

Draft Response to Scottish Government consultation on Drink Drive limits

Nestrans is the statutory Regional Transport Partnership for Aberdeen City & Shire. One of the objectives contained in our Regional Transport Strategy as approved by Ministers in 2009 is safety and casualty reduction.

The Nestrans Board at its meeting on 9 October 2012 considered a report on the Scottish Government's proposals to reduce the drink driving limits and agreed to submit the following as its views on the consultation:

QUESTION 1

Do you agree that the drink drive limits should be reduced in Scotland?

Yes – there is evidence that reducing the legal limit for drink driving would improve safety, reduce the number and severity of accidents and lead to reduced numbers of casualties including fatalities.

QUESTION 1A

The Scottish Government is proposing:

- **A reduction in the blood limit from 80 milligrammes of alcohol in every 100 millilitres of blood to 50 milligrammes of alcohol in every 100 millilitres of blood**
- **An (equivalent) reduction in the breath limit from 35 microgrammes of alcohol in 100 millilitres of breath to 22 mcg of alcohol in every 100 millilitres of breath, and**
- **An (equivalent) reduction in the urine limit from 107 milligrammes of alcohol in 100 millilitres of urine to 67 mg of alcohol in every 100 millilitres of urine.**

Do you agree with the SG proposal to reduce the drink drive limits?

Yes – the Scottish Government proposals to reduce the drink drive limits are in line with European Commission recommendations and consistent with the majority of major European countries. It is necessary to ensure that reductions in blood, breath and urine levels are consistent and therefore the recommendations to proportionately reduce the breath and urine limits in line with the proposed blood limit reduction is supported.

QUESTION 2

Do you have any evidence for what would be the main consequences of the SG proposals?

No. As there are no statistics for casualties who had been drinking but were within legal limits, it can only be assumed what will be the consequences of a change in the law. Whilst the studies reported in the consultation document do tend to provide evidence that a reduction in drink driving would have a significant impact in reducing casualties, what is lacking is evidence that a change in the law will ensure a reduction in drink-driving. It is therefore imperative that a marketing campaign and supporting information is available to ensure the aimed for reduction in drink driving, particularly those who currently drink within legal limits.

QUESTION 3

Do you have any evidence for what would be the financial impact of the SG proposals?

It is assumed that the financial implications of implementing such a change in the law will be minimal. However, it is important that the change is supported by publicity and marketing to promote a more responsible attitude to drink driving and to ensure that drivers (particularly those from outwith Scotland) are fully aware of the law and its implications. There may be impacts on businesses, such as rural restaurants and public houses if people reduce their visits to such establishments as a result of the change but this will be offset by any demonstrated reduction in casualties.

QUESTION 4

Do you have any comments to make on the ancillary matters related to the SG's proposal to reduce the drink drive limits?

Any change in legislation must be backed up by information campaigns, marketing and education to gain the public's support and ensure a full understanding of the changes and their impact.

QUESTION 5

Are there any other measures that should be considered in order to tackle drink driving?

The consultation is very focused on drink driving limits and the legal limit at which it is acceptable to drive. However, perhaps as relevant, the Road Traffic Act 1988 (Section 4) refers to "driving, attempting to drive or being in charge of a vehicle while unfit to drive through drink or drugs". Has sufficient consideration been given to levels of impairment through use of drugs (whether legal, prescribed or illegal) or the need to impose a commensurate reduction in drug impaired driving to improve road safety?