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Key Reported Road Casualties Scotland 2023

Key findings

- There were 5,788 road casualties reported in 2023. Of these, there were 155 fatalities, 1,930 people were seriously injured and 3,703 people were slightly injured.
- The number killed on Scotland's roads fell from 171 in 2022 to 155 in 2023. This was the fourth lowest annual figure, and the second lowest recorded outwith the pandemic period of 2020 and 2021.
- Although there was a drop in fatalities, casualties of other severities increased in 2023: serious casualties rose by 9% (from 1,778 to 1,930); Slight casualties rose by 1% (from 3,681 to 3,703); and total casualties rose by 3% (from 5,630 to 5,788).
- Total casualties have now increased each year since 2020, but despite this are still at low levels historically. The number of casualties recorded in 2023 was the fourth lowest on record.
- Car users had the highest number of casualties in 2023 (3,385), followed by pedestrians (939) and motorcyclists (473).
- Pedestrian total casualties were up 3% from 2022 and pedestrian fatalities increased by 13 to 47.
- Cycling casualties fell by 16% but cycling fatalities increased from 2 to 7
- Motorcycle total casualties increased by 1% and there was one more fatality, up from 25 to 26.
- Car driver and passenger total casualties increased by 6% compared with 2022, but car fatalities fell by 38% from 98 to 61.

TABLE 1: CASUALTY REDUCTION TARGETS FROM SCOTLAND'S ROAD SAFETY FRAMEWORK TO 2030

Target	2030 target reduction	2023 reduction achieved
People killed	50%	11%
People seriously injured	50%	29%
Children (aged < 16) killed	60%	23%
Children (aged < 16) seriously injured	60%	33%

Statistics in this publication are provisional. Final figures will be published in Reported Road Casualties Scotland in October 2024. Figures may change as a result of late returns and amendments to the data. These changes are likely to be small.

Contents

An Accredited Official Statistics Publication for Scotland

These statistics are accredited official statistics**.** The Office for Statistics Regulation has independently reviewed and accredited these statistics as complying with the standards of trustworthiness, quality, and value in the Code of Practice for Statistics.

Accredited official statistics are called National Statistics in the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007.

Transport Scotland statistics are regulated by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR). OSR sets the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the Code of Practice for Statistics that all producers of official statistics should adhere to.

Introduction

This bulletin presents provisional statistics of reported injury road collisions in Scotland in 2023. These statistics are based on information Police Scotland collect for all road collisions where someone has been injured or killed. Collisions in which there are no injuries, or collisions not reported to the police are therefore not included in these figures.

The figures published here are provisional due to possible late returns and amendments. Final figures will be published in Reported Road Casualties Scotland in October. The differences between the provisional and final numbers are likely to be small. More information on the data is available in Annex A.

In mid-2019, Police Scotland started to use a new collision recording system. The introduction of this new system changed the way that casualty severity is recorded, making it difficult to directly compare figures produced using the old and new systems. For the years 2004 to 2019, this publication includes figures for slight casualties, slight collisions, serious casualties, and serious collisions that have been adjusted in order to maximise comparability with figures for the most recent years. This does mean that the figures for serious and slight collision and casualties are not comparable prior to 2004. More information is set out in the following section of this publication.

The statistics in this publication are used by Transport Scotland, Police Scotland, Local Authorities and road safety professionals across Scotland to target interventions to make Scotland's roads safer.

Changes in severity reporting and 'adjustments' to figures

In the summer of 2019, Police Scotland started using CRASH (Collision Reporting and Sharing), an injury-based reporting system, for recording the data that feeds this publication. Before the introduction of CRASH, police officers would use their own judgement, based on official guidance, to determine the severity of the casualty (either 'slight' or 'serious'). CRASH is an injury-based recording system where the officer records the most severe injury for the casualty. The system then automatically converts the injuries to a severity level from 'slight' to 'serious'.

Since CRASH removes the uncertainty that arises from officers having to assess the severity of casualties based on their own judgement, severity information collected in this way is expected to be more accurate and consistent. However, the move to an injury-based reporting system tends to result in more casualties being classified as 'serious', which means that the number of serious and slight casualties are not comparable with earlier years.

The Department for Transport has carried out analysis which adjusts historical figures so that they reflect the numbers that *would have been reported if CRASH had been used to record the casualty severity in those years*. Within this publication, these adjusted figures are used to report on serious casualties, serious collisions,

slight casualties, and slight collisions for the years 2004 to 2019. This means that the adjusted figures for 2004 to 2019 are comparable with figures for 2020 to 2022, but not with figures for years prior to 2004.

As the adjustments relate only to serious and slight casualties, figures for total casualties and fatalities are unaffected.

Unadjusted figures are also provided in the accompanying excel files. More information on the methodology used to produce these adjusted figures is available from the Department for Transport website.

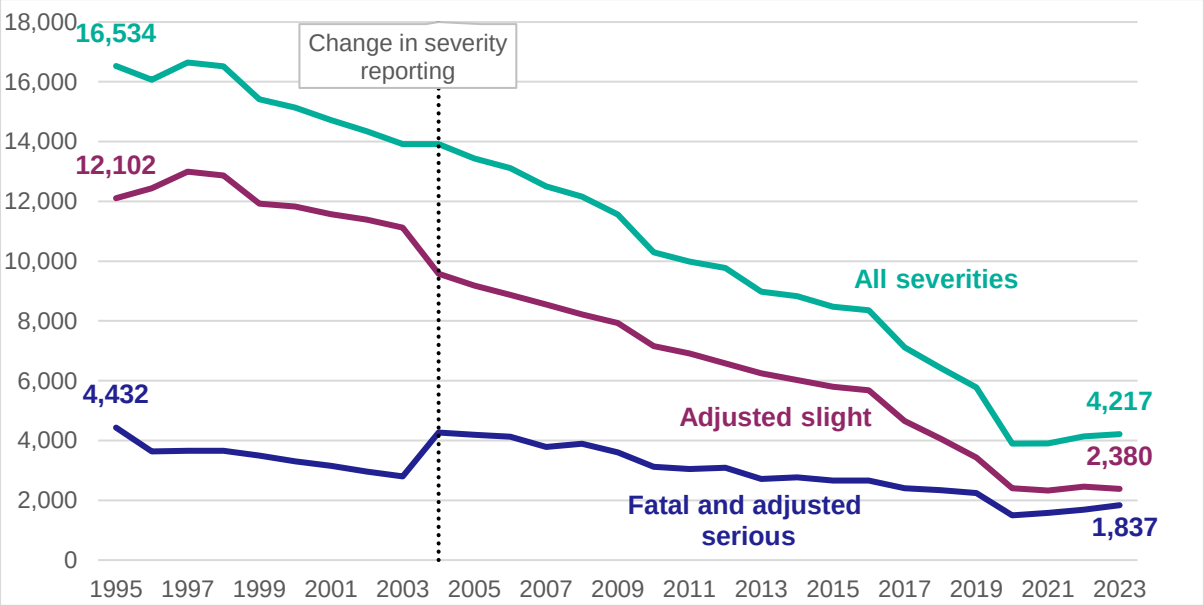
Reported number of collisions

Casualty and collision numbers for 2020 and 2021 were affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and associated restrictions on travel.

Figure 1 shows the long-term trend for injury road collisions recorded by the police.

In 2023, there were 4,217 collisions in which someone was killed or injured. This was 2% higher than in 2022 and the fourth lowest number since records began. There were 151 fatal collisions in 2023, the same as in 2022, there were 1,686 serious injury collisions; and 2,380 slight injury collisions.

FIGURE 1: NUMBER OF REPORTED INJURY ROAD COLLISIONS BROKEN DOWN BY SEVERITY, 1995 – 2023



Note for Figure 1: Due to changes in the way casualty severity is recorded, figures for the number of serious and slight collisions are not comparable with years prior to 2004.

Reported number of casualties

Casualty and collision numbers for 2020 and 2021 were affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and associated restrictions on travel.

Figure 2 shows that in 2023, 155 people were killed in road collisions in Scotland: 16 (9%) less than 2022.

Since 1978, there has been a clear, steady, long-term downward trend. More recent years' figures have fluctuated around a less pronounced downward trend. Both 2020 and 2021 had the lowest number of fatalities ever recorded and 2023 was the fourth-lowest with 155 fatalities.

FIGURE 2: TOTAL NUMBER OF REPORTED ROAD FATALITIES, 1950 – 2023

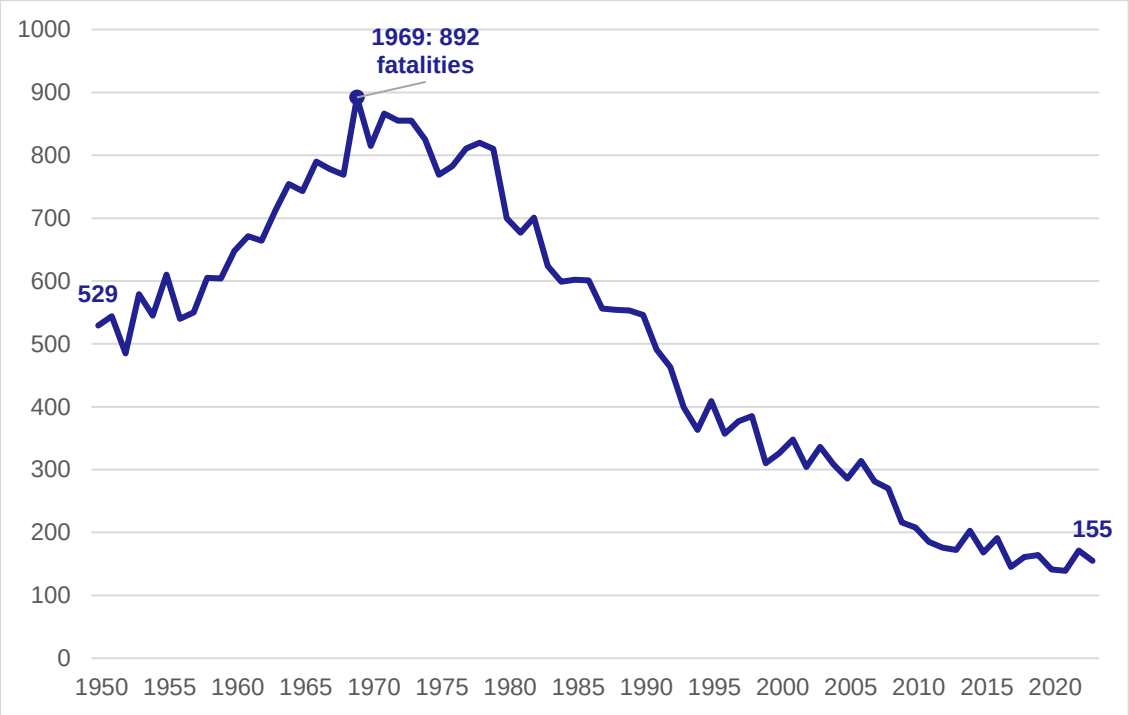
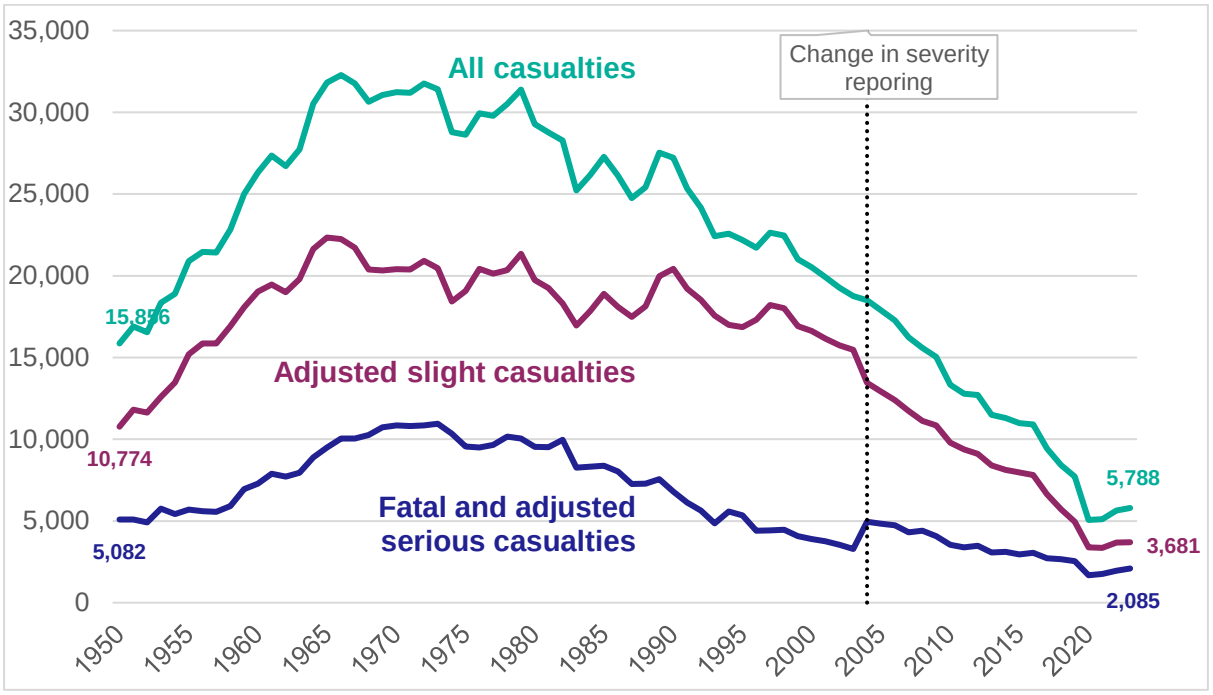


Figure 3 shows that there were a total of 5,788 casualties (of all severities) reported in 2023: 158 (3%) more than in 2022 and the fourth lowest number since annual records began in 1950.

Between circa 1970 and 1990, the figures fluctuated around a general downward trend, with numbers falling from the short-term peak in 1989 & 1990 (of over 27,000). Since 1998, there has been a consistent reduction, with numbers falling below 12,000 in 2013, which was half the level of the early 1990s.

FIGURE 3: NUMBER OF REPORTED ROAD CASUALTIES BROKEN DOWN BY SEVERITY, 1950 – 2023



Note for Figure 3: Due to changes in the way casualty severity is recorded, serious and slight figures prior to 2004 are not directly comparable with later years.

In 2023, 1,930 people were seriously injured in road collisions. As outlined above, this figure cannot be directly compared to the reported figures prior to 2004. Figure 4 uses adjusted figures to show how many serious casualties there would have been in previous years if they had been recorded using an injury-based reporting system. The number of people seriously injured in 2023 increased by 9% on 2022. Figure 3 shows that the longer-term trend for fatal and serious casualties has generally been downward since the early 1980s.

There were 3,703 people reported as slightly injured in 2023. Once again, this figure cannot be directly compared to the reported figures for previous years prior to 2004. The number of people slightly injured in road collisions in 2023 increased by 1% on 2022. Figure 3 shows that the number of slight casualties has shown a clear downward trend since the mid-1990s.

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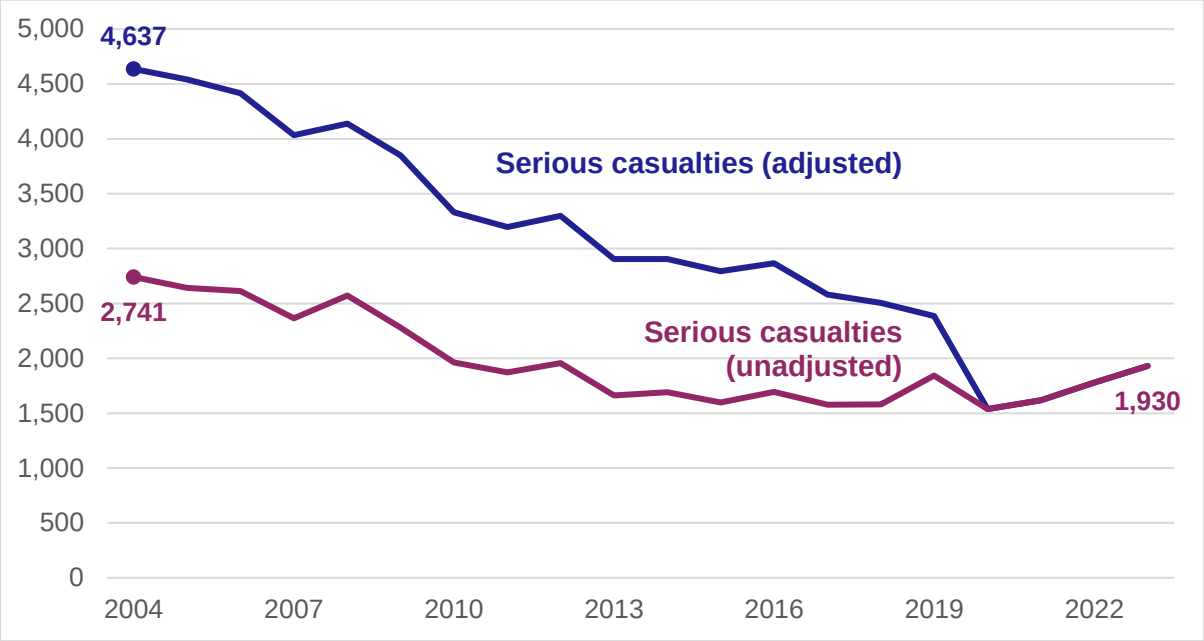
FIGURE 4: NUMBER OF SERIOUS ROAD CASUALTIES, ADJUSTED AND UNADJUSTED 2004 – 2023



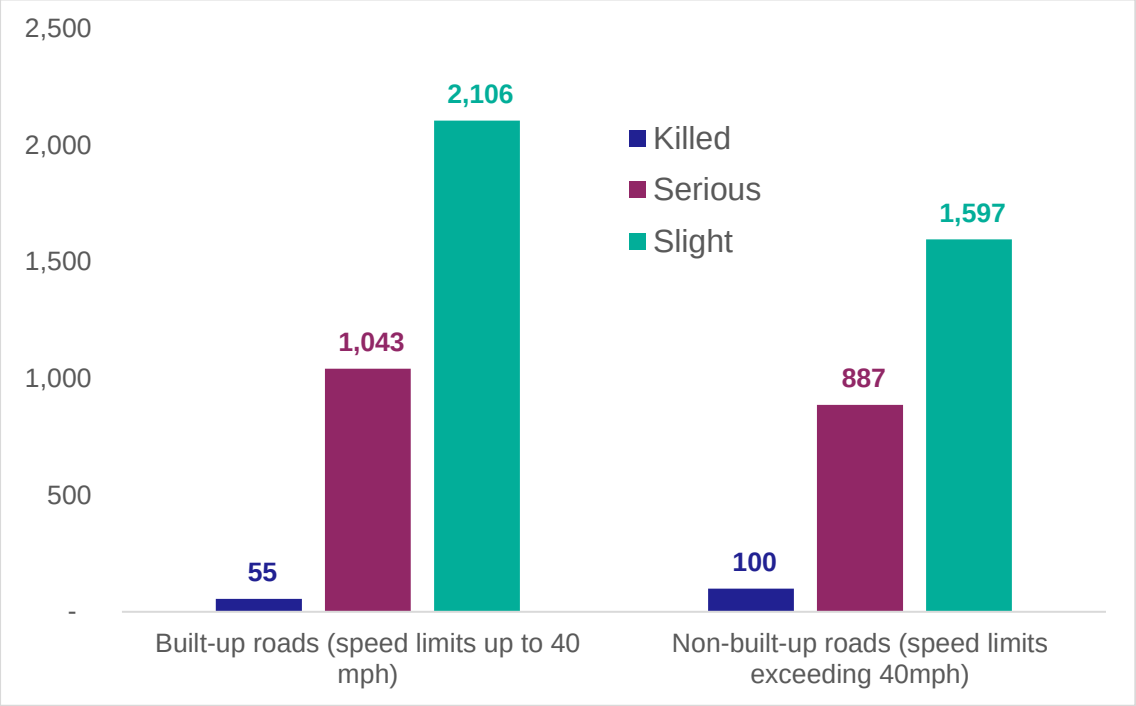
Casualties by type of road

Figure 5 shows the number of casualties by road type. Built-up roads are those which have speed limits of up to and including 40 miles per hour (ignoring temporary speed limits on roads for which the normal speed limit is over 40 mph); non-built up roads have speed limits exceeding 40 miles per hour.

In 2023, non built-up roads accounted for over two-fifths of the total number of reported casualties (45%: 2,584 out of 5,788). However, they accounted for over almost two thirds of those killed 65%: 100 out of 155) and over two fifths of the total number of seriously injured (46%: 887 out of 1,930). This will be at least in part due to the higher average speed on non built-up roads, and also because these roads make up two-thirds of Scotland's road network.

Compared with the 2014-18 average (the baseline period for measurements of the current Road Safety Framework) total casualties on non built-up roads have reduced by 37% and built-up roads by 48%. However, whilst fatalities on non built-up roads have decreased by 19% over the same period, fatalities have increased by 9% for built-up roads.

FIGURE 5: NUMBER OF CASUALTIES BY ROAD TYPE, 2023



Casualties by mode of transport

In 2023 there were 3,385 car users reported injured in road collisions; over half of all road casualties (58%: 3,385 out of 5,788) and a 6% increase on 2022. Of these, 61 were killed, a decrease of 38% from 2022, and 896 seriously injured.

There were 939 pedestrian casualties recorded in 2023, one in six of all casualties (16%: 939 out of 5,788) and up by 24 (3%) since 2022. Five per cent of pedestrian casualties were killed (47 out of 939) and 46% seriously injured (429 out of 939). Please note, in addition to people walking, this category includes people riding toy cycles on the footway, people pushing bicycles, occupants of prams or wheelchairs, and people who alight safely from vehicles and are subsequently injured.

Pedal cycle casualty numbers in 2023 decreased by 16% compared to 2022. There were 404 pedal cyclist casualties recorded in 2023 of which 7 died (5 fatalities more than in 2022).

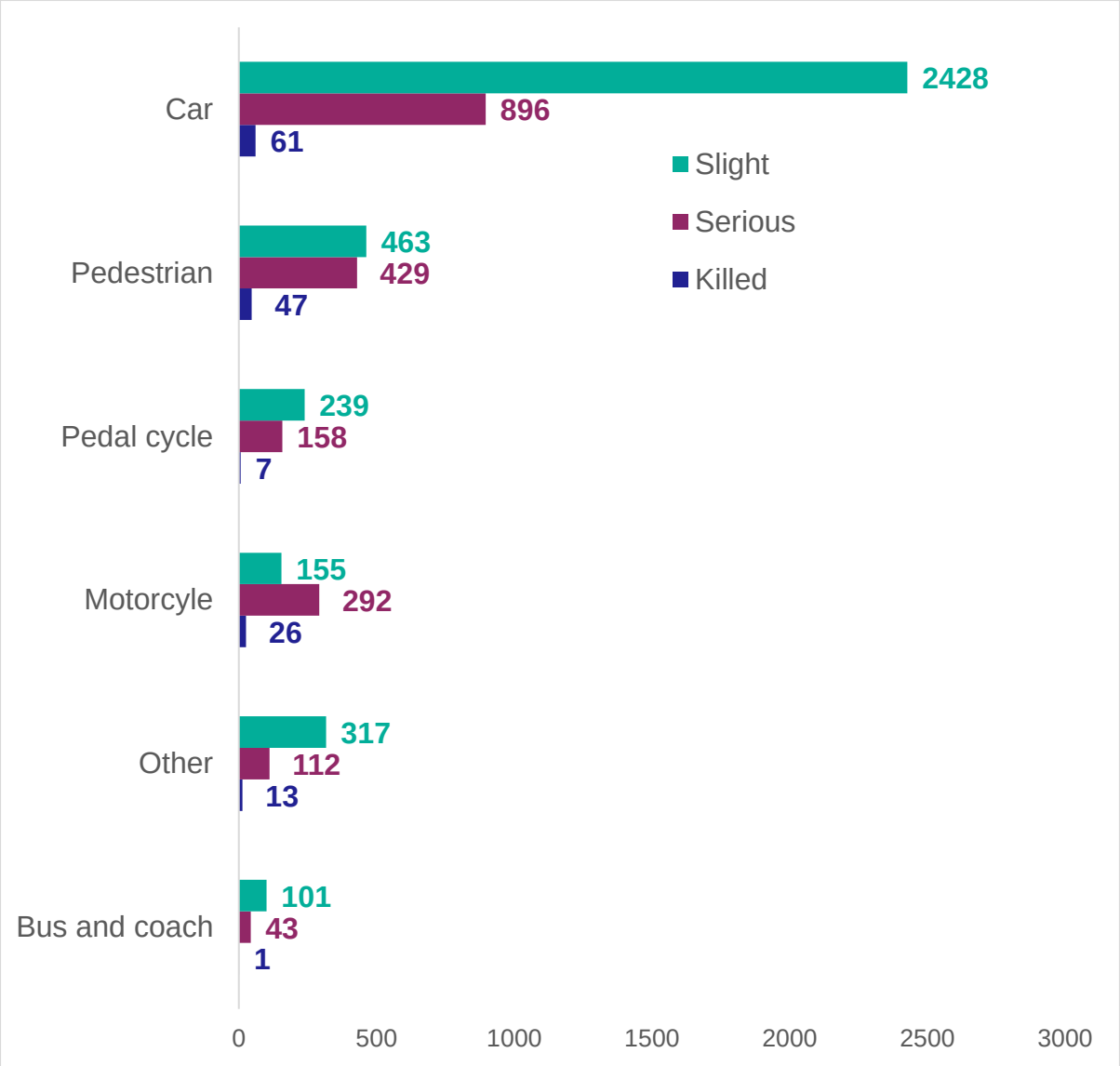
Motorcycle casualties increased by 1% in 2023. 473 motorcycle casualties were reported, of whom 292 (62%) suffered serious injuries and 26 died, one fatality more than 2022.

A total of 145 bus and coach users were reported as casualties (an increase of 24% on 2022), of whom 43 were seriously injured, and one died.

Together, all other modes of transport accounted for 8% of casualties in 2023 (442 out of 5,788), for 8% of those killed (13 out of 155) and for 6% of those seriously injured (112 out of 1,930).

Figure 6 shows the number of casualties (fatal, serious, and slight) by each mode of transport in 2023.

FIGURE 6: NUMBER OF CASUALTIES BY MODE OF TRANSPORT, 2023

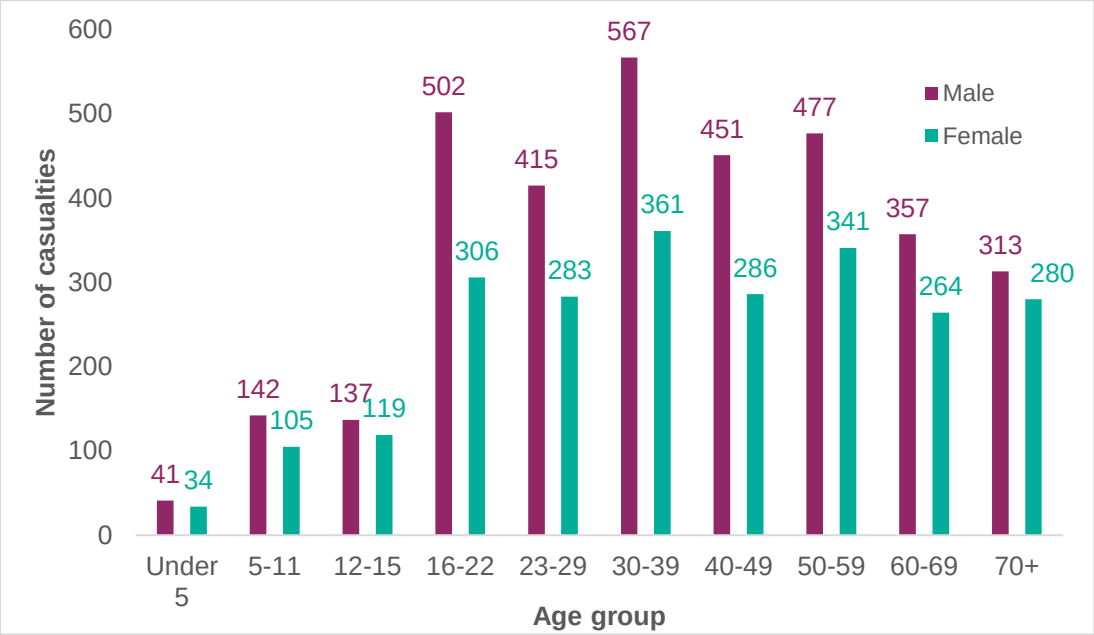


Casualties by gender and age

Figure 7 shows the number of reported casualties by gender and age. This figure does not account for differences between age groups in the level of exposure to risk; for example, we do not control for the number of people in each group with driving licences or for the overall number of people in each age group.

In 2023, male fatalities fell by 14 to 112. Female fatalities fell by 2 to 43. Fourteen per cent (809) of all casualties were aged 16–22, an increase of 4% on 2022. Of these casualties, 502 were male and 306 were female.

FIGURE 7: NUMBER OF CASUALTIES BY GENDER AND AGE, 2023



Child Casualties

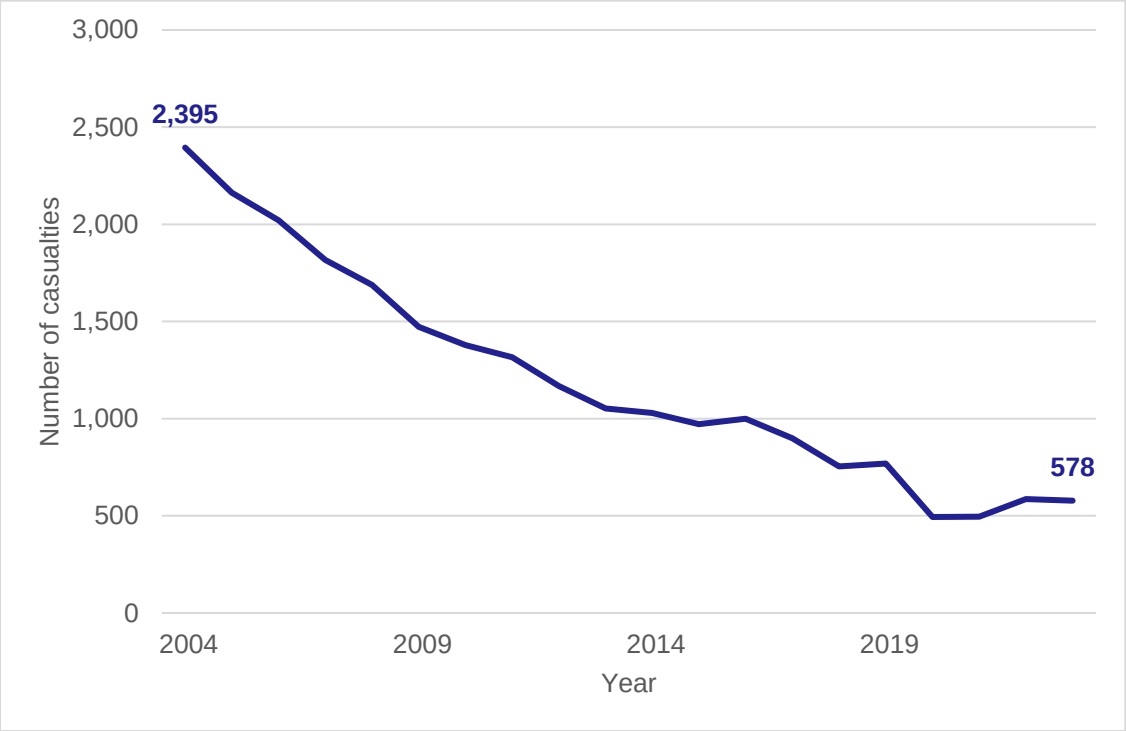
For the purposes of these statistics, casualties under the age of 16 are classified as child casualties. Figure 8 shows that there were 578 child casualties reported in 2023, representing 10% of all casualties (578 out of 5,788) and a decrease of 9 (or 2%) from 2022. Of these, 5 died, two more than in 2022. Two of the children killed in 2023 were pedestrians, two were car passengers and one was a pedal cyclist. The numbers of fatalities are small, so care should be taken when drawing conclusions from year-on-year changes and trends should be looked at over the longer term.

There were 263 child pedestrian casualties recorded in 2023. They accounted for 28% of all pedestrian casualties of all ages (263 out of 939). Of the child pedestrian casualties, 107 were seriously injured (2 died). The number killed was one more than in 2022.

In 2023, there were 229 child casualties in cars, 7% of all car user casualties (229 out of 3,385). Of the child casualties in cars, 41 were seriously injured and two died.

In 2023, there were 34 child pedal cycle casualties (8% of the total of 404 pedal cycle casualties of all ages) including 8 who were seriously injured, there was one child pedal cyclist killed in 2023, one more than in 2022.

FIGURE 8: NUMBER OF CHILD CASUALTIES, 2004 – 2023



Casualties by Police Force division and Local Authority area

Figures 9 and 10 show the average number of reported numbers of casualties in each Police Force division and each Local Authority area for 2019-2023. Since numbers for individual police force divisions and local authorities can be low, late returns and amendments can result in higher percentage changes than those seen in the national figures. In addition, there can be quite large percentage year-to-year fluctuations in the figures for local authority areas within Scotland, particularly for those with the lower numbers. We therefore present the average figures for the last five years.

For both police force divisions and local authorities, the highest number of casualties are seen in urban, densely populated areas. Figure 10 shows that Glasgow City and City of Edinburgh have the highest number of road casualties in the 2019-2023 period. Orkney Islands, Shetland Islands and Na h-Eileanan Siar have the lowest number of casualties.

FIGURE 9: AVERAGE NUMBER OF REPORTED ROAD CASUALTIES BY POLICE FORCE DIVISION, 2019-2023

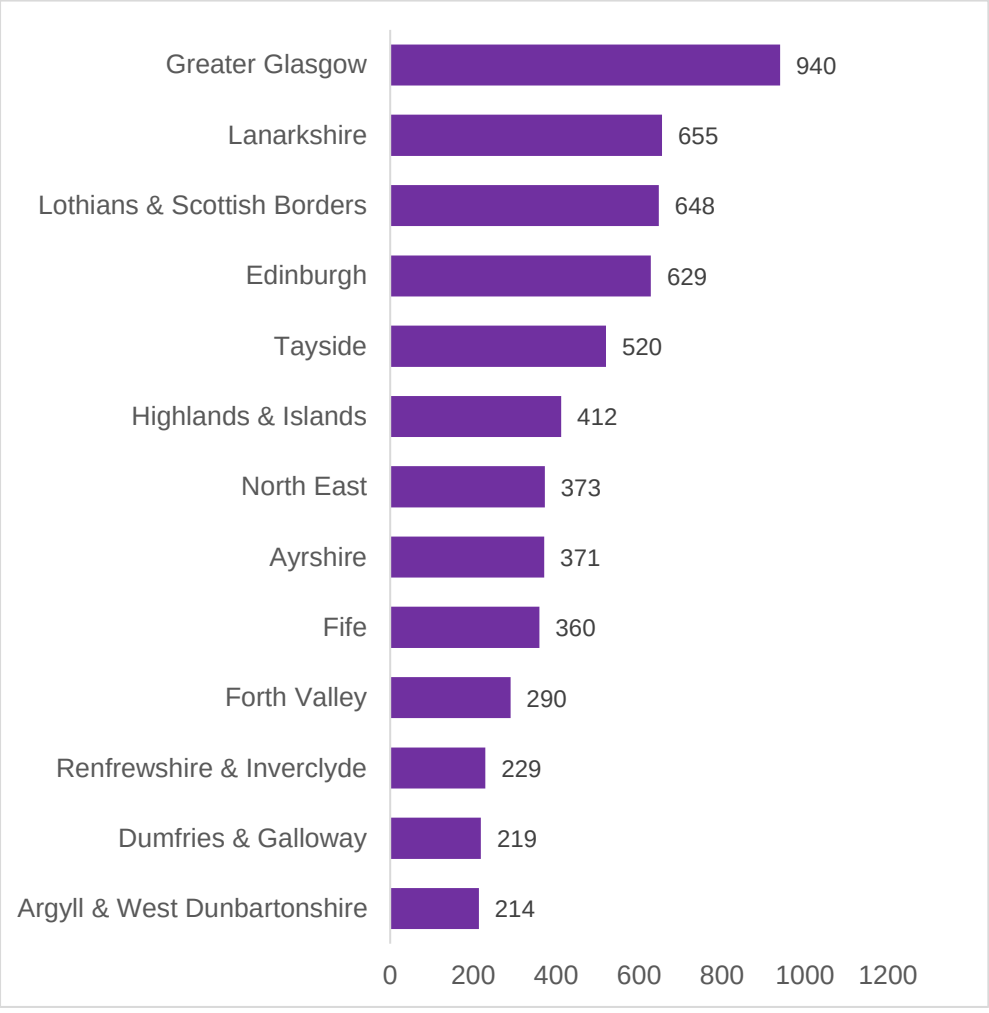
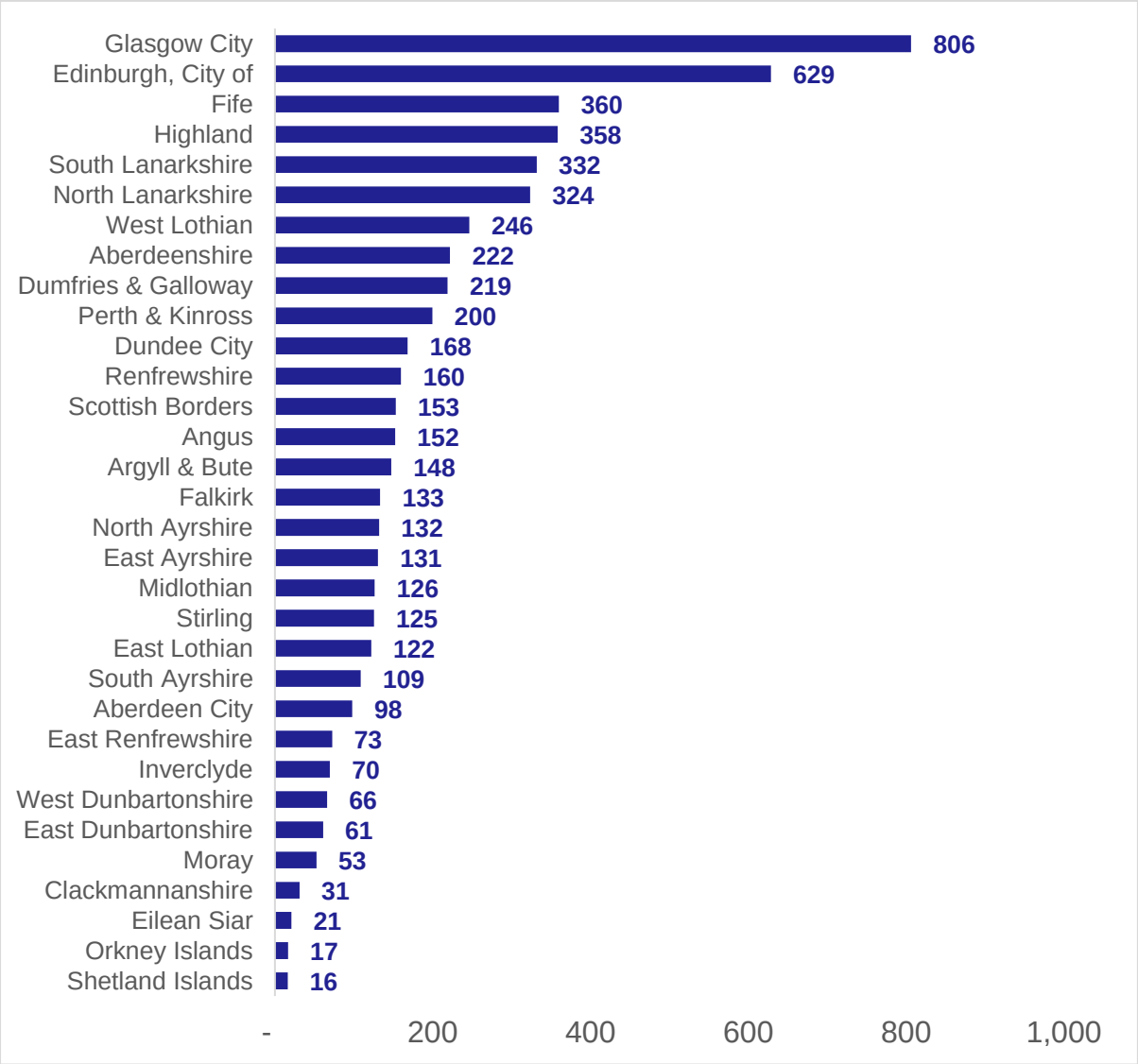


FIGURE 10: AVERAGE NUMBER OF REPORTED ROAD CASUALTIES BY LOCAL AUTHORITY, 2019-2023



Progress towards casualty reduction targets for 2030

Introduction

The Scottish Government recently published a new Road Safety Framework to 2030 The following section provides information on the progress made towards the four main casualty reduction targets outlined in the framework. These targets are included in Table 2 and each reduction target is assessed against the 2014/18 average.

TABLE 2: CASUALTY REDUCTION TARGETS IN SCOTLAND'S 2021 ROAD SAFETY FRAMEWORK

Target	2030 target % reduction
People killed	50%
People seriously injured	50%
Children (aged < 16) killed	60%
Children (aged < 16) seriously injured	60%

When reporting progress towards the two targets relating to serious injuries, years prior to 2020 (including the baseline period of 2014-2018) are reported on the basis of adjusted figures (see Introduction for more information).

Target: 50% reduction in those killed by 2030

There were 155 people killed in 2023, an 11% reduction since the adjusted 2014-18 baseline average. Provisionally, the number in 2023 is not on track to meet the framework target for 2030 (a reduction of 50% from 2014-18 baseline). Figure 11 shows that the total number of fatalities in 2023 was above the indicative line required to achieve the target.

Target: 50% reduction in those seriously injured by 2030

On the basis of adjusted figures, there were 1,930 serious injuries in 2023, a 29% reduction since the adjusted 2014-18 baseline level.

Figure 12 shows that, provisionally, the reduction is on track to meet the framework target for 2030 (a reduction of 50% from 2014-18 baseline).

Target: 60% reduction in children killed by 2030

Due to small numbers and year-to-year fluctuations this target is measured using a three-year average. An average of 4 children a year were killed in the 2021-2023 period, a 23% reduction from the 2014-2018 baseline. Figure 13 provisionally shows that the reduction is not on track to meet the framework target for 2030.

Target: 60% reduction in children seriously injured by 2030

On the basis of the adjusted figures, there were 175 serious injuries in 2023, a 33% reduction since the adjusted 2014-18 baseline level. Figure 14 provisionally shows that the reduction is not on track to meet the framework target for 2030 (a reduction of 60% from 2014-18 baseline).

FIGURE 11: PROGRESS TOWARDS CASUALTIES KILLED REDUCTION TARGET

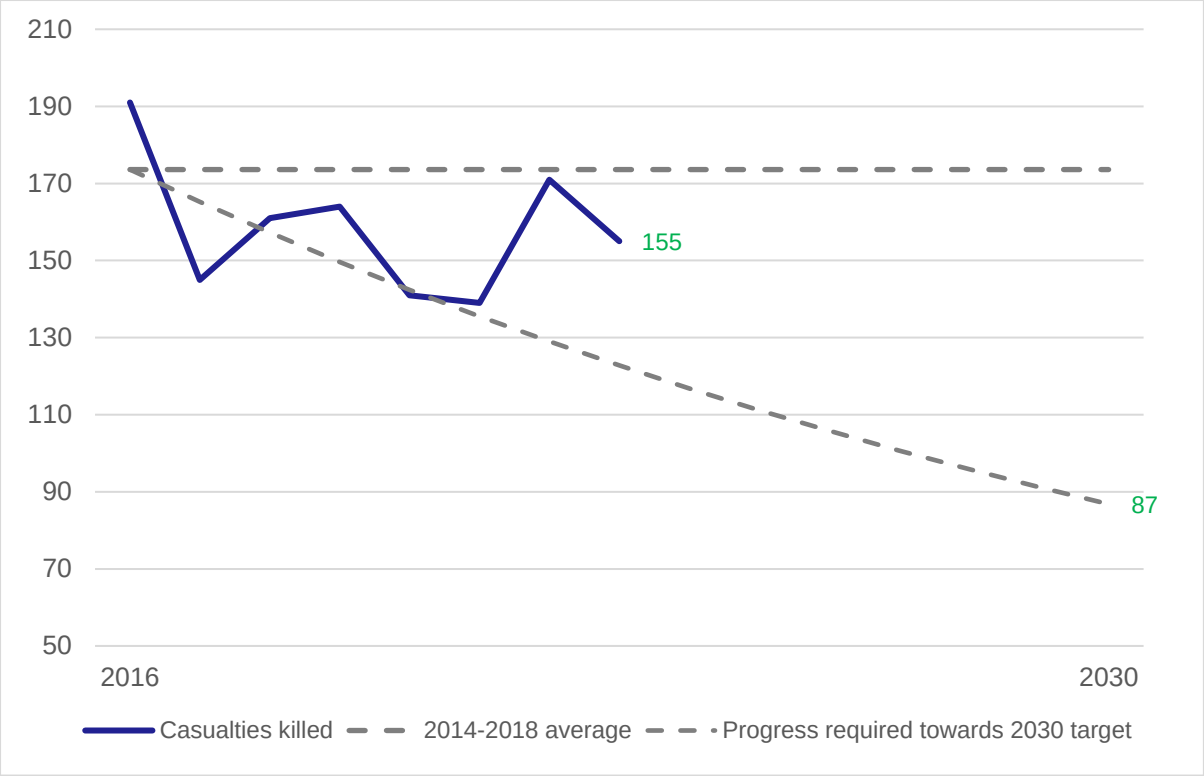


FIGURE 12: PROGRESS TOWARDS CASUALTIES SERIOUSLY INJURED REDUCTION TARGET

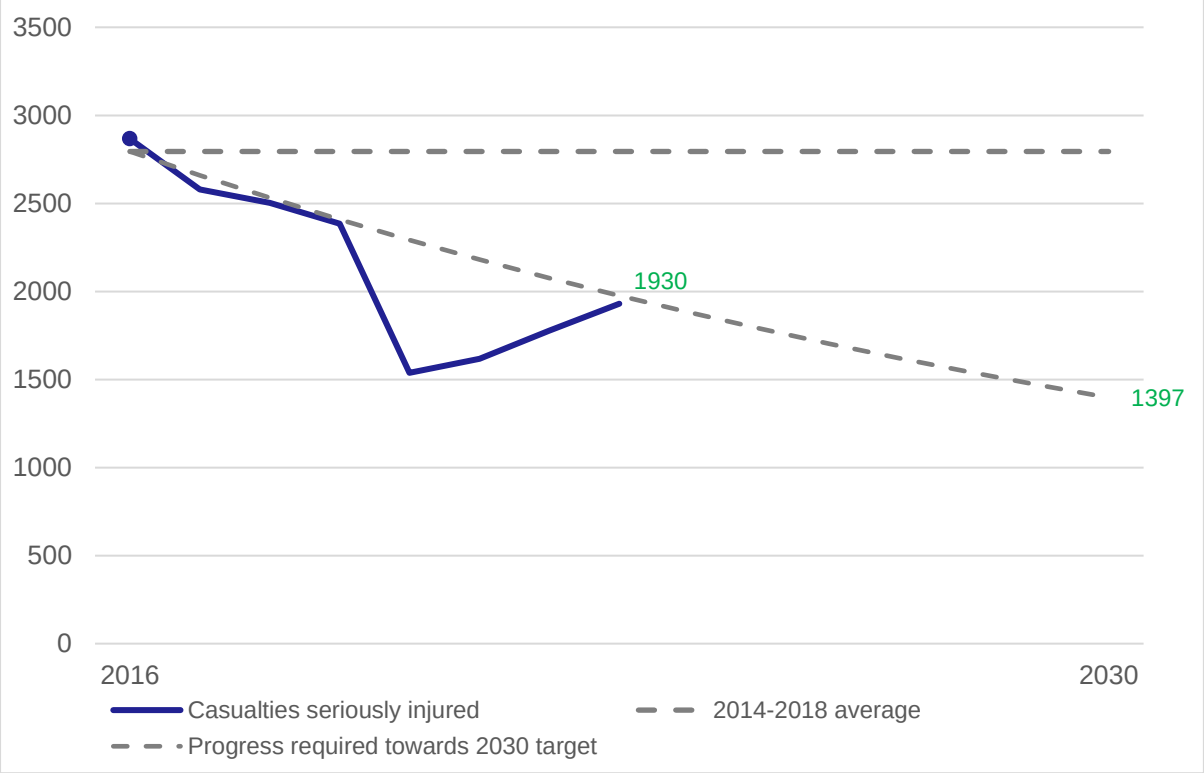


FIGURE 13: PROGRESS TOWARDS CHILDREN KILLED REDUCTION TARGET

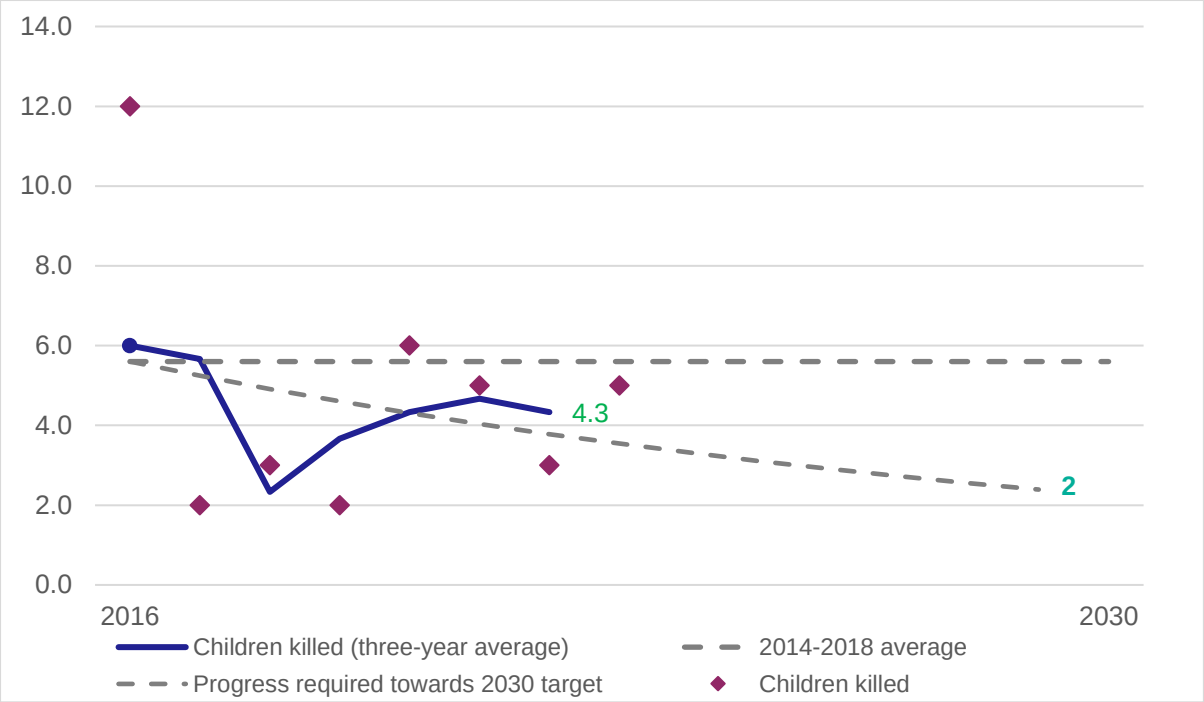
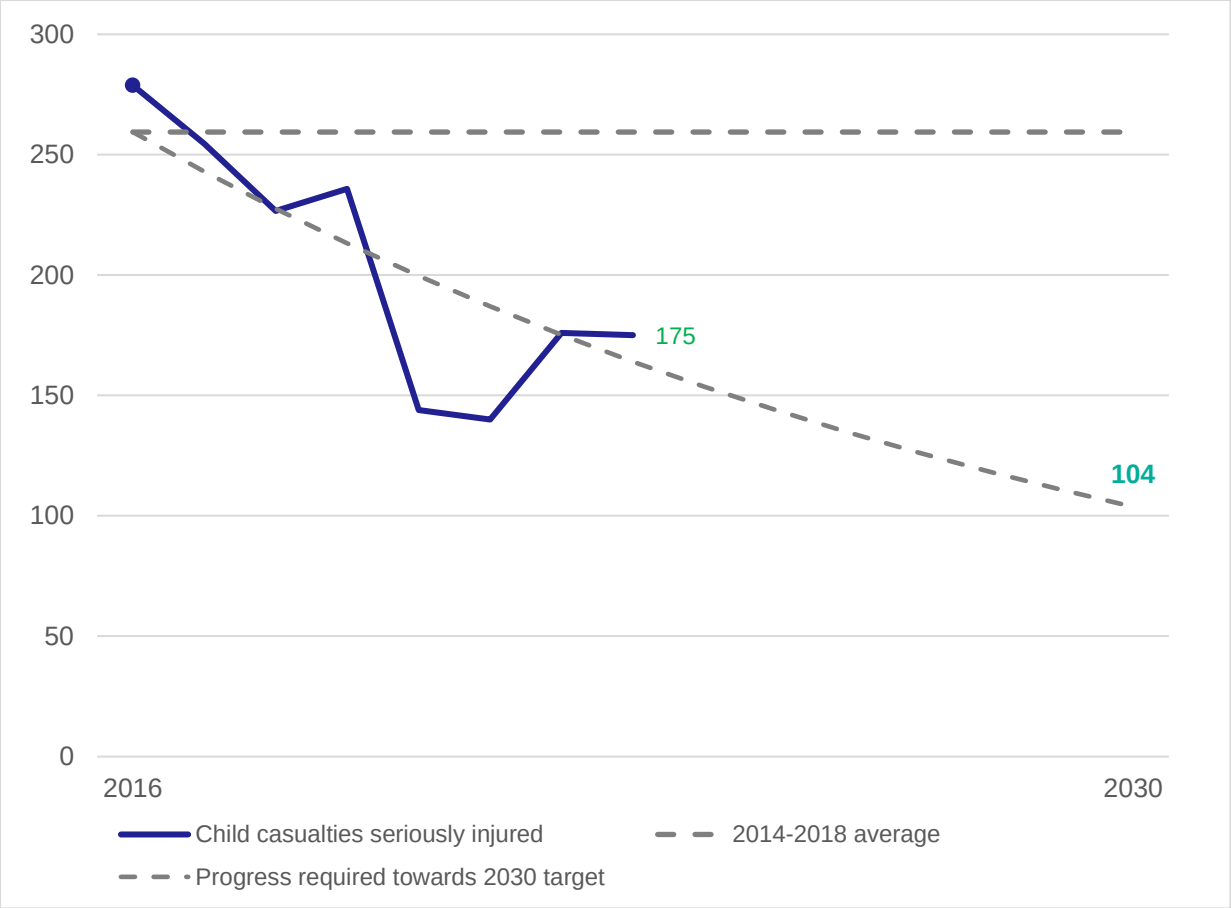


FIGURE 14: PROGRESS TOWARDS CHILDREN SERIOUSLY INJURED REDUCTION TARGET



Annex A: Supporting information including comparisons with other sources

Sources of the data

The figures in this bulletin were compiled from Stats19 statistical returns made by Police Scotland. These returns cover all collisions in which a vehicle is involved that occur on roads (including footways) and that result in personal injury. Only injury collisions reported to the police are included. The vehicle(s) involved in the collision need not be moving, and need not be in collision—for example, the returns include collisions involving people alighting from buses. Damage-only collisions, in which no people are injured, are not included in these statistics.

There could be many non-fatal injury collisions which are not reported to the police, and as a result these statistics are expected to undercount the true number of road casualties.

Stats 19 forms and guidance are available on the Department for Transport website.

Provisional data

Data used in this publication were extracted from Transport Scotland's reported road collision statistical database in May 2024. The figures published here are marked as provisional, as late returns and amendments will be included in the final figures published in Reported Road Casualties Scotland in October and in figures included in later years' publications. Table 3 (overleaf) shows the difference between the provisional and final number of casualties. In most years, the difference between the provisional and final figures is less than 0.5%.

TABLE 3: DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE PROVISIONAL AND FINAL NUMBER OF RECORDED CASUALTIES (NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE), BROKEN DOWN BY SEVERITY, 2001 – 2022

Year	Killed	Seriously injured	Slightly injured	All severities	Killed (% dif)	Seriously injured (% dif)	Slightly injured (% dif)	All severities (% dif)
2001	0	1	4	5	N/A	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
2002	1	9	0	10	0.30%	0.30%	N/A	0.10%
2003	-1	9	29	37	-0.30%	0.30%	0.20%	0.20%
2004	-1	30	130	159	-0.30%	1.10%	0.80%	0.90%
2005	0	58	-29	29	N/A	2.20%	-0.20%	0.20%
2006	0	31	159	190	N/A	1.20%	1.10%	1.10%
2007	-1	66	85	150	-0.40%	2.80%	0.60%	0.90%
2008	-2	33	-18	13	-0.70%	1.30%	-0.10%	0.10%
2009	0	0	17	17	N/A	N/A	0.10%	0.10%
2010	0	4	6	10	N/A	0.20%	0.10%	0.10%
2011	0	2	5	7	N/A	0.10%	0.00%	0.10%
2012	4	15	82	101	2.30%	0.80%	0.80%	0.80%
2013	0	5	0	5	N/A	0.30%	N/A	0.00%
2014	-3	5	23	28	-1.50%	0.30%	0.20%	0.20%
2015	0	-1	13	18	N/A	-0.10%	0.10%	0.20%
2016	0	4	16	20	N/A	0.20%	0.20%	0.20%
2017	0	9	28	37	N/A	0.60%	0.40%	0.40%
2018	1	1	7	9	0.60%	0.10%	0.10%	0.10%
2019	-3	15	32	44	-1.80%	0.70%	0.60%	0.60%
2020	-1	8	41	48	-0.70%	0.50%	1.20%	1.00%
2021	1	19	60	80	0.70%	1.20%	1.80%	1.60%
2022	-1	17	18	34	-0.60%	1.00%	0.50%	0.60%

Approach to evaluating progress against casualty reduction targets within this publication

One way of assessing progress towards the targets is to compare actual casualty numbers in each year with an indicative line that starts at the baseline figure in 2014-18 and falls, by a constant percentage reduction in each subsequent year, to the target for 2030. This is the approach previously adopted by the GB Road Safety Advisory Panel. The indicative line starts at the baseline figure in 2016 as that is the middle year of the baseline period. Other approaches could have been used: there are many ways of producing lines that indicate how casualty numbers might fall fairly steadily to the targets for 2030.

The method adopted to produce the indicative target lines shown in Figures 11, 12, 13 and 14 involves a constant percentage reduction in each year from 2016 to 2030. The resulting indicative target lines represent the percentages of the baseline averages. They are not straight lines, because of the compounding over the years effect of constant annual percentage reductions (to two decimal places, the falls are: 4.83% p.a. for killed and seriously injured to meet the 2030 target. For children killed and seriously injured the fall is 6.34% p.a..

The calculations themselves are contained within the spreadsheet accompanying this publication.

Severity reporting

The classification of the severity of an collision (as “fatal”, “serious” or “slight”) is determined by the severity of the injury to the most severely injured casualty. The police usually record this information soon after the collision occurs. However, if further information becomes available which would alter the classification (for example, if a person dies within 30 days of the collision, as a result of the injuries sustained in the collision) the police change the initial classification of the severity.

From the middle of 2019, Police Scotland have used the CRASH system for recording severity details of collisions. Table 4 lists the options for determining how severe an injury is. The introduction of CRASH means that the severity of injuries is recorded more accurately than before and has led to an increase in the recorded number of serious injuries. Figures recorded from 2019 onwards are therefore not directly comparable with those recorded prior to the introduction of CRASH. The adjustment methodology discussed in the Introduction is an attempt to account for this and provide comparable figures.

TABLE 4: CLASSIFICATION OF INJURY SEVERITY USING THE CRASH REPORTING SYSTEM

Injury in CRASH	Detailed severity	Severity classification
Deceased	Killed	Killed
Broken neck or back	Very Serious	Serious
Severe head injury, unconscious	Very Serious	Serious
Severe chest injury, any difficulty breathing	Very Serious	Serious
Internal injuries	Very Serious	Serious
Multiple severe injuries, unconscious	Very Serious	Serious
Loss of arm or leg (or part)	Moderately Serious	Serious
Fractured pelvis or upper leg	Moderately Serious	Serious
Other chest injury (not bruising)	Moderately Serious	Serious
Deep penetrating wound	Moderately Serious	Serious
Multiple severe injuries, conscious	Moderately Serious	Serious
Fractured lower leg / ankle / foot	Less Serious	Serious
Fractured arm / collarbone / hand	Less Serious	Serious
Deep cuts / lacerations	Less Serious	Serious
Other head injury	Less Serious	Serious
Whiplash or neck pain	Slight	Slight
Shallow cuts / lacerations / abrasions	Slight	Slight
Sprains and strains	Slight	Slight
Bruising	Slight	Slight
Shock	Slight	Slight

Before the introduction of CRASH, the police used the following classifications for determining collision severity:

- a **fatal injury** is one which causes death less than 30 days after the collision;
- a **fatal collision** is an collision in which at least one person is fatally injured;
- a **serious injury** is one which does not cause death less than 30 days after the collision, and which is in one (or more) of the following categories:
- an injury for which a person is detained in hospital as an in-patient, or

- any of the following injuries (whether or not the person is detained in hospital): fractures, concussion, internal injuries, crushings, severe cuts and lacerations, severe general shock requiring treatment, or
- any injury causing death 30 or more days after the collision;
- a **serious collision** is one in which at least one person is seriously injured, but no-one suffers a fatal injury;
- a **slight injury** is any injury which is neither fatal nor serious - for example, a sprain, bruise or cut which is not judged to be severe, or slight shock requiring roadside attention;
- a **slight collision** is one in which at least one person suffers “slight” injuries, but no-one is seriously injured, or fatally injured.

Over the years, improvements in vehicle design, and the provision and use of additional safety features, together with changes in the law (e.g. on the fitting and wearing of seat belts), will all have helped to reduce the severity of the injuries suffered in some collisions.

Road safety measures should also have reduced the levels of injuries sustained. For example, if traffic calming schemes reduce average speeds, people may suffer only a slight injury in collisions that previously would have taken place at higher speeds and so might previously have resulted in a serious injury.

However, it is also possible that some of the changes shown in the statistics of serious injuries and slight injuries may be due to changes in administrative practices, which may have altered the proportion of collisions categorised as serious. For example, the distinction between serious and slight injuries could be affected by factors such as changes in hospitals’ admission policies. All else being equal, the number of serious injury cases would rise, and the number of slight injury cases would fall, if it became standard procedure for a hospital to keep in overnight, for precautionary reasons, casualties with a particular type of injury.

The increase in the number of serious injury collisions in 1994 was partly attributed to a change in the health boards’ policies in admitting more child casualties for overnight observation, which in turn changed the classification of many injuries from slight to serious. The number of child casualties recorded as having serious injuries in 1994 was 35 per cent higher than in the previous year. There could also be changes in hospitals’ procedures that would reduce the numbers of serious injury cases.

Comparisons with other sources of injury road collisions data

Injury road collisions, and their associated casualties, are only recorded in Stats 19 (the data collection which is the source for the figures presented throughout the main body of this publication) if they occur on public roads and become known to the police within 30 days. This means that the number of collisions and casualties collected through Stats 19 is likely to be lower than the true number.

This section provides high level comparisons between the data collected through the Stats 19 statistical returns made by Police Scotland and alternative sources as a means of assessing the coherence and completeness of the Stats 19-derived statistics.

This sections also compares trends for different casualty severities within the Stats 19 data collection.

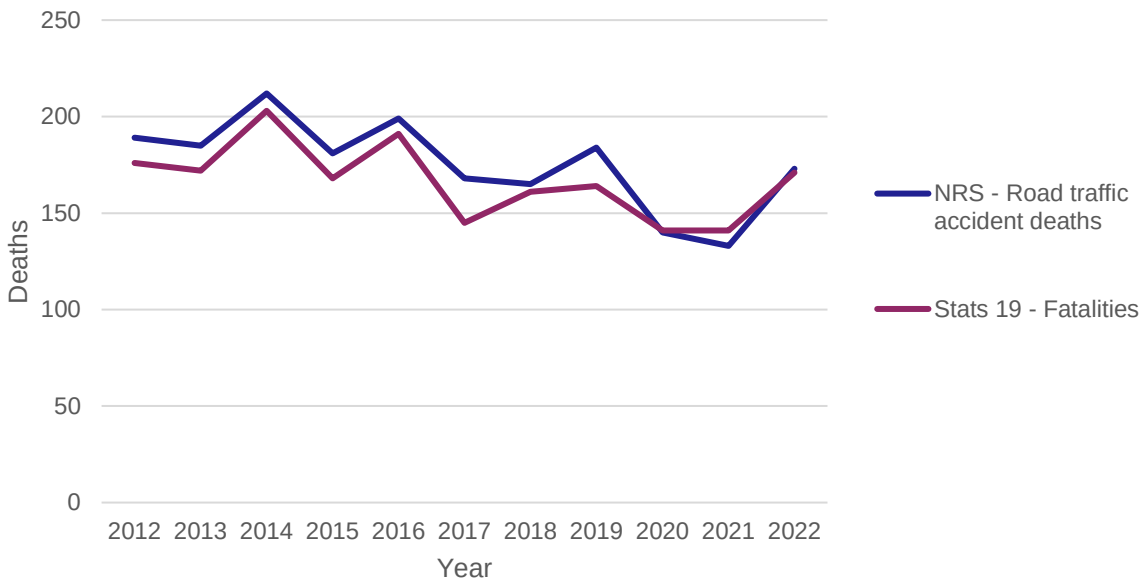
National Records for Scotland deaths data

National Records for Scotland (NRS) produce annual figures for deaths due to road traffic accidents. As these are derived from information recorded on death certificates, they provide an alternative source of information for the road fatalities presented elsewhere within this publication.

Figure 15 shows that overall, the number of road traffic accident deaths published by NRS are similar to the fatalities reported within road casualties publications, with both sources generally rising and falling together

Where there are differences, figures from NRS are generally higher. This is to be expected as there are some definitional differences between the two sets of figures. In particular, for a fatality to be included within the Stats 19 data, the fatality must occur within 30 days of the traffic collision, whereas there is no such cut-off for NRS figures.

FIGURE 15: STATS 19 FATALITIES COMPARED TO NRS ROAD TRAFFIC ACCIDENT DEATHS, 2012 TO 2022



Further information on data collected for causes of death can be found on the NRS website

Emergency admissions resulting from road traffic accidents

Public Health Scotland (PHS) routinely publish figures for emergency hospital admissions resulting from road traffic accidents within their Unintentional Injuries publication. Although there are differences between emergency hospital admissions and the serious casualties collected through Stats 19 (serious casualties may not involve an admission to hospital), these still offer a source for broad comparisons.

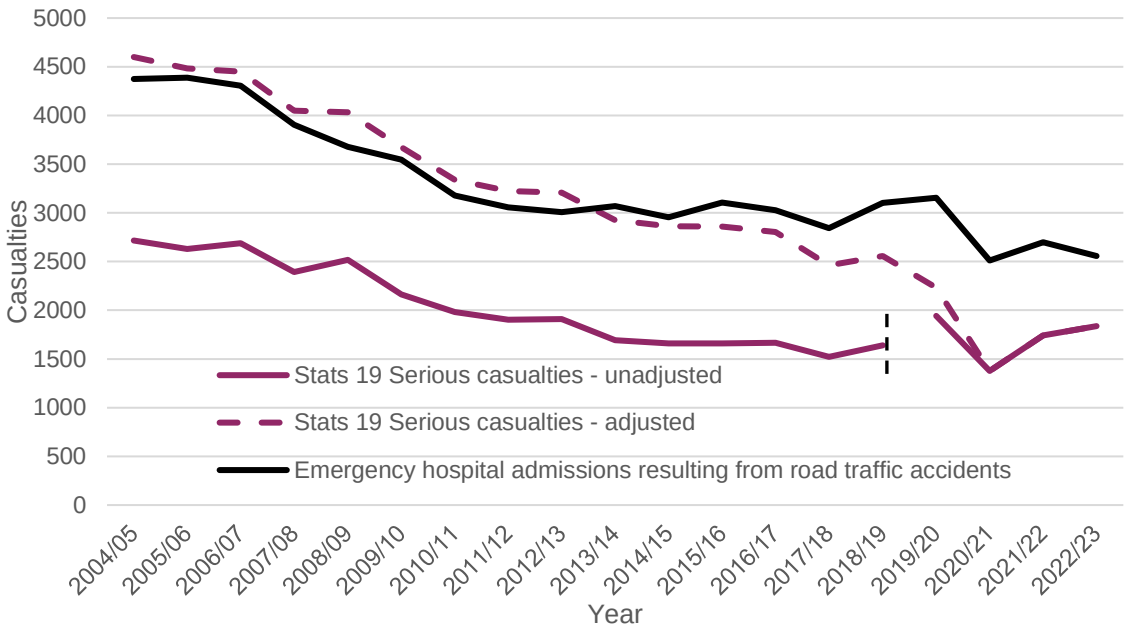
The Unintentional Injuries publication by PHS presents data for financial years, therefore the Stats 19 figures presented here have also been calculated using financial years and will differ from figures elsewhere in this publication.

Figure 16 shows that unadjusted Stats 19 figures and emergency hospital admissions followed a broadly similar trend over the past two decades, until the break in the time series caused by the introduction of CRASH in 2019/20 (see Introduction). Both sources showed a decline to all-time lows in 2017/18.

Over the past two decades, emergency admissions have consistently been higher than the unadjusted serious casualties collected through Stats 19. Emergency admissions were between 32% and 48% higher than serious casualties between the years 2004/05 and 2018/19 and this gap widened in the years immediately prior to the introduction of CRASH.

Using adjusted figures for serious casualties brings historic Stats 19 casualties more into line with emergency admissions, but highlights a greater drop in Stats 19 casualties over time compared with emergency admissions.

FIGURE 16: STATS 19 SERIOUS CASUALTIES COMPARED TO EMERGENCY HOSPITAL ADMISSIONS, 2004/05 TO 2022/23



There are potential reasons for differences in trends between emergency admissions and Stats 19 data, some of which may have been further affected by the introduction of CRASH in mid-2019. These include:

- Reduced reporting of road accidents by the public to the police;
- Changes in the way in which Police Forces report collisions in their Stats 19 returns;
- An increase in the proportion of road casualties going to hospital;
- Changes in hospitals' practices (which might result in an increased proportion of the casualties who go to A&E departments being admitted to hospital, or a larger proportion of admissions as a result of a road accident being identified as such in hospitals' data);
- Road safety improvements which disproportionately reduced injuries classified as serious in Stats 19 but which do not involve being admitted to hospital.

The Transport Scotland statistics team will be taking forward work over the summer period to explore in more detail the differences between emergency admissions and Stats 19 data.

Further information on the Unintentional Injuries publication can be found on the Public Health Scotland website.

Scottish Household Survey

The Scottish Household Survey (SHS) is a representative, annual survey of private households in Scotland and collects information on a range of topics, including transport. The SHS previously included questions which asked respondents whether they had been involved in a road collision, and if so whether they had been injured. The survey also asked respondents whether the police came to know about the collision. The questions were asked in their most recent form in 2012,2014,2016,2019, and 2021.

The latest available data from 2021 shows that 0.8% of respondents reported that they had been injured in a road collision in the two years prior. The figure for 2021 is not directly comparable with earlier years due to pandemic-related changes to the survey in that period, but given the uncertainty around survey estimates it is also difficult to draw any firm conclusions regarding trends over time in earlier years [Table 5].

TABLE 5: PERCENTAGE OF SHS RESPONDENTS REPORTING THEY WERE INJURED IN A ROAD COLLISION, 2012-2021

Year	Percentage injured	Confidence interval +/-
2012	1.7	0.5
2014	0.7	0.3
2016	1.0	0.4
2019	1.2	0.4
2021	0.8	0.4

Given the small number of respondents that reported being injured in a collision in a given year (for illustration there were 22 in 2021, and 36 in 2019), there is very large uncertainty around single-year estimates for the proportion of the injury collisions that were reported to the police. This means that it is not possible to assess trends in collision-reporting using the SHS. However, a combined figure for 2012-2021 suggests that around a third of injury collisions (34%) were not reported to the police over this period. The confidence interval around this estimate is +/- 9 percentage points.

These estimates may be subject to survey recall issues as well as differences between what respondents would perceive as an injury road collision and the stricter definitions used in Stats 19 (for example, injuries sustained on private ground but may be included by a respondent in the Scottish Household Survey, but are not included in Stats 19). However, they do underline that a significant proportion of injury collisions are not reported to the police and provide one estimate for the scale of this under-reporting.

Further information on the Scottish Household Survey including survey questionnaires can be found on the Scottish Government website.

Differences between severities

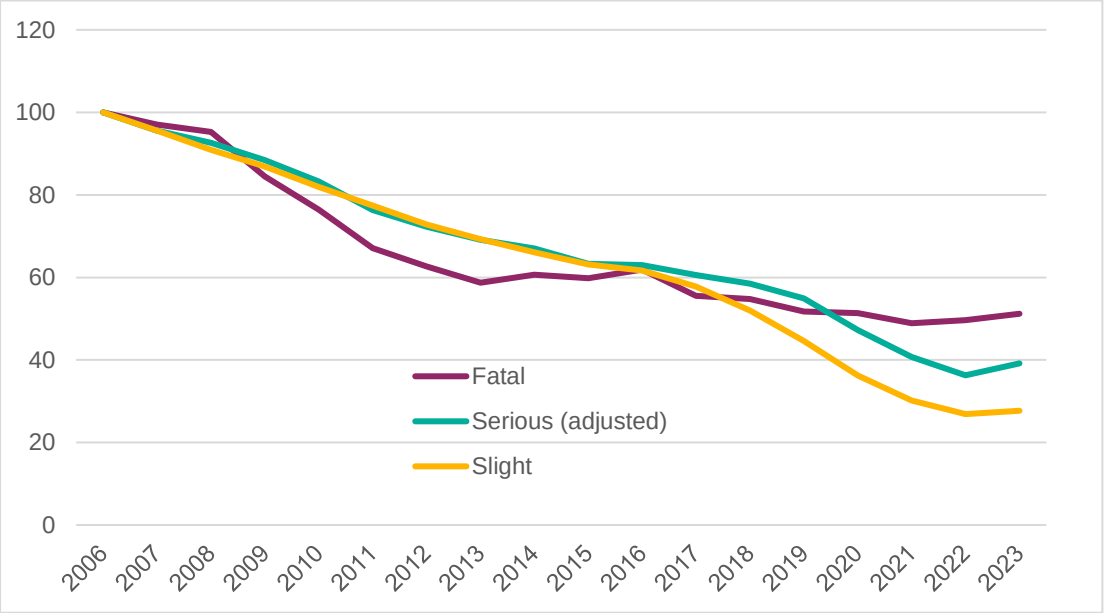
Figure 17 presents trends for the different severities of casualties collected within the Stats 19 data collection (fatal, adjusted serious, and slight). This analysis uses a rolling 3 year average to smooth out single year fluctuations, particularly in fatalities, and is indexed to the 2004-2006 average in order to straightforwardly compare changes over time between different severities.

All three severities show a clear fall over time, although fatalities fell more quickly than serious and slight casualties between 2009 and 2015. In recent years differences have emerged, with serious casualties falling more than fatalities, and slight casualties falling more than serious casualties.

There are potential reasons the differing trends between severities, some of which could have been further affected by the introduction of CRASH. These include:

- Reduced reporting of less serious road accidents by the public to the police (and hence reduced reporting in Stats 19);
- Changes in the way in which Police Scotland reports collisions of differing severity in their Stats 19 returns;
- Road safety improvements which disproportionately reduced the number of less serious injuries.

FIGURE 17: INDEXED 3-YEAR ROLLING AVERAGE OF CASUALTIES, BY SEVERITY, 2004-06 TO 2021-23



The Transport Scotland statistics team will be taking forward work over the summer period to explore differences in trends

between severities, including the impact of CRASH and severity adjustments.

Access to data

Almost all of the data collected for this statistical bulletin are available as part of a GB-wide dataset on data.gov.uk

Further detail be made available on request, subject to consideration of legal and ethical factors. Please contact Transtat@transport.gov.scot for further information.

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