

HIPS/16/49 - Understanding the direct and indirect impact of lowering Scotland's drink-drive limit

In December 2014, the 'drink-drive limit' was reduced in Scotland from 80mg to 50mg of alcohol in 100ml of blood. Evidence suggests this will reduce road traffic accidents (RTAs) and resultant deaths, at least initially. It could also affect overall levels of drinking and related harms, which are rising in Scotland at least in part due to increased home drinking. We will conduct group interviews with the general public to explore attitudes and responses to the change and whether, how and why they feel they changed their drinking patterns, locations, or mode of transport, both initially and over time. We will also conduct individual interviews with pub/bar owners/managers to find out how these businesses have responded to the limit change; and with police and community safety staff to ask them how the change has affected travel and enforcement. Finally, we will review data on police enforcement and public awareness campaigns. Our findings will enable better understanding of how the change may have impacted on overall drinking levels, drinking/driving patterns and related harms in Scotland, and will therefore inform future policies to reduce alcohol-related harm.