportunity to ensure those changes are communicated clearly and consistently in ways that resonate with the public and support road safety objectives. Drinkaware reaches millions of adults each year through its digital tools, campaigns and partnerships, with a particular reach among people drinking above the low-risk guidelines.<sup>71</sup> As an independent and trusted source of health information, Drinkaware is well-placed to help translate changes to drink-driving laws and guidance into practical, understandable messages for drinkers. We stand ready to work with government to support public awareness of any changes resulting from the road safety strategy, and would welcome early conversations on how this could be delivered most effectively.

In the past year, around one in five adults (21%) have reported to have seen or heard any information about the health risks associated with drinking alcohol from Drinkaware, second only to the NHS (27%).<sup>72</sup> These audiences may not always be reached by traditional road safety campaigns.<sup>73</sup> Awareness of Drinkaware has also continued to increase, rising from 51% in 2023 to 58% in 2025.<sup>74</sup>

Used alongside national road safety communications, trusted routes such as Drinkaware could help reinforce understanding of any changes to drink-driving laws and support informed decision-making among drinkers. By providing clear guidance on alcohol, impairment and risk, this approach could complement enforcement and education measures and contribute to wider efforts to reduce alcohol-related harm on the roads.

### BAC Reduction and Rural Pub Trade

Drinkaware recognises concerns about the potential impact of changes to drink-driving limits on rural pub businesses. Evidence from Scotland suggests that there has been minimal long-term economic impact overall, although some rural premises reported changes in weekday drinking patterns.<sup>75</sup> Given that rural roads account for a disproportionate share of fatal collisions (60%),<sup>76</sup> there is an opportunity for government, charities such as Drinkaware, and industry partners to work together to support rural venues during any transition. This could include promoting low and no alcohol options, diversifying food offers, and encouraging responsible drinking behaviours, helping to support rural businesses while contributing to improved road safety outcomes.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Drinkaware (2025). *1.5 million completions of Drinkaware's Drinking Check*. <https://www.drinkaware.co.uk/news/15-million-completions-of-drinkawares-drinking-check>

<sup>72</sup> Drinkaware. (2025, August 27). *Drinkaware Monitor 2025*. <https://www.drinkaware.co.uk/research/drinkaware-monitors/drinkaware-monitor-2025>.

<sup>73</sup> Drinkaware. (2025). *Annual Trustees Report 2024*. <https://media.drinkaware.co.uk/media/iw0d0hqj/998-drinkaware-annual-trustees-report-2024-final-interactive.pdf>

<sup>74</sup> Data collected by CAM NfP in January 2025. Based on a sample of 1,000 UK adults, results are estimated to be representative of the population aged 16+, with a reported margin of error of  $\pm 0.5$ -3% at the 95% confidence level.

<sup>75</sup> Sumpter et al., 2020. See Note 20.

<sup>76</sup> Department for Transport. (2025). *Reported road casualties Great Britain, annual report: 2024*. GOV.UK. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/reported-road-casualties-great-britain-annual-report-2024/reported-road-casualties-great-britain-annual-report-2024>

<sup>77</sup> Sumpter et al., 2020. See Note 20.