

The Right Hon Philip Hammond MP
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Department for Transport
Great Minster House
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14th July 2010

The application of recommendations made in the Report of Sir Peter North's Review of Drink
and Drug Driving Law

I am writing to welcome you to your appointment as Secretary of State for Transport, on behalf of a number of organisations which although linked to the public health sector have reason to call for action on a matter which falls largely within your remit as Secretary of State for Transport.

You will of course be aware of the level of death and injury on British roads and of the importance in taking a preventative, public health approach by acting to improve the safety of all road users as far as is as reasonably practicable.

You will also be aware of the number of people Killed and Seriously Injured (KSI) each year as a result of crashes involving a driver over the legal Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) limit and of the number of people killed and seriously injured each year as a result of crashes involving a driver with a BAC of between 50 and 80 mg/100ml, the current BAC limit for British drivers.

As you know, Drivers with a BAC of between 20 and 50 mg/100 ml have at least a three times greater risk of dying in a vehicle crash than those drivers who have no alcohol present in their blood. This risk is at least six times that level for drivers with a BAC of between 50 and 80 mg/100 ml, and to 11 times with a BAC of between 80 and 100 mg/100 ml.

In his report, Sir Peter recommends, among other things, a reduction in the BAC limit from 80 to 50mg/100ml. Although subject to various research approaches, it is estimated that such a move would result in between 43 and 168 fewer deaths on British roads in the first year with an estimate of up to 303 lives annually saved by the 6th year. A reduction of 303 deaths would imply a reduction in deaths of around 22 per cent in 2017 if Sir Peter's recommendations were implemented in 2011 (¹ If all else remains the same and trends continue as they have from

2000). In 2008 figures, the total value of prevention of 303 drink drive-related road deaths is estimated to be around £484 million.

Furthermore, serious injury reduction as a result of such a move has been estimated at anywhere between 280 and 16,000.

We urge you to adopt the proposals made in Sir Peter's report, make an immediate and sustained reduction in death and injury on British roads and make a significant and positive impact on the health of the British public.

Additionally, to aid compliance we urge you to encourage your colleague The Right Hon Kenneth Clark to ensure that the offences involving mandatory disqualification in sections 4(1), 5(1)(a), 7(6) and 7A(6) of the Road Traffic Act 1988 are added to the list of 'Offences Brought to Justice' determined by the Ministry of Justice, on which the police in England and Wales are required to report.

Together we urge you to prioritise the adoption of recommendations made by Sir Peter North as part of a wider commitment to improvement the safety of British roads and British road users.

Yours sincerely

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