



Reported Road Casualties Wales, 2020

22 September 2021
SB 28/2021

Police recorded road accident and casualty numbers throughout most of 2020 were affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic which saw restrictions on how, where and why people could travel within Wales.

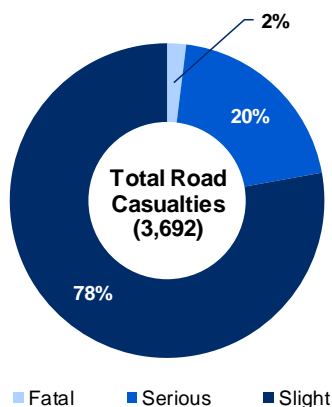
Key Results

In 2020 there were 3,692 road casualties reported by police forces in Wales.

This is a 36% decrease compared to 2019.

- 819 of the casualties were killed or seriously injured (KSI), a decrease of 31% compared with 2019.
- 2,873 had slight injuries, 38% lower than the figure for 2019.
- 72% of KSI casualties in 2020 were male.

Chart 1: Proportion of reported Road casualties by severity, 2020



Source: Road Accident Statistics, Welsh Government

- There was a 37% decrease in child casualties (those aged under 16) and a 32% decrease in young people casualties (aged 16-24), compared with 2019.
- Young people aged 16-24 are disproportionately more likely to be casualties in road accidents. They make up 11% of the population but 22% of all casualties.
- When adjusting for distance travelled, motorcyclists and pedal cyclists were more likely to be casualties than car users.

About this bulletin

This statistical bulletin covers road traffic accidents and casualties in Wales. The data are based on Welsh police force records of accidents resulting in personal injury. It provides more detailed analysis of the data that was originally published in our Police Recorded Road Accidents release (July 2021), and has a focus on motorcyclists, pedal cyclists, pedestrians and young people.

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Quality and data coverage

The data presented in this report reflect personal injury road accidents *recorded by police forces* in Wales. While these data are the most detailed and reliable source of information on road accidents and casualties, they do not provide a complete record of all such incidents – for example, hospital, survey and compensation claims data indicate that many non-fatal accidents are not reported to or recorded by the police. In addition, changes in police recording practices may mean that the statistics are not directly comparable over time.

The UK Department for Transport explores the additional sources in some detail in its [Reported Road Casualties report for Great Britain](#). Its analysis of National Travel Survey (NTS) data suggest that approximately 50% of accidents involving some degree of personal injury, and two thirds of all non-fatal road casualties, are *not* reported to police. Examples of injuries reported in the NTS include whiplash and minor cuts and bruises, but it is not known how many of these would have qualified as recordable injuries had police attended the scene. Analysis of motor insurance claims statistics indicates that a very significant proportion of the injuries not reported to police are likely to be whiplash.

Overall, the available sources show that accidents reported to and recorded by police forces represent only a subset of all personal injury road accidents, but that coverage of serious injuries and fatalities is good.

The impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) on Road Casualties

Police recorded road accident and casualty numbers throughout most of 2020 were affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic which saw restrictions on how, where and why people could travel within Wales. The restrictions generally resulted in reduced traffic volume for all types of motorised vehicles. The fall in traffic volume consequently led to a decrease in road accidents and casualties.

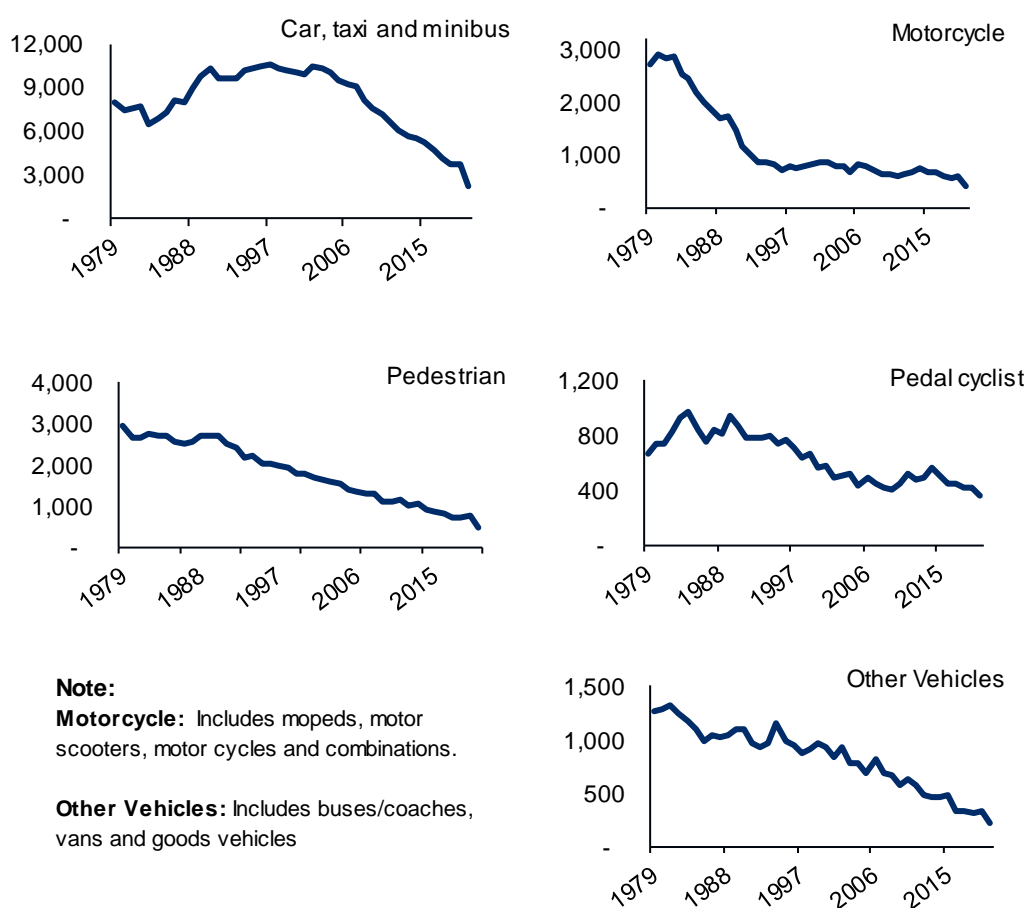
Reported casualties

This section presents high level summaries for all casualties in Wales, including some breakdowns by age and gender. The later sections in this bulletin focus on [motorcyclist casualties](#), [pedal cyclist casualties](#), [pedestrian casualties](#) and [young people](#).

While fatalities decreased across most users groups, they increased for cyclists which is likely a reflection of the increased [volume of cyclists](#) in 2020.

Chart 2 shows casualty trends by different user groups. All category of users have seen a decrease in road casualties over time. Compared to 1979, casualty numbers in 2020 were 76% lower in total.

Chart 2: Reported road casualties in Wales by road user, 1979 to 2020



Source: Road Accident Statistics, Welsh Government

In 2020, police forces in Wales recorded a total of 2,864 road accidents involving personal injury, which resulted in 3,692 casualties. 22% of the reported road accidents resulted in at least one KSI casualty.

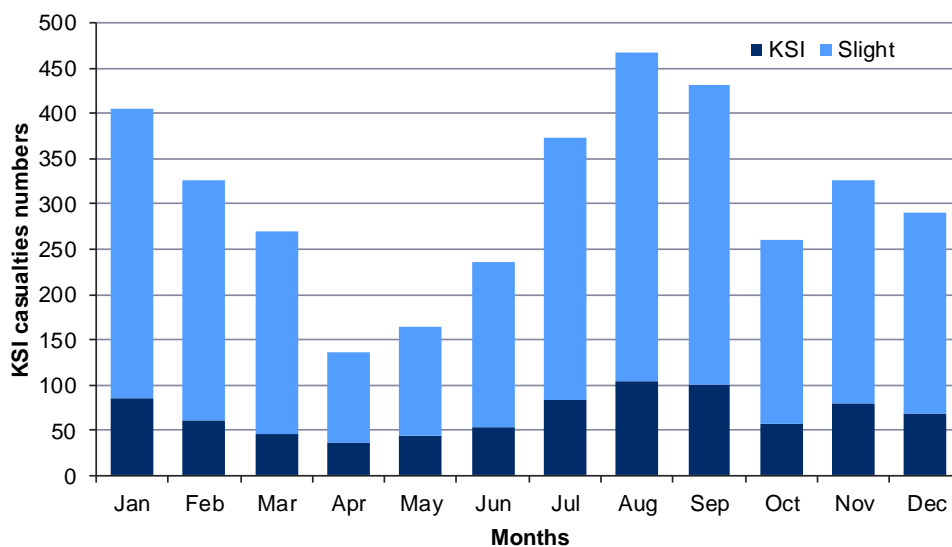
- Of these, 72 people were killed (2%), 747 were seriously injured (20 %) and 2,873 were slightly injured (78%)
- Males were more likely than females to be casualties, accounting for 62% of all casualties and 72% of all people killed or seriously injured in Wales in 2020.

In 2020 there were falls in casualty numbers for all categories of road users because of travel restrictions that were imposed as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Compared to 2019, the number of KSI casualties dropped by at least 50 % in the months of April, May and June 2020 (Chart 3) when compared to the same month a year earlier. The highest fall was in April (64%) followed by May (63%). However, KSI casualties in September 2020 were up by 6% compared to 2019.

Over the same period, slight casualties followed a similar pattern with April 2020 recording the highest decrease, 75% compared to 2019.

Chart 3: Total KSI and Slight casualties by month, 2020

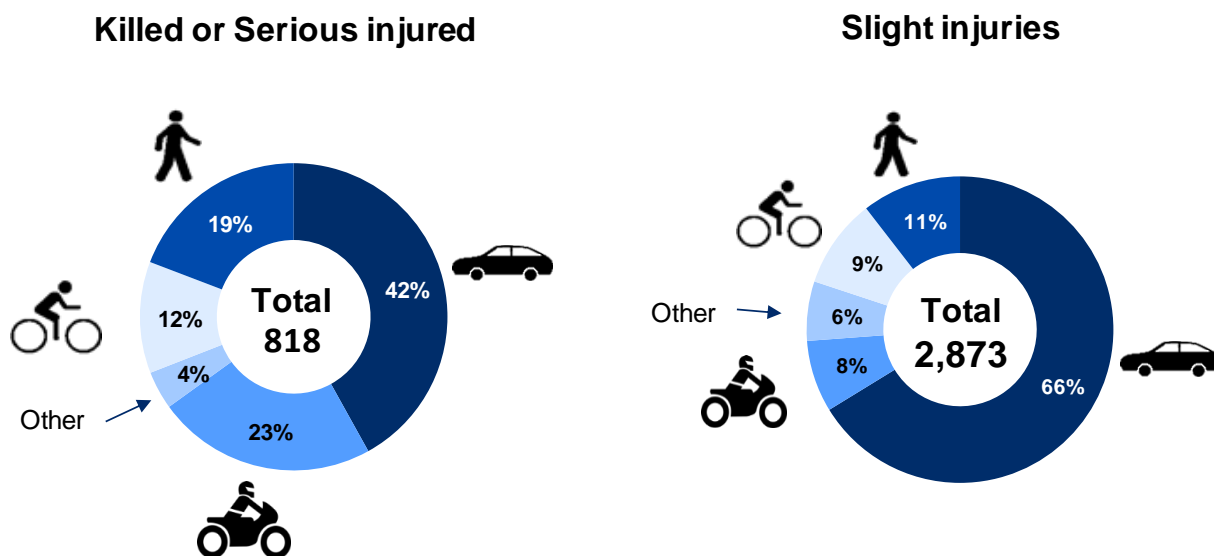


Source: Road Accident Statistics, Welsh Government

There have been large falls in the number of people killed and injured on Welsh roads since the 1970s by all types of road users.

All user groups recorded decreases in the number of casualties in 2020. Car, taxi and minibus users recorded the highest fall (40%) closely followed by pedestrians (39%).

Chart 4: KSI and slight casualties by type of road user, 2020 (a)



Notes:

Source: Road Accident Statistics, Welsh Government

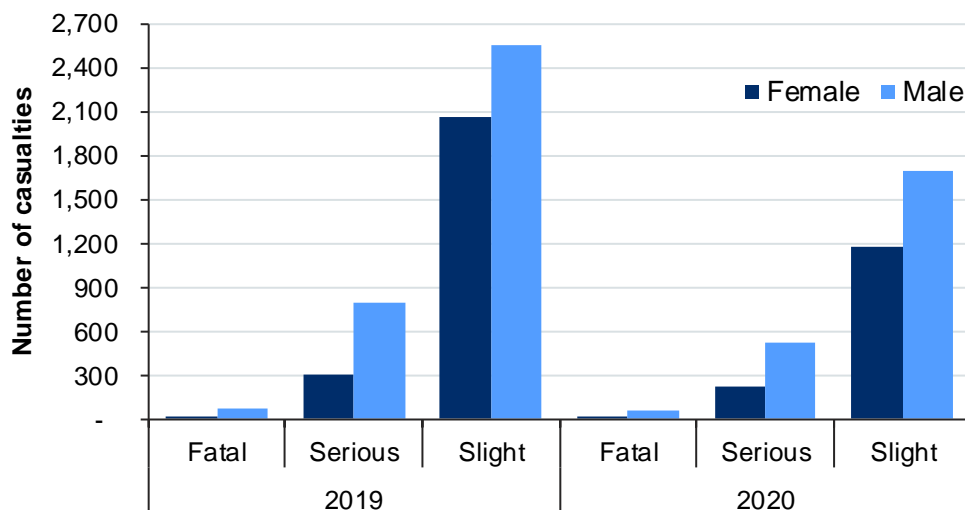
(a) 'Other', Includes buses, coaches, goods vehicles, invalid vehicles, motor caravans, other and unknow vehicles

- Car, taxi and minibus users accounted for 42% of KSI casualties and 66% of slight casualties.
- Motorcyclists accounted for 23% of KSI casualties and 8% of slight casualties. Pedal cyclists made up 12% of KSI casualties and 9% of slight casualties. Motorcyclists and pedal cyclists involved in road traffic accidents are more likely to be killed or seriously injured than car users.
- Pedestrians accounted for 19% of KSI casualties and 11% of slight casualties, similar to last year.

Analysis of age, gender and mode of travel

Males were more likely than females to be casualties, accounting for 62% of all casualties and 72% of all people killed or seriously injured in Wales in 2020 (Chart 5).

Chart 5: Fatal, serious and slight casualties by gender, 2019 and 2020

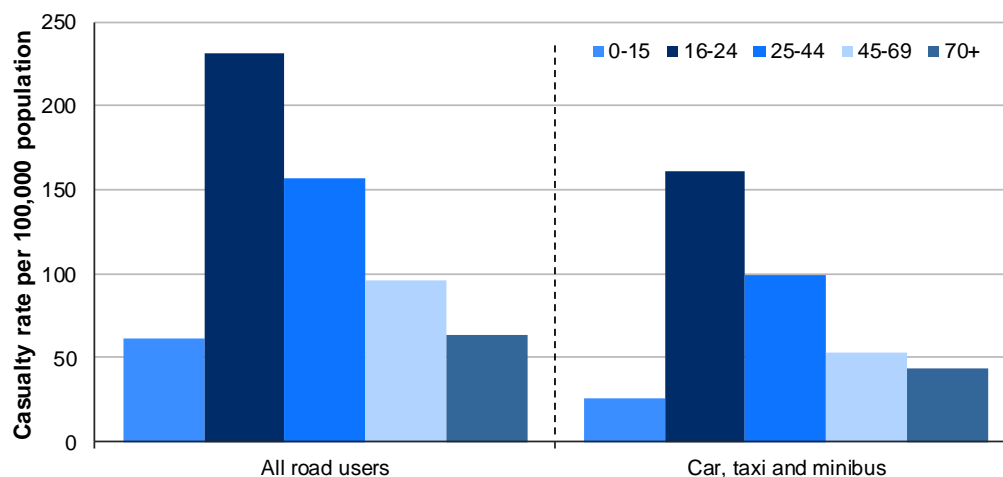


Source: Road Accident Statistics, Welsh Government

One way to examine risk is by looking at the number of casualties as a proportion of the population at large. ([Chart 6](#)) shows the rate per 100,000 people in each age group of being a road accident casualty, by type of road user. These rates do not necessarily reflect the risk per trip or per kilometre travelled because there may be differences in the number of road users in each category by age.

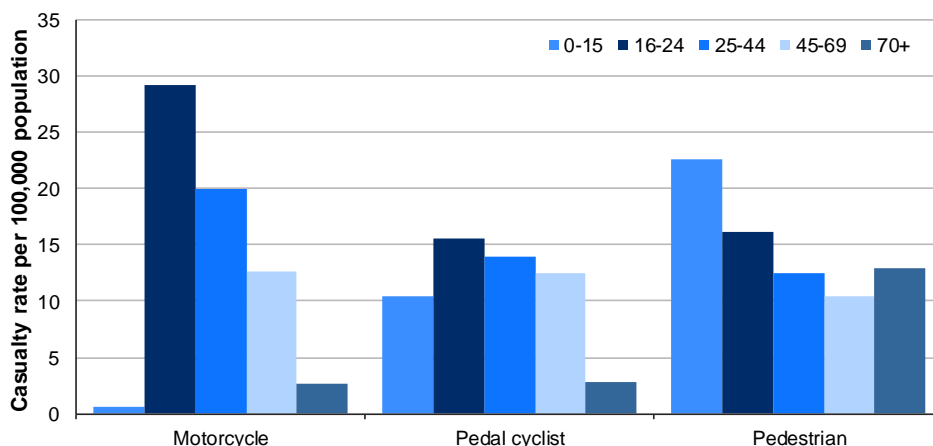
- Young people (aged 16-24) are the most at risk age group, with 231 casualties per 100,000 young people in the population.
- Young people are also the most likely age group to be car user casualties (161 per 100,000 young people) or motorcyclist casualties (29 per 100,000 young people).
- Pedestrian casualty risk is highest for the 0-15 age group, followed by 16-24.
- Pedal cyclist risk was highest for the 16-24 age group in 2020. In previous years the 45-68 year olds age group dominated pedal cycle casualties.

Chart 6A: Casualty rates by age group by Car, taxi and minibus user, 2020



Source: Road Accident Statistics, Welsh Government and mid-year population estimates - 2020, ONS

Chart 6B: Casualty rates by age group by Motorcycle, Pedal Cyclist and Pedestrian, 2020



Source: Road Accident Statistics, Welsh Government and mid-year population estimates - 2020, ONS

Notes:

(a) Motorcycle: includes mopeds, motor scooters, motorcycles and combinations

We can also look at exposure to risk, expressed as the number of casualties per billion vehicle kilometres travelled ([Table 1](#)). This shows that for the equivalent distance travelled:

- Although car users account for the vast majority of casualties, the relative risk for motorcyclists and pedal cyclists is much higher.
- In year 2020 Motorcyclists were 17 times more likely than car and taxi occupants to be casualties whilst pedal cyclists were 9 times more likely.

- Motorcyclists were nearly 50 times more likely than car and taxi occupants to be killed or seriously injured and pedal cyclists were 16 times more likely to be killed or seriously injured

Table 1: Number and rate (per billion vehicle kilometres) of vehicle occupant casualties, 2020

Casualty type	Number of vehicle occupant casualties, 2020				Number and Rate per billion vehicle kilometres (a)			
	Motorcycles	Cars and taxis	Other		Motorcycles	Cars and taxis	Other	
			powered vehicles (b)	Pedal cyclists			powered vehicles	Pedal cyclists
Fatal	17	26	2	7	85	1	0	22
Serious	172	317	31	89	860	17	5	278
KSI	189	343	33	96	945	19	6	300
Slight	218	1,903	180	271	1,090	103	31	847
Total	407	2,246	213	367	2,035	121	36	1,147





Source: Road Accident Statistics, Welsh Government

Notes:

- (a) Calculated using 2020 casualty data and 2020 traffic volume data
- (b) Includes buses/coaches, vans and goods vehicles

Reported casualties by speed limit data shows that, in 2020, most casualties were sustained on a 30mph speed limit road sections followed by 60mph roads (Chart 7). The majority of casualties were Car, taxi and minibus users. Most pedestrians' casualties were reported on roads with 30mph and 20mph.

Chart 7: Breakdown of road casualties by speed limit in 2020

Speed limit mph					Total Casualties
20	50	8	21	27	106
30	1,007	187	252	369	1,815
40	255	43	27	18	343
50	131	28	15	10	184
60	624	121	47	24	816
70	179	20	5	10	214

Source: Road Accident Statistics, Welsh Government

The following sections look at Motorcycle, Pedal Cycle, Pedestrian and Young Person casualties in more details.

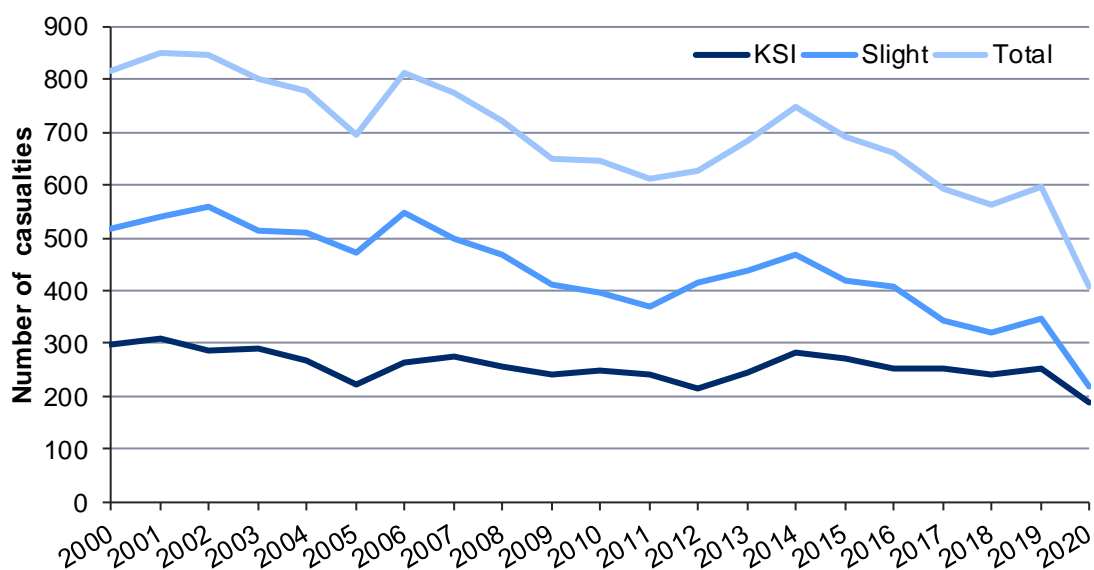
Other detailed information, such as local authority breakdowns, can be accessed from the accompanying [Dashboard](#) and [StatsWales](#) tables.

Motorcycle user casualties

Key points

- There were 407 motorcyclist casualties reported by the police in 2020, representing 7% of all casualties in Wales. This was a 32% decrease compared with 2019.
- Of the 407 casualties, 189 were KSI and 218 were slightly injured.
- There has generally been a decrease in motorcycle casualties' over time in all severity types before a sharp fall in 2020 (Chart 8).
- The share of motorcycle casualties who are killed or seriously injured generally increases with age.
- As in 2019 (and previous years) motorcycle casualties were most common on Sundays in 2020.
- Most motorcycle casualties in urban areas occurred on roads with 30 mph speed limits (52%), whilst in rural areas they most often occurred on 60 mph speed limits road sections.
- 81% of motorcycle casualties occurred in daylight and 19% occurred in darkness in 2020.

Chart 8: Motorcyclist casualties by severity, 2000 - 2020

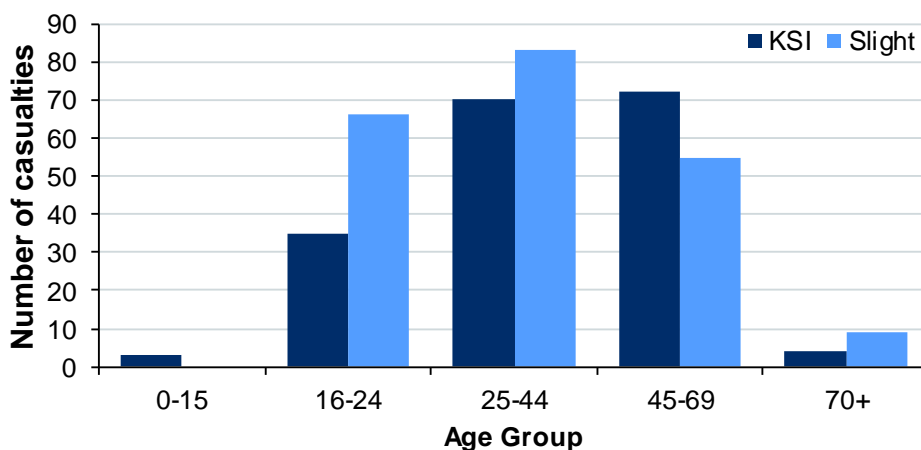


Source: Road Accident Statistics, Welsh Government

Motorcycle casualties by age

The proportion of motorcycle casualties who are killed or seriously injured generally increases with age (Chart 9). For motorcyclists aged 16-24, about one third of all casualties were KSI. For 45-69 year olds, more casualties were KSI (58%) than slightly injured (42%).

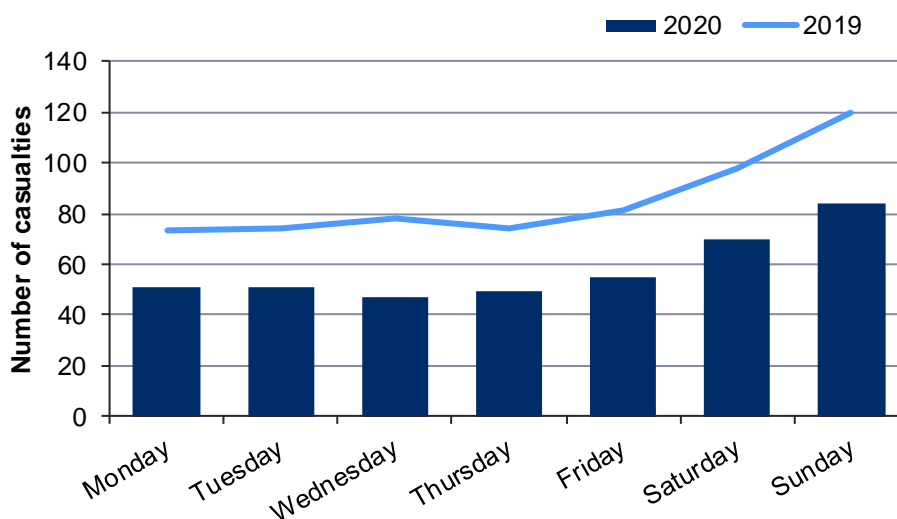
Chart 9: Motorcyclist casualties by severity and age group, 2020



Source: Road Accident Statistics, Welsh Government

As in 2019 (and previous years) motorcycle casualties were most common on Sundays in 2020 (21% of all motorcycle casualties), (Chart 10).

Chart 10: Motorcyclist casualties by day of week, 2019 - 2020



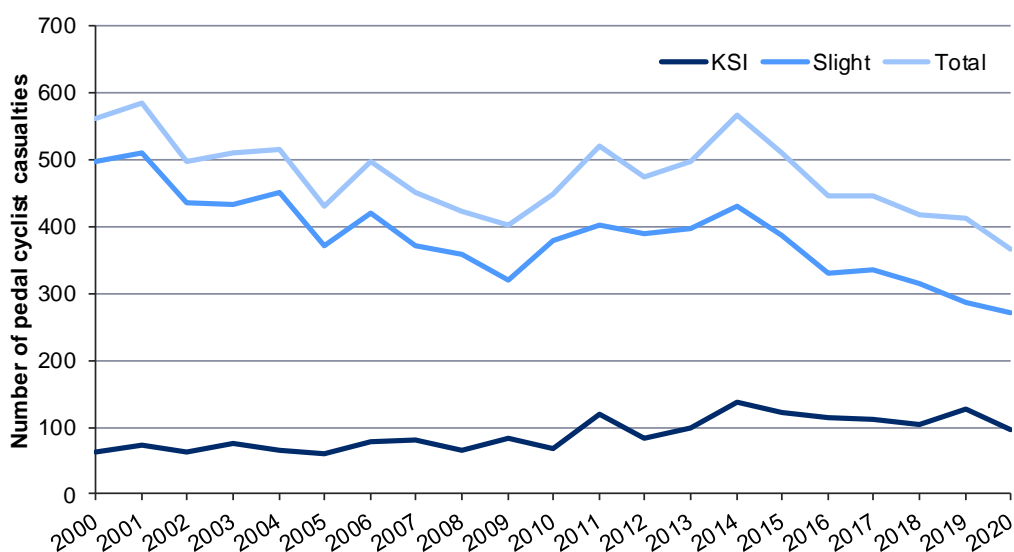
Source: Road Accident Statistics, Welsh Government

Pedal cyclist casualties

Key points

- There were 367 pedal cyclist casualties in 2020, representing 10% of all casualties in Wales. Of these, 96 were KSI and 271 were slightly injured.
- Compared to 2019, the number of pedal fatalities increased by 1 casualty whilst serious and slight casualties dropped by 32 and 14 respectively over same period despite the increase in pedal usage.
- Pedal cycle traffic volume had increased in 2020 by 68.4%, the largest increase since records began, whilst there were decreases in other modes of travel during the same period.
- The vast majority of pedal cyclist casualties in 2020 were male (86%)
- 62% of all pedal cycle casualties occurred at junctions, with 43% of these occurring at T-junctions.

Chart 11: Pedal cyclist casualties by severity, 2000 to 2020



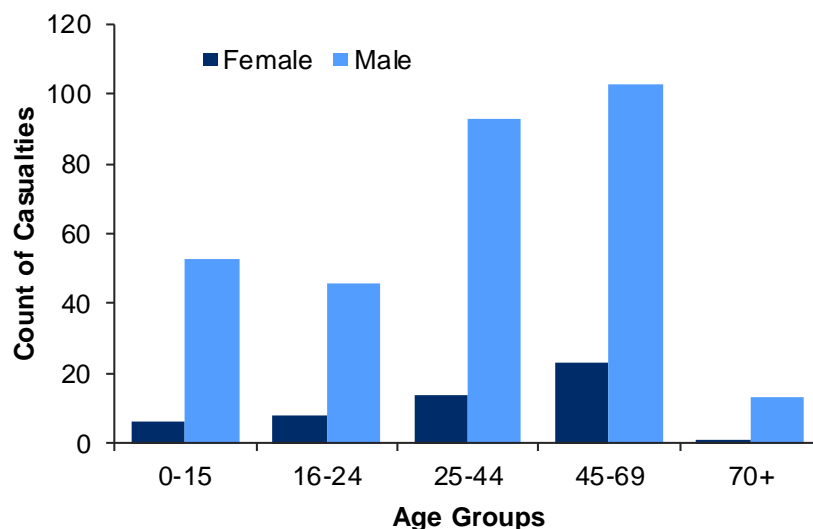
Source: Road Accident Statistics, Welsh Government

There was a significant fall in pedal cyclist casualties from the late 1980s onwards, with the lowest total recorded in 2009. For fatalities and serious injuries there was a slight upward trend to 2014 and a slight fall thereafter. The total number of KSIs has remained broadly stable in recent years (Chart 11).

Pedal cyclist casualties by Age and gender

The highest number of pedal cyclist casualties occurred in the 45-69 age group, (Chart 12). Pedal casualties for those aged 16-24 increased by 15% whilst all other groups registered decreases in 2020. Casualties among children have fallen during recent years and in 2020 fell by 25% compared to the previous year.

Chart 12: Pedal cyclist casualties by age and gender in 2020

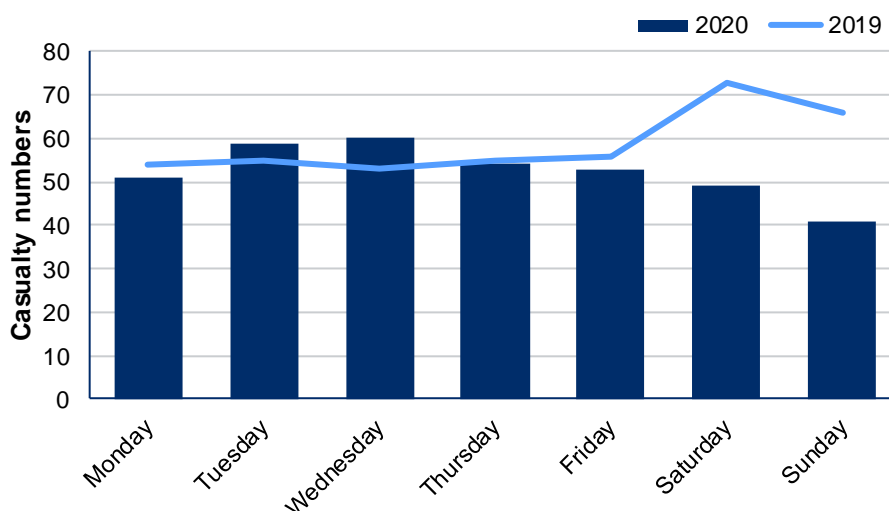


Source: Road Accident Statistics, Welsh Government

Note: Unknown age group not included

Tuesday and Wednesday recorded an increase in number of pedal casualties (7% and 13% respectively) compared to same days in 2019. Other weekdays registered a decrease in daily casualties with Sunday dropping by 28% compared to the previous year ([Chart 13](#)).

Chart 13: Pedal Cyclist casualties by day of week, 2020



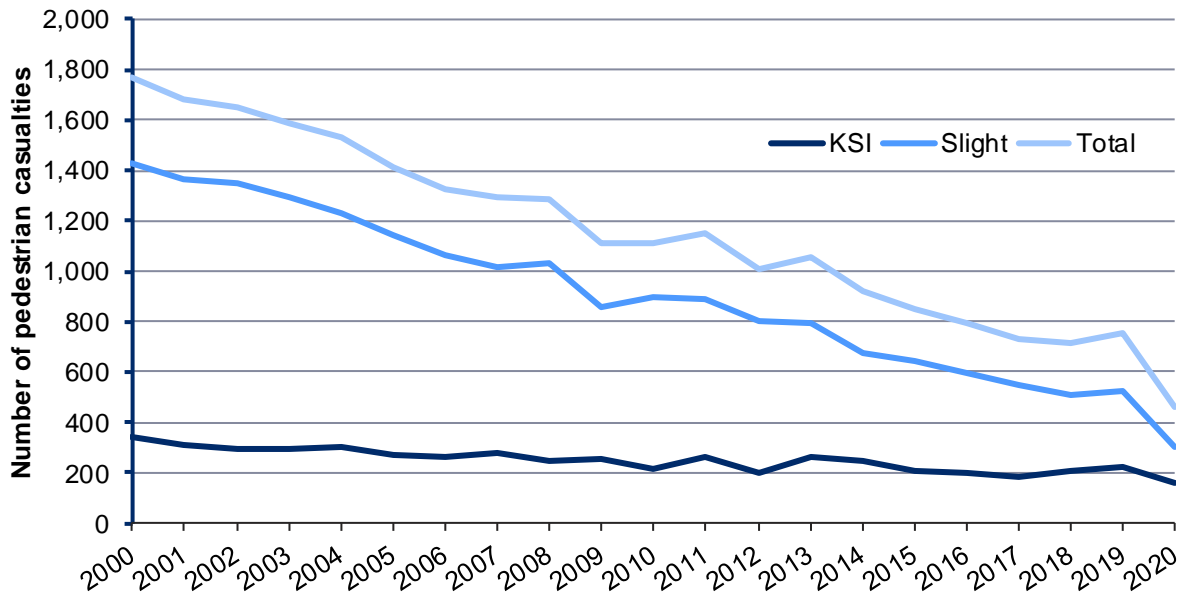
Source: Road Accident Statistics, Welsh Government

Pedestrian casualties

Key points

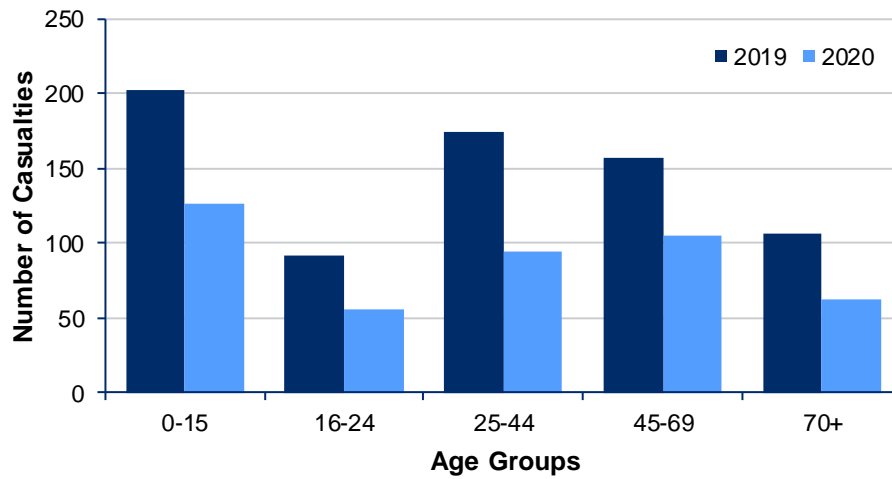
- In 2020 there were 458 pedestrian casualties, a fall of 39% compared with 2019. Pedestrian casualties represented 12.4% of all casualties in Wales.
- 20 pedestrians were killed (a 17% decrease compared to 2019), 137 were seriously injured (32% decrease) and 301 (43% decrease) were slightly injured.
- There has been a significant fall in pedestrian casualties since the late 1980s, and the 2020 figure is the lowest on record (Chart 14).
- In 2020 there were more pedestrian casualties aged 0-15 (28% of total) than in any other age group. ([Chart 15](#)).
- 57% of pedestrian casualties were male. Figures for males were higher than for females across all severities of casualty
- Fridays and Saturdays saw more casualties in the late evening and early hours of the morning than the other days of the week.
- On weekdays there are clear spikes in incidence between 07:00 to 09:00 and again from 15:00 until 18:00, in line with the beginning and end of school and working days

Chart 14: Pedestrian casualties by severity, 2000 to 2020



Source: Road Accident Statistics, Welsh Government

Chart 15: Pedestrian casualties by age group, 2019 to 2020



Source: Road Accident Statistics, Welsh Government

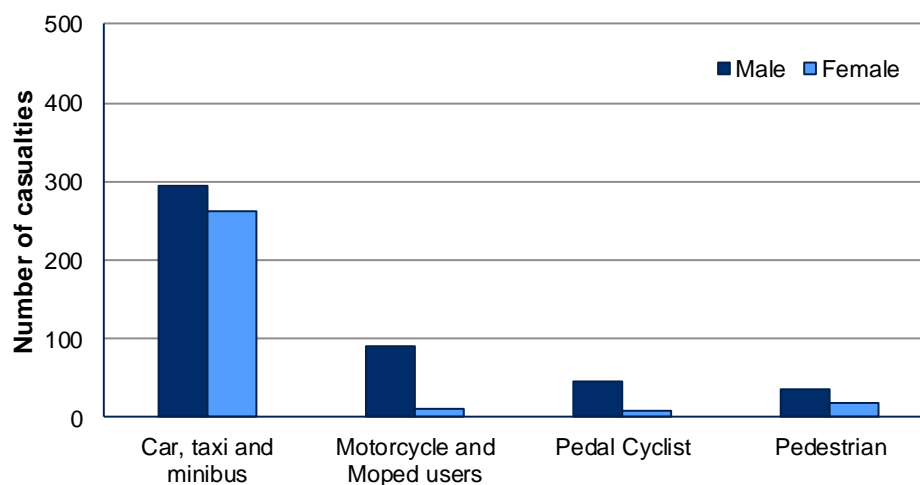
There were a total of 66 hit and run pedestrian casualties in 2020, a decrease of 50% compared to 2019, [StatsWales](#).

Young Persons Casualties (16-24 age group)

Key points

- In 2020, there were 799 road casualties aged 16-24 in Wales, a 32% fall compared with 2019. 177 of those casualties were killed or seriously injured (KSI).
- Young people are disproportionately more likely to be casualties in road accidents. They make up 11% of the population but 21% of all casualties on the roads in 2020. In particular, the figures for cars, taxis and minibus casualties (24% of total) and motorcyclist casualties (28% of total) were much higher than the 11% population share.
- 62% of young casualties were male and 38% were female.
- Males aged 16-24 are more likely than females to be casualties in all road user categories, but for motorcyclists the difference is stark, with 10 times as many young male casualties as young female (Chart 16).
- 72% of young person casualties were in the car, taxi and minibus user categories.
- Most young person casualties occurred on roads with maximum speeds of 30mph speed limit (49%) and 60mph speed limit (28%).

Chart 16: Casualties aged 16-24 by gender and road user category, 2020



Source: Road Accident Statistics, Welsh Government

Notes

1 Relevance

There are a variety of organisations that use the Welsh road traffic accident and casualty data.

The Welsh Government uses road traffic collision and casualty data to help set road safety policy. It is also used for performance indicators, both for the Welsh Government's Transport Strategy and for some health performance indicators.

Other users include Highway Authorities, covering the Welsh Government, which is responsible for the motorway and trunk road network, and local authorities, which are responsible for other roads in Wales. Other bodies involved in road safety include the Safety Camera Partnership, Trunk Road Agents, and Police & Community Safety Partnerships. Welsh Government also provides data to transport planning organisations to support road safety assessments.

2 Accuracy

The statistics refer to casualties resulting from personal injury accidents on public roads reported to the police and forwarded to the Welsh Government. The police compile statistical data about road traffic accidents and casualties (called Stats19 data) for the Welsh Government and the Department for Transport (DfT). This follows police attendance at accidents that involve any personal injury, together with members of the public reporting personal injury accidents directly to the police. The figures are based on information available to the government 14 weeks after the end of the latest quarter.

The figures shown may change in future if there are late amendments. Similarly, the figures for earlier years may differ from those previously published. The figures cover only road accidents reported to the police involving personal injury.

The chart below shows the local authorities covered by each of the Welsh police force areas.

Local Authority	Police Force
Isle of Anglesey	North Wales police force
Gwynedd	
Conwy	
Denbighshire	
Flintshire	
Wrexham	
Powys	Dyfed powys police force
Ceredigion	
Pembrokeshire	
Swansea	South Wales police force
Neath Port Talbot	
Bridgend	
Vale of Glamorgan	
Cardiff	
Rhondda Cynon Taf	
Merthyr Tydfil	Gwent police force
Caerphilly	
Blaenau Gwent	
Torfaen	
Monmouthshire	
Newport	

Source: Road Accident Statistics, Welsh Government

As discussed in the quality and data coverage section, there is known under-reporting and under-recording of personal injury road accidents, as well as potential for the misclassification of accidents. Misclassifications are minimised by local authorities and the Welsh Government conducting a number of data validations. For example, Welsh Government data analysts may query the location of an accident with a police force when the grid reference of an accident is in a different local authority to the one specified in the data return. These issues are discussed in more detail in a statistical article '[Quality Report for Welsh Road Casualties](#)'.

This data is obtained from administrative sources and thus may be affected by changes in procedures within those systems.

This article also summarises the sources and methods used to compile the road accident and casualty figures for Wales. It also reviews the quality of the resulting figures in terms of the six dimensions of statistical quality of the European Statistical System. The aim is to provide background information about road casualty statistics for Wales in a single document for all users of the published statistics.

3 Timeliness and punctuality

This release is a supplementary statistical bulletin to the [Police recorded road accidents](#) release. It provides detailed analysis of road casualties that were reported by the police forces in Wales.

Related publications are available from the [Statistics and Research website](#).

Road casualty statistics for Wales are available on [StatsWales](#).

4 Accessibility and clarity

This statistical bulletin is pre-announced and then published on the statistics & research website.

Data in this bulletin as well as other years is available on the [StatsWales website](#).

5 Comparability and coherence

A casualty is defined as a person killed or injured in an accident. One accident may give rise to several casualties. Casualties are subdivided into killed, seriously injured and slightly injured categories. Casualties reported as killed include only those cases where death occurs in less than 30 days as a result of the accident. They do not include those who died as a result of natural causes (e.g. heart attack) rather than as a result of the accident, nor do they include confirmed suicides. This definition is used consistently across the GB.

National Statistics status

The [United Kingdom Statistics Authority](#) has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#).

National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value, and it is our responsibility to maintain compliance with these standards.

All official statistics should comply with all aspects of the Code of Practice for Statistics. They are awarded National Statistics status following an assessment by the UK Statistics Authority's regulatory arm. The Authority considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate. The designation of these statistics as National Statistics was confirmed in July 2013 following a [full assessment against the Code of Practice](#).

Since the latest review by the Office for Statistics Regulation, we have continued to comply with the Code of Practice for Statistics, and have made the following improvements:

- Improved our understanding of data quality, by using the [Quality Assurance of Administrative Data toolkit](#)
- Added to and refined information about dimensions of quality and described links to policy and Welsh Government targets
- Improved visuals by de-cluttering and standardising charts and tables

It is Welsh Government's responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected of National Statistics. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, we will discuss any concerns with the Authority promptly. National Statistics status can be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained, and reinstated when standards are restored.

Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFG)

The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The Act puts in place seven well-being goals for Wales. These are for a more equal, prosperous, resilient, healthier and globally responsible Wales, with cohesive communities and a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. Under section (10)(1) of the Act, the Welsh Ministers must (a) publish indicators ("national indicators") that must be applied for the purpose of measuring progress towards the achievement of the Well-being goals, and (b) lay a copy of the national indicators before Senedd Symru. The 46 national indicators were laid in March 2016 and this release does not include any of the national indicators.

Information on the indicators, along with narratives for each of the well-being goals and associated technical information is available in the [Wellbeing of Wales report](#).

Further information on the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#).

The statistics included in this release could also provide supporting narrative to the national indicators and be used by public services boards in relation to their local well-being assessments and local well-being plans.

Further details

The document is available at

<https://gov.wales/reported-road-casualties-2020>

Next update

July 2022 (provisional)

We want your feedback

We welcome any feedback on any aspect of these statistics which can be provided by email to:

stats.transport@gov.wales

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