



## Reported Road Casualties Wales, 2021

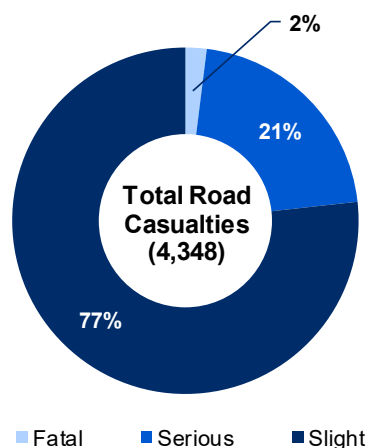
20 July 2022  
SB 17/2022

### Key Results

In 2021 there were 4,348 road casualties reported by police forces in Wales, an increase of 17% compared to 2020 but a decrease of 25% compared to 2019. Of these casualties:

- 1,011 (23%) were killed or seriously injured (KSI), an increase of 23% compared with 2020 but a decrease of 15% compared to 2019.
- 3,337 (77%) had slight injuries, 16% more than the figure for 2020 but 28% less than the figure for 2019.

**Chart 1: Proportion of reported Road casualties by severity, 2021**



Source: Road Accident Statistics, Welsh Government

- Males were more likely than females to be casualties, accounting for 60% of all casualties and 69% of all people killed or seriously injured in Wales in 2021.
- Young people aged 16-24 are disproportionately more likely to be casualties in road accidents. They make up 11% of the population but accounted for 21% of all casualties in 2021.
- When adjusting for distance travelled, motorcyclists and pedal cyclists are 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 casualties' data that was originally published in our Police [Recorded Road Accidents](#) release (June 2021), and has a focus on motorcyclists, pedal cyclists, pedestrians and young people.

### In this bulletin

<a href="#">Quality and data coverage</a>	2
<a href="#">Reported casualties</a>	3
<a href="#">Analysis of age, gender and mode of travel</a>	5
<a href="#">Motorcycle casualties</a>	9
<a href="#">Pedal casualties</a>	11
<a href="#">Pedestrian casualties</a>	12
<a href="#">Young casualties</a>	14
<a href="#">Notes</a>	15
<a href="#">Feedback</a>	18

## 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 suggests 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 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.

## Impact of COVID-19 on traffic volume

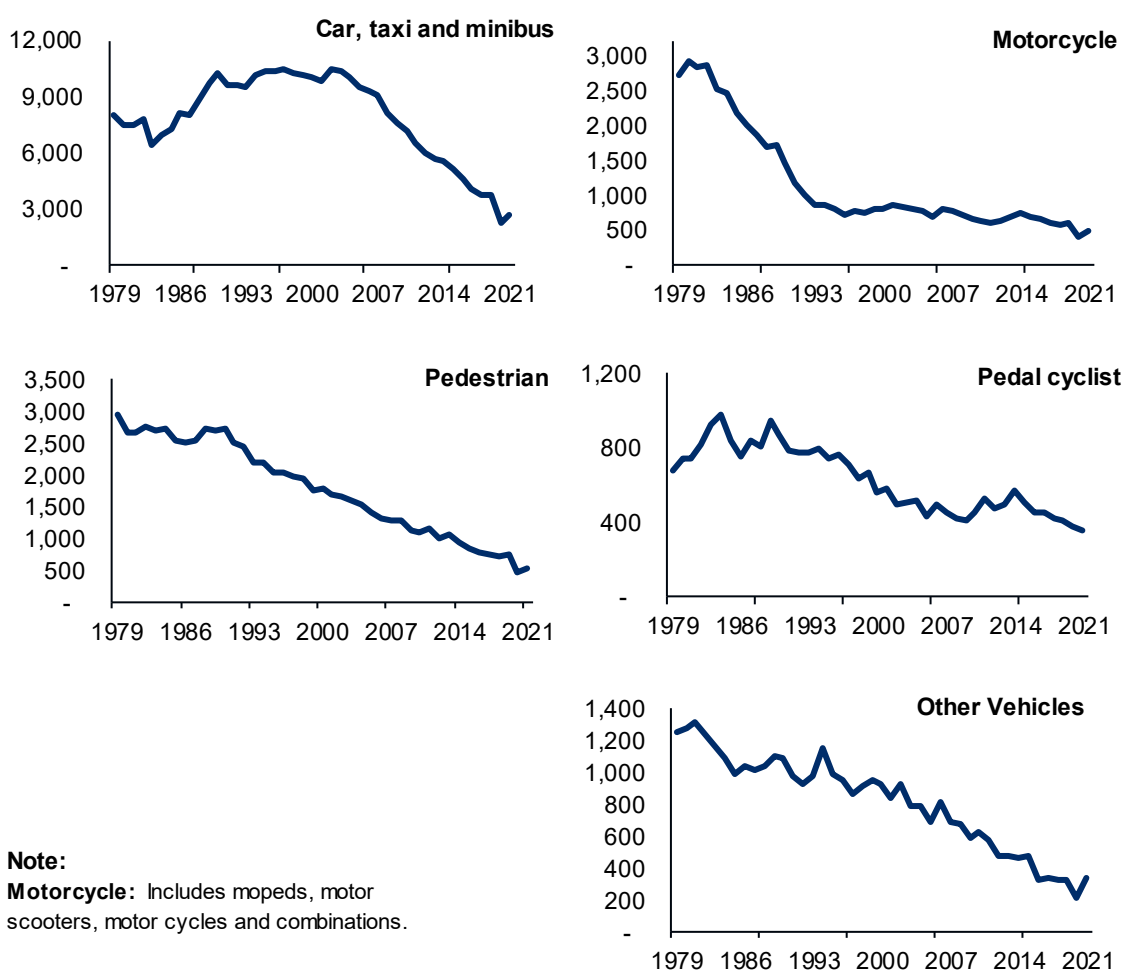
Police recorded road accident and casualty numbers throughout most of 2020 were affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic which saw restrictions on how, where and why people could travel within Wales. Traffic volume decreased considerably during 2020 in light of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic (a decrease of 23.4% compared to 2019). COVID-19 restrictions continued to impact travel in 2021, though to a lesser extent. Traffic volume data for 2021 is not currently available but is due to be published by the Department for Transport (DfT) in Summer 2022.

## Reported casualties

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

Chart 2 shows casualty trends by different road user types. All categories of road user have seen an overall decrease in road casualties over time. Compared to 1979, total casualty numbers were 72% lower in 2021.

**Chart 2: Reported Road casualties in Wales by road user, 1979 to 2021**



**Note:**

**Motorcycle:** Includes mopeds, motor scooters, motor cycles and combinations.

**Other Vehicles:** Includes buses/coaches, vans and goods vehicles

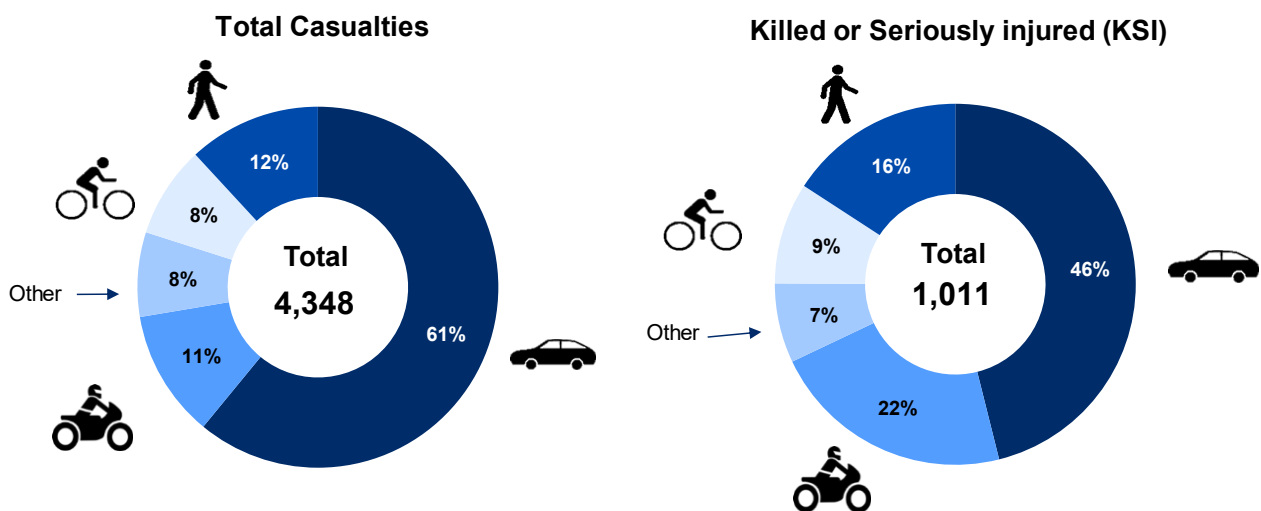
Source: Road Accident Statistics, Welsh Government

- In 2021, police forces in Wales recorded a total of 3,288 road accidents involving personal injury, which resulted in 4,348 casualties. Of the reported road accidents, 22% resulted in at least one KSI casualty.
- Of these 4,348 casualties, 86 people were killed (2%), 925 were seriously injured (21%) and 3,337 were slightly injured (77%)

Compared to 2020 where COVID-19 travel restrictions resulted in falls in casualty numbers across all road user categories, in 2021 there were increases in casualty numbers for all categories of road users except pedal cyclists. Similar to the overall trend for total casualties, there have also been large falls in the number of people killed and seriously injured on Welsh roads since the 1970s by all types of road users.

Chart 3 presents the percentage of total and KSI casualties by the type of road user. Each category of road user has a different chance of having a serious injury. Pedestrians, pedal cyclists and motorcyclists are considered to be vulnerable road users as they are at a higher risk of being involved in an accident (relative to distance travelled) or are more vulnerable in terms of becoming a casualty, if involved in an accident.

**Chart 3: Total Road casualties and KSI casualties by type of road user, 2021 (a)(b)**



**Notes:**

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

(b) Motorcyclists and pedal cyclists involved in road traffic accidents are more likely to be killed or seriously injured than car users.

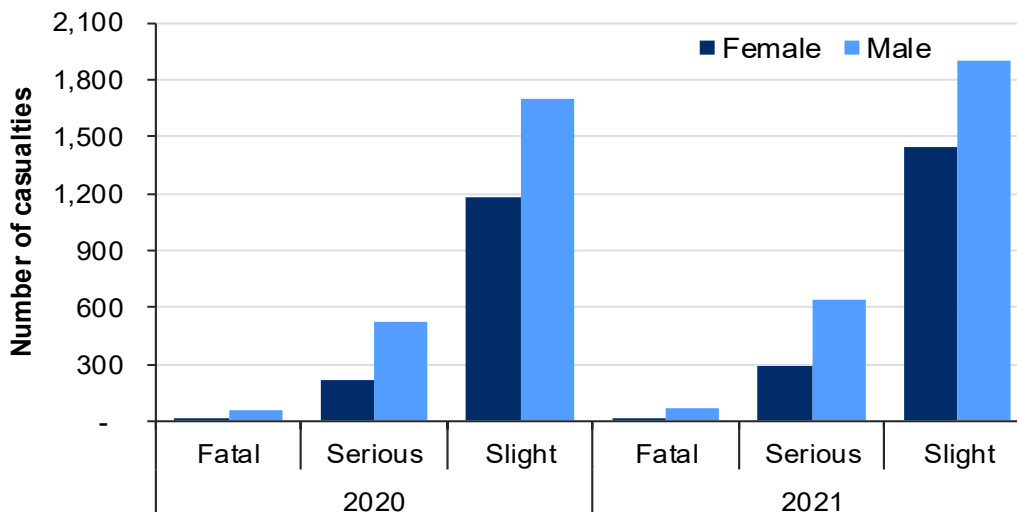
Source: Road Accident Statistics, Welsh Government

- Car, taxi and minibus users accounted for 61% of total casualties but 46% of KSI casualties in 2021.
- Motorcyclists accounted for 11% of total casualties, however, they accounted for 22% of KSI casualties.
- Pedal cyclists and pedestrians also accounted for a higher proportion of KSI casualties than they did for total casualties, reflecting that they are more likely to be killed or seriously injured if involved in an accident.

## Analysis of age, sex and mode of travel

Males were more likely than females to be casualties, accounting for 60% of all casualties and 69% of all people killed or seriously injured in Wales in 2021, Chart 4.

**Chart 4: Fatal, serious and slight casualties by sex, 2020 and 2021**



Source: Road Accident Statistics, Welsh Government

Chart 5 shows the long term trend in the number of KSI casualties by age group. Since 1994 the numbers have fallen across all age groups with Children (under 16) having the largest relative decrease (76.5%), followed by the 16 to 24 age group (66.3%). For the 45 to 69 age group, the number has decreased by 24.0% since 1994. COVID-19 restrictions in 2020 generally resulted in reduced traffic volume for all types of motorised vehicles which consequently led to a decrease in road accidents and casualties. When comparing to 2020, KSI casualty numbers in all age groups have increased in 2021 with the highest increase reported for 25-44 age group (39.7%) and lowest in 45-69 age group (12.7%).

**Chart 5: Number of KSI casualties by age group 1993 – 2021**

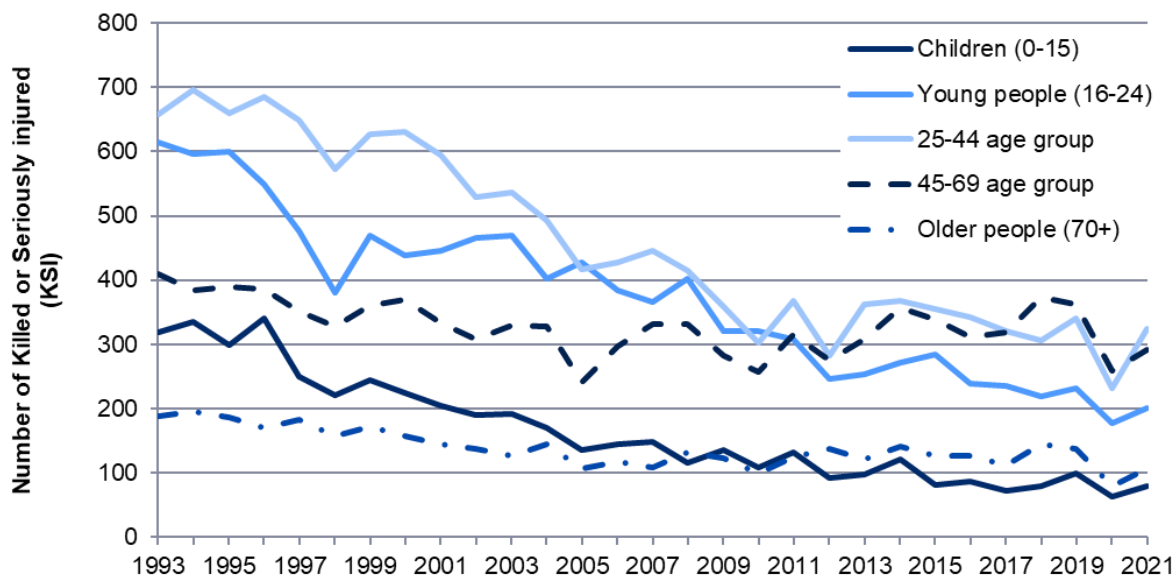
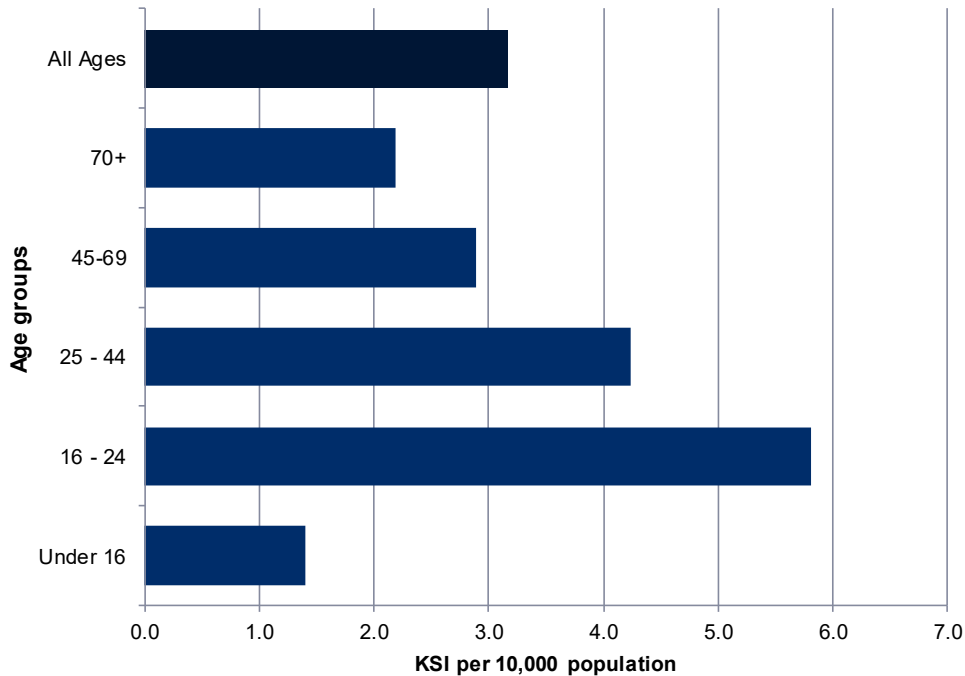


Chart 6 highlights the disproportionately high rate of KSI casualties per 10,000 population among young people (16-24) compared with older people (70+) and children (under 16) in 2021. The distribution of KSI casualty by age group is similar to previous years for Wales.

**Chart 6: KSI casualties per 10,000 population, by age group, 2021**



**Note:** Source: Welsh Government analysis of Police Road Accident Statistics  
2020 Mid-year population estimate used

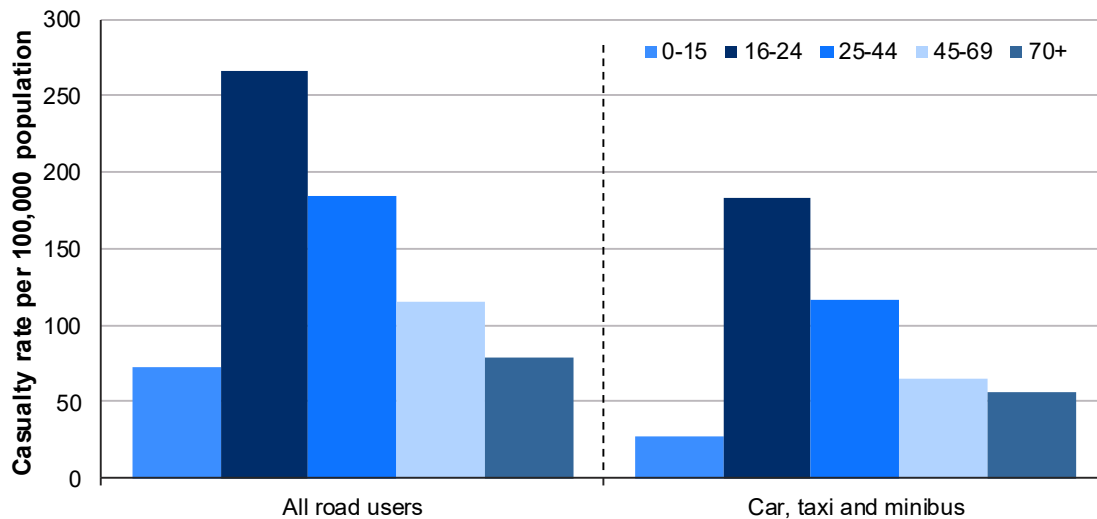
## Total Casualties by road user type

This section deals with casualties by the type of road user. Each category of road user has a different chance of having a serious injury. Pedestrians, motorcyclists and pedal cyclists are considered to be vulnerable road users as they are at a higher risk of being involved in an accident (relative to distance travelled) or are more vulnerable in terms of becoming a casualty, if involved in an accident.

One way to examine risk is by looking at the number of casualties as a proportion of the population. (Chart 7) shows the casualties as a rate per 100,000 population, by age group and 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.

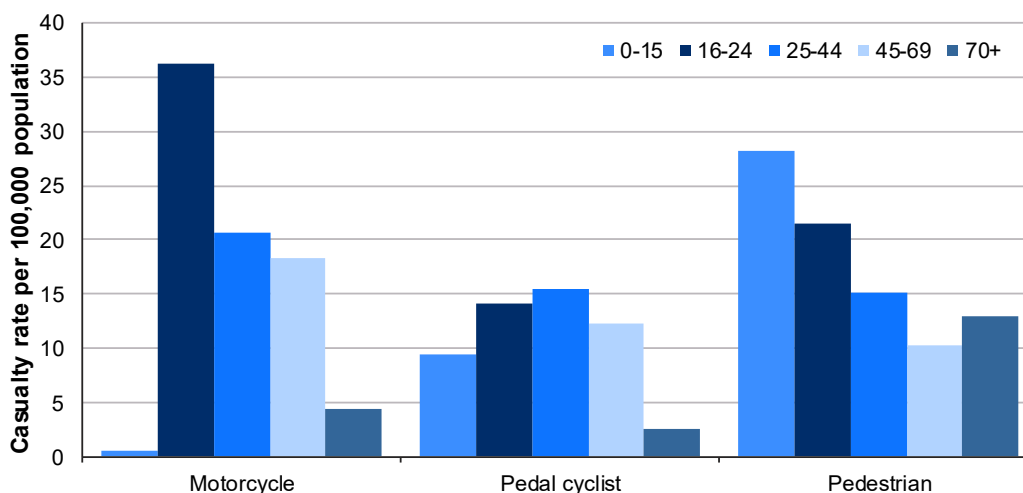
- Young people (aged 16-24) are the most at risk age group overall, with 266 casualties per 100,000 population (based on 2020 midyear population estimates).
- Young people are also the most likely age group to be car user casualties (183 per 100,000 population) or motorcyclist casualties (36 per 100,000 population).
- Pedal cyclist risk was highest for the 25-44 age group in 2021.
- Pedestrian casualty risk was highest in 2021 for the 0-15 age group (28 per 100,000 population), followed by 16-24 (21 per 100,000 population).

**Chart 7A: Casualty rates by age group by Car, taxi and minibus user, 2021**



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

**Chart 7B: Casualty rates by age group by Motorcycle, Pedal Cyclist and Pedestrian, 2021**



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 2021, Motorcyclists were 17 times more likely than car and taxi occupants to be casualties but 44 times more likely to be killed or seriously injured.
- Pedal cyclists were 8 times more likely than car and taxi occupants to be casualties but were 11 times more likely to be killed or seriously injured.

**Table 1: Number and rate (per billion vehicle kilometres) of vehicle occupant casualties, 2021**

Casualty type	Number of vehicle occupant casualties, 2021				Vehicle occupant casualties 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	18	38	8	7	90	2	1	22
Serious	203	428	64	85	1,015	23	11	266
KSI	221	466	72	92	1,105	25	12	288
Slight	275	2,184	257	265	1,375	118	44	828
<b>Total</b>	<b>496</b>	<b>2,650</b>	<b>329</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>2,480</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>1,116</b>

Source: Road Accident Statistics, Welsh Government





**Notes:**

(a) Calculated using 2021 casualty data and 2020 traffic volume data

(b) Includes minibuses, buses/coaches, vans and goods vehicles

Reported casualties by speed limit data shows that, in 2021, most casualties were sustained on 30mph speed limit road sections followed by 60mph road sections (Table 2). 30mph and 60mph road sections account for the majority of road sections in Wales. Most pedestrians' casualties were reported on roads with 30mph and 20mph.

**Table 2: Breakdown of road casualties by speed limit in 2021**

Speedlimit mph					Other	Total Casualties
20	42	8	24	31	10	115
30	1,119	241	247	422	112	2,141
40	268	44	23	17	24	376
50	184	24	9	9	30	256
60	846	157	50	28	122	1,203
70	190	22	4	9	31	256

Source: Road Accident Statistics, Welsh Government

The sections below consider vulnerable road users that include Motorcyclists, Pedal Cyclists and Pedestrians as well as looking at Young Person casualties in more detail.

Other detailed information on police reported road casualties, such as local authority breakdowns, Police force can be accessed from the accompanying [Dashboard](#) and [StatsWales](#) tables.

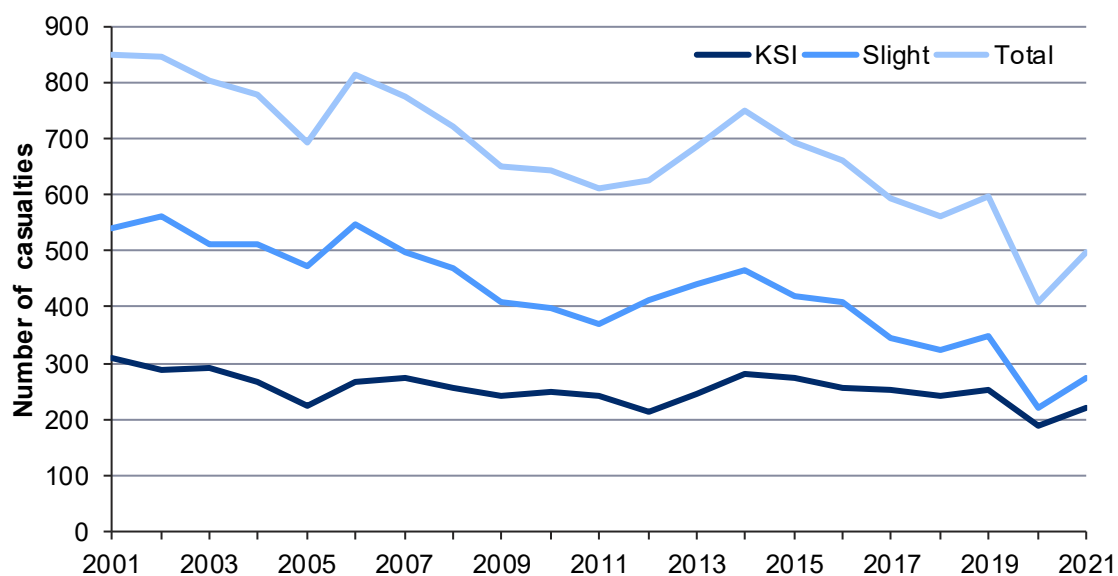


## Motorcycle user casualties

### Key points

- There were 496 motorcyclist casualties reported by the police in 2021, representing 11% of all casualties in Wales.
- Of these casualties, 221 were killed or seriously injured and 275 were slightly injured.
- The number of motorcyclist casualties increased by 22% compared to 2020. There has generally been a decrease in motorcycle casualties over time in all severity types before a sharp fall in in 2020 (Chart 8).
- The proportion of motorcycle casualties who are killed or seriously injured generally increases with age up to and including the age group 45-69.

**Chart 8: Motorcyclist casualties by severity, 2001 - 2021**

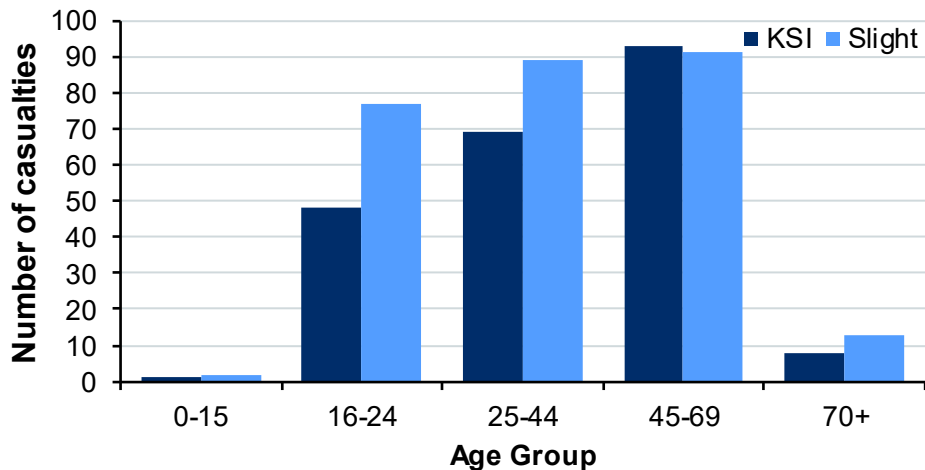


Source: Road Accident Statistics, Welsh Government

## Motorcycle casualties by age

The proportion of motorcycle casualties who are killed or seriously injured generally increases with age up to and including the age group 45-69 (Chart 9). For motorcyclists aged 16-24, nearly 40% of all casualties were KSI. For those aged 45-69, more casualties were KSI (51%) than slightly injured (49%).

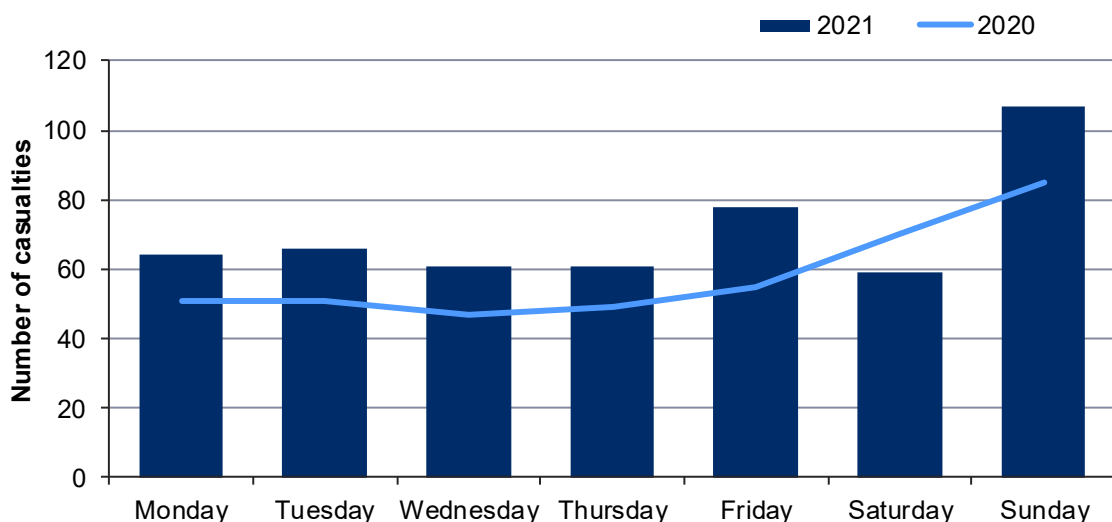
**Chart 9: Motorcyclist casualties by severity and age group, 2021**



Source: Road Accident Statistics, Welsh Government

Motorcycle casualties were most common on Sundays in 2021 (22% of all motorcycle casualties) (Chart 10). Compared to the previous year, there was a 16% fall in motorcycle casualties on Saturday.

**Chart 10: Motorcyclist casualties by day of week, 2020 – 2021**



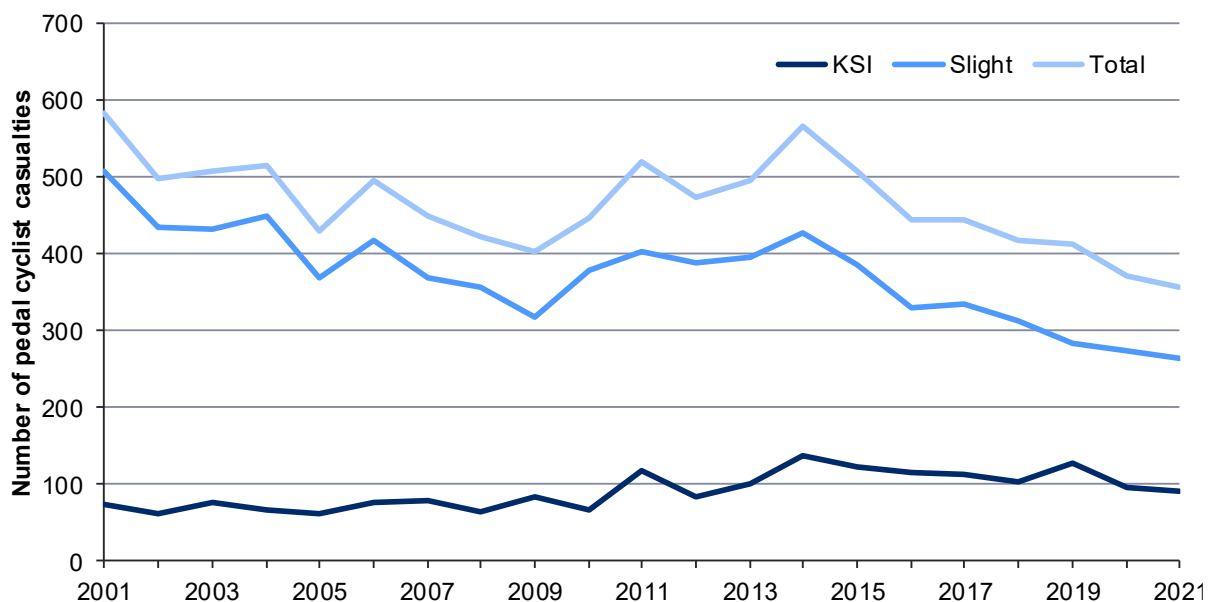
Source: Road Accident Statistics, Welsh Government

## Pedal cyclist casualties

### Key points

- There were 357 pedal cyclist casualties in 2021 (Chart 11), representing 8% of all casualties in Wales.
- Of these casualties, 92 were killed or seriously injured and 265 were slightly injured.
- Pedal cycle traffic volume increased significantly in 2020 by 68%, the largest increase since records began, whilst there were decreases in all other vehicle types over the same period. Pedal cycle traffic volume for 2021 is not currently available.
- The vast majority of pedal cyclist casualties in 2021 were male (86%).
- 71% of all pedal cycle casualties occurred at junctions, with 32% of casualties occurring at T-junctions.

**Chart 11: Pedal cyclist casualties by severity, 2001 to 2021**



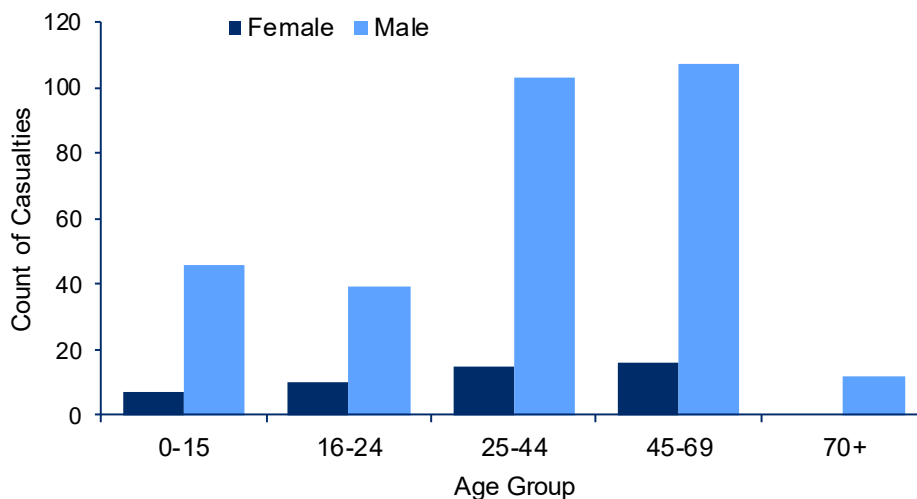
Source: Road Accident Statistics, Welsh Government

There was a significant fall in the number of 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 sex

The highest number of pedal cyclist casualties occurred in the 45-69 age group (123 casualties), (Chart 12). Pedal cyclist casualties for those aged 25-44 increased by 9%, this was the only age group to see an increase in 2021. Casualties among children (aged 0-15) decreased by 13% in 2021 when compared to the previous year, (a decrease of 33% compared to 2019). Care should be taken when interpreting percentage changes based on small numbers as these can be more volatile.

**Chart 12: Pedal cyclist casualties by age and sex in 2021**



Source: Road Accident Statistics, Welsh Government

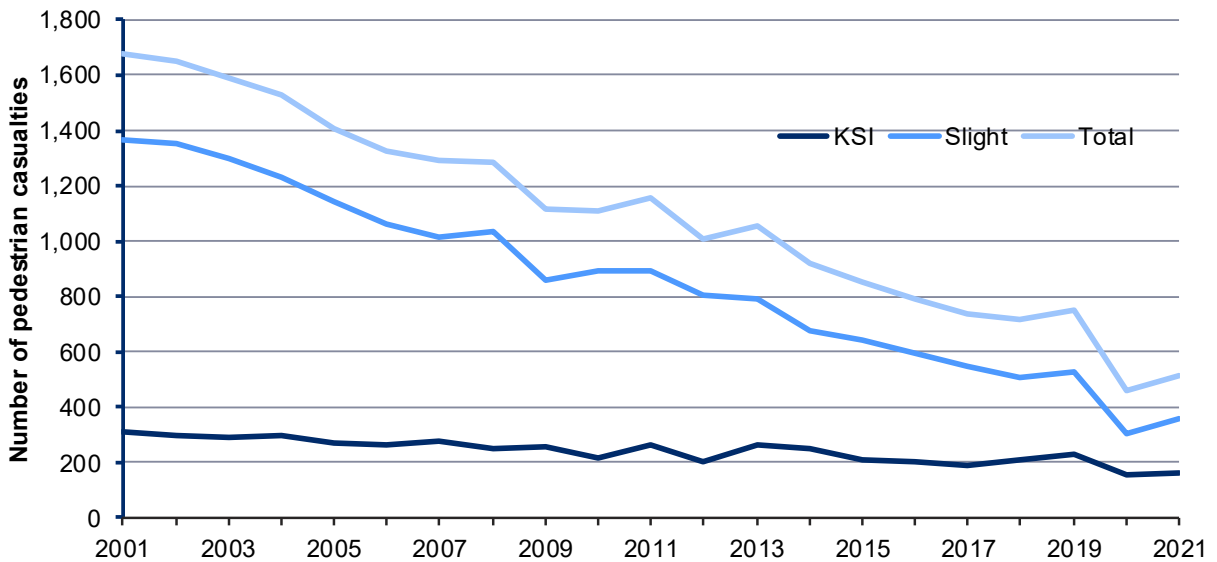
**Note:** Unknown age group not included

## Pedestrian casualties

### Key points

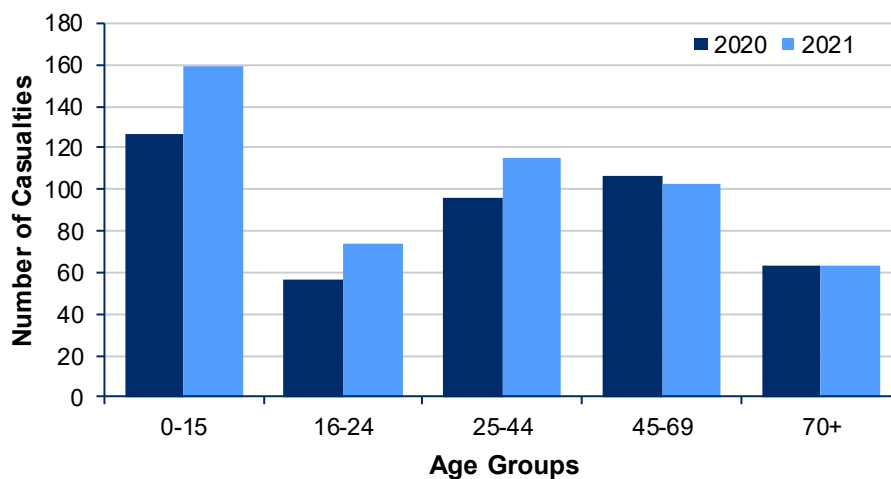
- In 2021 there were 516 pedestrian casualties, representing 12% of all casualties in Wales.
- Of these casualties, 15 pedestrians were killed, 145 were seriously injured and 356 were slightly injured.
- The number of pedestrian casualties increased by 12% compared with 2020. There has been a significant fall in pedestrian casualties since the late 1980s with the figure in 2020 the lowest on record (Chart 13).
- The majority of pedestrian casualties in 2021 were male (57%), casualty figures for males were higher than for females across all severities of casualty.
- Friday was the day of the week which recorded the highest number of pedestrian casualties.
- 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 13: Pedestrian casualties by severity, 2001 to 2021**



Source: Road Accident Statistics, Welsh Government

**Chart 14: Pedestrian casualties by age group, 2020 to 2021**



Source: Road Accident Statistics, Welsh Government

In 2021 there were more pedestrian casualties aged 0-15 (31% of total) than in any other age group. (Chart 14).

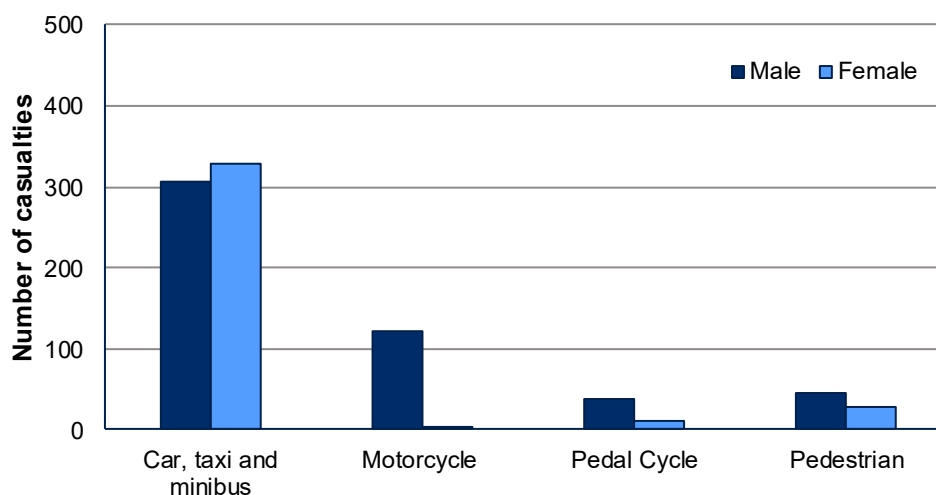
There were a total of 98 hit and run pedestrian casualties in 2021, an increase of 44% compared to 2020, further information at this breakdown can be found in our [StatsWales tables](#).

## Young Persons Casualties (16-24 age group)

### Key points

- In 2021, there were 918 road casualties aged 16-24 in Wales, a 14% rise compared with 2020, (a decrease of 22% compared to 2019). 201 casualties aged 16-24 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 2021. In particular, the figures for cars, taxis and minibus casualties (24% of total) and motorcyclist casualties (25% of total) were much higher than the 11% population share.
- In 2021, 59% of young person casualties were male and 41% were female. However, there were more female casualties (52%) reported for car, taxi and minibus user categories than male.
- Males aged 16-24 are more likely than females to be casualties across all road user categories, but for motorcyclists the difference is stark, with more than 40 times as many young male casualties as young female (Chart 15).
- The majority of young person casualties (69%) were in the car, taxi and minibus road user category.

**Chart 15: Casualties aged 16-24 by sex and road user category, 2021**



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 wellbeing of Wales. The Act puts in place seven wellbeing 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 wellbeing goals, and (b) lay a copy of the national indicators before Senedd Cymru. Under section 10(8) of the Well-being of Future Generations Act, where the Welsh Ministers revise the national indicators, they must as soon as reasonably practicable (a) publish the indicators as revised and (b) lay a copy of them before the Senedd. These national indicators were laid before the Senedd in 2021. The indicators laid on 14 December 2021 replace the set laid on 16 March 2016.

Information on the indicators, along with narratives for each of the wellbeing 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 wellbeing assessments and local wellbeing plans.

## Further details

The document is available at

<https://gov.wales/reported-road-casualties-2021>

## Next update

July 2023 (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](mailto:stats.transport@gov.wales)

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