

Rt Hon Heidi Alexander MP
Secretary of State for Transport
The Department for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London SW1P 4DR
United Kingdom

SENT VIA EMAIL

Monday 11 August 2025

Dear Secretary of State,

RE: Support for reducing drink drive limit in England and Wales

I am writing on behalf of the Institute of Alcohol Studies to express our strong support for any plans to reduce the drink drive limit in England and Wales. Lowering the legal blood alcohol limit is one of the most effective, evidence-based ways to prevent deaths and serious injuries on our roads and we were extremely encouraged to learn the Government is considering this.

England and Wales now stand out as the only countries in Europe with a limit as high as 80mg of alcohol per 100ml of blood. All others have adopted a limit of 50mg or lower, and international evidence shows that such reductions lead to fewer crashes, fatalities, and injuries.ⁱ Aligning with the rest of Europe and Scotland is a proportionate and effective step to improve road safety.

Public support for this change is overwhelming: polling shows that 77% of people favour lowering the limit.ⁱⁱ Numerous organisations have called for this reform, including road safety charities, motoring groups, police associations and public health bodies.ⁱⁱⁱ

Progress on reducing drink drive casualties over the past four decades has stalled, and is now in decline. The latest figures show a 16% increase in deaths from drink driving between 2021 and 2022 and a 32% increase since 2012.^{iv} At the same time, the UK is experiencing record alcohol deaths, with sharp rises since the pandemic. This is why we have called for a National Alcohol Strategy – and why we welcome the Department for Transport's leadership on this important issue.

Alongside reducing the blood alcohol limit, we support the Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety (PACTS) recommendations^v, including:

- mandatory breath testing powers for the police and the reduction in enforcement levels to be reversed
- increased penalties for drivers who combine drink and drugs
- specialist rehabilitation courses for those with mental health and alcohol problems
- reforming the High Risk Offender Scheme
- that the Government pays more attention to drink driving in alcohol harm and night-time
- economy policies

We have also endorsed the British Medical Association's recent consensus statement on drink driving and its recommendations, which include a lower limit for new and commercial drivers.^{vi}

We would welcome a meeting to discuss how we can assist your drink driving prevention plans. Now is the right time to act and we are ready to support you in any way we can to help deliver life-saving policy change.

Advisory Council

Chair: Dr Peter Rice; Vice-chair: Dr Janet Tollington; Chief executive: Dr Katherine Severi
Crispin Action, Professor Jeff Collin, Dr Philip M Hadfield, Professor Gerard Hastings, Professor David Jernigan,
Professor Petra Meier, Professor Jonathan Shepherd CBE, Dr Gillian W Shorter
Secretary to the board: Paul Whitaker

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'K Severi'.

Dr Katherine Severi
Chief Executive, Institute of Alcohol Studies

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- ⁱ World Health Organization, SAFER Initiative, [Advance and enforce drink driving counter measures](#).
ⁱⁱ Strain, David (2023), [One Drink, Don't Drive](#), BMA.
ⁱⁱⁱ BMA (2025), [Alcohol, drugs and driving consensus statement](#).
^{iv} Department for Transport (2024), [Reported road casualties in Great Britain involving illegal alcohol levels: 2022](#).
^v Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety (2020), [Drink Driving: Taking Stock, Moving Forward](#).
^{vi} BMA (2025).