About this report This is a survey report on safe driving, by Brake and Direct Line. Brake publishes regular survey reports throughout the year under the following topics:

- Are you ready to drive?
- Fit to drive
- A risky business
- Speed
- Driven to distraction

The reports are based on a survey of 1,000 drivers, conducted by an external research agency, Surveygoo. For further reports in the series, visit www.brake.org.uk/safedrivingreports
DRINK DRIVING

Q1: Within the past year, have you driven after drinking alcohol?

A fifth of people questioned (21%) admitted they had driven after drinking in the last year. Drivers aged 25 - 34 were the biggest offenders, with more than two fifths (43%) admitting to driving after drinking some alcohol at least once in the last year. Of the same age group, nearly a third (31%) drove after drinking and weren’t positive they were under the drink-drive limit.

THE FACTS:

- Drink-drive fatalities accounted for around 14% of all road deaths in 2014.1
- An estimated 25 road deaths per year are caused by drivers who are under the drink-drive limit, but who have significant amounts of alcohol in their blood.2
- Drivers who have 20-50mg alcohol per 100ml of blood are at least three times more likely to die in a crash than those with no alcohol in their blood.3
- Drivers with BAC of 10mg/100ml, far below the UK or European drink drive limits, are 46% more likely to be at fault in collisions.4
- Alcohol is a depressant and even small amounts (such as half a pint of lager) affect your reaction times, judgement and co-ordination. It also makes you drowsy and affects your vision and how you judge speed and distance.5

Q2: Within the past year, have you been a passenger with a driver who had been drinking alcohol?

Nearly a quarter of drivers (23%) questioned by Brake and Direct Line admitted they had been a passenger with a driver that had been drinking alcohol. This figure rose to 42% for drivers aged 25 - 34. The numbers are much lower for drivers aged 45 – 64, dropping to less than a fifth.

ADVICE FOR YOUNG DRIVERS:

Even very small amounts of alcohol affect drivers’ reaction times and hazard perception, making them much more likely to crash. This is the case even if the driver doesn’t feel drunk or even tipsy.

Planning ahead to get home safely will help you avoid getting into an awkward or risky situation, such as having to refuse a lift from a driver who has had alcohol.

There is no failsafe way to tell how much alcohol will put you over the limit; the concentration of alcohol in blood depends on various factors. It can be best to arrange from the outset to get a taxi or use public transport rather than relying on a lift from a driver who may drink some alcohol or driving home yourself.
Q3: How much alcohol do you think it takes to affect your driving?

Four in five drivers surveyed (79%) believe that their driving is affected at around the current drink-drive limit or below.

A small glass of wine, half a pint of average-strength beer, or one shot of spirits (or equivalent) 42.5%

Two small glasses of wine, one pint of average-strength beer, or two shots of spirits (or equivalent) 36.9%

Three small glasses of wine, one and a half pints of average-strength beer, or three shots of spirits (or equivalent) 10.6%

Four or more small glasses of wine, two or more pints of average-strength beer, or four or more shots of spirits (or equivalent) 9.9%

Figure 1: How much alcohol do you think it takes to affect your driving?

Q4: What should the drink-drive limit be?

Of the drivers that Brake and Direct Line surveyed, just over half (54%) believe that the drink-drive limit in the United Kingdom should be cut to the effective zero-tolerance limit of 20mg of alcohol per 100ml of blood, which would be in line with countries such as Sweden. A further 25% of drivers surveyed believe that the current drink-drive limit should be cut from the current limit of 80mg of alcohol per 100ml of blood to 50mg per 100ml, which is in line with Scotland. Drivers over the age of 44 were more inclined to support dropping the drink-drive limit to the effective zero-tolerance limit, while drivers under the age of 35 were more likely to back the drink-drive limit remaining at the current level in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

End notes
2. Saving lives by lowering the drink-drive limit, Prof. R. Allsop, RAC Foundation, 2015
4. Official blame for drivers with very low blood alcohol content, British Medical Journal, 2014