News story: Christmas drink drive campaign uses friends' influence to help save lives

Tell your friends not to drink drive this festive period — says latest THINK! campaign starting today (7 December 2017).

For this year's campaign, which runs to January 1 (2018), THINK! has teamed up with Kiss FM duo Rickie and Melvin, who will be urging young adults to encourage their friends not to get behind the wheel after drinking.

The radio presenters will also front videos for Kiss FM's social media channels, with its audience almost a third more likely than the average person to enjoy a night out in a pub.

A further radio advert, which will run in England and Wales, uses the message "mates don't let mates drink and drive", playing on the fact friends will say anything to each other, except to stop them from drink driving.

Road Safety Minister Jesse Norman said:

> Driving even while below the legal limit is becoming increasingly socially unacceptable, with more and more people choosing to turn down drinking any alcohol when they plan to drive. But even so there are still some drivers who are willing to take the risk.
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> Friends, colleagues and family members can positively influence those around them. So we are calling on them to stop potential drink drivers from getting behind the wheel and risking tragedy this Christmas.

Rickie Haywood Williams said:

> We feel we owe it to our audience to share such an important message. Me and Melv grew up together, we look out for each other and we want to spread the word to our listeners to do the same.

Melvin Odoom continued:

> Rickie will always be there for me on a night out and vice versa. Drink driving awareness is something that needs to be out in front at all times. The campaign is designed to shine a light on the issue and we want to help us much as we can to stop people making the wrong decision.

Police forces across England and Wales are also taking part in enforcement action throughout December and on January 1.

National Police Chiefs' Council Lead for Roads Policing, Chief Constable Anthony Bangham said:

> Every year police forces deal with cases of drink or drug driving that directly result in families facing Christmas without loves ones. Even a small amount of alcohol or drugs in your system can affect your ability to drive safely — don't let your friends and family pay the price.
>
> Police forces are running targeted operations across the country to enforce the law on drink and drug driving: you can face an unlimited fine, disqualification for driving, and a long prison sentence.

In October, it was the 50th anniversary of the breathalyser test. Last December (2016), 89,138 motorists were tested and 5,869 were found to be over the drink drive limit.

In England last year, more than half of car drivers who were involved in a crash and failed a breath test were aged up to 34.

THINK! has also teamed up with a number of partners including Arriva Buses, which is offering free bus journeys to either home or work the morning after a night out, and Budweiser, which is launching a new alcohol-free beer to coincide with the campaign.

LADbible will also be creating videos for its social media channel and Diageo will be marking the 5 millionth person to sign up to its drink drive pledge.

The Maritime and Coastguard Agency is also promoting its cold water shock film, which delivers a hard-hitting message designed to make people think twice before entering the water. Coastguard statistics reveal that on average around 50 people die of alcohol-related drowning around the coast of the UK each year. Of these, a significant percentage are young men who end up in the water as they make their way home.

Network Rail, British Transport Police and Rail Safety Standards Board will also be launching an alcohol awareness campaign next week reminding the public to "keep a clear head" when they are around the railway. The organisations will also be targeting Christmas revellers at the busiest railway stations as well as in pubs and clubs located near railways stations and level crossings.