



The High Risk Offender Scheme for drink-drivers

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Environment, Transport and the Regions**

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Executive Summary

This report explores the characteristics of those drink-drive offenders who have been classified as High Risk Offenders (HROs), based on:

- analyses of driver licence data supplied by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA);
- three surveys, two with separate samples of HROs and the third with non-HROs.

According to regulations which came into force in June 1990, a drink-drive offender can become an HRO by:

- 1 providing an evidential sample with an alcohol level at least 2½ times the legal limit;
- 2 providing an evidential sample with an alcohol level between 1 and 2½ times the legal limit, having been convicted of a drink-driving offence in the previous ten years; or
- 3 refusing to supply an evidential sample.

Once the period of disqualification has ended, the driving licence is not reissued automatically. Instead an HRO must reapply for a licence, and one will only be issued after a positive medical assessment. The report shows that the three Types of HRO have somewhat different characteristics. It also shows that not only Type 2 HROs have significant levels of reoffending: nearly a quarter of Type 1 and a third of Type 3 HROs had a previous drink-driving conviction in the preceding ten years.

Analyses of DVLA driver licence file

In 1991, the first full year of the new HRO scheme, there were about 38 thousand new HROs. The annual number fell to just over 33 thousand in 1994, but has since risen gradually to about 34 thousand in 1997. About two fifths of drink-drive offenders over the period of the new scheme have 'qualified' as High Risk Offenders. The proportion of all HROs who are of Type 1 has risen gradually over these years, while the proportion of Type 2 has fallen and the proportion of Type 3 has varied only slightly.

HROs tend to be older than 'Ordinary Offenders' (taken to be drivers who were convicted in 1992 of their first drink-drive offence which was not sufficiently serious for them to become an HRO). Among men, the age distribution for Ordinary Offenders has a sharp peak at 21, while the distributions for HROs have broader peaks in the range 26-30. The peak ages for women are higher, 26-28 for Ordinary Offenders and 32-34 for HROs. About 8 per cent of HROs and nearly 9 per cent of all drink-drive offenders are women. However, the percentage of HROs disqualified *per year* who are women has risen steadily, as has the percentage of all drink-drive offenders.

Socio-economic information was provided by linking drivers' postcodes to the ACORN directory (CACI, 1993). A consistent relation was found between the number of HROs and ACORN category - a driver from a category A area (labelled in the ACORN system as Thriving) is roughly one third less likely than a typical driver to be an

HRO, whereas a driver from a category F area (labelled as Striving) is roughly two-fifths more likely.

Some drivers take more than two years to regain their licences. The data suggest that about two thirds of HROs will eventually regain their licences and a third will not. Records from the Drivers' Medical Branch at DVLA show that in any year only a small proportion of HROs applying for a new licence are refused, eg 3.5 per cent of those that applied in 1997/98. Therefore it appears that most of the third of HROs have chosen not to apply for a new licence.

Significant numbers of HROs are convicted for driving while disqualified: on average, almost 1-in-10 HROs of Type 2 or 3 are convicted per year of disqualification, but the rate is only half as high for HROs of Type 1. Significant numbers are also re-convicted of drink-driving, i.e. further offences committed after they became HROs. The mean number of subsequent convictions for men who became HROs in 1991-92 is 0.41 (Type 2), 0.31 (Type 3) and 0.21 (Type 1), compared with 0.14 for Ordinary Offenders. Thus, the HRO regulations are successfully identifying drivers whose subsequent behaviour shows that they pose a genuine high risk.

Questionnaire Survey 1

The aim of the survey was to examine the drinking habits and attitudes of HROs, and their experiences of the scheme. A sample of HROs were interviewed while they were disqualified, and most recognised that they were over the legal limit at the time they were stopped by the Police; however most felt they were still fit to drive. Around half of those who claimed to have consumed more than 20 units (roughly 4 times the legal limit) still felt they were fit to drive. The willingness to consider an alternative form of transport to return home increased with the perceived lack of fitness to drive.

Four fifths of offenders claimed to have suffered adverse effects as a result of their conviction in addition to the penalties imposed by the Court. Nearly two thirds of the principal effects related to employment and one fifth related to domestic and social issues, such as the effect on home or social life.

Only a small number of respondents claimed to have heard of the term *High Risk Offender* prior to their appearance in Court. However, over two thirds claimed that they were aware that they would need to pass a medical examination before getting their licence back. The level of awareness was significantly higher amongst those over 35 years of age. Almost all drivers stated that they intended to reapply for their licence at the end of their disqualification period. Amongst the few who had decided not to, the reasons included no longer needing a car and not wishing to go through the 'hassle' of reapplication.

Questionnaire Survey 2

Some HROs do not apply quickly for a new licence, and this survey examined their reasons by interviewing a

sample of HROs who were still unlicensed more than a year after their disqualification had ended. This proved to be a difficult group to interview, particularly because about two fifths of the sample were reported to be no longer living at the addresses held by DVLA. Two fifths of offenders who did not apply for a new licence immediately they were entitled to felt that the process was too expensive, and a third said that they no longer needed a car. Of those offenders who had not yet applied, about half said that they intended to do so in the future. Around a quarter did not intend to do so; the remainder were unsure.

An attempt was made to measure the extent to which non-reapplicants were continuing to drive while still disqualified. One in nine HROs admitted to actual driving whilst disqualified, normally on just a few occasions. Naturally, respondents may well be reluctant to report candidly the extent to which they have driven while disqualified.

Questionnaire Survey 3

This survey investigated knowledge of the HRO Scheme amongst male drivers who had *not* been convicted of drink driving offences. A third of the respondents claimed to know that *some drink-driving offenders must pass a medical examination before they can get their licence back at the end of disqualification*. Only one driver in twenty claimed that they *had heard of the High Risk Offender Scheme*. Nearly half the respondents thought that *It is up to the Court to decide* who has to pass the medical examination. Respondents who claimed knowledge of either the medical examination or the HRO Scheme were no better informed as to the types of offenders classed as HROs than those who claimed no knowledge of the Scheme.

HROs and rehabilitation courses

Nearly 30 per cent of offenders attending drink-drive rehabilitation courses have been HROs. 24 months after conviction, HROs who had not attended courses had reoffended about three and a half times more than HROs who had attended a course. The improvement was similar to that achieved by non-HROs who attend courses.

Reference

CACI Ltd (1993). *The ACORN user guide*. CACI Information Services, London.

1 Introduction

The Transport Research Laboratory (TRL) and the British Institute of Traffic Education Research (BITER) have carried out an investigation into the working of the High Risk Offender Scheme for the Department of the Environment Transport and the Regions (DETR). The term High Risk Offender (HRO) originated in the report of the Blennerhasset Committee of Enquiry set up in 1974 to review the operation of the law relating to drinking and driving (DOE, 1976).

The High Risk Offender Scheme was first introduced in May 1983. At that time it covered offenders with two convictions within ten years with a BAC (Blood Alcohol Concentration) in excess of 200mg/100ml (2.5 times the legal alcohol limit of 80mg/100ml) and offenders convicted of refusing to provide an evidential specimen. The criteria were broadened in June 1990, since when an HRO is any driver who is disqualified on having:

- 1 provided an evidential sample with an alcohol level at least 2.5 times the legal limit;
- 2 provided an evidential sample with an alcohol level between 1 and 2.5 times the legal limit (equivalent to 80-200mg/100ml BAC) and had been convicted of a drink-driving offence in the previous ten years; or
- 3 refused to supply an evidential specimen.

Once the period of disqualification has ended, the driving licence is not reissued automatically as with most other types of offender. Instead, an HRO must reapply for a new licence, and one will only be issued after a satisfactory medical assessment has been given by the Drivers Medical Group at DVLA (the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency).

The analyses in this report are of the records of HROs as they existed at the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) in March 1998, when the new-style HRO scheme had been running for 7 years and 9 months. As few HROs are disqualified for more than 3 years, many had by then become eligible to reapply for their licences. Thus, it is now possible to gain a clear idea of the proportion of HROs who will eventually regain their licences. In addition it is now feasible to carry out an in depth examination of offenders who have experienced the working of the scheme from conviction to regaining their licence.

Section 2 of this report explains the practical working of the HRO scheme. It also describes the information available from the Driver Licence File of the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) which has been used in the statistical analyses and to draw the samples for the questionnaire surveys. Section 3 gives the results of the statistical analyses of the social-profile and reoffending rates of HROs. Section 4 reports on interview surveys examining characteristics of HROs and the working of the scheme in terms of the views of offenders experiencing its effects. Section 5 explores the knowledge of a representative sample of the male driving population about the HRO Scheme. Section 6 reports on HROs and drink-drive rehabilitation courses. Section 7 brings together conclusions that can be drawn from the research and Section 8 suggests recommendations for further research.

2 Practical aspects of the HRO scheme

2.1 Practical implementation of the regulations

This Section describes the processing of drink-drive offenders following conviction in order to provide background information for the analyses presented in the later Sections.

i At Court

- a A drink-drive offender is convicted and then sentenced (this may or may not be on the same occasion). If the offender is a 'High Risk Offender' they are sometimes told about the scheme by the Court, but generally the first that they learn about it is a letter from DVLA (see paragraph iib).
- b At the time of sentencing they hand in their licence to the Court if they have been disqualified. If they do not have their licence with them, they are told to hand it in to the Court.
- c The Court uses form D20 or magnetic tape or electronic interchange to inform DVLA of the offence and the sentencing details, and the offender's name, date of birth, address and licence number if available. The licence is generally sent with the D20 but, if not available immediately, it is returned to DVLA separately. The physical licence is destroyed by DVLA, but details are retained on the computer file.

ii DVLA letters

- a The information from the Court notification is entered on the driver's record in the computer file. First time drink-drive offenders who are under 2.5 times the limit are sent a letter explaining that they might become an HRO in future if they commit further drink-drive offences.
- b Alcohol levels of at least 2.5 times the legal limit should have been recorded by the Court and transmitted to DVLA. The computer system can then identify HRO cases and a marker is placed on the driver's record. A letter is sent to the offender. It explains the scheme and says that DVLA will write again 3 months before the end of the disqualification period. This may be the first time offenders hear that they will be required to pass a medical examination before regaining their licence.
- c Three months before the disqualification period ends, another letter is sent to the HRO. It reiterates the need for a medical assessment, tells the offender to get form D1, complete it and send with the current fee to DVLA Drivers' Medical Branch.

iii Procedure for renewing licence

The renewal procedure can start up to three months before the end of the disqualification period.

- a The offender gets Form D1 from the Post Office. It is completed and sent with the current fee to DVLA Drivers' Medical Branch. Details of any change of

address may be notified at this time. It should be noted that the offender becomes unlicensed upon disqualification, and the licence is cancelled. There is no requirement to notify DVLA of a change of address during the disqualification period, although it can be processed if DVLA are notified.

- b Drivers' Medical Branch receives form D1 and writes back to offenders telling them the name and address of the appointed examining doctor.
- c The offender contacts the examining Doctor, and makes an appointment to see them. The applicant is required to make the appointment within three weeks and return the form to DVLA showing the date of the appointment.
- d The offender attends the Medical Examination. There are two forms which are sent to the examining Doctor; form DR1 which is completed by the offender, and form DR3, which is completed by the examining Doctor following a blood test and medical examination. The offender pays the current fee for the medical examination.
- e If the blood test or medical examination reveals something that requires further examination then form DR2 is sent to the offender's GP to inform them of the findings.
- f Drivers' Medical Branch considers the results, with reference to the forms received and decides whether to issue the licence for the full term (until 70), to refuse a licence or to issue a short period licence so that a driver may be reassessed (normally after a year).
- g If a full term licence is granted then the licence is despatched and the DVLA does not write separately to the offender. If the decision is to refuse a licence or to issue a short term licence then the offender is advised and told that they have a right of appeal to a Magistrates' Court (Sheriff Court in Scotland). Licences and letters are despatched separately.

Figures from the DVLA show that 30,214 HROs applied to renew their licence during the financial year 1997/98. 1,305 short period licences were issued (4.3 per cent) and 1,063 (3.5 per cent) were refused a licence.

2.2 The DVLA data source

The principal source of statistical information used in this report is the Driver Licence File maintained by DVLA, which contains information about all licensed drivers and riders in Great Britain.

Twice yearly, data are extracted from this file for each driver whose record contains an 'HRO Indicator' and they are sent to TRL for analysis as part of its research programme. This indicator is set for any driver who qualified as an HRO since the new scheme began. The indicator is also set for any driver who, while not currently an HRO, has been convicted of a drink-driving offence and could become an HRO under the second criterion if they were convicted of a subsequent offence. The great majority of 'ordinary' (ie non-HRO) drink-drive offenders fall into this category and so are included automatically when the data are extracted.

The DVLA file only contains information that is related to the administration of the licensing system, but much of this has clear value for research. The following items are of particular relevance to this project:

- i the driver's age, sex and postcode;
- ii the dates at which any periods of disqualification began;
- iii the HRO Indicator;
- iv details of convictions for endorsable driving offences including offence type, date of offence, date of conviction, period of disqualification, alcohol level.

Wherever permitted by the regulations which govern the operations of DVLA, details of driving convictions are removed from the DVLA file when a driver applies for a replacement licence, in particular following a period of disqualification. The minimum period for which details must be retained varies with the offence type, the commonest period being three years. It is ten years in the case of drink-drive convictions, however, so the history of drink-drive offences in the file prepared for TRL is effectively complete from 1988.

As mentioned in the Introduction, there can be three reasons for drivers becoming HROs. Their subsequent treatment is independent of the particular reason, but research summarised by Maycock (1997) in a review of drinking and driving has found that the three types of HRO defined by these reasons have distinctive characteristics. The reason can be determined from the driver's offence history, and will be abbreviated as follows:

1 offence ≥ 200	- HRO type 1
2nd offence, 80-200	- HRO type 2
Refusal	- HRO type 3

There can be ambiguity about the appropriate type in a small number of cases, eg where a driver is convicted during one court appearance of drink-drive offences committed on various dates. Such cases are assigned to the highest appropriate type (ordered as in the above list).

This system of classification will be adopted in this report, but it does implicitly emphasise the role of BAC level or refusal to supply a specimen at the expense of any previous drink-drive offences. The reason for this emphasis is, as discussed by Maycock, the traditional view that alcohol levels of 2.5 times the legal limit or more pose particularly high risks.

However, 23 per cent of those becoming an HRO because of such an offence with $BAC \geq 200$ have been convicted in the previous 10 years with BAC between 80 and 200; 33 per cent of those becoming an HRO because of refusing to supply a specimen have been convicted of a drink-drive offence in the previous 10 years. It may be argued that this level of reoffending is more significant than the level of alcohol or the refusal to supply a specimen. Section 8 will consider the scope for elaborating the system of classification in future research.

The file held by TRL was used for the statistical analyses reported in Section 3. It was also used to extract the Driver Numbers of HROs for the two interview surveys described in Section 4. DVLA was then requested to supply the names

and addresses of the respondents. For the postal survey reported in Section 5, DVLA were asked to supply the names and addresses of a sample of male drivers who had not been convicted of a drink-driving offence.

3 Characteristics of HROs: Statistical analyses

The data file used in this analysis was supplied to TRL by DVLA in April 1998. It contains information on offenders convicted up to March 1998. Because of a possible delay of up to three months between offenders being convicted and the information from the Courts being entered onto DVLA's database, these data are assumed to be complete up to the end of November 1997.

3.1 The number of HROs

Figure 1 presents the monthly number of new HROs between June 1990 and December 1997. There is a fairly consistent seasonal pattern, in addition to random variations. This represents a combination of seasonal patterns in the incidence of drink-driving and in the timetables of the Courts. For example, the number of new HROs dips each December because Courts are closed over

Christmas, and peaks in January to clear the backlog, plus the consequences of any rise in the number of drink-driving offences detected over the 'festive period'.

Figure 2 shows the distribution of HROs between the three types. Table 1 shows the annual totals (the 1997 total may be slightly too low because of the potential incompleteness of court details in December). Note that this report adopts the convention that a driver can only become an HRO once, so that a subsequent disqualification after regaining the driving licence does not lead to a new HRO and hence does not contribute to Table 1.

Table 1 Number of new HROs per year

	Number of new HROs (thousands)	Distribution of HROs (%)		
		1 offence ≥ 200	2nd offence 80-200	Refusal
1991	37.8	44	34	21
1992	35.5	46	33	21
1993	33.9	44	33	23
1994	33.1	46	32	22
1995	33.1	47	32	21
1996	33.2	49	32	19
1997 ^x	33.6	50	31	19

^x data for 1997 are incomplete

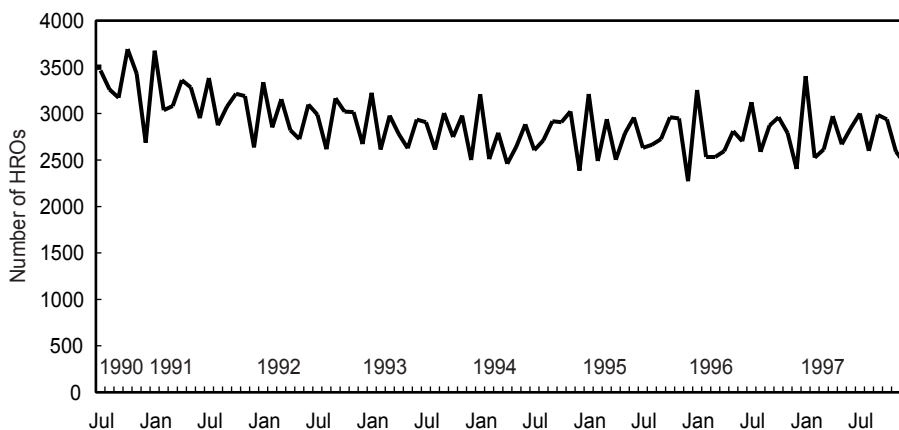


Figure 1 The number of new HROs per month

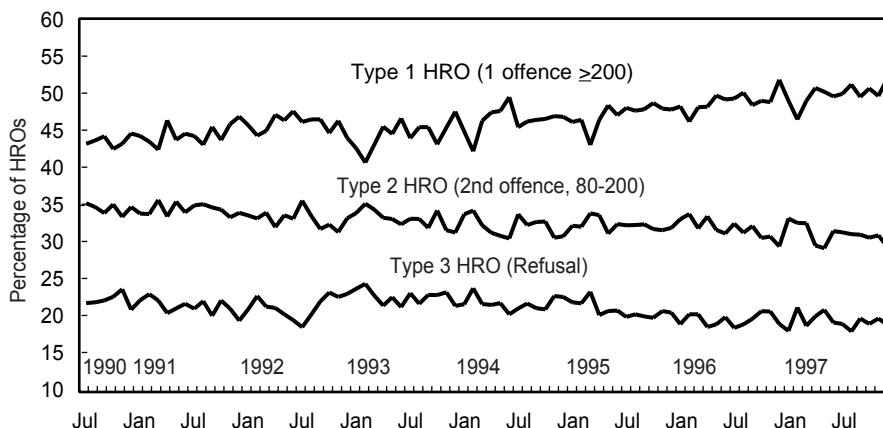


Figure 2 The distribution of new HROs

These results show that the number of new HROs fell until 1994-95, and has since varied very little; this pattern largely reflects the changing level of drink-drive accidents shown in official figures (DETR, 1998). The first group of HROs (1 offence ≥ 200) is the largest, and has grown while the other two have tended to decline. Part of the increasing proportion in the first group and the decreasing proportion in the second group is likely to have been a consequence of the changes in criteria in June 1990.

Over the period covered by the table, the proportion of young drivers declined as a consequence of the declining birthrate in the early 1970s. The resulting rise in the average age of drivers would have tended to increase the proportion of 'repeat offenders', since the typical driver would have had a longer driving career during which to commit a previous drink-driving offence. The trend has been in the opposite direction, however, with a higher proportion of new HROs being convicted with high BACs.

Since the new HRO scheme began in June 1990, about 39 per cent of drink-drive offenders have 'qualified' as High Risk Offenders. This calculation is based on all HROs, irrespective of when they were convicted, and this approach is followed by most of the analyses presented in the following Sections; however, several will examine how particular aspects have varied between years.

3.2 Social characteristics of HROs

3.2.1 Age

The date of birth is recorded for every driver in the DVLA database: it forms part of the driver number. It is thus possible to compare the age distributions for the various categories of drink-drive offenders: to be precise, the age when they were convicted of the drink-drive offence that led to them becoming an HRO.

Figure 3 presents the results of an analysis using single year bands; drivers aged 51 or more were assigned to a single 'older' category and do not appear in the figure. For women, the three types of HRO are grouped together because of the relatively small numbers. The figure includes results for 'Ordinary Offenders' to provide a yardstick: these are drivers who were convicted in 1992 of their first drink-drive offence which was not sufficiently serious for them to become an HRO, i.e. the offence was not a refusal and the alcohol level was under 2½ times the legal limit.

HROs clearly tend to be older than Ordinary Offenders. Among men, there is a clearly-defined peak age of 21 for Ordinary Offenders, whereas the three HRO graphs have much broader peaks in the 26-30 age range. The graphs for HRO types 1 and 3 (1 offence ≥ 200 and refusers) are similar; HRO type 2 (2nd offence 80-200) are more common between the ages of 23 and 34, but less common

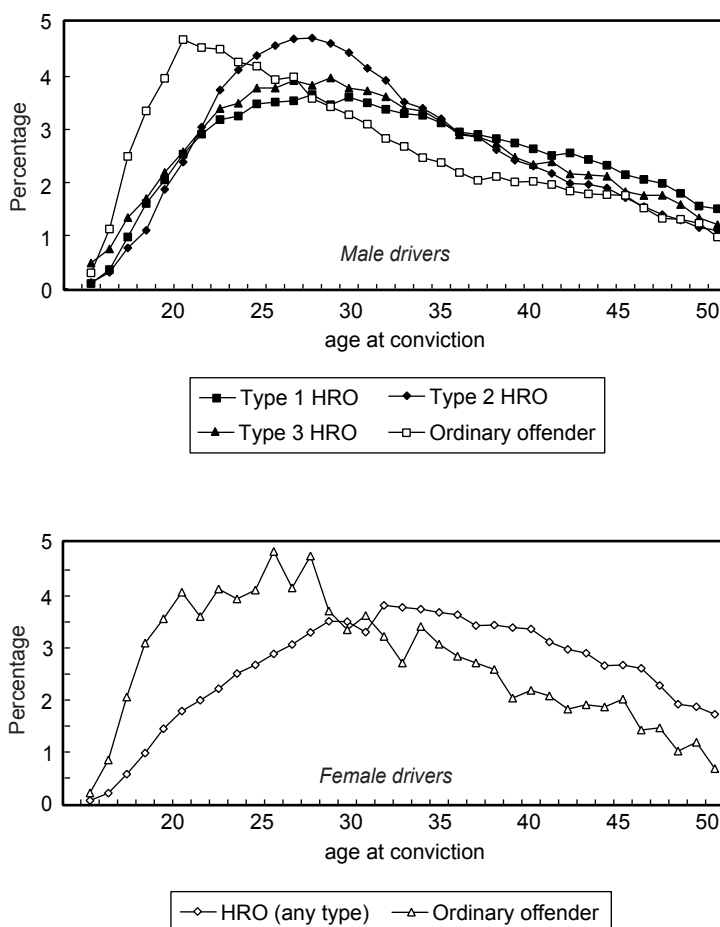


Figure 3 Age distribution of HROs and 'Ordinary offenders'

among younger and older drivers. The peak ages for women are higher, 26-28 for Ordinary Offenders and 32-34 for HROs.

In addition to being older on average, women HROs also differ from men in the distribution of HRO types. Only 13 per cent of women HROs are of type 2 (2nd offence 80-200) compared with 34 per cent of men, while 62 per cent are of type 1 (1 offence ≥ 200) compared with 45 per cent of men. (This may be influenced by the fact that a woman drinking the same amount as a man will normally reach a higher BAC.) The differences are less for HRO type 3 (refusers) - 26 per cent for women and 21 per cent for men. Overall, 7.8 per cent of HROs are women, compared with 8.7 per cent of Ordinary Offenders, but the next Section shows that the percentages have risen year by year.

3.2.2 Sex

It has been shown that a relatively low proportion of HROs are women. However, Figure 4 shows that the proportion of HROs disqualified *each year* who are female has risen steadily since the HRO scheme began in 1990. 6.1 per cent of new HROs in 1990 were women, whereas the incomplete data for 1998 suggest that this has risen to 10.6 per cent.

The rise has affected each of the HRO types although, as seen above, relatively few women HROs are of type 2 (2nd offence 80-200). The proportion of all drink-drive offenders who are women has also risen throughout the 1990s, from 6.9 to 10.4 per cent.

3.2.3 Social background

The driving licence file contains no information relating to a driver's social background, but this type of information can be introduced by using a system that is widely applied for market research purposes. The system, known as the ACORN directory (CACI, 1993), was supplied by CACILtd.

The ACORN directory classifies each local area in Great Britain using a set of 54 ACORN types. This is based on an extensive Cluster Analysis of data from the 1991 Census. The actual directory comprises a list of all British postcodes

with the appropriate ACORN type for each postcode. As the great majority of DVLA driver records contain the driver's postcode, it is possible to associate most drivers with the ACORN type of the area where they live.

The 54 ACORN types are grouped into 17 ACORN Groups, which are further grouped into 6 ACORN Categories (see Appendix A). The analyses reported below relate to the 6 ACORN Categories. The following are the labels used by CACI, more details are provided in the ACORN User Guide (CACI, 1993).

- Category A - Thriving
- Category B - Expanding
- Category C - Rising
- Category D - Settling
- Category E - Aspiring
- Category F - Striving

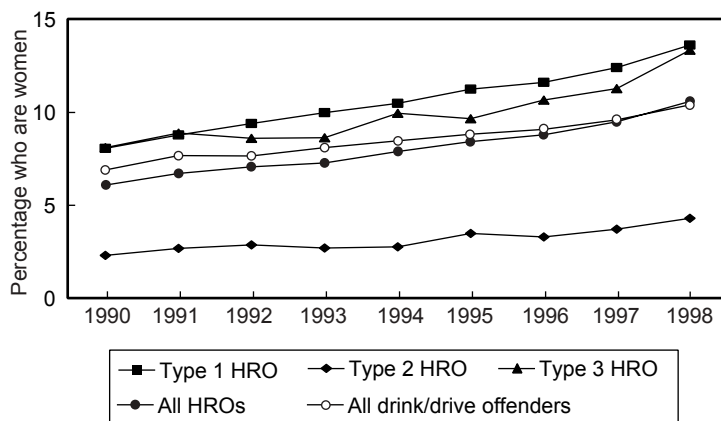
The link between the driver and the ACORN directory is the postcode. If the postcode is incomplete or inaccurate the link cannot be made; if the driver has moved and failed to notify DVLA, the link will be faulty. Provided the linked dataset is treated statistically, i.e. no reliance is placed upon the codes for individual drivers, these errors are unlikely to affect the analyses.

A driver who became an HRO several years ago may since have moved, in which case the current category may differ from the category at the time of disqualification. To minimise bias while maintaining a sufficient sample of HROs to study, the following results are based on HROs who were disqualified in or after 1996.

When the two files were linked, 88 per cent of HROs could be linked to a specific postcode in the ACORN directory. The remainder could not be linked because either:

- a the HRO postcode was unknown or incomplete; or
- b the postcode was not present in the directory.

In the latter case, techniques exist for choosing an adjacent postcode where the driver's postcode almost matches postcodes in the directory, but it was felt that these could introduce new errors and that the matching rate was already sufficiently high to allow reliable results to be



Note: 1998 data are incomplete

Figure 4 Percentage of HROs and offenders who are women

prepared. The characteristics of unlinked HROs differ slightly from those of linked drivers, there being slightly fewer female and 20-29 year old drivers than expected. The following analyses are based on the full set of linked HROs.

The question of which Categories are over- and under-represented among the population of HROs is of particular interest. CACI publishes the percentage of the population living in each type of area; Table 2 compares these with the percentage of HROs in each type of area. Where the first percentage exceeds the second, there are relatively few HROs, and *vice versa*. Thus, the relative incidence of HROs rises rather steadily as social status - as shown by the ACORN codes - declines. A Thriving driver from a category A area is almost one third less likely than a typical driver to be an HRO, whereas a Striving driver from a category F area is roughly two-fifths more likely than a typical driver to be an HRO.

The HRO-Type also varies with ACORN code. Over 55 per cent of HROs in the Thriving and Expanding categories were disqualified with BAC \geq 200, compared with 45 per cent from the Striving category. The latter had correspondingly many disqualifications for refusals and repeat offences. Some of these variations may be influenced by variations between ACORN categories of the proportions of HROs in different age groups or proportions of males and females.

3.3 Period of disqualification

The mean length of an HRO's disqualification is presented in Table 3, and varies markedly with the type of offence for which they are disqualified (which determines the HRO type) as well as the number of previous drink-drive convictions. Previous convictions clearly lead to longer disqualifications¹. HROs convicted for refusing to supply a specimen tend to receive shorter disqualifications than other HRO types, relative to the previous number of drink-drive convictions. Figure 5 compares the cumulative distributions.

¹ For a second (or subsequent) offence within ten years of an earlier one, the minimum disqualification period prescribed is three years, unless for 'special reasons' the court reduces this.

Table 2 Relative number of HROs, by ACORN classification

ACORN category	Percentage of:			Percentage of HROs:				Mean age of HROs
	Population	HROs	Ratio	Type 1	Type 2	Type 3	Female	
A:Thriving	19.8	14.0	0.71	55.3	28.2	16.6	13.0	37.1
B:Expanding	11.6	9.1	0.79	55.7	28.8	15.5	11.0	35.5
C:Rising	7.8	8.0	1.03	49.2	30.8	20.1	10.5	36.0
D:Settling	24.0	22.1	0.93	52.3	30.3	17.4	9.9	35.7
E:Aspiring	13.7	15.3	1.12	48.2	32.1	19.7	8.0	35.5
F:Striving	22.7	31.5	1.39	45.1	33.1	21.9	7.5	35.1
All HROs with ACORN group known				49.9	31.1	19.1	9.4	35.7
Postcode not matched				44.6	34.1	21.3	8.4	37.2

HRO Type 1 - 1 offence >200 87.8 per cent of HROs have known ACORN group

HRO Type 2 - 2nd offence 80-200

HRO Type 3 - Refusal

Table 3 The mean length of disqualification for HROs (months)

HRO type	Number of previous drink-drive convictions				Overall mean
	0	1	2	>2	
1 offence \geq 200	23.9	37.0	42.4	45.0	27.6
2nd offence 80-200	24.5 ^x	35.2	39.5	42.1	35.7
Refusal	17.0	32.9	35.9	39.0	22.6

^x These drivers have been convicted of separate offences on the same date, so they had no previous conviction when they came to court

Table 4 compares the mean disqualification periods over recent years. The figures for all three groups have fallen slightly since 1993. While it is possible that sentencing policy has softened slightly, there may be other explanatory factors.

Table 4 The mean length of disqualification for HROs (months), by year

HRO type	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
1 offence \geq 200	28.2	28.1	27.9	28.1	28.0	27.3	27.1	27.1
2nd offence 80-200	36.6	36.4	36.2	35.9	35.7	35.3	35.1	34.6
Refusal	23.7	23.4	22.9	23.2	22.5	22.1	21.6	21.2
Any	30.1	29.9	29.6	29.6	29.3	28.8	28.5	28.3

3.4 End of disqualification

An HRO must apply for his or her driving licence to be renewed once the period of disqualification has ended. The information received by TRL contains no details of the process by which the licence is returned: it simply records the date when the disqualification ended and the date that the new licence commenced - in those cases where the licence was renewed.

Of the 270 thousand drivers who had become HROs between June 1990 and March 1998, 167 thousand (62 per cent) had reached the end of their disqualification: a new

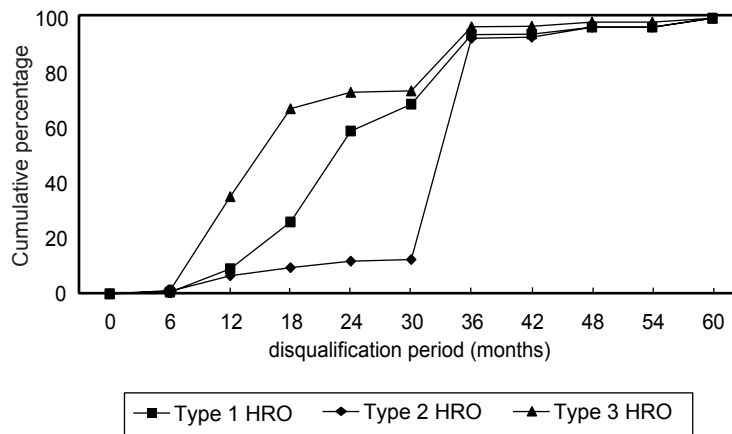


Figure 5 Cumulative distribution of HRO disqualification periods

licence had been issued to 94 thousand of these (56 per cent of those whose disqualification had ended, 35 per cent of all HROs).

The information received contains no indication of the reasons why licences had not been renewed, or even whether the HROs had applied for new licences. These drivers tend to have longer periods of disqualification (the mean period is 26.3 months for those whose licences had been reissued, 28.8 months for the others), so some will not have had time to complete the processes involved. This is likely to apply to relatively few of these drivers, however.

The gap between the end of the disqualification and the date of renewal of the licence can be extensive. Table 5 shows that the gap is over two years for almost 8 per cent of HROs, although almost one half receive their new licence within the first month. There are subtle differences between repeat offenders and the other two HRO types. Again, the data do not show whether the delays are caused by lateness in reapplying or the length of the process in particular cases.

An alternative perspective is obtained by considering the position when the HRO data were extracted for TRL: of those whose disqualification ended at a certain time in the past, how many have had their licences renewed? The answer is presented in Figure 6: the periods used are as in Table 5, with months 25-30 and 31-36 in addition. Although the graphs resemble cumulative sums of frequencies, they actually show independent data: for example, 50 per cent of HROs of type 1 whose

disqualification ended 7-12 months before the date when the data were extracted had been given a new licence, compared with 55 per cent of those whose disqualification ended 13-18 months before. Table 6 summarises these data and confirms there are variations by HRO type: HROs of type 2 take significantly longer than the others to be relicensed.

Table 6 Percentage of HROs whose licence had been renewed by March 1998

HRO type	Disqualification ended:				
	Less than 1 year ago	Between 1 and 2 years ago	Between 2 and 3 years ago	More than 3 years ago	At any time
1 offence ≥ 200	43.2	56.0	60.3	65.6	58.2
2nd offence 80-200	34.9	49.5	55.3	61.9	51.7
Refusal	41.7	53.8	58.9	65.1	57.3
Any	40.2	53.5	58.4	64.6	56.1

The reference date is 1 March 1998, when the HRO data were compiled

These results, for those whose disqualification ended more than three years ago, suggest that a new licence will eventually be issued to about two-thirds of HROs. The great majority of renewals occur within the first half-year following the end of disqualification, but there is still a

Table 5 Time taken to issue a new licence after the end of the disqualification period (based on the 94,000 HROs whose licences have been renewed)

HRO type	Percentage of relicensed HROs reissued with licence during month n:										Mean time
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7-12	13-18	19-24	>24	
1 offence ≥ 200	48.7	10.9	7.0	4.2	2.8	1.9	6.5	7.1	3.2	7.7	5.23
2nd offence 80-200	36.9	16.3	10.9	5.8	3.4	2.4	8.0	5.8	3.2	7.1	5.49
Refusal	47.5	11.4	7.1	4.1	2.7	1.9	6.8	6.7	3.1	8.5	5.51
Any	45.3	12.5	8.1	4.6	3.0	2.0	7.0	6.7	3.2	7.8	5.37

Month 1 is the first after end of disqualification, month 2 is the second etc.

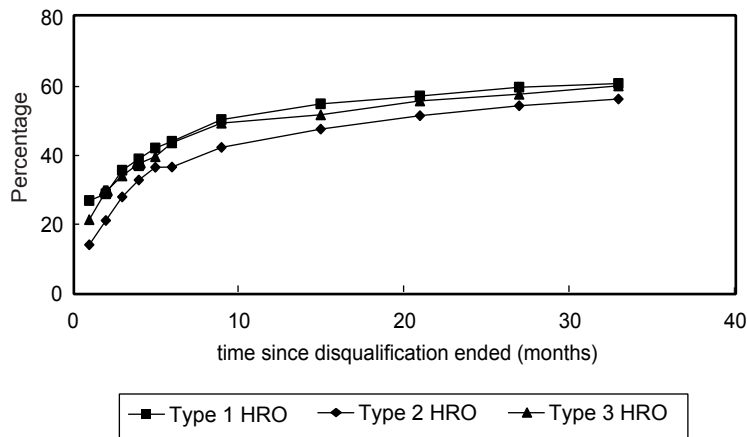


Figure 6 Percentage of HROs whose licences have been reissued

trickle of renewals three years later. Some of the third of HROs for whom there is no record of renewal will have been refused a licence, others may have chosen not to apply for renewal. Section 4.2 of this reports examines reasons given by HROs for not applying for a new licence immediately after the end of their disqualification period.

3.5 Driving while disqualified

The main point of disqualifying drivers convicted of drink-driving is presumably to keep these dangerous drivers off the road, and this must be especially true of High Risk Offenders - there is also the deterrent effect. This section considers the extent to which HROs appear to continue to drive after they have been disqualified. The available evidence consists of convictions of HROs for *drink-driving while they were disqualified*, also for the specific offence of driving while disqualified. Table 7 presents this in the form of rates per driver-year, calculated by dividing the number of HROs convicted while in a particular state by the number of driver-years that HROs spent in that state.

Table 7 Rate of convictions per driver-year for HROs while they were disqualified

HRO type	Drink-driving convictions when:		Driving while disqualified convictions
	Still disqualified	After end of disqualification ¹	
Male HROs			
1 offence ≥ 200	.026	.027	.047
2nd offence 80-200	.043	.042	.104
Refusal	.040	.037	.101
Female HROs			
1 offence ≥ 200	.011	.013	.022
2nd offence 80-200	.024	.020	.062
Refusal	.016	.019	.042

¹ Includes both drivers whose licences have and have not been renewed

The high proportion of male HROs who have been caught driving while disqualified is disturbing. In any year, approximately 1 in 10 male HROs of types 2 and 3 will be

convicted - and presumably many more will escape detection. The much lower level among type 1 HROs is intriguing: those who disobeyed the drink-driving laws more flagrantly, in the sense of having high alcohol levels, appear more willing to accept the penalty imposed.

One might have predicted that the rate of drink-driving would increase after the end of disqualification, since drivers can then drive freely and hence have (in theory) greater opportunity to drink and drive. In fact, the table shows no significant differences between the rates while disqualified and after the end of the disqualification period, once effects of sex and HRO type are taken into account.

3.6 Reconviction rates

The previous section has raised the issue of reconviction rates. This section presents analyses of the recent file of DVLA data.

Figure 7 shows the percentage of HROs who have, subsequent to the disqualification which caused them to become an HRO, been convicted of a further drink-drive offence (the rates exclude convictions for the small number of minor drink-drive offences which are not considered by DVLA when deciding whether an offender is an HRO). The percentages are calculated over all HROs, some of whom became HROs much later than others: the mean time since disqualification for all groups is about 4 years. The female HROs have been grouped together to reduce random effects caused by their relatively small numbers: the relations between the subsets of female HROs are broadly as shown for male HROs. The pattern of Table 7 is confirmed, and the decline of conviction rates with age is shown clearly.

In order to standardise upon the time when drivers were convicted, and consequently the period over which they may have reoffended, Figure 8 is confined to those who became HROs in 1991-92: it includes Ordinary Offenders for comparison, i.e. those who were convicted during this period of their first drink-drive offence which was not sufficiently serious for them to become an HRO (as in Section 3.2.1). It shows the mean number of convictions per driver for drink-drive offences committed after the original conviction; the period over which these subsequent offences

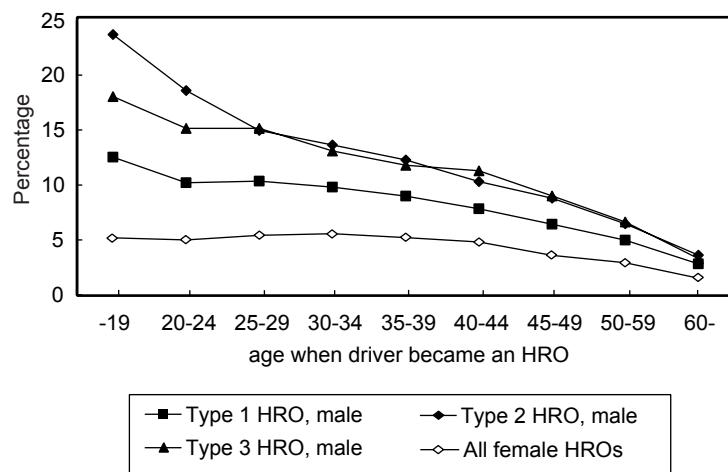


Figure 7 Percentage of HROs who have been reconvicted

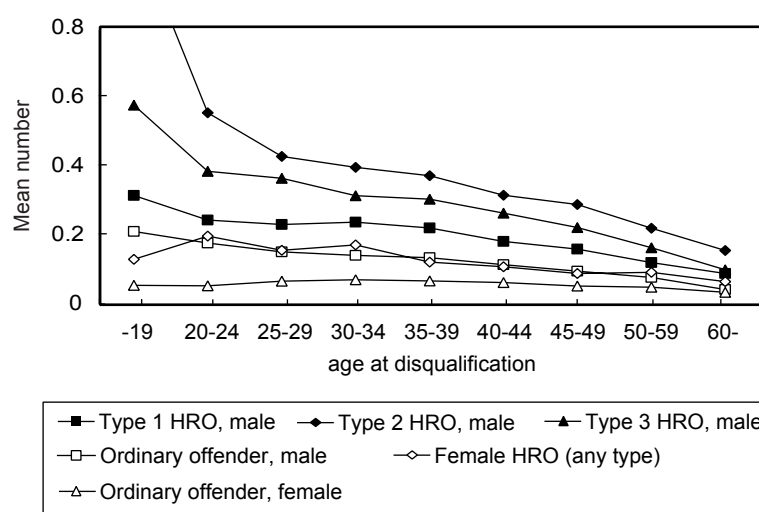


Figure 8 Mean number of subsequent drink-drive convictions by drivers convicted of drink-driving in 1991–1992

were committed ranges from about seven years for those originally convicted early in 1991 down to just over five years for those originally convicted in late 1992.

The results are summarised in Table 8, which confirms that HROs are genuinely High Risk Offenders in the sense of subsequently committing far more drink-driving offences than the Ordinary Offenders. For example, male drivers who became HROs because of a second offence have, on average, committed about three times as many subsequent offences as the Ordinary Offenders. This shows that the regulations have proved effective in identifying those offenders who genuinely pose a high risk. On the other hand, they seem to have proved ineffective in curbing those risks.

4 Characteristics of HROs: Interview surveys

The statistical analyses of Section 3 give an overall view of the working of the High Risk Offender Scheme, but cannot give details of the attitudes of HROs or the effects of the scheme on them. Consequently two interview surveys

Table 8 Mean number of subsequent drink-drive convictions by offenders convicted in 1991-92

HRO type	1st offence		Refusal	Ordinary offender	
	≥200	80-200		Any	offender
Men	0.21	0.41	0.31	0.30	0.14
Women	0.09	0.31	0.13	0.13	0.06

These figures show the mean number of convictions per drink-drive offender over the period between the original conviction in 1991-2 and the end of 1997.

were undertaken by the British Institute of Traffic Education Research (BITER) in consultation with TRL, and using TRL's team of experienced interviewers.

The first survey was of HROs before the end of their disqualification period; it investigated their drinking habits and social characteristics, as reported in Section 4.1. The second survey, reported in Section 4.2, was undertaken with a sample of HROs who, according to the records held by DVLA, had not had their licence reissued within a reasonable period of being entitled to do so.

4.1 Interviews with HROs before the end of their disqualification

The principal aim of this survey was to determine the drinking habits and social characteristics of a sample of HROs. Drink-drivers tend to pose particular problems when attempts are made to contact them, being more likely to change address than the average driver and less willing to cooperate in research. HROs are more likely to have an alcohol problem than other drink-drivers and interviewing them has proved to be difficult.

A sample of male drivers from eleven postcode areas was drawn from the data file supplied by DVLA to TRL. The sample consisted of drivers whose disqualification had not ended, and precedence was given to more recently convicted offenders.

Interviews were carried out between Autumn 1996 and Summer 1997. Letters informing respondents that they might be approached for an interview were sent to approximately 1500 offenders. Nine per cent of these were returned as 'moved away', and a small number (less than one per cent) requested not to be contacted. The interviewers were issued with a number of names and requested to interview a quota of the three different HRO types. They were issued with more names at a later date where necessary. The interviewers reported a further 17 respondents who had either moved, were not known at the address, were in prison, or the address was judged to be unsafe to visit. 14 respondents refused an interview when approached by an interviewer.

In total, 280 interviews were completed. The relatively small number of respondents and the difficulty in contacting them means that the results of the survey may not be fully representative of the population of HROs.

The results of the survey are presented in several Sections arranged to follow the events preceding arrest through to the consequences of conviction:

- sample characteristics;
- the drinking circumstances that preceded the driver's arrest;
- the reasons behind the decision to drive after drinking;
- the circumstances of the arrest;
- the consequences of conviction;
- the offenders' knowledge of the provisions of the HRO Scheme and their intentions regarding reapplying for their licence;
- their drinking habits before and after conviction;
- their attitudes towards drink-driving issues.

4.1.1 Results

4.1.1.1 Sample characteristics

The sample comprised 114 type 1 (1 offence ≥ 200), 95 Type 2 (2nd offence 80-200) and 71 Type 3 (Refusal). There are some differences in the final sample compared with the make up of the overall file. Compared with the 1996 data from Table 1, there was a lower proportion of Type 1 in this sample (41 per cent against 49 per cent) and a higher proportion of Type 3 (25 per cent against 19 per cent). The proportion of Type 2 HROs was similar (34 per cent against 32 per cent).

The details of their offences provided by some offenders were not consistent with those recorded in the DVLA file. Approximately one in five Type 3 HROs (those disqualified for failing to provide a specimen) claimed to have provided an evidential sample at the police station and one in ten Type 2s claimed that the present offence was their first drink-driving offence. As would be expected from the way that HROs are classified (see Section 2.2), one fifth of Type 1 HROs (19 per cent) and one third of Type 3 HROs (33 per cent) admitted to a previous drink-driving conviction (compared with rates for the population of HROs of 23 per cent for Type 1 HROs and 33 per cent for Type 3 HROs). It should be noted that results obtained by word of mouth should be treated with caution.

4.1.1.2 The drinking circumstances that preceded the driver's arrest

Where and when had they been drinking?

Half the respondents had been drinking in a pub, club or wine bar. A further third (34 per cent) had either been drinking at home or at the home of a friend or relative.

The distribution of offences by time of day showed the typical pattern with the number of offences rising fairly steadily from early morning to a peak in the hour before midnight. Nearly three-quarters (71 per cent) of all offences occurred in the eight hour period from 8pm - 4am. A further fifth (20 per cent) occurred in the previous eight hours (from noon to 8pm). It is noteworthy that the remainder (only 9 per cent) were stopped by the police between 4am and noon, which includes the 'morning after' period.

Table 9 shows the distribution of responses by HRO Type. The proportion of Type 2 HROs who had been drinking in a pub/club or wine bar was higher than for the other two groups, but the difference is not significant because of the small number of respondents. The differences in the time of day were, however, significant. Type 1 HROs were over-represented during the noon to 8pm period whereas Type 3 were over-represented during the drinking hours (8pm - 4am) and under-represented during the 12 noon to 8pm period.

Table 9 Differences between the different HRO types

	Type 1	Type 2	Type 3
In pub/club/wine bar before stopped	(N=114) 47%	(N=95) 58%	(N=71) 47%
Time stopped by Police	(N=110)	(N=93)	(N=67)
Noon to 8pm	27%	20%	9%
8pm to 4am	66%	68%	84%
4am to noon	6%	12%	7%
Mean admitted consumption before being stopped	10 units	7 units	7 units
Reason for being stopped:	(N=111)	(N=93)	(N=60)
Accident	35%	11%	18%
Moving traffic offence	33%	52%	57%
Other	32%	38%	25%
People who drink and drive should be sent to prison:	(N=111)	(N=87)	(N=67)
Disagrees 'a lot' or 'a little'	80%	67%	69%

How much had they drunk?

Respondents were asked how many pints of beer (or lager, shandy or cider), glasses of wine, measures of spirits or other drinks they had consumed prior to being stopped by the police. The brand name of the beverage was noted where possible. The answers were converted into units of alcohol. The distribution of admitted alcohol consumption (units) was very skewed. The range was wide; the highest value being 97 units of spirits!

On average, respondents admitted to having consumed eight units prior to the incident. Half the respondents admitted consuming between 5 and 14 units (the 25th and 75th percentile respectively). Only 5 per cent of the sample admitted to drinking more than 22 units.

Admitted consumption tended to decrease with age. Table 10 shows the mean for four age groups and for all ages. The mean admitted consumptions by age groups over 35 years were significantly less than the admitted consumptions of age groups under 35.

Table 10 Admitted alcohol consumption prior to the offence

<i>Age group</i>	<i>Mean consumption (units)</i>
16-24 yrs	10.1
25-35 yrs	10.3
35-44 yrs	6.7
45+ yrs	6.1
Total	7.8

Unsurprisingly, Type 1 HROs had a significantly higher mean admitted consumption (ten units) than either Type 2 or Type 3 HROs (seven units) (see Table 9).

How long had they been driving?

On average, respondents had been driving for only seven minutes before being stopped by the police, but the range was large (0 - 285 minutes). The mean driving time was significantly less for respondents who had been drinking in a pub, club or wine bar (6 minutes) than for those who had been drinking at a private house (10 minutes).

Had they any passengers?

Over one third (38 per cent) of the drivers had at least one passenger (normally an adult) with them when they were stopped by the police. Of those drivers with passengers, two-thirds had only a single adult passenger.

The availability of alternative drivers who had consumed less to drink than the offender was explored in a series of questions. Of the 106 passengers, 102 were adults. Of these, 42 were legally entitled to drive the vehicle. 37 of whom had been drinking. In only 13 cases (14 per cent of drivers with passengers) had a passenger drunk less alcohol than the driver. Even in these cases, the passengers may have been over the legal limit or considered themselves unfit to drive.

4.1.1.3 The reasons behind the decision to drive after drinking

The reasons why drivers drive after drinking are important for the development of countermeasures. In general, the drivers in the sample drove after drinking because, they considered themselves fit to drive, despite recognising in most instances that their BAC was over the legal limit. Although two-thirds of drivers thought that they were at least possibly over the legal limit, three-quarters claimed that they were probably or definitely fit to drive.

The admitted alcohol consumption of an HRO was a powerful predictor of both the probability of considering themselves fit to drive, and considering themselves to be over the legal limit. Figure 9 plots the percentages of HROs who considered themselves over the legal limit for various levels of admitted alcohol consumptions. As expected, the percentage increases with increasing admitted alcohol consumption. The polynomial trend line suggests that, at an admitted alcohol consumption of about 5-6 units, 50 per cent of HROs consider themselves to be over the legal limit.

Figure 9 also plots the percentage of HROs who considered themselves to be fit to drive for various levels of admitted alcohol consumption. As expected, the percentage declines with increasing admitted alcohol consumption. However, the polynomial trend line suggests that HROs must admit to an alcohol consumption of over 20 units before 50 per cent consider themselves to be unfit to drive! There is, therefore, a difference of about 15 units of alcohol between the consumption at which half the HROs consider themselves to be driving illegally and the consumption at which half consider themselves unfit to drive.

Most HROs (89 per cent) had not thought about getting somebody else to drive their vehicle. For the few that had, the two commonest stated reasons for not being able to do so were that no-one was available and that others had had too much to drink.

About a quarter (27 per cent) of HROs thought about leaving the vehicle where it was and going on by some other means. The commonest alternatives were to get a taxi (50 per cent) and to walk (23 per cent). There were a wide variety of reasons given for eventually deciding to drive; the commonest being the claimed absence of alternative transport (23 per cent). Other reasons included the offenders considering themselves either fit to drive (20 per cent) or under the legal limit (12 per cent).

There were clear relationships between the offenders' perception of their fitness to drive and whether or not they were over the legal limit and whether they claimed to have considered alternative forms of transport. About one in six drivers (17 per cent) who considered themselves definitely fit to drive considered not driving compared with nearly two thirds (63 per cent) of those who considered themselves definitely unfit to drive. One driver in eleven (9 per cent) who considered themselves definitely under the limit considered not driving compared with half (51 per cent) of those who considered themselves definitely over the limit.

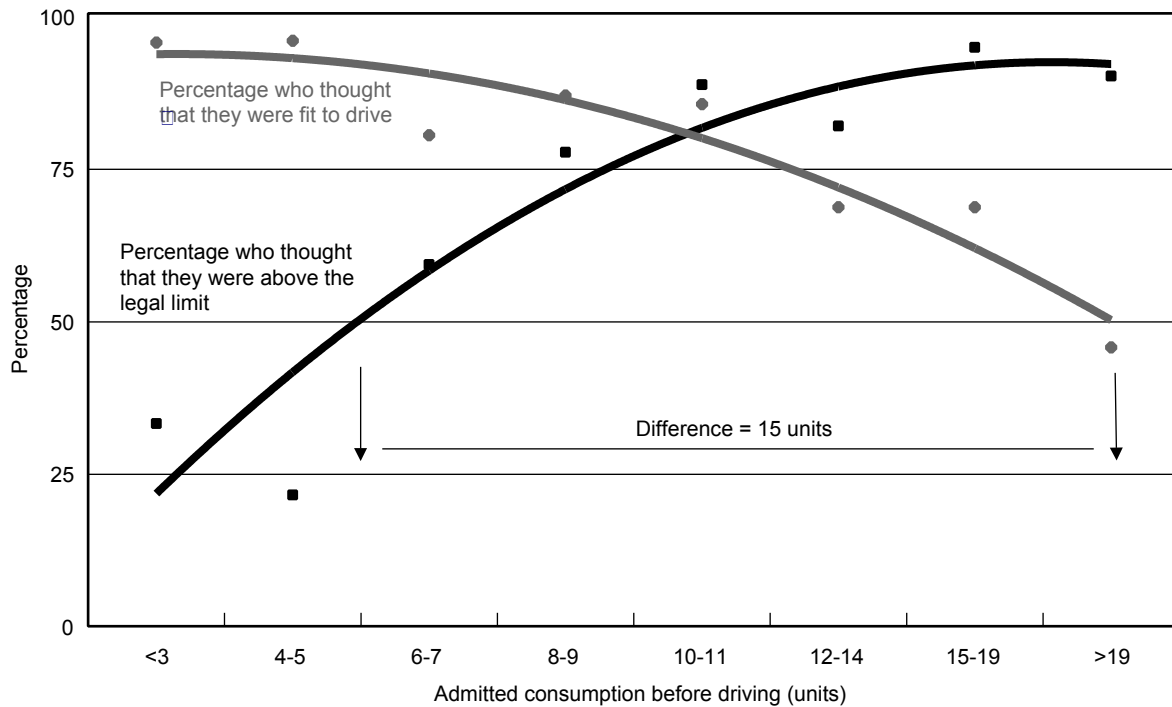


Figure 9 Perceptions of fitness to drive and being above the legal limit as a function of admitted alcohol consumption

4.1.1.4 The circumstances of the arrest

Reason for being required to provide a breath sample

Table 11 shows the reasons given by the Police for stopping the offender, as reported by the offender.

Table 11 Police reasons for stopping respondent (grouped)

	Percentage
Suspicion of impairment (driving erratically, tip off etc)	33%
Moving traffic offence (speeding, vehicle fault etc)	22%
Accident	21%
Other specific reason	18%
No reason given	3%
Don't know/Can't remember	3%
Total respondents (N)	280

A third of offenders said they were stopped because of suspicion of impairment, just over a fifth said they were stopped following a moving traffic offence, and just under a quarter said they were required to give a breath test following a road accident. Over half the accidents (53 per cent) involved another vehicle; a further 33 per cent were single-vehicle crashes. One in five of the crashes (22 per cent) resulted in injury; the remainder were damage-only. (It appears that about one in ten of *all* accidents involve an injury, so this high percentage confirms that alcohol-involvement tends to increase the severity of an accident.)

About one in three Type 1 HROs (34 per cent) were required to provide a breath test as a result of an accident - a significantly higher proportion than for either Type 2 (11 per cent) or Type 3 (16 per cent). Type 2 and Type 3 were more commonly stopped as a result of erratic driving or speeding/going too fast (Table 9).

Provision of breath test

Most HROs (71 per cent) provided a breath test at the roadside when required to do so. Less than half of the Type 3 HROs (41 per cent) stated that they had provided a roadside sample. Amongst those drivers who did not provide a sample, the main reason amongst Type 1 and Type 2 was that they were not asked to provide such a sample. Amongst Type 3, two in five said they were not asked to provide a roadside sample; one in five refused because they did not want to co-operate and one in ten claimed that they tried but failed.

Turning to the provision of an evidential specimen, nearly four drivers in five (78 per cent) stated that they gave such a specimen. One driver in six (16 per cent) stated that they refused to provide a sample and a small proportion of drivers (4 per cent) claimed that they tried but failed to provide a sample (which, in law is regarded as a refusal).

Whether or not a driver provided either a roadside and or an evidential breath test appeared to be independent of his previous driving convictions.

4.1.1.5 The consequences of conviction

Aside from the penalties imposed by the Court, 236 offenders (82 per cent) claimed to have suffered additional adverse effects as a result of their conviction. The commonest effects were: effect on business/lower wages/future promotion prospects (22 per cent); losing or having to change jobs (21 per cent) and commuting problems (13 per cent). Overall, nearly two thirds of the first-mentioned effects related to employment compared with 18 per cent relating to home/social/family effects.

About half the offenders (51 per cent) reported a second effect of conviction. Amongst the second-mentioned

effects, the home/social/family effect was predominant being mentioned by over half (52 per cent) the offenders who gave a second effect.

Whether or not any effect was reported was independent of HRO type, whether the offender lived alone, and whether they had access to a vehicle within their household. Older drivers were significantly more likely to report an effect than younger drivers. This is consistent with results reported by the Portman Group (1994).

The type of effect reported (eg employment, home/social) appeared independent of socio-economic factors. It may well be, however, that the reporting of an effect depended on where the offender lived and the availability of alternative transport.

4.1.1.6 The offenders' knowledge of the provisions of the HRO Scheme

The offenders' knowledge of the term *High Risk Offender* was low. Only 4 per cent claimed to have heard of it prior to their appearance in Court and only a further 5 per cent claimed to have learnt the term since appearing in Court. Of those few offenders who had heard of the Scheme, the majority was unaware of either the categories of offenders included in the Scheme or the major consequences of becoming an HRO.

However, 72 per cent of offenders claimed that they were aware that they would need to pass a medical examination in order to get their licence back. The level of awareness was independent of HRO type but was significantly higher amongst older age groups; 77 per cent of the 35+ age group as compared with 65 per cent of the under 35 age group.

4.1.1.7 The offenders' intentions regarding reapplying for their licence

Almost all offenders (92 per cent) stated that they intended to reapply for their licence at the end of their disqualification period. Amongst the few who had decided not to, the reasons included no longer needing a car and not wishing to go through the 'hassle' of reapplication. The intention to reapply was independent of the offenders' awareness of the need to pass a medical examination.

About half (49 per cent) of those who intended to reapply were *very sure* that they would receive the licence. Less than 10 per cent were either *unsure* or *very unsure*. There was some evidence to suggest that older offenders were less sure of the outcome of their licence application.

4.1.1.8 Their drinking habits before and after conviction Drinking habits prior to conviction

Table 12 shows that before their (latest) conviction, the most common drinking frequency for offenders (44 per cent) was one or two nights a week. One in five drank on three to four nights a week and one in ten drank every night. Many offenders (59 per cent) reported that they used to drink the same amount on each occasion. Only one in five offenders used to drink at lunchtimes as well as during the evening.

Table 12 Reported frequency of drinking occasions before conviction

Frequency of drinking occasions	Percentage
Every night	10%
5-6 nights per week	8%
3-4 nights per week	20%
1-2 nights per week	44%
Less frequently	16%
No night-time drinking	1%
Don't know/can't remember	0%
Total number (N)	280

Most offenders (74 per cent) drank *with others* when drinking away from home. Nearly half (45 per cent) admitted to *sometimes* driving home afterwards. Over a third claimed that they *never* drove home afterwards.

Table 13 shows that offenders admitted to drinking an average of eight units on each night-time drinking occasion. The amount drunk was independent of the frequency of night-time drinking and whether they drank alone or in company. Younger offenders (16-24 and 25-34 age groups) tended to drink significantly more than those aged at least 45 years old. Those who claimed *never* to drive home afterwards had a significantly higher admitted consumption (9 units) than those who drove home always or sometimes (7 units).

Table 13 Mean admitted consumption (units) per night-time drinking occasion by age group

Age group	16-24	25-35	35-44	45+	All
Mean number of units	10	10	8	6	8
Number of offenders	52	64	67	85	268

Changes in drinking habits

Since conviction, the drinking habits of most (52 per cent) offenders have stayed *about the same*. About one offender in twelve stated that they were now drinking more, largely because they no longer needed to worry about driving afterwards. Over a third (39 per cent) were drinking less. Amongst this group, a quarter were concerned about their drinking. A slightly smaller proportion (23 per cent) reported that they now had less money (to spend on alcohol).

About one offender in seven (15 per cent) was now drinking more at home since their conviction. Few offenders (6 per cent) were drinking more often away from home.

4.1.1.9 Attitudes towards drink-driving issues

Since 1976, the Government has run anti drink-driving campaigns over the Christmas and New Year periods. The effectiveness of the campaigns has been monitored each year by a tracking survey. Typically this survey comprises pre/post checks on each burst of advertising. The 1995 survey has been used to compare the attitudes of the general public with those of HROs. This tracking survey was conducted amongst men who both drove a car or van and drank away from home. The sample consisted of 450

males aged 18+ with an additional sample of a further 50 males aged 18 to 34 years. Interviewing was conducted at home with drivers selected on a random location basis.

One question in the survey of HROs contained a subset of the attitude statements used in the tracking survey (Research International (UK) Ltd, 1996). Table 14 shows the statements categorised under the headings:

- Likelihood of getting caught
- Attitudes to small levels of consumption
- Cause of accidents
- Social pressures

A comparison of the scores on each of the 16 statements by HRO type suggested that there was only one significant difference (the results are included in Table 9). For the statement *I think that people who drink and drive should be sent to prison*, Type 1 showed a greater tendency to disagree.

An analysis of scores by age group suggested that older drivers (35+ years) tended to negate the effects of small levels of consumption and, to a lesser extent, the role of alcohol in accidents.

Comparisons were made between individual attitude scores of the total offender sample and those of the control sample obtained from the tracking survey. The tracking survey provided only the percentage agreeing (*Not sures* and *Don't knows* may have been omitted from the sample size when calculating the percentage agreeing for the Tracking Survey). Hence only overall comparisons could be made (Table 14).

Broadly, it would appear that the two statements relating to the *likelihood of being caught* show the greatest difference. Overall, HROs are not in favour of being imprisoned for their offence, particularly as they tend to believe that bad luck plays a part in their arrest. Both the *cause of accident* statements appear to show significant differences with the HRO offender sample tending to

negate the role of alcohol. A similar trend is seen with four out of the six *attitudes to small levels of consumption* statements which differ by ± 7 or more. Statements relating to social pressure are divided; three of them show differences of ± 5 or less, whilst the remaining three statements show quite substantial differences indicating greater awareness of social pressures amongst HROs. HROs are more likely to report that they try and stop others from drinking too much and driving. They are also more likely to feel that avoiding drinking could affect their social life.

4.2 Interviews with HROs who fail to reapply for their driving licences

The principal aim of this part of the project was to study the reasons why many HROs fail to reapply for their licences. As mentioned in Section 4.1, drink-drivers tend to pose particular problems when attempts are made to contact them and the group discussed here has proved to be particularly difficult to contact.

The file held by TRL was used to extract driver numbers for those HROs for whom at least 12 months had elapsed since the end of their disqualification period, and for whom there was no indication that a licence had been renewed. (The data held by TRL only gives the information that a new licence has been issued, and does not indicate whether a licence has been applied for, or refused.) A list of 1108 driver numbers was sent to DVLA, who then supplied TRL with the names and addresses of these HROs. The sample covered 26 postcode areas throughout Britain. On average, the drivers had been eligible to reapply for a period of 23 months (range 12 to 35 months).

456 of these drivers were reported to be no longer living at the addresses held by DVLA, in addition 66 offenders were reported to have died, were in hospital or ill, or, when contacted by the interviewer, were considered too drunk to complete the interview. The interviewers were issued with

Table 14 Comparison of attitude scores of HROs and tracking survey sample

Statement category	Attitude statement	Percentage agreeing		
		HROs	Tracking survey	Difference
Likelihood of getting caught	I think that people who drink and drive should be sent to prison	27	75	-48
	I think its bad luck if someone is caught drinking & driving because lots of people do it	48	14	34
Attitudes to small levels of consumption	If you feel alright to drive then it is probably quite safe, even if you have drunk a bit over the limit	39	14	25
	Drinking a little bit over the legal limit does not really make me more likely to have an accident	42	19	23
	Even one drink makes me a worse driver	38	58	-20
	It's wrong to drive even after a couple of drinks	71	78	-7
	Drinking any alcohol at all and driving puts other people's lives at risk	84	85	-1
Cause of accidents	If you want to drive safely, it's best not to mix drinking and driving at all	95	94	1
	Drink is only a minor cause of road accidents	50	21	29
Social pressures	Most car accidents that happen to people who have been drinking would probably happen anyway	27	16	11
	I myself try to stop other people from drinking too much when they are going to drive	86	68	18
	It's difficult to avoid some drinking and driving if you are going to have any kind of social life	43	27	16
	When you're out drinking it can spoil your evening if you know you have got to drive home	64	51	13
	If you know someone is driving, it is wrong to offer them a drink	86	81	5
	People are more likely to tell me not to drink and drive these days	75	79	-4
People I know seem to criticise drinking drivers more often nowadays	76	78	-2	

a number of names and asked to interview a quota of the three HRO types. Attempts were made to approach 310 HROs, of whom 104 could not be contacted. A total of 206 drivers were eventually contacted and 147 agreed to being interviewed. A total of 143 interviews were used in the analysis.

The number of 'non-reapplicants' reported as 'no longer living at the address' is very high. It consists of letters returned 'not-known' and reports from interviewers who were told that respondents had 'moved'. A licensed driver is required by law to inform DVLA of any change of address, however a disqualified driver is not (Section 2.1, paragraph iiiia). If a driver is convicted of any driving related offence, the Court informs DVLA. The information returned to DVLA by the Court will include the address the driver has given to the Court (which should be their most recent address). Courts send the information to DVLA in batches which are then entered into the Driver Licence File, hence at any one time, a certain proportion of addresses held by DVLA will be in arrears. This proportion depends on how soon (if ever) a driver reports a change in address, whether any recent Court information has been entered, and whether the information supplied to the Court and DVLA is correct.

The offenders who were reported to be 'no longer at an address' must therefore either have moved and not informed DVLA of their change of address, or given a false address to the Court or DVLA, or did not wish to be contacted and therefore informed TRL that they had 'moved away'. (It was of course possible for respondents to decline to be interviewed, and 59 did so.) Some of these respondents could also have been in the process of applying for their licence, or have applied and been turned down, but their new address may not yet have been entered into DVLA's data.

It appears to be in an HRO's best interest to keep DVLA informed of any changes in order to regain their licence as quickly as possible. The fact that a high percentage of the addresses for these non-applicants appear to be out of date implies that these offenders are mobile and are in no hurry to regain their licence. The HROs who could be contacted are therefore likely to be unrepresentative of those offenders who do not regain their licence immediately after the end of their disqualification period. They are either less mobile, or more willing to inform DVLA of any change of address. The results of the interviews can therefore only be regarded as illustrative, and not as a definitive guide to the attitudes of HROs who do not have their licences renewed as soon as possible after the end of their disqualification period.

The results of the survey are reported in the following sections:

- sample characteristics
- reapplication status
- reasons for non-reapplication
- extent of driving while disqualified

The circumstances of the offence are not examined in detail, largely because of the time span (normally at least three years) between the event and the interview.

4.2.1 Results

4.2.1.1 Sample characteristics

The sample comprised 40 per cent Type 1 HROs (1 offence \geq 200), 41 per cent Type 2 (2nd offence 80-200) and 19 per cent Type 3 (Refusal). Compared with the 1996 data from Table 1, there was a lower proportion of Type 1 (40 per cent as against 49 per cent) and a higher proportion of Type 2 (41 per cent versus 32 per cent). The proportion of Type 3 was the same (19 per cent).

The details of their offences provided by some offenders were not consistent with those recorded in the DVLA file. Nearly one in five Type 2 HROs (repeat offenders) claimed that it was their first drink-driving offence; a further 9 per cent declined to answer the question. Nearly half the Type 3 HROs (48 per cent) claimed that they provided an evidential sample at the police station.

As would be expected from the way HROs are classified (Section 2.2), one in five Type 1 HROs (21 per cent) and over half the Type 3 HROs (52 per cent) admitted to a previous drink-driving conviction (compared with rates for the population of HROs of 23 per cent for Type 1 HROs and 33 per cent for Type 3 HROs).

4.2.1.2 Reapplication status

At the time of their interview, just over half the drivers (55 per cent) said they had not yet applied for their licence. However, 65 offenders said they had reapplied for their licence, 55 of whom said they had already been issued with a new licence. One had been refused and the remaining nine were awaiting a decision. As explained previously, the data from DVLA held by TRL only shows whether a new licence has been issued, not whether a new licence has been applied for, or refused.

Of those offenders who had reapplied, 44 said they had done so as soon as possible and 38 of these had received their licence. The information about these HROs was obtained at least 12 months after the end of their disqualification period. If they applied immediately, as they said, then, as described in Section 2.1, the apparent inconsistency is probably due to delays in the application process (such as requesting information from the patient's GP) and the time taken for the DVLA database to be updated.

4.2.1.3 Reasons for non-reapplication

The commonest reasons given by the 99 offenders who did not apply for a new licence immediately they were entitled to come under the general headings of cost² and no longer needing a car (Table 15). The respondents normally referred to the costs of the 'medical examination' or 'reapplication':

Can't afford £100 fee for medical to get licence.

My ban ended last October. I didn't have £100 to reapply and have the blood test - you don't get it on the NHS!

but the cost of reinsurance was also mentioned:

Too expensive and insurance is too high.

² The current costs are £70 for the medical examination and a £20 fee for applying for a new licence.

Table 15 Reasons for HROs not applying for a new licence as soon as entitled

Reason	Percentage
Couldn't afford the cost	39%
Didn't need a car then	31%
No licence to reapply for	7%
Medical condition	7%
Might be tempted to drink and drive	3%
Other reason	10%
Don't know	2%
Total (number of HROs who said that they had not applied immediately)	99

Under the general heading of not needing a car at the time were comments such as:

Don't need it. Work abroad (Middle East). Would apply for it if I came to work in UK.

At the moment I get by. I works local and I drinks local. To have a car costs. I get faster to work without it. I've got used to not having one.

A number of offenders had medical problems and were pessimistic about the chances of being given a licence. For example:

Because of my illness. I've thought with my epilepsy I may not get it back.

Still getting blackouts as have heart trouble and the doctor advised me not to [apply]. Also couldn't afford medical to get passed by doctor, they wanted nearly £200.

Of those 78 offenders who had not yet applied, about half (47 per cent) said that they intended to do so in the future. Around a quarter (27 per cent) did not intend to do so; the remainder were unsure. The reasons for deciding not to apply for a new licence in the future were very similar to those given for not applying immediately, for example:

The lack of need for a car:

I may in the future if I feel I need it but at the moment I don't. I only work 5 mins walk away so I don't need it to get to work. I work 6-6, six nights a week so don't get out much.

The costs involved:

I can't afford a car, the insurance or the money for a medical

The medical conditions:

I feel too old to drive. My knees are not too good from playing too much rugby.

4.2.1.4 Driving while disqualified

All 143 offenders were asked about driving whilst disqualified. About a quarter (26 per cent) said that there had been occasions when they had been tempted to drive, 73 per cent had not been tempted and one per cent refused to answer the question.

Typically, the reasons for being tempted to drive were

because of some emergency (33 per cent) or when a car (but no driver) had been available (Table 16).

Table 16 Types of occasions where HROs had been tempted to drive

Type of occasion	Percentage
Emergency situations	33%
When a car available but no other driver	22%
Everyday situations	14%
When invited to drive	8%
Other reasons	8%
In bad weather	6%
Just wanting to drive	6%
Reason not stated	3%
Total number of HROs (those who had been tempted to drive)	36

Examples of actual driving included:

I drove when I obtained work

When I've been offered work; when I've wanted to go shopping or visit mates; all the time because I've never been without a car since 1965.

If I wanted to pop round the corner and my girlfriend's car was outside.

Examples of being tempted to drive included:

Last summer I had the chance to drive a Cabriolet; would loved to have driven it, but I didn't dare risk it; a Cabriolet stands out too much.

I needed to get somewhere and my mate offered to lend me his car. Anyway I thought better of it.

Just knowing the rest of the family are driving and I can't upsets me and I sometimes want to get in a car and drive like they do.

When presented with three hypothetical scenarios (Table 17), nearly a third said that they would be likely or very likely to drive if a friend had had an accident and needed to get to hospital. Few (6 per cent) were likely to do so if a friend had broken down miles from anywhere. None were likely to do so simply because of needing to go to newsagent when it was raining.

Table 17 Willingness to drive in various scenarios

	Accident to a friend	Breakdown of friend's car	Going to newsagent in rain
Very likely	22%	1%	-
Likely	8%	5%	-
Not sure	15%	2%	1%
Unlikely	17%	19%	17%
Very Unlikely	38%	72%	82%
Total number of HROs	139	139	139

One in nine drivers (11 per cent) admitted to driving whilst disqualified, normally on just a few occasions. Naturally, respondents may well be reluctant to report candidly the extent to which they have driven while disqualified.

5 Public knowledge of the High Risk Offender Scheme

A postal survey was carried out to investigate the level of knowledge of the HRO scheme among the general driving population; specifically male drivers who had *not* been convicted of drink-driving offences.

A sample of 3,961 male drivers aged 18-66 years with no previous drink-driving convictions (within the past 10 years) was drawn from DVLA files. A questionnaire was mailed to 3,961 drivers in July 1997. A total of 1,042 completed questionnaires were returned. A further 171 envelopes were returned *Not known at this address*. The overall response rate was 27 per cent, and it was significantly higher among younger (18-20 years old) drivers.

5.1 Results of the postal survey

A third (34 per cent) of the respondents claimed to know that *some drink-driving offenders must pass a medical examination before they can get their licence back at the end of disqualification*. Only one driver in twenty (5 per cent) claimed that they *had heard of the High Risk Offender Scheme*. A further 12 per cent were unsure and the remainder (82 per cent) claimed not to have heard of it.

44 per cent of older people (45+ years) claimed to know about the medical examination compared to 27 per cent of younger (18-24 years) drivers. In terms of socio-economic groups (SEGs), C2s were more likely to claim to know about the medical (43 per cent). The percentage for other groups varied between 21 (social group A), and 38 (group E).

Overall, nearly half the respondents (49 per cent) thought that *It is up to the Court to decide* who has to pass the medical examination. Around a third of respondents thought that it was *all drink-driving offenders*; those *who are convicted of two offences within 10 years*; or those *with alcohol levels more than three times the legal limit* who had to pass this examination. Only about one in five respondents thought that it was those *with alcohol levels at least 2.5 times the legal limit* and those *who refuse to provide a breath sample at the police station*.

A knowledge score was computed by awarding one point for the identification of a correct criterion for an HRO and deducting one point for an incorrect answer. Less than 10 per cent scored full marks; the modal score was negative (-1).

Respondents who claimed knowledge of either the medical examination or the HRO Scheme were no better informed as to the types of offenders classed as HROs than those who claimed no knowledge of the Scheme.

6 HROs and rehabilitation

Drink-driver rehabilitation courses have been running in a number of areas in England and Wales since 1993. Their progress is being monitored by TRL and details of the courses and the experimental monitoring have been described by Davies and Harland (1998). The courses were

introduced mainly to cater for first offenders without a serious alcohol problem. However, nearly 30 per cent of course attenders have been High Risk Offenders. Thus HROs are slightly under-represented on courses as 39 per cent of all drink/drive offenders are HROs.

An examination of the reoffending behaviour of male HROs who attended a course has been carried out using Survival analysis (Hull and Nie, 1979). Table 18 shows the percentage of offenders who were convicted of a further drink-drive offence within 24 months of the original conviction for HROs and non-HROs who attended courses, and also for those who did not attend.

Table 18 Reoffending rates after 24 months

	Course attenders	Non-course attenders	Ratio
HROs	2.2%	7.6%	3.5
Non-HROs	1.8%	5.9%	3.3

24 months after conviction, HROs who had not attended courses had reoffended about three and a half times more than HROs who had attended a course. This improvement was similar to that of non-HROs who attended courses.

7 Conclusions

This report has explored the characteristics of those drink-drive offenders who have been classified as High Risk Offenders. According to regulations which came into force in June 1990, a drink-drive offender can become an HRO by:

- 1 providing an evidential sample with an alcohol level at least 2½ times the legal limit;
- 2 providing an evidential sample with an alcohol level between 1 and 2½ times the legal limit, having been convicted of a drink-driving offence in the previous ten years; or
- 3 refusing to supply an evidential sample.

Once the period of disqualification has ended, the driving licence is not reissued automatically. Instead an HRO must reapply for a licence which will only be issued after a positive medical assessment.

The report shows that the three Types of HRO have somewhat different characteristics. It also shows that not only Type 2 HROs have significant levels of reoffending: nearly a quarter of Type 1 and a third of Type 3 HROs had a previous drink-driving conviction in the preceding ten years.

The report has presented analyses of an extract of the DVLA driver licence file. It has explored the number of drivers who become HROs, their length of disqualification and the proportion whose driving licences are reissued at the end of the period of disqualification. The extract was prepared in March 1998, so the data are effectively complete up to the end of November 1997. Since statistical analyses give an overview of the data and do not throw light on the effects on the people involved, the report also has described the results of three questionnaire surveys.

These examined in depth the experiences HROs have of the system and their attitudes to drinking and driving.

Analysis of licence data

In 1991, the first full year of the new HRO scheme, there were about 38 thousand new HROs. The annual number fell to just over 33 thousand in 1994, but has since risen gradually to about 34 thousand in 1997. About two fifths of drink-drive offenders over the period of the new scheme have 'qualified' as High Risk Offenders. The proportion of all HROs who are of Type 1 has risen gradually over these years, while the proportion of Type 2 has fallen and the proportion of Type 3 has varied only slightly.

HROs tend to be older than 'Ordinary Offenders', defined for this report as drivers who were convicted in 1992 of their first drink-drive offence which was not sufficiently serious for them to become an HRO, i.e. the offence was not a refusal and the alcohol level was under 2½ times the legal limit. Among men, the age distribution for Ordinary Offenders has a sharp peak at 21, while the distributions for HROs have broader peaks in the range 26-30. The peak ages for women are higher, 26-28 for Ordinary Offenders and 32-34 for HROs. Only about 8 per cent of HROs are women, compared with nearly 9 per cent of drink-drive offenders. However, the percentage of HROs disqualified *per year* who are women has risen steadily, as has the percentage of all drink-drive offenders.

The licence data contain no socio-economic information about drivers. To provide this, the DVLA data have been linked via drivers' postcodes to the ACORN directory, which classifies residential areas on the basis of Census information. While the linked data are inevitably somewhat imprecise, the analyses do demonstrate a strong socio-economic influence upon the rate of HROs in an area. A driver from a category A area (labelled in the ACORN system as Thriving) is roughly one third less likely than a typical driver to be an HRO, whereas a driver from a category F area (labelled as Striving) is roughly two-fifths more likely.

The period of disqualification varies with the type of HRO as well as the number of previous convictions. For a given number of previous convictions, the mean disqualification for Type 3 HROs is shorter than for Types 1 and 2 - especially when there is no previous conviction. The mean period of disqualification fell slightly for all HRO Types between 1992 and 1997.

Some drivers take more than two years to regain their licences. The data suggest that about two thirds of HROs will eventually regain their licences and a third will not. Records from the Drivers' Medical Branch at DVLA show that in any year only a small proportion of HROs are refused a new licence (3.5 per cent of those that applied in 1997/98). Therefore it appears that most of the third of HROs have chosen not to apply for a new licence.

Significant numbers of HROs are convicted of driving while disqualified: on average, almost 1-in-10 HROs of Type 2 or 3 are convicted per year of disqualification, but the rate is only half as great for HROs of Type 1. Significant numbers are also re-convicted of drink-driving, i.e. further offences committed after they became HROs.

The mean number of subsequent convictions for men who became HROs in 1991-92 is 0.41 (Type 2), 0.31 (Type 3) and 0.21 (Type 1), compared with 0.14 for Ordinary Offenders. Thus, the HRO regulations are successfully identifying drivers whose subsequent behaviour shows that they pose a genuine high risk.

Questionnaire surveys

Survey 1

The aim of the survey was to examine the drinking habits and attitudes of HROs, and their experiences of the scheme. 280 HROs were interviewed while they were still disqualified and several general conclusions emerged.

Most offenders recognised that they were over the legal limit at the time they were stopped by the Police, however most felt they were still fit to drive. Around half the group that said they had consumed more than 20 units (roughly 4 times the legal limit) still felt they were fit to drive. Their willingness to consider an alternative form of transport to return home increased with their perceived lack of fitness to drive.

Aside from the penalties imposed by the Court, four fifths of offenders claimed to have suffered additional effects as a result of their conviction. Nearly two thirds of the principal effects related to employment and one fifth related to domestic and social issues, such as the effect on home or social life.

Only a small number of respondents claimed to have heard of the term *High Risk Offender* prior to their appearance in Court and a few more claimed to have learnt the term since appearing in Court. However, over two thirds claimed that they were aware that they would need to pass a medical examination before getting their licence back. The level of awareness was significantly higher amongst those over 35 years of age.

Almost all drivers stated that they intended to reapply for their licence at the end of their disqualification period. Amongst the few who had decided not to, the reasons included no longer needing a car and not wishing to go through the 'hassle' of reapplication.

Since conviction, the drinking habits of about half the offenders have stayed *about the same*. About one offender in twelve stated that they were now drinking more - largely because they no longer needed to worry about driving afterwards. Over a third were drinking less. Amongst this group, a quarter were concerned about their drinking.

The annual tracking surveys used to monitor the impact of the Government's Christmas drink-driving campaigns provide a measure of the attitudes towards drink-driving issues of the general male driving public. Respondents were given a subset of the attitude questions from the tracking survey. Compared with the 1995 sample pre-campaign scores, HROs are less likely to favour being imprisoned for their offence, particularly as they tend to believe that bad luck plays a part in their arrest. HROs are more likely to play down the role of alcohol as a cause of accidents, and feel that avoiding drinking could affect their social life.

Survey 2

Many HROs do not apply quickly for a new licence, and this survey examined their reasons by interviewing a sample of HROs who were still unlicensed more than a year after their disqualification had ended. This proved to be a difficult group to interview: successful interviews could be completed with only one eighth of the sample. The low response rate was partly caused by the fact that about two fifths of the sample were reported to be no longer living at the addresses held by DVLA.

Consequently, the HROs who were interviewed may well be unrepresentative of the full sample, and the results of the interviews should only be regarded as illustrative.

At the interview, over half the drivers said they had still not applied for a new licence. Just over a quarter said that they had applied *as soon as possible* and had been issued with a licence, although their records cannot have been updated by DVLA at the time that the licensing data were extracted for TRL.

Two fifths of offenders who did not apply for a new licence immediately they were entitled to felt that the process was too expensive, and a third said that they no longer needed a car. Of those offenders who had not yet applied, about half said that they intended to do so in the future. Around a quarter did not intend to do so; the remainder were unsure.

An attempt was made to measure the extent to which non-reapplicants were continuing to drive while still disqualified. About a quarter of HROs admitted to being tempted to drive whilst disqualified, typically because of some emergency or when a car (but no driver) was available. One in nine HROs admitted to actual driving whilst disqualified, normally on just a few occasions. Naturally, respondents may well be reluctant to report candidly the extent to which they have driven while disqualified.

Survey 3

The aim of this part of the research was to investigate knowledge of the HRO Scheme amongst the general driving population; specifically male drivers who had *not* been convicted of drink-driving offences.

A third of the respondents claimed to know that *some drink-driving offenders must pass a medical examination before they can get their licence back at the end of disqualification*. Only one driver in twenty claimed that they had heard of the *High Risk Offender Scheme*. Nearly half the respondents thought that *It is up to the Court to decide* who has to pass the medical examination. Respondents who claimed knowledge of either the medical examination or the HRO Scheme were no better informed as to the types of offenders classed as HROs than those who claimed no knowledge of the Scheme.

HROs and rehabilitation courses

Nearly 30 per cent of offenders attending drink-drive rehabilitation courses have been HROs. 24 months after conviction, HROs who had not attended courses had reoffended about three and a half times more than HROs

who had attended a course. The improvement was similar to that achieved by non-HROs who attend courses.

8 Recommendations for future research

This report gives an insight into the workings of the HRO Scheme, and its effects on the offenders involved in it. The findings indicate fruitful directions for further research:

a The results have indicated that, because of increasing concerns over repeat offending, the way the three groups of HROs have been coded in the past needs to be revised. Of the three groups discussed in the report, it is the offenders with two offences between 80 and 200 (Type 2) who are more likely to reoffend. Section 2.2 shows that offenders coded as Type 1 may have more than one high BAC (≥ 200) offence, and also that Type 3 offenders (those who refuse a specimen) may have had a previous drink-drive offence. It would be useful in future to analyse the data TRL receives from DVLA so that all multiple offenders are identified clearly, subdividing Types 1 and 3 as follows:

- 1a Single high BAC offenders: one offence ≥ 200 , no previous offences;
- 1b One offence ≥ 200 plus a previous offence, 80-200;
- 2 2nd offence 80-200;
- 3a A refusal, no previous offences;
- 3b A refusal and one previous offence, 80-200.

This analysis would highlight more clearly the differences between the multiple offenders and the other groups, and may show differences between the three suggested types of multiple offenders (1b, 2, 3b). The period examined for previous offences would need to be standardised, following a comparison of the consequences of alternative definitions for the various details examined in Section 3.

The data on reoffending rates (Table 8) clearly shows that those who become HROs by virtue of a second offence are significantly more likely than the other groups to go on to commit further offences. This group can increasingly be seen as a particular 'hard core' requiring closer examination in further research.

- b There is also a continuing need to monitor trends in the numbers of HROs.
- c Type 2 HROs (2nd offence 80-200) are the most common (for men) between the ages of 23 and 34 (Figure 3). This result would need to be re-examined after the reanalysis proposed above had been carried out: however, an in-depth examination could provide new insights into the attitudes of drink-drivers less than 35 years old.
- d The proportion of all drink-drivers who are women has risen throughout the 1990s (Section 3.2.2). In addition, women HROs differ from men in age (on average women HROs are older than men) and in distribution of HRO Types. Less is known generally about women

HROs, but these results indicate that they may need to be treated differently from their male counterparts. An in-depth investigation of the pattern of womens' drinking in general and of women HROs in particular could help to formulate new methods for reducing the number of HROs.

It is suggested that the possibilities for further work cited above would be most effectively incorporated in a new research programme aimed at co-ordinating the wider aspects of drink-drive policy including non-HRO offenders, together with considerations of further scope for rehabilitation courses.

9 Acknowledgements

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10 References

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Appendix A: Description of ACORN categories

CACI Ltd (1993) has classified each local area in Great Britain using a set of 54 ACORN types. This is based on an extensive cluster analysis of data from the 1991 Census. The actual directory comprises a list of all British postcodes with the appropriate ACORN types for each postcode. As the great majority of DVLA driver records contain the driver's postcode, it is possible to associate each driver with the ACORN type of the area where he or she lives. The 54 ACORN types are grouped into 17 ACORN Groups, which are further grouped into 6 ACORN Categories:

Category A: Thriving

Wealthy achievers, suburban areas;
Affluent greys, rural communities;
Prosperous pensioners, retirement areas.

Category B: Expanding

Affluent executives, family areas;
Well-off workers, family areas.

Category C: Rising

Affluent urbanites, town and city areas;
Prosperous professional, metropolitan areas;
Better-off executives, inner city areas.

Category D: Settling

Comfortable middle agers, mature home owning areas;
Skilled workers, home owning areas.

Category E: Aspiring

New home owners, mature communities;
White collar workers, better-off multi-ethnic areas.

Category F: Striving

Older people, less prosperous areas;
Council estate residents, better-off homes;
Council estate residents, high unemployment;
Council estate residents, greatest hardship;
People in multi-ethnic, low-income areas.

The basic unit of the cluster analysis which generates the ACORN codes covers almost 400 people on average, and clearly some areas of this size will contain individual addresses from two or more types. The data are widely used by commercial customers, so in practice any errors are likely to be acceptably small.

A.1 Reference

CACI Ltd. (1993). *The ACORN user guide*. CACI Information Services, London.

Abstract

The High Risk Offender (HRO) Scheme covers those drink-drive offenders who are felt to pose a particularly high risk to other road users or themselves because of the severity of the offence committed. The consequence of being an HRO is that the driving licence is not reissued automatically at the end of the disqualification period, as occurs with most other types of offender. Instead, an HRO must apply for a new licence, and one will only be issued following a positive medical assessment.

This report presents analyses of an extract of the DVLA (Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency) driver licence file. It explores the number of drivers who have become HROs, their length of disqualification and the proportion whose driving licences are reissued at the end of the period of disqualification.

These analyses give an overview of the data but do not throw light on the effects on the people involved, so the report also describes the results of questionnaire surveys. Two surveys examined the experiences that HROs have of the scheme and their attitudes to drinking and driving; a third investigated knowledge of the HRO scheme amongst a representative sample of the driving population.

Related publications

- TRL252 *Does retesting deter dangerous driving* by D G Harland and J Lester. 1997 (price £25, code E)
- TRL232 *Drinking and driving in Great Britain - a review* by G Maycock. 1997 (price £25, code E)
- RR325 *A review of rehabilitation programmes for drink/drive offenders in the USA* by P J Mills. 1992 (price £35, code J)
- CR301 *Unlawful driving behaviour: a criminological perspective* by C Corbett and F Simon. 1992 (price £45, code N)
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