NORTH EAST
Regional Road Safety Resource

Project Report: 18

Drink Driving: NE Regional Overview

Produced November 2009
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Introduction

This report has been produced by the NE Regional Road Safety Resource as an overview of 'Drink Drive' collisions in the region over the last 3 years. The collisions of interest in this report are those where at least one driver was judged to be impaired by alcohol. The data used to produce this report is based on the project database of Stats 19 provided by Cleveland, Durham, and Northumbria police forces.

Profile of casualties injured in Drink Drive collisions

Drink drive collisions are those collisions where one, or more, of the drivers involved were impaired by alcohol. The current drink drive limit in the UK is 80mg of alcohol per 100ml of blood; this is higher than the limit in most other EU countries.

The current police Stats 19 form contains two areas where alcohol impaired driving is recorded. There is a 'Breath Test' section that police officers fill in if a breath test is administered at the scene of the collision and also there is a coding in the contributory factors section for 'Driver/Rider impaired by alcohol'. Unfortunately neither of these data sets is 100% accurate and both will show some under counting of drink drive collisions. For example, the breath test section will show some under counting because obviously not all drivers are tested at the scene (particularly those who are fatally or severely injured); the contributory factors section will show under counting because not all officers successfully complete this section of the report and can sometimes leave it blank.

For the purposes of this report drink drive collisions will be those collisions where the contributory factor 'Driver/Rider impaired by alcohol' has been successfully recorded.

According to the DfT's document "Road Casualties Great Britain: 2008" casualties that occur from drink drive collisions account for 6% of all national road casualties. In the NE region over the same period this figure was 5%; slightly less than the national figure.

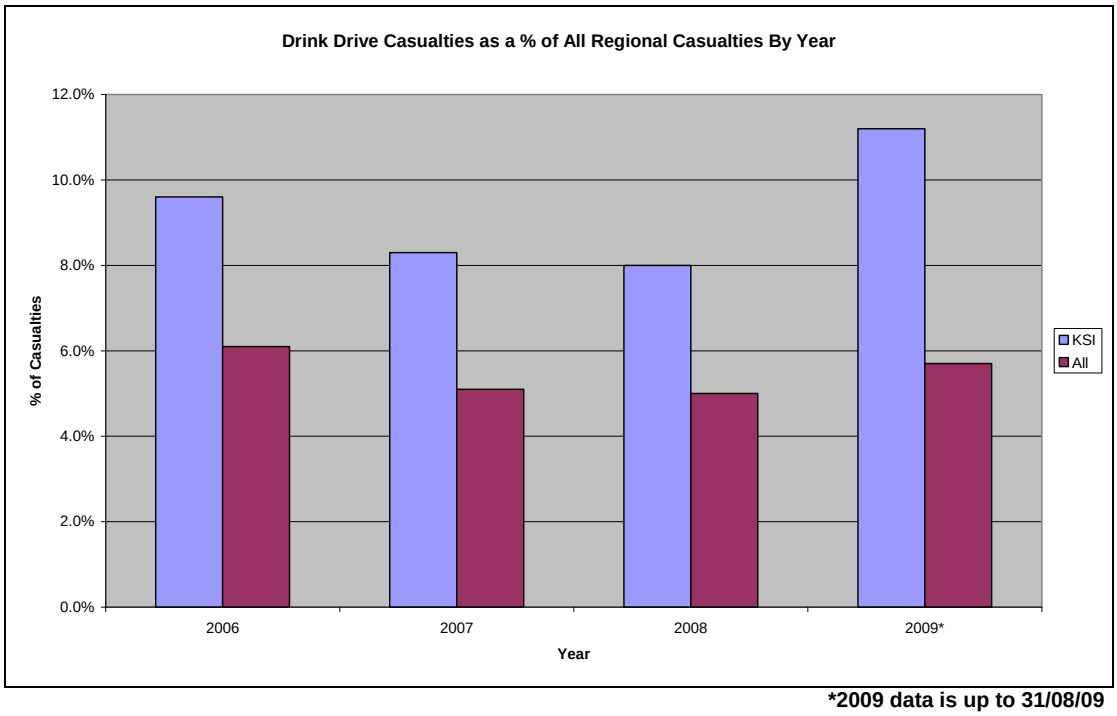
Figure 1: NE Casualties Resulting from Drink Drive Collisions

	2006	**2007**	**2008**	**2009***
Fatal	12	11	8	8*
Serious	100	74	71	63*
Slight	521	413	399	242*
Total	**633**	**498**	**478**	**313***

***2009 data is up to 31/08/09**

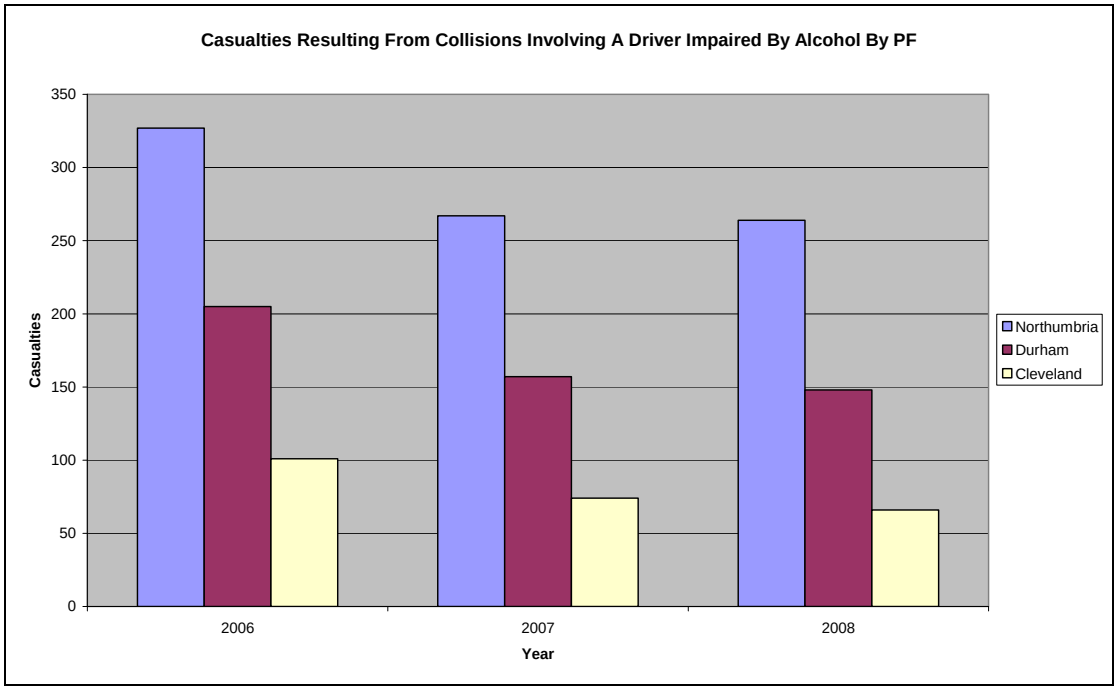
During the period 2006-2008 casualties from Drink Drive collisions have been on the decrease (both KSI's and all injury casualties) not only in real terms but also as a percentage of all regional casualties. The data would seem to suggest that so far 2009 has been a bad year for Drink Drive related casualties, with these casualties accounting for a higher proportion of the region's figures.

Figure 2: NE Drink Drive Casualties as % of Region



***2009 data is up to 31/08/09**

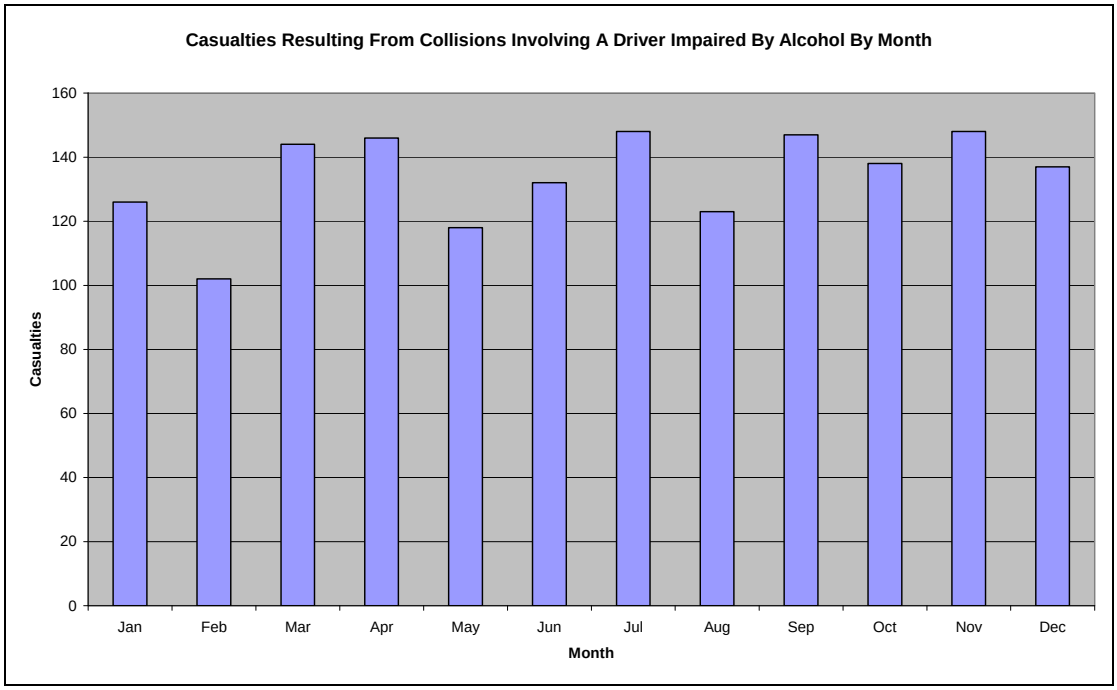
Figure 3: NE Drink Drive Casualties By Police Force 2006-08



Month

Drink Driving is a problem throughout the year, with resulting casualty levels consistently at 100-150 per month. The common perception is that drink driving is only a problem during the Christmas period but this is untrue. Road safety practitioners spend a lot of time, money, and resources during this period to ensure that drink driving does not show a peak in December and their efforts would appear to be working. However, looking at the casualty figures, the pattern would suggest that to further impact upon drink driving then campaigns need to be run at other points of the year too.

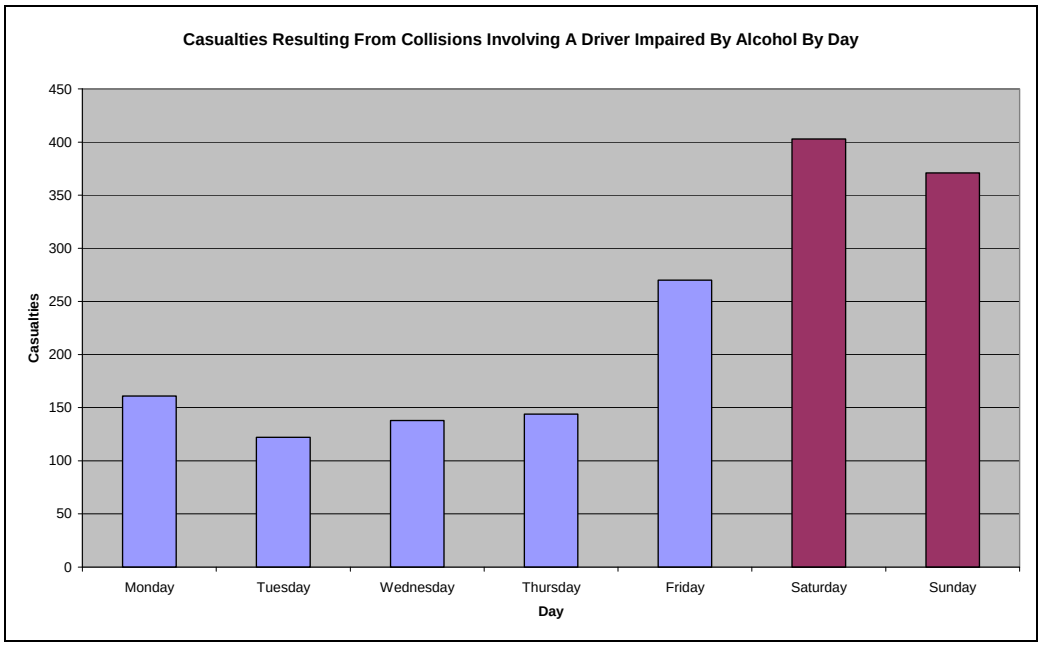
Figure 4: NE Drink Drive Casualties By Month 2006-08



Day

48% of Drink Drive casualties are injured at the weekend, a much higher proportion than the trend for all casualties in the region. A large amount of drink related activities are generally carried out at the weekend so it is to be expected that Drink Drive casualties would be higher, particularly since alcohol can stay in a drivers blood hours after he/she has stopped drinking.

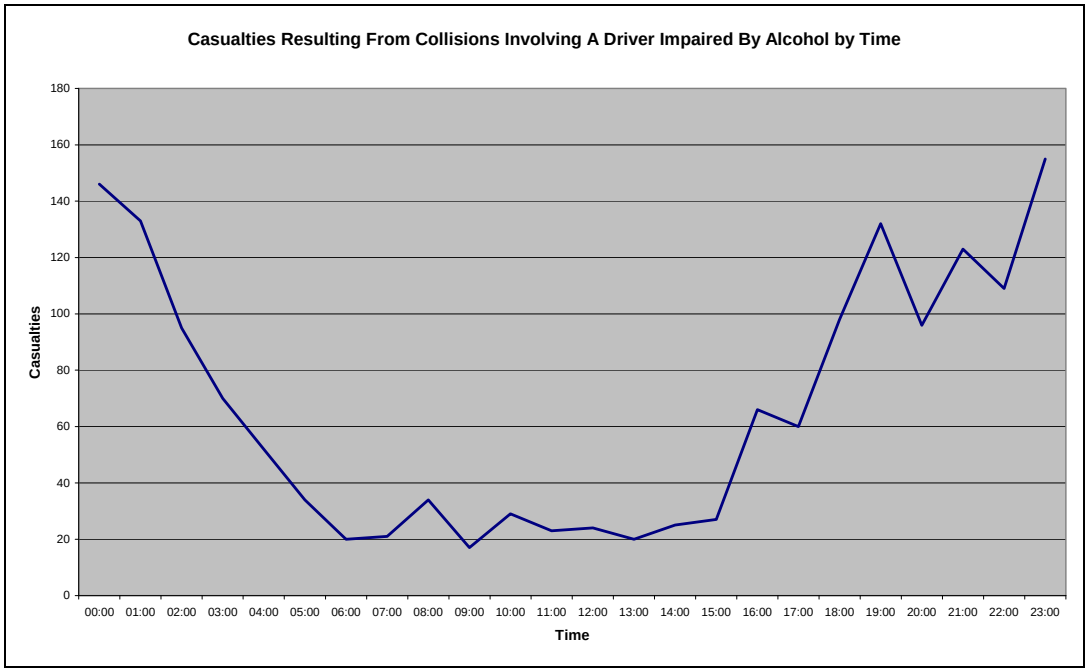
Figure 5: NE Drink Drive Casualties by Day 2006-08



Time

The majority (61%) of casualties injured in Drink Drive collisions are injured between 7pm and 3am, i.e. late in the evening. This is unsurprising since the majority of drinking is carried out in the evening. For all regional casualties this time period only makes up 19% of the daily casualties so there is a definite over representation of drink drive casualties in the evening.

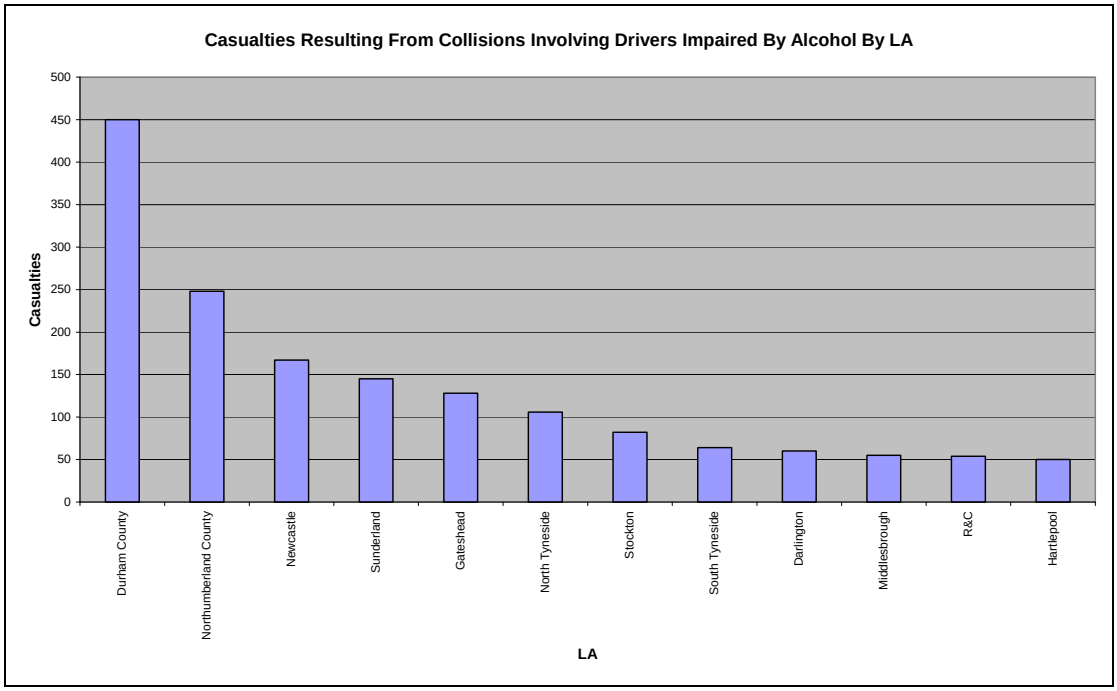
Figure 6: NE Drink Drive Casualties by Time of Day 2006-08



Local Authority

The level of collisions involving drink drivers differs from area to area in the NE region. In terms of pure casualty levels Durham County Council area has the highest levels in the region, with Northumberland County Council second. However, these areas have the largest geographic areas, highest populations, and highest road traffic casualties; so it's not surprising that in terms of pure casualties Drink Drive levels are higher in these areas.

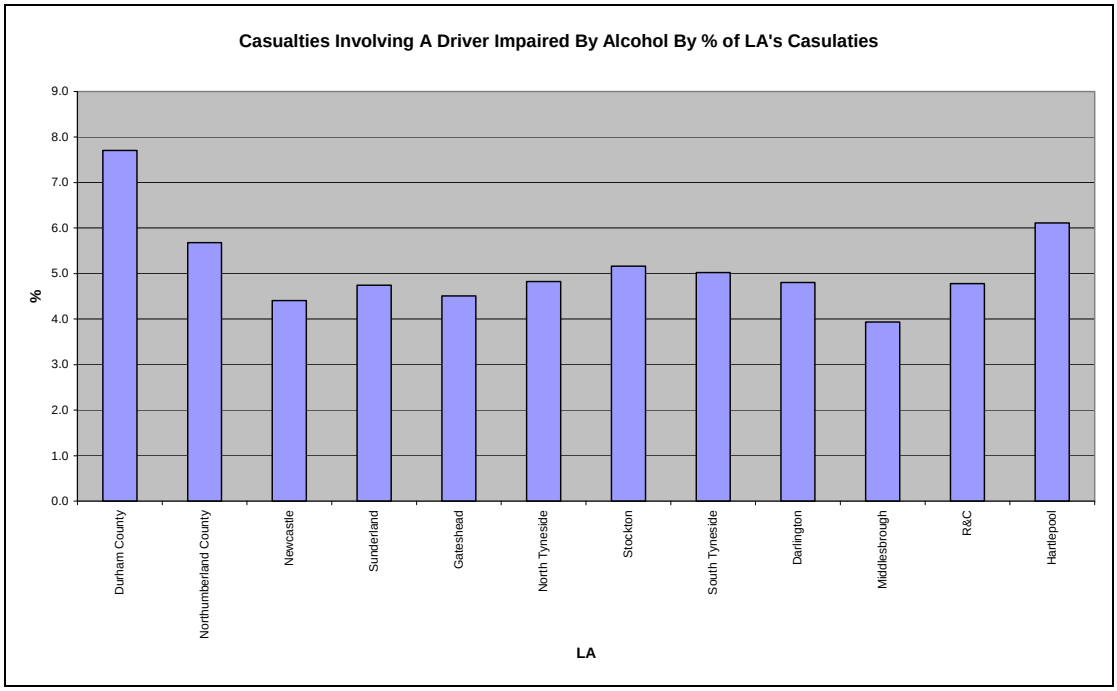
Figure 7: NE Drink Drive Casualties by LA 2006-08



Looking at Drink Drive casualties as a proportion of an area's total casualties is a more appropriate way to identify where drink driving is a specific problem. As previous stated the national trend is 6% of all casualties and the NE regional trend is about 5% of all casualties.

Figure 8 shows that the majority of areas are at about 5% of all casualties (the regional trend) for drink driving. However, the areas of Durham County Council and Hartlepool Borough Council show a higher proportion of drink drive related casualties than both the regional and national trends. This shows that for Durham County in particular, drink driving is more of a problem compared to other areas in the region, as it not only has the highest levels of casualties but also these casualties make up a larger proportion of the areas total casualty levels.

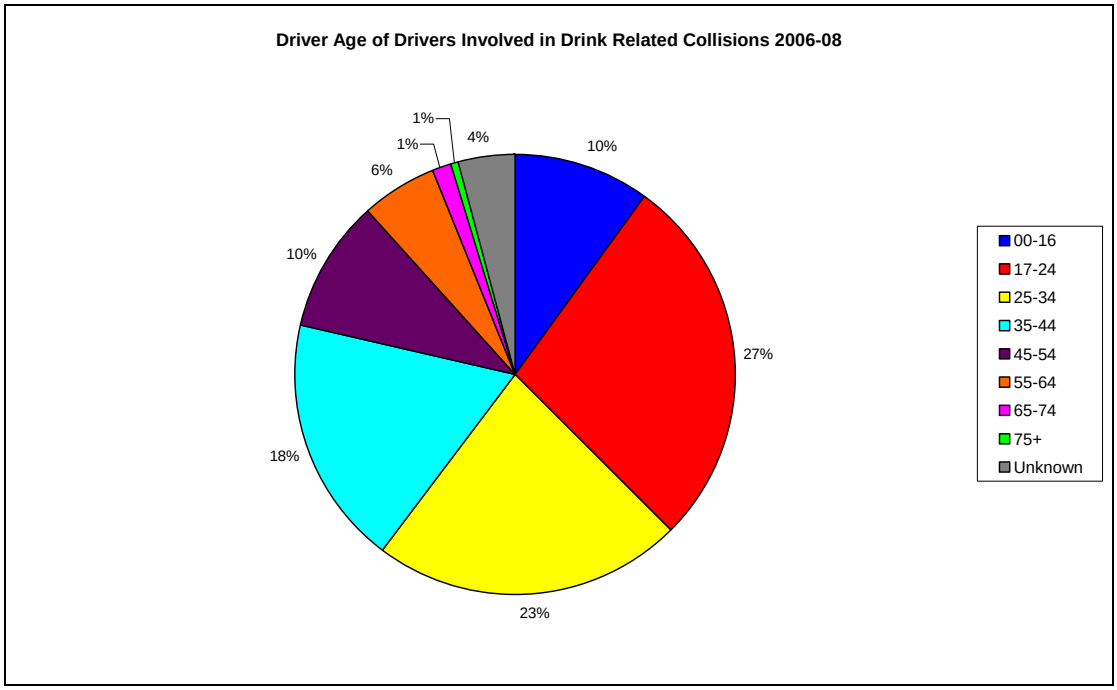
Figure 8: Drink Drive Casualties as a Proportion of an Area's Total Casualty Levels 2006-08



Driver Age

Looking at the driver age of those involved in Drink Drive collisions it shows that involvement is highest between the ages of 17 to 44 years old. 68% of drivers involved in Drink Drive collisions fall in to this age band.

Figure 9: Age of Drivers Involved In Drink Drive Collisions 2006-08



However, with the exception of the 00-16 age band, driver involvement in Drink Drive collisions would appear to go down with age. The 17-24 year old band has the highest proportion of involvement and the over 75 year old band has the least. This would suggest that drink driving in the region decreases with age, or at least Drink Drive collisions do.

Driver Sex

82% of drivers involved in Drink Drive collisions are male. This proportion is higher than the trend for all regional collisions. Drink driving is more of a problem with male drivers.

Figure 10: Sex of Drivers Involved in Drink Drive Collisions 2006-08

Driver Sex	Proportion of Regional Collisions	Proportion of Drink Drive Collisions
Male	72%	**82%**
Female	28%	**18%**

Driver Profiles

Driver profiling helps to indentify and understand the 'types' of people who are involved in Drink Drive collisions around the region. Profiling is based upon the driver postcodes recorded on the Stats 19 forms. These are run through a software package called Mosaic Public Sector, which places each into one of 11 'Groups' and 61 'Types' based on a variety of national data including the Census, British Crime Survey, and credit reports. This data is then compared to all postcodes in the region so that as well as real figures it is possible to see which profiles are over-represented in the data.

There are 2 groupings that have both significant driver figures and are over represented in the data. The names given to these are:

- Group G - Low income families living in estate based social housing.
- Group H - Upwardly mobile families living in homes bought from social landlords.

Both of these groups are areas of moderately high deprivation levels. They tend to be large council estates where household income is low, unemployment is quite high, and access to shops/amenities is very limited. Figure 11 shows more of the main characteristics associated with areas of these groupings and also some communication methods that each group is susceptible to.

Figure 11: Characteristics of Areas where Drink Drivers Involved in Collisions Live

Group G	Group H
Families	Middle aged couples
Low income	Mostly poorly educated
Free school meals	Council estates
Terrace and semis	Small towns
Large council estates	Exercised right to buy
Outer suburbs	Self reliant and capable
Bad place to live	Poor diet
Heavy TV Viewing	Heavy smokers
	Heavy viewers of TV
Receptive to TV	***Receptive to TV***
Receptive to Telemarketing	***Receptive to Telemarketing***
Receptive to posters	***Receptive to Red top newspapers***
Unreceptive to Internet	***Unreceptive to Internet***
Unreceptive to magazines/newspapers	***Unreceptive to telephone advice lines***
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Headline Notes

- Drink Drive casualties are on the decrease in the NE region and currently account for 5% of the total casualties.
- Drink Drive casualties occur throughout the year and do NOT peak during the Christmas period.
- Weekends show the highest casualty levels.
- Casualty levels are highest in late evening going into the early ours.
- Casualty levels fluctuate around the region.
- 17-44 age group accounts for 68% of the drivers involved in Drink Drive collisions.
- 82% of drivers involved are Male.