We must not let motorists off the hook

Nobody in their right mind would want to be caught drink-driving.

It’s reckless, selfish and shows a complete disregard for the safety of other people. It comes with huge penalties, potential loss of livelihood, a serious criminal record and a degree of personal shame.

Given all of that, it’s difficult to now imagine anyone arguing that drink-driving is actually OK.

Or to imagine a government reducing the criminal penalties around it.

The stigma around the offence didn’t always exist.

In past decades, it was broadly socially acceptable and those who campaigned to tighten up legislation and increase penalties were cast as meddlers.

A similar journey must now take place on the issue of texting and using mobile phones while driving.

An investigation in the Sunday Mail today demonstrates that drivers just aren’t getting the message on the dangers of this practice. This isn’t just a quick text at the traffic lights. Our pictures show drivers texting and using mobiles while driving.

They are putting not just their own lives at risk but those of other road users.

They are putting not just themselves at risk but their passengers and other road users.

Or, as police officers’ representative Calum Steele puts it, “dicing with death”.

Current sentencing is clearly not acting as a deterrent and needs to be updated.

The suggestion that convictions are dropping because of a lack of police officers is also enormously concerning.

But the motoring public also have their part to play in changing the culture of drivers.

Most people wouldn’t get in a car with someone they suspect of having had too much to drink.

They should adopt the same attitude when drivers opt to lift a handset while on the move.

Drivers themselves also need to learn the harsh lessons of the A34 tragedy more quickly.

There’s no text or call that can’t wait until you’ve come to a halt. Particularly at 70mph.

Put the phones down.

There are far fewer obese adults in Sweden, not to mention children.

I couldn’t have known the impact the move would have on the family after leaving for Stockholm more than five years ago.

However, life changed when we moved to Sweden. Here, all children sit down to a hot meal in school, there are no packed lunches and fast food rarely features in a weekly menu.

It is normal for children in Sweden only to have sweets on a Saturday and fizzy drinks are far more difficult to come by.

Nursery, or förskola, is a healthy environment from so many perspectives – healthy food, an emphasis on outdoor play every day regardless of weather, regular trips to the forest.

Snacks and lunches are fruit or yoghurt, bulgur and veg, healthy bread, and so on.

My partner Theres and I pay £50 a month for our two children though this figure varies depending on the hours and area where children attend nursery.

At lunch, the emphasis is on trying different things. My daughter gets a salad buffet every day and they are encouraged to pick three things from it.

Every child eats school meals. There are no packed lunches and no stigma attached to a free meal when everyone has them.

It’s quite clear Scotland has a dreadful obesity record. Even for adults, lifestyles are often in stark contrast. There are far fewer obese adults in Sweden, not to mention children.

I’m always a little shocked when I go back home. There are deep cultural differences. Food habits are deeply ingrained as are alcohol habits.

Alcohol is only sold here in government-controlled shops with restricted hours, for example, only until 3pm on a Saturday, and there are no supermarket-style cheap deals.

Pub culture is a lot less part of society. I think Scotland could learn a lot, especially at nursery and school level. This is when it is critical. Every society can change.

Finland had similar problems but introduced ways of tackling it at a young age and now they are at the other end of the spectrum.

It’s easy to say we are Scottish, we eat chips and drink lager. But Swedes have food vices, too. Cakes and sweet things are a big part of daily culture but it’s fine when it’s part of a balanced diet.

We pay more tax here but I think it’s spent on things that are meaningful and make life better for the majority.

There’s no doubt that we have it better here. I long for Scotland to adopt some of the policies here, especially regarding paternal rights and health and wellbeing.

I receive a £300-a-year subsidy for a gym or sports club membership, which is typical of many workplaces.

My office also provides free tennis and badminton every week as well as in-house massages. Many workplaces have a paid hour a week to do any physical activity of choice.

There are cycle-to-work schemes as well and good shower facilities in the majority of workplaces to make it easier.