

Consultation on DVLA proposal to extend the high risk offender (HRO) scheme

Response from Brake, the road safety charity

12 March 2013

About Brake

[Brake](#) is an independent charity working across the UK to make roads safer, prevent road death and injury, and care for victims. Brake carries out research into road users' attitudes and behaviour in relation to road safety, engages schools and communities to spread road safety education, disseminates international research, guidance and case studies to fleet and road safety professionals through its Fleet Safety Forum and Road Safety Forum, and supports communities campaigning for road safety. It is also a national, government-funded provider of specialist support for people bereaved and seriously injured in road crashes, running a national helpline and providing packs that are handed to bereaved families by police following every road death.

For more information contact Ellen Booth, senior campaigns officer, on ebooth@brake.org.uk or 01484 550067.

Response

Brake strongly welcomes the proposals within this consultation, on the basis that they will help to ensure more high risk drink drive offenders are included within this scheme and subject to rigorous testing before regaining their licence. This is vital to ensure the highest risk offenders undergo rehabilitation, and if this is not possible, are subject to long-term disqualification from public roads to protect the general public from the danger they pose.

Brake would also advocate the DVLA assessing the safety benefits of extending the HRO scheme to a wider group, on the basis that the scheme has been shown to be effective in reducing reoffending, yet is currently only used for very high margin offenders who are at or over 2½ times the drink drive limit. Brake proposes the DVLA considers lowering this threshold to twice the drink drive limit or below, given the very substantial increase in crash risk for drivers with this amount of alcohol in their blood.

When drivers reach between 100 and 150g alcohol per 100ml blood their risk of single vehicle crash increases to 29 times that of a sober driver¹. Once BAC level increases past 150mg alcohol/100ml blood, and up to 200g alcohol, risk of single vehicle crash increases dramatically to 382 times that of a sober driver². It is therefore clear that setting the limit for entry to the HRO scheme at 200mg/100ml blood is not in line with established research into the risks associated with drink driving at different BAC levels.

While there will be cost implications of extending the HRO scheme, if it is determined this move would have a significant safety benefit, the cost savings from prevented crashes and casualties³

¹ ibid

² ibid

³ Reported road casualties Great Britain, DfT, 2012

may compensate, as well as ensuring fewer families must suffer acutely and needlessly as a result of drink driving.

You can read more about Brake's calls for action on drink driving on its [Not a drop, not a drag](#) campaign page.

Proposal 1 - Amending an anomaly in the HRO repeat offender criteria

Brake strongly supports this proposal, for the reasons given in the consultation document.

Proposal 2 – Extending the HRO scheme to include those who refuse permission to allow a sample of their blood to be analysed

Brake strongly supports this proposal, for the reasons given in the consultation document.