

Road Safety Offence Analysis

Drink Drivers – Jan-Apr 2020

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1. Aim

This document examines offence data related to individuals arrested for Drink Driving in Essex during the first four months of 2020. It includes previous arrest data from Essex Athena, to show other recent arrests and offences linked to each individual. Athena offences comprise offences each individual was arrested for in Essex since 1st April 2015. This is not a criminal record check or full offending history, but does indicate the extent to which each individual is of recent or current interest to Essex Police for adverse reasons.

A comparison will be made to examine if the profile of drink driver has changed since COVID restrictions came in to place. Drink driver profiles will also be compared to similar recent work on Drug Drivers.

2. Executive Summary

- 437 people were arrested for Drink-Driving in Essex between 1st January and 30th April 2020.
- 23% of those arrested had one or more previous arrest for a criminal (non-driving) offence since April 2015 - between them this comprises 2,017 previous criminal offences.
- Only 4% had a previous driving offence serious enough to be recorded on Athena.
- An additional 764 criminal (non-driving) offences were recorded for these individuals during their drink drive custody episode in 2020.
- The most common criminal offences recorded for the group were Violence, Burglary & Theft and Public Order/Criminal Damage type offences.
- Almost half the drink drivers were males aged under 40.
- Compared to drug drivers, drink drivers were:
 - Slightly more likely to be female (18% of drink drivers, compared to 4% of drug drivers)
 - Slightly older (average age of 37 compared to 30 for drug drivers)
 - Had fewer previous offences recorded (23% of drink drivers had previous compared to 43% of drug drivers)
- During 2020, into the period of COVID restrictions, the following trends have been observed:
 - Reduction in the number of drink drive arrests.
 - Demand from STORM incidents has also reduced over the same period, while proactive arrests by the Road Crime Unit, and all arrests for drug drive have increased.
 - The fact that the night-time economy is effectively closed, and people have fewer reasons to drive, suggests the reduction in drink driving is genuine.
 - The increase in drug drive arrests may simply reflect an increased capacity to detect offences given the reduced demand from STORM incidents.
 - No observable change in the profile of those arrested.

3. Recommendations

- 1) Continue to focus enforcement resources on both drink and drug driving in order to:
 - Reduce the very high risk of injury collisions these behaviours create
 - Gain wider benefits of crime detection and prevention
- 2) Shift emphasis of driver impairment road safety initiatives towards drug driving.

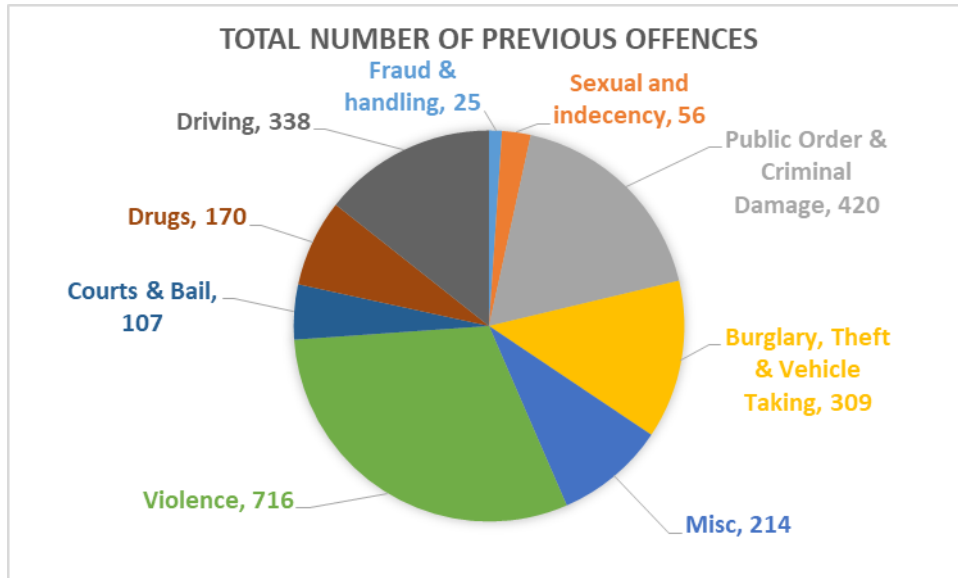
2) Offender profile

a. Previous arrests and offences

So far during 2020 there have been 437 drink drive arrests, of these:

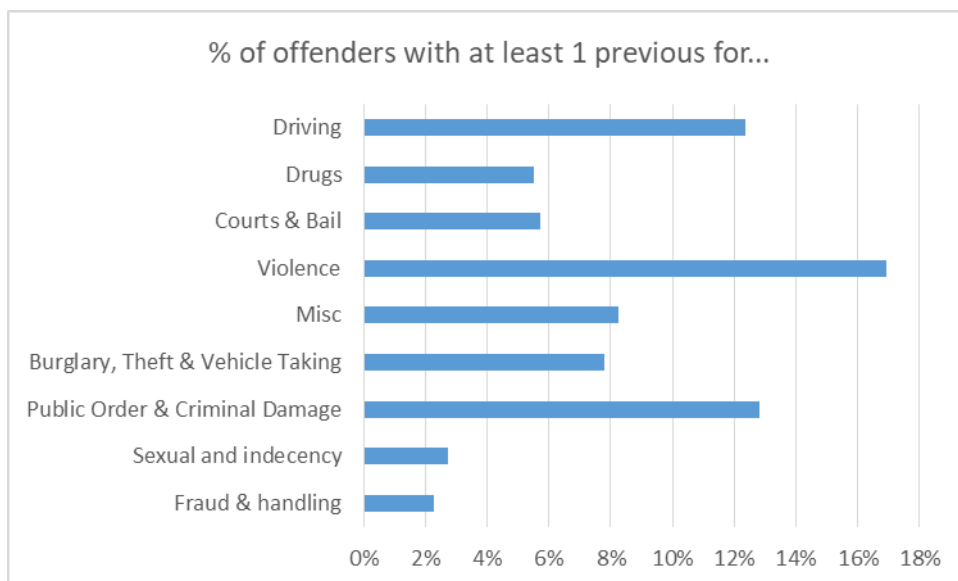
- 318 (73%) have no previous arrests on Athena
- 17 (4%) have a previous arrest for driving offences only
- 102 (23%) have one or more previous arrest for a criminal offence

The following offences are recorded on Athena for the detained persons, *prior* to their drink drive arrest in 2020:

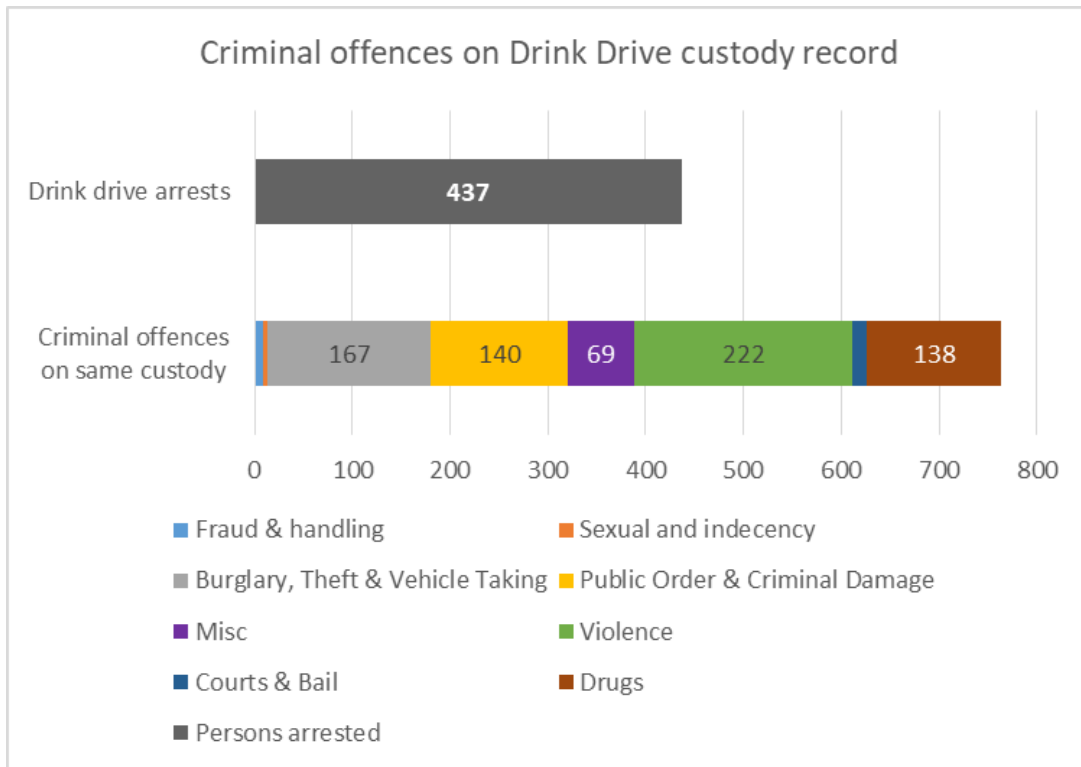


This gives a total of 2,355 previous offences for the 2020 drink drivers, including 338 previous driving offences.

Not every 2020 Drink Drive offender had previous arrests so the following chart shows the percentage of this cohort what had 1 or more previous arrest, by offence grouping. Please note, if somebody had previous for multiple offence types they will show in each of those categories below.



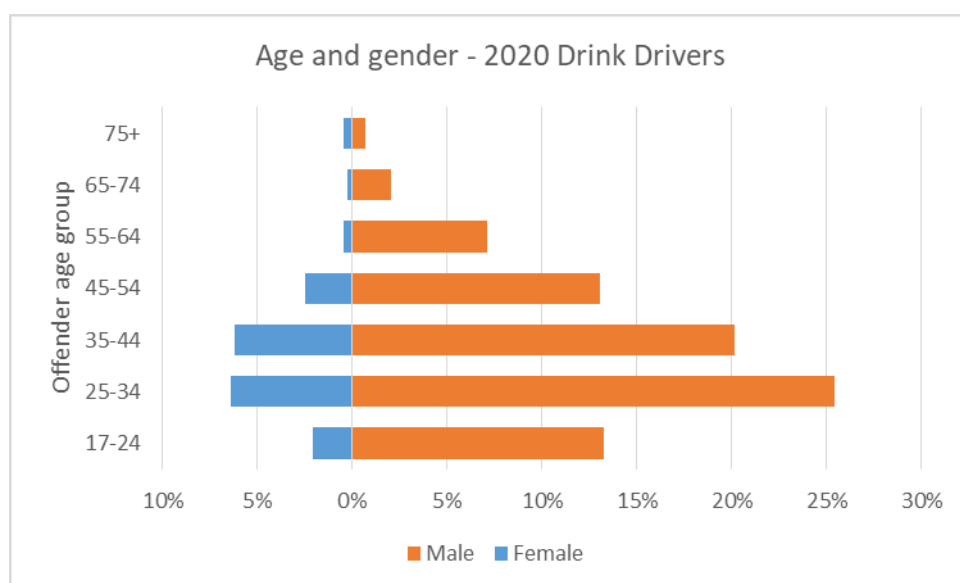
At the time of their arrest in 2020, the following offences were recorded on the same custody record for the 437 drink drivers in Essex:



This shows that the 437 drink drive arrests involved detained persons suspected of involvement in a further 764 criminal offences, the most common of which were, Burglary & Theft, Public order, Violence and Drugs offences. The most common Miscellaneous offences included things like harassment, malicious communications and obstructing a constable.

b. Age and gender

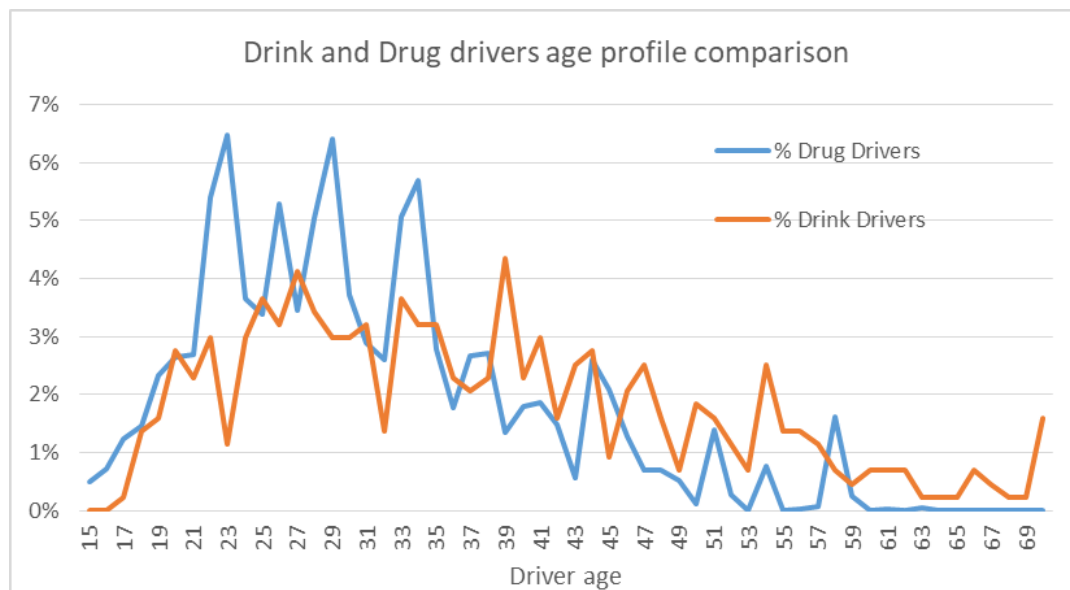
The graph below shows the age and gender distribution of drink drivers.



This shows drink drivers were overwhelmingly young and male, with almost half being males under the age of 40.

c. Comparison with drug drivers

The following table makes comparison between the profiles of Drink Drivers in this cohort, with similar previous work around Drug Drivers.



This shows that while there are similarities in the age profile of drink and drug drivers, drug drivers tend to be younger, with drink drivers having a flatter age profile curve. The average age of drink drivers was 37, compared to 30 for drug drivers.

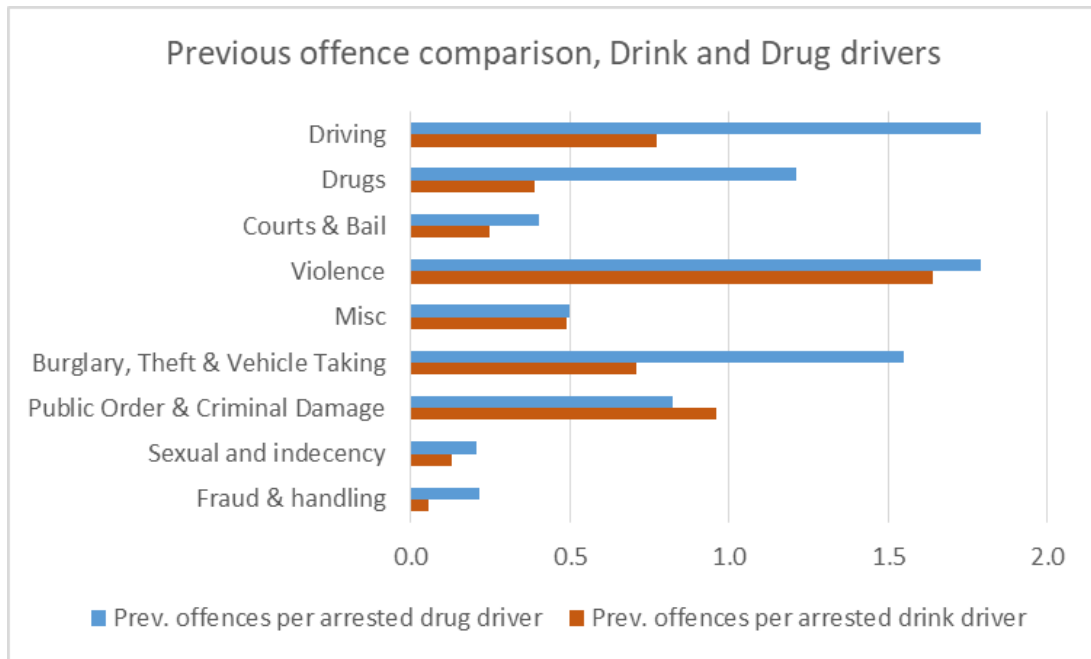
There are also a higher proportion of females within the drink driving group;

- 18% of drink drivers are female
- 4% of drug drivers are female

There is a considerable difference in the number of previous arrests between the two groups:

- 23% of drink drivers with one or more previous arrest for a non-driving criminal offence
- 43% of drug drivers with one or more previous arrest for a non-driving criminal offence

The offending profiles of the drink and drug driver cohorts are compared below:



This shows that the drug driver cohort have more previous offences than drink drivers of all types, except for public order. However the previous offence rates for violence and miscellaneous are very close.

3) Changes during 2020

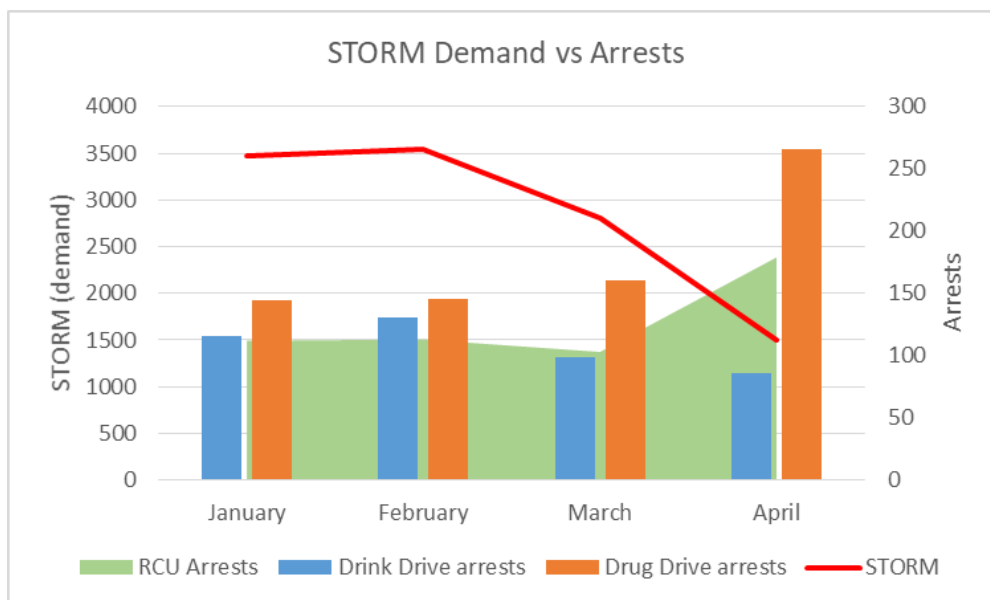
a. Number of arrests

The chart below shows the number of drink drive arrests per week in Essex since 6th January.



There was an apparent spike in arrests during the first week of COVID restrictions. However, this was following a period of declining numbers, and at 31 arrests for the week, was close to the weekly average of 31.2 for the period 13th Jan to 16th February. From 23rd March to 19th April weekly arrest numbers were depressed, but picked up noticeably in the last week.

The chart below compares monthly arrest figures for Drink and Drug driving, with demand (as measured by STORM incidents), and arrests made by the Road Crime Unit (RCU). Note: not all drink and drug driving arrests are made by RCU, and RCU make other types of arrest.



This shows that while arrests for drink driving have reduced, there has been a drastic increase in drug drive arrests. There are likely to be a multitude of factors for this trend, however it does suggest the following:

- RCU have been able to be more proactive, making more arrests with reduced demand to attend STORM incidents.
- Increased capacity for RCU (and potentially other front line resources?) has enabled more drug drivers to be caught.
- The fact that at the same time the numbers of drink drivers has reduced leads us to the inferences that:
 - o Closing of the night time economy has reduced the opportunity and motivation to drink drive.
 - o Home working/lockdown means drinkers have less reason to drive.
 - o Drug drivers have a lifestyle that is largely unaffected by COVID restrictions, as it already exists outside of mainstream society.

b. Offender profile

The chart below indicates, that on the three measures used there have been no changes in the profile of people arrested for drink driving in Essex between the start of the year and the COVID-restrictions period.

