

News story: Drug driving crackdown means more dangerous motorists off roads

Tough new drug driving laws are now taking more dangerous drivers off roads, with conviction rates for the new drug driving offence at 98%.

Thanks to government action, which is ensuring police forces now have access to improved screening equipment to test suspected drug drivers, motorists are now just as likely to be convicted for driving under the influence of drugs as they are for drunk driving.

A new law introduced in 2015 makes it [illegal to drive with certain drugs in the body above specified limits](#), and includes 8 illegal drugs and 9 prescription drugs. If caught, drivers can lose their licence for at least a year, be fined up to £5,000 or even end up in prison.

2015 saw 1,442 motorists in the UK – about 4 a day – convicted for offences including being in charge of, attempting to drive, or causing death after exceeding the legal drug limit.

Transport Minister Paul Maynard said:

Driving under the influence of drugs has no place in our society. It devastates families and ruins lives.

Our tough approach has taken dangerous drivers off our roads and is stopping other crimes taking place.

With higher prosecutions and convictions, we are delivering on our clear message that if you take drugs and drive, you will face the consequences.

The [report](#) out today (27 August 2017) shows that of the drivers who underwent a preliminary drug screening, approximately 94% were male and 64% were aged between 16 and 29 years.

The research also shows these laws are disrupting wider criminal activity as two-thirds of people caught drug-driving have previously committed other offences. Merseyside Police reported 21 arrests in March 2016 for drug driving offences, the majority of whom were criminally active in the recent past or were members of organised criminal groups.

Justice Minister Dominic Raab said:

Our message is that any driver who risk the lives of others by

taking the wheel under the influence of drugs will be punished.

We're using better technology to detect this reckless behaviour, and our courts are punishing offenders in record numbers.

Before the new law came into force, police would have to gather evidence that the driver was impaired, which would include carrying out tests or getting a medical opinion, before being able to take a blood or urine sample at a station.

Police forces now have access to improved screening equipment to test suspected drug drivers for cannabis and cocaine at the roadside. They are also able to test for other drugs such as ecstasy, LSD, ketamine and heroin at a police station with a blood test, even if a driver passes the roadside check.

It makes it quicker to identify those driving under the influence of drugs and helps the prosecution of drug drivers.

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

Targeted legislation against drug driving in March 2015 has made it much easier for police to consistently identify those driving under the influence of drugs. This change in law has enabled us to prosecute thousands more dangerous drivers who may have previously escaped detection yet still presented a very serious threat to other road users.

Far too many people still attempt to drive under the influence of drugs. We are better prepared to catch them than ever before and will ensure that they face the full penalty of law.

[News story: The AAIB has sent a team to Dorset](#)

[unable to retrieve full-text content]The AAIB has sent a team to investigate a light aircraft accident in Dorset.

Press release: New fund launched to reduce litter through innovative projects

Almost £500,000 will be awarded to community projects to tackle the blight of littering, Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey announced today.

The money will support the development of new innovation and approaches for tackling litter, from behavioural research for better positioned bins and recycling points so more people throw their rubbish away, to digital technology. This includes apps and 'smart-bins' that can text alerts to rubbish collectors when they are full, stopping nasty litter from spilling out onto our high streets or leading people to litter nearby.

Cleaning up the country's streets costs the tax payer almost £800 million a year when much of this is avoidable litter, and money that could be better spent in the community.

Despite this, a worrying 1 in 5 people have admitted to dropping litter in the past. As we head into the bank holiday weekend, with people out enjoying the warm weather, they are reminded to throw their rubbish in bins or take their rubbish home, rather than spoil our spaces with rubbish.

The Litter Innovation Fund will support local areas to crack down and reduce littering in our communities by enabling local authorities, community groups, charities, educational institutions, and small and medium enterprises to apply for funding towards innovative and creative solutions to the problem.

Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey, said:

Tackling the litter that blights streets across our country is an important part of our drive to be the first generation to leave our environment in a better state than we found it. I pay tribute to those who help clear up our pavements and verges.

The Litter Innovation Fund offers a great opportunity for the most creative solutions to littering to receive funding and for us all to learn new ways of how to stop littering happening. 10% of the fund is entirely dedicated to preventing marine litter, a growing problem with global consequences for our precious marine environment.

I encourage groups to get involved and showcase the wealth of options there are out there to tackle littering. Let's help people make the right choices.

Communities Minister Marcus Jones, said:

The Litter Strategy detailed our plans on education and awareness, improving enforcement and better cleaning and infrastructure. I said in that strategy that I am passionate about our need to reduce litter in this country and I meant it.

Many areas are similarly keen to tackle litter locally by encouraging their communities to bin their rubbish properly rather than littering their streets and green spaces.

We are looking to support the most creative plans with a funding boost from the Litter Innovation Fund.

Welcoming the fund's launch, Keep Britain Tidy Chief Executive Allison Ogden-Newton, said:

Innovation is vital if we are to change the behaviour of the minority of people who still think it is OK to drop their rubbish on the ground for someone else to pick up.

Keep Britain Tidy's Centre for Social Innovation was created to develop and test new approaches to behaviour change and we are delighted to see the Government has recognised the importance of innovation to tackle the blight of littering in our country.

All projects will be measured and evaluated to assess their effectiveness and the most successful could be rolled out more widely. This will ensure local authorities and communities make the best use of a host of innovative solutions in focussing their resources to tackle the scourge of litter.

In addition, some £45,000 of the fund will be exclusively dedicated to projects designed to address marine littering and help prevent the amount of plastic entering our oceans.

The fund builds on the Government's wider Litter Strategy for England and the Government today has also [published responses](#) to the public consultation on penalties for environmental offences including littering.

Information for applicants to the Litter Innovation Fund can be found on [WRAP's website](#) from 10am on Saturday 26 August.

For further information please contact Defra press office on out of hours on 0345 051 8486.

[News story: Online services: technical issues](#)

One of our key suppliers is experiencing technical issues, which can prevent access to some of our online services.

You may have problems accessing our online services, including submitting your annual return. This is because one of our key suppliers is experiencing technical difficulties, which has affected a number of clients including the Charity Commission.

We are working hard with the suppliers to fix this issue, and hope to resume normal service as soon as possible.

However, due to the bank holiday weekend this issue may not be fully resolved until Tuesday 29 August at the earliest.

We apologise for any inconvenience this may cause. We will let you know when normal service has resumed.

[News story: Competing designs for the UK's new Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre](#)

The consultation on the design competition for the UK's Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre is coming to a close. The project will create a national space for remembrance as well as challenging visitors to stand up against hatred and prejudice.

The [online feedback portal](#), where anyone can see and give feedback on the designs, will close at 7pm Wednesday 30 August 2017.

The international design competition sought to harness the very best architectural talent to create an emotionally powerful and sensitively designed memorial. 92 design teams expressed an interest in the project, with a shortlist of ten invited to submit concept designs.

The opportunity for the public to feed in their view to the Jury was announced in January 2017 and a number of exhibitions have since taken place around the country. The Jury will meet to make its decision in September 2017.

Public feedback received as part of the consultation will be given to the independent Jury to consider before making its decision. The final decision for the schemes and winner will sit with the Jury.

The designs have most recently been displayed at the V&A where visitors were able to see and feedback on the designs as well as take part in a number of events involving Holocaust survivors.

The Jury is comprised of:

- Sir Peter Bazalgette (Chair)
- Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP, Communities and Local Government Secretary
- Rt Hon Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London
- Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis
- Samantha Cohen, Assistant Private Secretary to Her Majesty The Queen
- Charlotte Cohen, Holocaust Commission Youth Commissioner
- Alice Greenwald, President and CEO of 9/11 Memorial and Museum
- Ben Helfgott MBE, Holocaust survivor
- Natasha Kaplinsky OBE, Broadcaster
- Lord Daniel Finkelstein OBE, Journalist
- Dame Julia Peyton-Jones DBE, Former Director of Serpentine Gallery
- Sarah Weir OBE, CEO of Design Council
- Paul Williams OBE, Stanton Williams Architects.

The United Kingdom Holocaust Memorial International Design Competition is being run in accordance with EU procurement guidelines and the Public Contract Regulations 2015. This competition is being organised by Malcolm Reading Consultants and has been advertised in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) on behalf of the United Kingdom Holocaust Memorial Foundation and the Department for Communities and Local Government.