



## Motoring offences in Wales, 2021

15 February 2023

SB 7/2023

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic had a significant impact on road traffic and police recorded road collisions and casualties in Wales in 2020 and 2021 as restrictions were put in place around how, where and why individuals could travel. The restrictions generally resulted in reduced traffic volume for all types of motorised vehicles which is likely to have impacted the statistics presented in this release (please see page 2 for further detail).

### Main points

#### Fixed penalty notices (FPNs)

- In 2021 a total of 74,400 FPNs were issued in Wales, a 17% increase compared to 2020 and similar to the number issued in 2019. Speed limit offences accounted for 83% of FPNs in 2021.
- Since 2012, the number of FPNs issued in Wales have seen an overall decrease from a high of 112,400.

#### Court proceedings

- 57,753 motoring offenders were prosecuted in Wales in 2021, a 27% increase compared to 2020 and 2% higher than in 2019.

#### Collisions involving drink driving (2020 data)

- In 2020, an estimated 8% of all recorded collisions and 9% of all casualties in Wales involved one or more drivers impaired by alcohol.
- 14% of all fatal casualties in 2020 were estimated to be involved in alcohol related collisions.
- 13% of motorised vehicle drivers and passengers killed in Wales were found to have had a blood alcohol level over the legal limit.

#### Screening breath tests

- In 2021, 18,462 screening breath tests were carried out in Wales, a reduction from 24,800 in 2020. In 2021, 2,900 of these tests (16%) were categorised as either 'positive or refused', compared to 3,600 (14%) in 2020
- In 2021, there were 153 positive breath tests of drivers involved in collisions, a decrease of 17 (13%) compared with 2020.

### About this bulletin

This annual statistical bulletin reports on motoring offences in general and assesses the relationship between drink driving and road collisions. Motoring offences covered are:

- Fixed penalty notices by police
- Court proceedings against motoring offenders
- Collisions involving alcohol or drug impaired drivers
- Breath tests

Both endorsable and non-endorsable FPNs are referred to in this bulletin.

Civil parking enforcements, carried out by local authorities, are not covered.

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## Impact of COVID-19 on Road Transport Statistics

Statistics presented in this release which relate to the 2021 calendar year will likely be impacted by restrictions in place at the time to reduce the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19). The restrictions generally resulted in reduced traffic volume for all types of motorised vehicles and had a significant impact on road traffic and police recorded road collisions and casualties in Wales in 2020 and 2021. This should be considered, and care should be taken when interpreting figures or comparing to previous years.

Traffic volume decreased considerably during 2020 as a result of the 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. In 2021, traffic volume saw an increase of 12.8% compared to the previous year but remained below pre-pandemic levels.

## Introduction

This annual statistical bulletin looks at motoring offences in general, provides a more detailed look at drinking and driving in Wales for 2021.

Motoring offences can be dealt with by official police action either through fixed penalty notices (FPNs) or through court proceedings. In addition to official police action, Welsh local authorities have civil parking enforcement powers. Motoring offences dealt with by local authorities are not included in these statistics. [Section 3.1](#) provides more information on when each local authority gained parking enforcement powers.

Court proceedings relating to FPNs cover the use of police powers to issue on-the-spot fines for various motoring offences (e.g. parking offences or speeding offences). These FPNs can either be endorsable (points added to a driving licence), or non-endorsable (no points added to a driving licence).

The bulletin also assesses the relationship between drink driving, road collisions and casualties in Wales in 2021 and 2020. It includes analysis by the Department for Transport (DfT) on collisions and casualties in collisions, and by the Transport Research Laboratory (TRL) on the blood alcohol concentration (BAC) from fatalities following traffic collisions. It presents information in three sections about:

- The association between drink driving and collisions;
- The results of breath tests of drivers involved in collisions;
- Enforcement action relating to drink driving, involving screening breath tests and the outcomes of prosecution through the Courts system.

## Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs)

### Key points

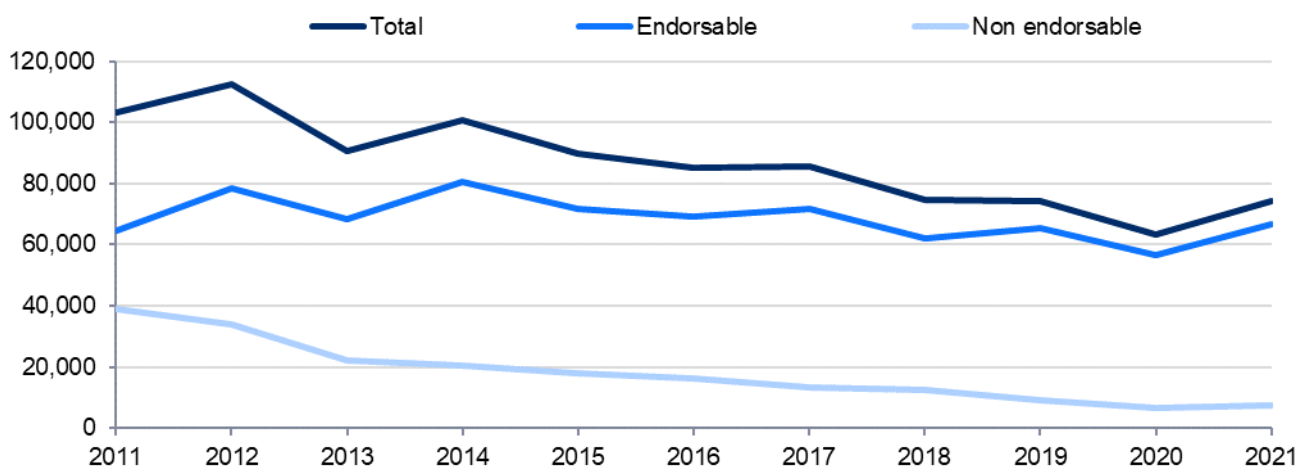
- In 2021 a total of 74,400 FPNs were issued in Wales, a 17% increase compared to 2020 and similar to the number issued in 2019. Endorsable FPNs accounted for 90% and non-endorsable FPNs accounted for 10%
- Speed limit offences remained the largest category of FPNs in 2021

### How many FPNs were issued by the police in Wales in 2021?

In 2021 a total of 74,400 FPNs were issued for motoring offences in Wales, a 17% increase compared to 2020, broadly similar to 2018 and 2019. Since 2012, there has been a gradual decrease in the number of FPNs issued in Wales.

The longer-term fall in FPNs issued in Wales may partly reflect the change in responsibility for civil parking enforcement from police to local authorities. By 2013, all local authorities had taken on this responsibility. Motoring offences recorded by local authorities are not covered by these statistics.

**Chart 1: Endorsable and non-endorsable FPNs issued in Wales, 2011-2021**

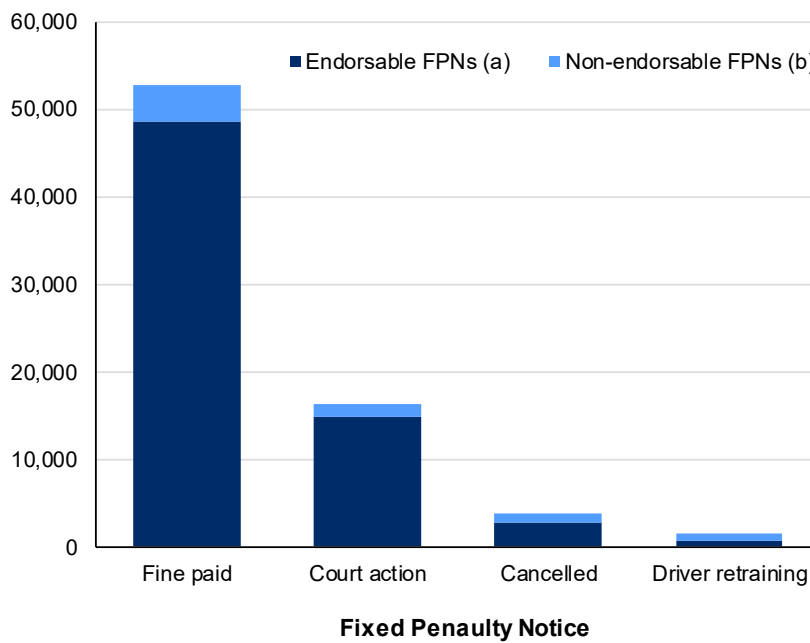


Source: Police Powers and Procedures, Fixed penalty notices for motoring offences, Home Office

## Outcomes of FPNs in Wales in 2021

Of all the FPNs issued by the police in Wales, endorsable FPNs accounted for 90% and non-endorsable FPNs accounted for 10%. For both endorsable FPNs and non-endorsable FPNs “fine paid” accounted for the majority of outcomes, representing 73% of endorsable FPNs and 53% of non-endorsable FPNs.

**Chart 2: Endorsable and non-endorsable FPNs, by top 4 outcome, Wales, 2021**



Source: Police Powers and Procedures, Fixed penalty notices for motoring offences, Home Office

(a) Financial penalty is accompanied by points on a driving licence.

(b) Financial penalty was issued, without any points being put on a driving licence.

[Table 1](#) below shows the broad categories of FPNs issued in Wales. Speed limit offences remained the largest category in 2021 by far, accounting for 83% of all offences, 17 times more than the next largest category (Seat belt offences).

**Table 1: Broad categories of FPNs, Wales, 2020 and 2021**

	<i>Number and percent</i>			
	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>Change on year</b>	
Speed limit offences	50,947	61,804	10,857	21%
Licence, insurance and record-keeping offences	3,806	2,984	-822	-22%
Seat belt offences	2,871	3,616	745	26%
Vehicle test and condition offences	1,786	1,780	-6	0%
Neglect of traffic signs and directions and of pedestrian rights	1,180	1,198	18	2%
Use of hand-held mobile phone while driving	680	789	109	16%
Obstruction, waiting and parking offences	634	458	-176	-28%
Careless driving (excluding use of hand-held mobile phone when drivir	620	717	97	16%
Lighting and noise offences	388	293	-95	-24%
Other Offences	269	434	165	61%
Work record or employment offences	207	267	60	29%
Miscellaneous motoring offences (excluding seat belt offences)	27	28	1	4%
Operator's licence offences	3	7	4	133%
<b>Total</b>	<b>63,418</b>	<b>74,375</b>	<b>10,957</b>	<b>17%</b>

Source: Police Powers and Procedures, Fixed penalty notices for motoring offences, Home Office

## Court proceedings

This section covers the number of motoring offenders prosecuted in Wales. It includes offences where there has been no police involvement, such as prosecutions instigated by government departments, private organisations and individuals.

### Key points

- A total of 57,753 motoring offenders were prosecuted in Wales in 2021.

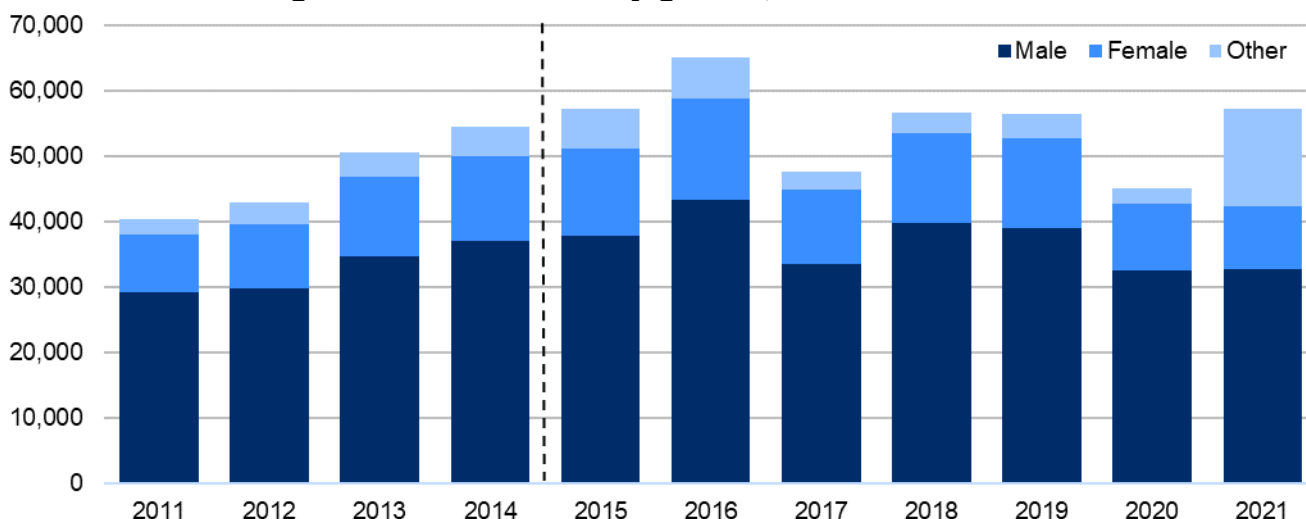
### How many motoring offenders were prosecuted in Wales?

In 2021, 57,753 motoring offenders were prosecuted in Wales. This is a 27% increase compared with 2020 and a 2% increase compared to 2019. Of the total motoring offenders, 57% were male, 17% were female and 26% were categorised as either not known or 'other' defendants (these include companies and public bodies) (Chart 3). The large increase in the 'other' category has been explored with the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and several reasons are possible:

- DVLA motoring offences were included in the roll out of single justice procedure cases since late 2020 – this is where the defendant is dealt with outside of court, so information such as sex may not be recorded.
- A new case management system for magistrates' courts and the Crown Court was rolled out from late 2020 which may have had an impact

We will continue to explore this increase.

**Chart 3: All motoring offenders in Wales by gender, 2011 to 2021** (a) (b) (c)



Source: Criminal Justice System statistics, Motoring data, Ministry of Justice (MoJ)

- (a) "Other" includes offences committed by companies and public bodies or where an individuals' gender is unknown in the data.
- (b) Figures from 2015 onwards are not directly comparable with the series prior to 2015 due to the introduction of the Single Justice Procedure (SJP). The SJP enables courts to deal with some non-imprisonable offences (including a substantial proportion of motoring offences) remotely. As a consequence, some offences committed in Wales are dealt with by courts outside of Wales, and vice versa resulting in some volatility in this series. The statistics in this section reflect the location of the courts, not necessarily the location of the offences. The fall in 2017 was mostly driven by decreases in insurance, speeding and registration and license offences prosecuted in Wales. It is likely that this, at least to some extent, reflects the introduction of the SJP.
- (c) The fall in 2020 is likely due to the impact of COVID-19 travel restrictions

## Motoring offences by police force area

Table 2 shows the number of motoring offences prosecuted by each of the police forces in Wales in 2021. All four police forces saw an increase in the number of motoring offences prosecuted compared to 2020 as a result of less travel restrictions, and a similar number to 2019. Those prosecuted do not necessarily reside in the police area in which they are prosecuted.

In 2021, the conviction rate in Wales was 88%, a decrease of 2 percentage points compared to the previous year and 3 percentage point decrease compared to 2019. Broadly, motoring offence conviction rates in Wales have remained within the range 85% to 91% per year in the last ten years, with little variation between the police force areas.

**Table 2: Motoring offenders by police force area and outcome, 2021 (a,b,c)**

Outcome	North Wales	Dyfed-Powys	South Wales	Number and percent	
				Gwent	Wales
Found guilty	10,647	7,101	24,241	9,059	<b>51,048</b>
<i>Conviction rate</i>	<i>89%</i>	<i>91%</i>	<i>87%</i>	<i>90%</i>	<b><i>88%</i></b>
Proceedings terminated early	1,177	638	3,558	937	<b>6,310</b>
Dismissed (found not guilty after summary trial)	51	19	85	32	<b>187</b>
Committed for trial	29	13	49	38	<b>129</b>
Acquitted (CC)	8	-	20	-	<b>28</b>
Not Tried (CC)	*	-	*	-	<b>*</b>
Discharged at committal proceedings	8	7	32	-	<b>47</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,920</b>	<b>7,778</b>	<b>27,985</b>	<b>10,066</b>	<b>57,753</b>

Source: Criminal Justice System statistics, Motoring data, Ministry of Justice (MoJ)

(a) Excludes motoring offences dealt with by fixed penalty notices rather than court proceedings.

(b) Number of offences involved, not number of persons appearing in courts. A person appearing in court can be charged with one or more offences at the same time.

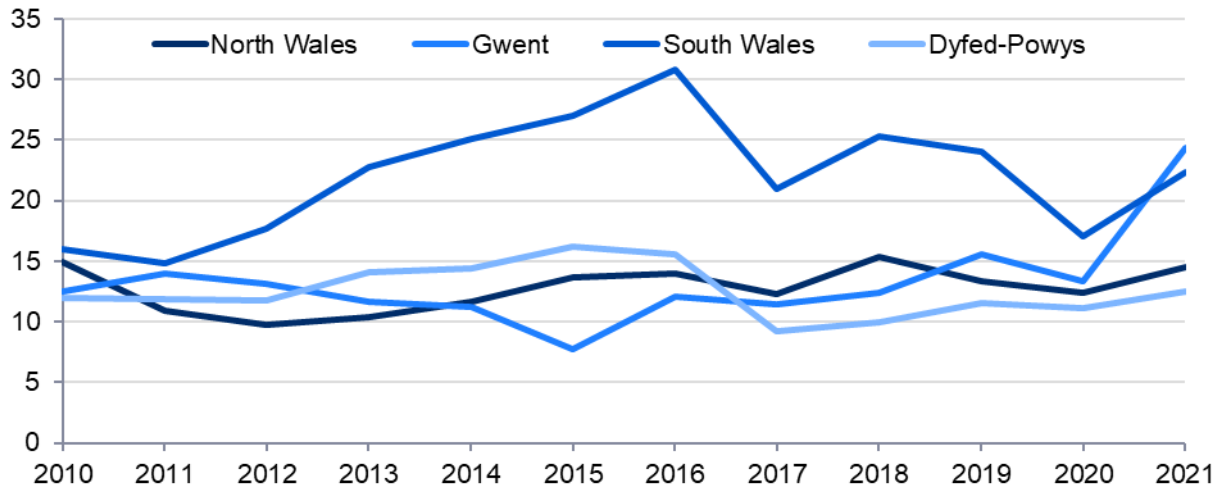
\* Indicates that figures are less than 5 and have been suppressed to prevent disclosure

- indicate zero records

(c) Totals may not equal due to suppressed numbers

The rate of motoring offences per person has been highest in South Wales since 2009. The rate in South Wales reached a peak in 2016 with 31 offences per 1,000 people, almost double that of the second highest at the time (Dyfed-Powys with 16 offences per 1,000 population) but has seen an overall decrease since then. The rates in the other three police force areas have remained relatively stable historically and within 10 offences per 1,000 people of each other since 2007. In 2021 motoring offences per person in all police forces went up: Dyfed-Powys (13%), Gwent (82%), North Wales (17%) and South Wales by 31% ([Chart 4](#)).

**Chart 4: Rate of motoring offences per 1,000 population by police force area, 2010 to 2021 (a)**



Source: Criminal Justice System statistics, Motoring data, Ministry of Justice (MoJ)

(a) Rates based on mid-year population estimates, Office for National Statistics.



## Driving under the influence – collisions and casualties

### Key points

- In 2020, an estimated 8% of all recorded collisions and 9% of all casualties in Wales involved one or more drivers impaired by alcohol.
- 14% of all fatal casualties reported by Police Forces in Wales in 2020 were estimated to be involved in an alcohol related collision.

Police officers who attend road traffic collisions record their initial views around the factors likely to have contributed to the incidents. The Department for Transport (DfT) uses this information alongside Coroners Court information to estimate the actual proportion of collisions involving drink driving. These estimates are [adjusted](#) for likely under reporting of collisions.

The data show that drink driving accounts for a minority of all road collisions and casualties. Estimates for the proportion of alcohol or drug related fatal collisions are not reliable in isolation because of the relatively small number of such collisions. The estimates for killed and serious injury collisions (KSI) together are more robust.

### Are serious collisions more likely to involve drink driving?

The latest available coroners courts data refers to 2020 and to allow comparisons with this information (which is presented later in this release) the other data presented in this section also refers to 2020. Where 2021 data is available for police recorded crime, this has been included to provide additional context.

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.

In 2020, the DfT estimates that 8% of all recorded collisions and 9% of all casualties in Wales involved one or more drivers impaired by alcohol. For collisions and casualties resulting in slight injuries only, the proportions were 7% and 8% respectively. For killed and seriously injured (KSI) however, drink driving accounted for 11% of collisions and 11% of casualties ([Table3](#)).

**Table 3: Collisions and casualties involved in alcohol related collisions by severity, 2020**

	<i>Number and percent</i>		
	DfT estimated alcohol related [a]	Total Reported in Wales (b)	Alcohol related proportion
<b>Collisions</b>			
KSI <sup>(c)</sup>	80	729	11%
Fatal	10	73	14%
Serious	70	656	11%
Slight	140	2,143	7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>2,872</b>	<b>8%</b>
<b>Casualties</b>			
KSI <sup>(c)</sup>	90	820	11%
Fatal	10	74	14%
Serious	80	746	11%
Slight	240	2,881	8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>3,701</b>	<b>9%</b>

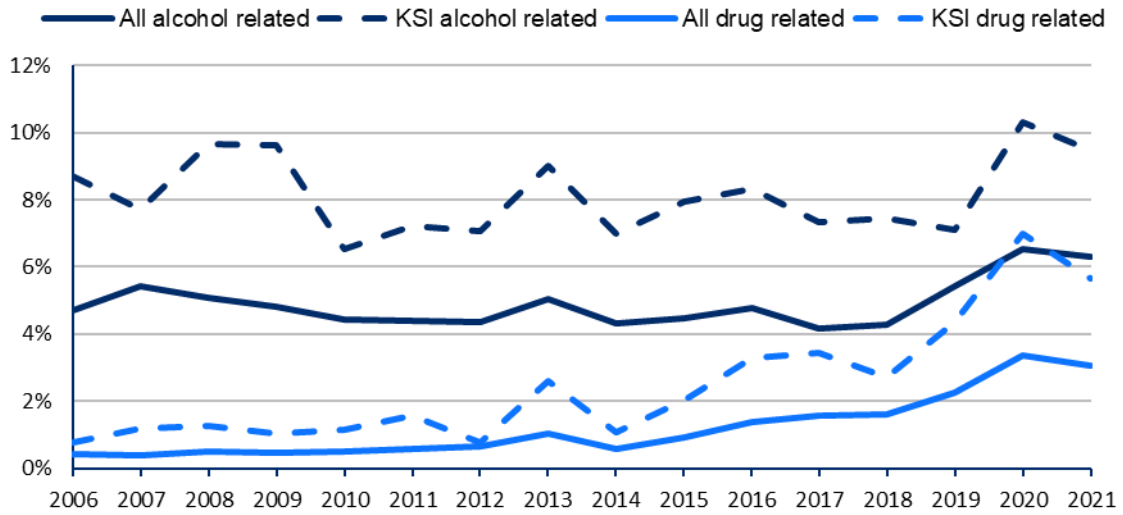
Source: Stats19, Welsh Government and Reported drinking and driving (RAS20), Department for Transport (DfT)

- (a) Estimated numbers, adjusted for under-reporting. Figures rounded to the nearest ten to reflect the uncertainty associated with making estimates from incomplete data sources. Figures may not sum to totals due to rounding.
- (b) Police Recorded Road Collisions and casualties in Wales
- (c) Killed or seriously injured.

When considering solely the contributory factors reported by police officers, there were twice as many collisions caused by drivers impaired by alcohol than impaired by drugs in 2020. Historically, the trend in the proportion of alcohol related collisions has been fairly stable since 2006 with a slight downward trend overall until 2018. However, when looking at the latest available data, the proportion decreased from 6.5% in 2020 to 6.3% in 2021 (Chart 5). The proportion of drug related collisions had been increasing from 2015 reaching highest recorded level in 2020 (3.4%) before dropping to 3.0% in 2021.

Due to the low number of collisions resulting in casualties who are killed or seriously injured, the proportions of alcohol and drug related KSIs are more changeable. However, they have always been higher than the proportions for all casualties, indicating that alcohol and drug related collisions are more likely than non-alcohol or drug related collisions to result in a serious injury or death ([Chart 5](#)).

**Chart 5: Proportion of Collisions involving alcohol and drug impaired drivers, Wales, 2006-2021 (a)(b)**



Source: Police Recorded Road Accidents (Stats19), Welsh Government

- (a) Based on police officers' views of contributory factors.
- (b) KSI = Killed or Seriously Injured

## Coroners Courts data (year 2020)

Coroners Courts in England and Wales (Procurator Fiscal in Scotland) report on blood tests carried out on people killed in traffic collisions and this information is used to derive the estimates presented below. It is important to note that some fatalities do not receive a blood test but may have had alcohol in their blood. These figures therefore represent a minimum level for the overall incidence of alcohol-related fatalities. More information about differences between total fatalities and those tested is given in [section 3.2](#) under “coverage”.

Table 4a shows that in 2020, 30% of motorised vehicle drivers and passengers killed in Wales whose blood was tested were found to have had a blood alcohol level over the legal limit, representing 13% of all fatalities. Across Great Britain, the proportions were higher with 19% of all tested being above the legal limit, representing 10% of all fatalities.

**Table 4A: Road traffic collision fatalities by level of blood alcohol concentration (BAC) (Motorised vehicles only), 2020**

	<i>Killed, aged 16 and over, with known BAC (Number)</i>				
	Total killed aged 16 and over	Total tested	BAC below limit <sup>(b)</sup>		BAC above limit <sup>(b)</sup>
			<=80	>80	
<b>Wales</b>					
Motorised Vehicles only (c)	45	20	14	6	
<b>Great Britain</b>					
Motor vehicle drivers and passengers	688	321	244	77	
Motorcycle riders <sup>(d)</sup>	285	171	155	16	
All	973	492	399	93	

Source: Transport Research Laboratory (TRL), as collected from Coroners and Procurators Fiscal

- (a) Aged 16 and over, with a known BAC (in mg per 100ml of blood). BAC categories are up to and including the higher limit.
- (b) The current drink drive limit in England and Wales is 80mg per 100ml of blood. The drink drive limit in Scotland was reduced on 5th December 2014 from 80mg to 50mg per 100ml of blood.
- (c) Includes both Motor vehicle drivers, Motor vehicle passengers and Motorcycle riders
- (d) Includes Motorcycle riders

[Table 4B](#) shows similar statistics relating to pedal cyclists and pedestrian casualties only.

**Table 4B: Road traffic accident fatalities by level of blood alcohol concentration (BAC) (Non-motorised road users only), 2020**

*Killed, aged 16 and over, with known BAC (Number)*

	Total killed aged 16 and over	Total tested	BAC below	BAC above
			<80	>80
<b>Wales</b>				
Non-motorised Vehicles only (b )	29	18	11	7
<b>Great Britain</b>				
Pedal cyclists <sup>(b)</sup>	141	43	39	4
Pedestrians	346	111	64	47
All	487	154	103	51

Source: Transport Research Laboratory (TRL), as collected from Coroners and Procurators Fiscal

(a) Aged 16 and over, with a known BAC (in mg per 100ml or blood). BAC categories are up to and including the higher limit.

(b) Includes pedal cyclists, pedal passengers and pedestrians.

## Breath tests of drivers involved in collisions

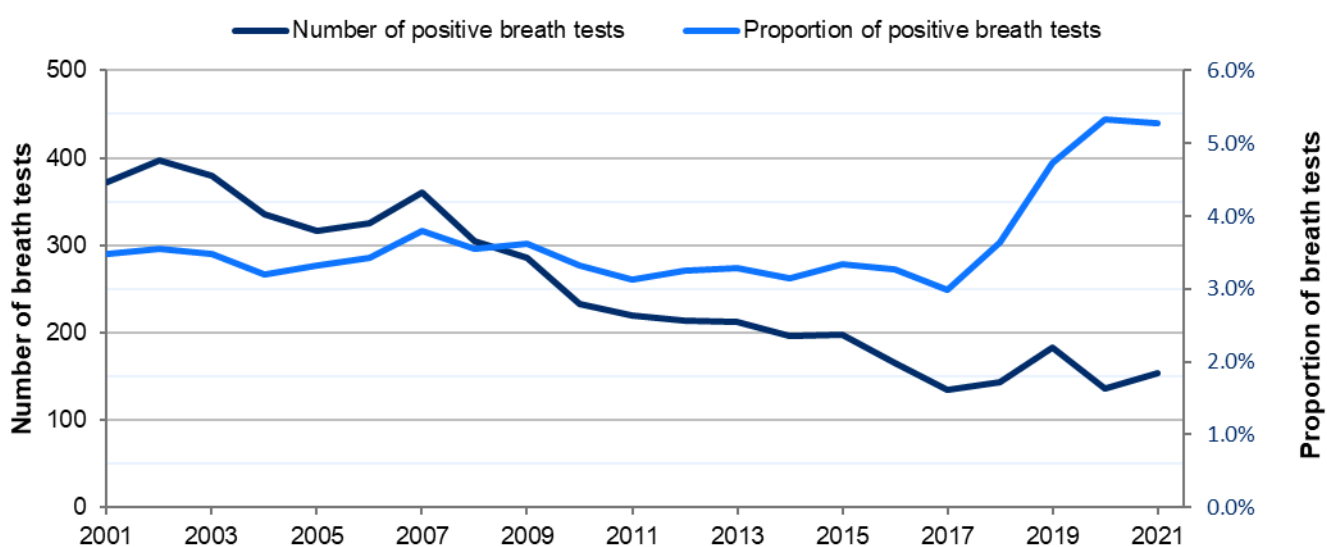
### Key points

- In 2021, 18,462 screening breath tests were carried out in Wales.
- There were 153 positive breath tests of drivers involved in collisions.

This section provides information on collisions where one or more of the drivers involved had breath alcohol levels above the legal limit for driving (currently 80mg of alcohol per 100ml of breath). Police officers carry out breath tests on drivers at the scene of collisions, and while they aim to test every driver, there are scenarios when that is not possible. These include cases when drivers refuse to provide a breath test or when the test is not requested or provided for medical reasons.

The proportion of positive breath tests following collisions is lower than the DfT estimates for the incidence of drink driving presented earlier in Table 4. This is likely to be explained by the fact that a greater number of drivers are tested at the scene of an accident, regardless of whether they are suspected of being over the limit. The figures here, however, can be used to assess trends in the amount of testing carried out, the proportion of positive and negative results and location of collisions involving drink driving (Chart 6).

**Chart 6: Number and proportion of drivers with positive breath tests involved in Collisions, Wales, 2001-2021 <sup>(a)</sup>**



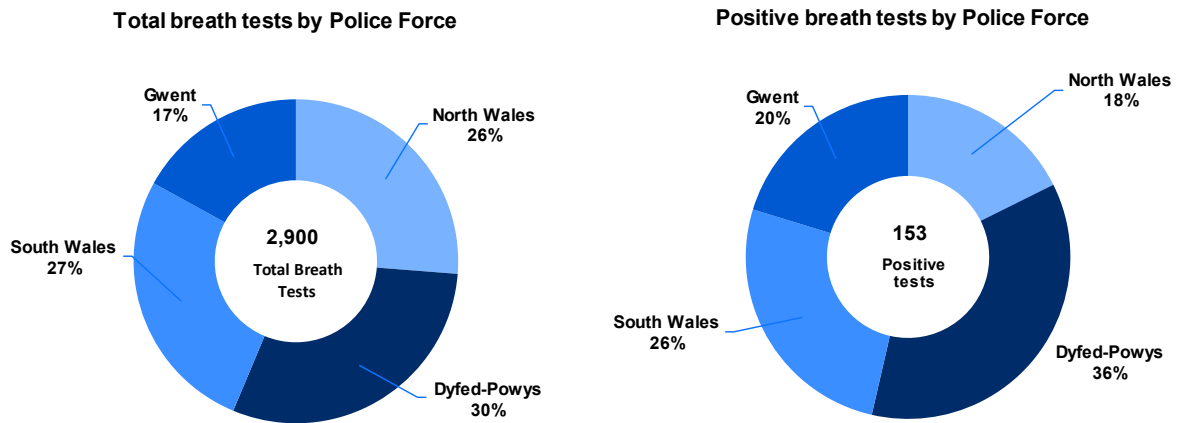
Source: Police Recorded Road Accidents (Stats19), Welsh Government

- (a) Proportion based only on instances where a breath test was taken (i.e., excludes where driver refused to provide or was not contacted and where test was not requested or not provided due to medical reasons).

It is worth noting that the total number of tests have seen an overall increase in 2021 compared to previous year. Over the long term, the total number of breath tests has generally fallen since 2000. This corresponds to a similar fall in the number of collisions recorded in Wales over this time.

- In 2021, Dyfed Powys police accounted for the highest proportion of all breath tests in Wales at 30% and the highest proportion of positive tests at 36% (Chart 7).
- Although North Wales accounted for 26% of all breath tests in Wales, they had the smallest proportion of positive breath tests at 18%.

**Chart 7: Breath test results of drivers involved in collisions by police force area, 2021<sup>(a)</sup>**



Source: Police Recorded Road Accidents (Stats19), Welsh Government

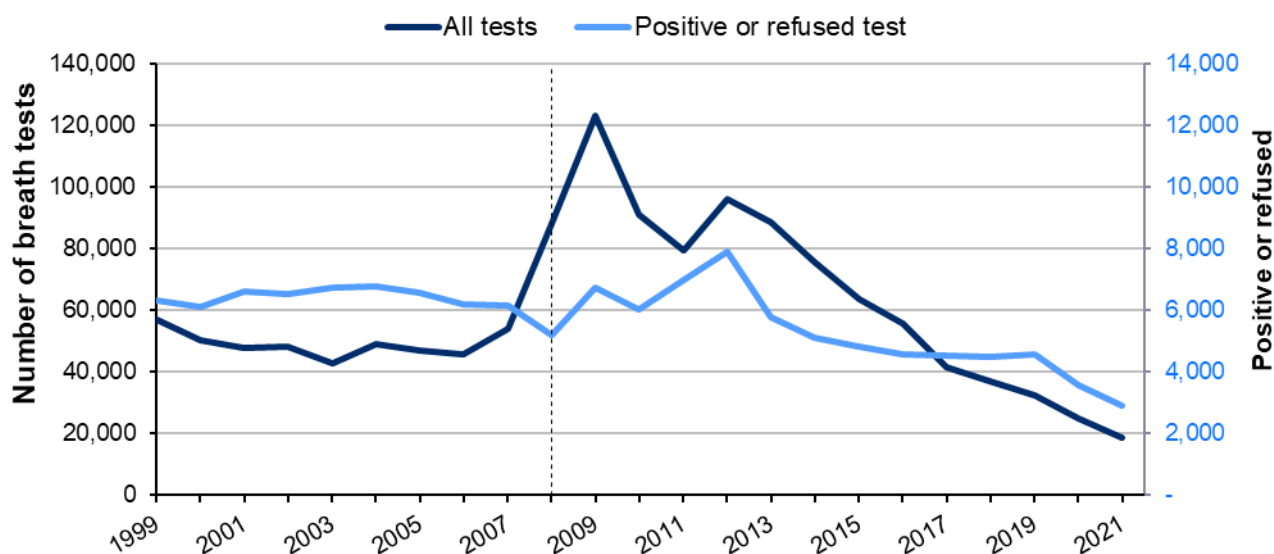
(a) Figures presented for total breath tests only include tests that had either a positive or negative result.

## Enforcement action on breath tests outcome

This section covers screening breath tests and police and court action in relation to drink driving offences. The majority of screening breath tests are not carried out in relation to road Collisions.

The number of annual screening breath tests increased dramatically between 2007 and 2009, before falling back to the 2000-2007 levels in recent years (Chart 8). The increase was due to a new digital breath test system being implemented by many police forces. At its peak in 2009 there were 123,000 tests in Wales. In 2021 there were 18,462 tests conducted, a 26% reduction compared with 2020.

**Chart 8: Screening breath tests, Wales, 1999 to 2021 (a)**



Source: Police powers and procedures, Breath test statistics, Home Office

(a) From April 2008 (denoted by the dotted line) police forces progressively began using new digital recording equipment in place of traditional breath testing screening devices, leading to a large increase in tests.

The rates of breath tests per 1,000 people differed greatly across the police force areas. The lowest rate was in South Wales Police (4.0 per 1,000) whilst the highest was in North Wales (10.4 per 1,000). There were 2,897 positive or refused tests in 2021 representing a 19% decrease on 2020 and 37% decrease on 2019. Despite the total number of tests continuing to fall, the percentage of positive or refused tests is currently the highest it has been since 2003, now standing at 16% (Table 5). There has been a 63% fall in the number of positive or refused tests since the peak in 2012, largely reflecting the fall in the total number of tests carried out over the same period (down 81%). Those screened for a breath test do not necessarily reside in the police area in which they are tested.



**Table 5: Screening breath tests by police force area, Wales, 2021**

	<i>Number and percent</i>				
	North Wales	Dyfed-Powys	South Wales	Gwent	<b>Wales Total</b>
<b>Number of breath tests</b>					
Total tests	7,132	3,118	5,320	2,892	<b>18,462</b>
Positive or refused	842	597	881	577	<b>2,897</b>
<i>Percentage positive or refused</i>	<i>11.8%</i>	<i>19.1%</i>	<i>16.6%</i>	<i>20.0%</i>	<i><b>15.7%</b></i>
<b>Rate of breath tests per 1,000 population <sup>(a)</sup></b>					
Rate of total tests	10.4	6.0	4.0	4.9	<b>5.9</b>
Rate of positive or refused	1.2	1.2	0.7	1.0	<b>0.9</b>

Source: Police powers and procedures, Breath test statistics, Home Office

(a) Based on 2021 mid-year population estimates, Office for National Statistics.

Not all positive or refused breath tests result in convictions. There are also circumstances in which people are convicted of drink driving offences without there having been a breath test – for example when blood tests are taken instead. These factors, along with the lag between breath tests taking place and legal proceedings, means that the number of guilty verdicts can be quite different to the number of positive and refused tests.

**Table 6: Guilty verdicts for drink or drug driving offences, Wales 2020, 2021 <sup>(a)</sup>**

<b>Motoring Offence Group</b>	<i>Number and percent</i>			
	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>Change on year</b>	
<b>Alcohol related offences</b>	<b>2,207</b>	<b>2,069</b>	<b>-138</b>	<b>-6%</b>
Driving with alcohol in the blood above the prescribed limit	2,077	1,946	-131	-6%
In charge of a motor vehicle with alcohol in the blood above the prescribed limit	99	92	-7	-7%
Driving or attempting to drive a vehicle whilst unfit through drink (impairment)	17	20	3	18%
In charge of a vehicle whilst unfit through drink (impairment)	14	11	-3	-21%
<b>Drug related offences</b>	<b>1,645</b>	<b>2,197</b>	<b>552</b>	<b>34%</b>
Driving with a controlled drug above specified limit	1,557	2,076	519	33%
Driving or attempting to drive a vehicle whilst unfit through drugs (impairment)	65	83	18	28%
In charge of a motor vehicle with a controlled drug above specified limit	17	33	16	94%
In charge of a vehicle whilst unfit through drugs (impairment)	6	5	-1	-17%
<b>Refusing a test</b>	<b>505</b>	<b>486</b>	<b>-19</b>	<b>-4%</b>
Driving and failing to provide specimen for analysis (breath, blood or urine)	459	441	-18	-4%
In charge of a motor vehicle and failing to provide specimen for analysis	33	36	3	9%
Failing to provide specimen for initial breath test	11	8	-3	-27%
Failing to allow specimens of blood to be subjected to laboratory test	2	1	-1	-50%
<b>All offences</b>	<b>4,357</b>	<b>4,752</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>9%</b>

Source: Criminal Justice System statistics, Motoring data, Ministry of Justice (MoJ)

(a) Offences under Road Traffic Act 1988 sections 4(1)(2), 5(1)(A)(B), 6(6), 7(6)(A).

- Percentage change not valid on baseline of zero.

- 4,752 offenders were found guilty of drink or drug driving offences in 2021, an increase of 395 (9%) on the previous year ([Table 6](#)).
- The majority of guilty verdicts for drink or drug driving offences were for alcohol related offences with “driving with alcohol in the blood above the prescribed limit” accounting for 1,946 offences (41% of all drink or drug driving offences).
- The number of guilty verdicts for those “Driving or attempting to drive a vehicle whilst unfit through drink (impairment)” increased by 18% in 2021 compared to the previous year.
- Drug driving convictions have increased significantly across Wales and Great Britain in recent years. However, it is not possible to estimate the extent to which this actually reflects increases in drug driving, as it corresponds to increased testing and enforcement activity by police forces.

# Notes

## 1 Context

### 1.1 Related publications

Welsh Government publishes a bulletin on [Police recorded road Collisions](#), an annual release which covers road Collisions and casualties in Wales.

Equivalent data for England can be found using links for the Home Office and the Ministry of Justice in section 2 below.

Transport Scotland publish the number of motor vehicle offences recorded by the police by type of offence in the 'Road Transport Vehicles' chapter of the compendium publication titled [Scottish Transport Statistics](#).

Transport Scotland also produce an annual publication titled [Reported Road Casualties Scotland](#) which includes information on breath testing and drink-driving

The Scottish Government publishes the number of people proceeded against in court for motor vehicle offences in the Statistical Bulletin titled [Criminal Proceedings in Scotland](#).

The Police Service of Northern Ireland produces statistics on fixed penalty notices: [Fixed penalty notice \(FPN\) and discretionary disposal statistics for traffic offences](#)

The Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service publish the number of defendants disposed of in the magistrates' courts for motoring offences:

[Magistrates' Court Bulletin](#)

The Police Service of Northern Ireland produce annual statistical reports on [Road Traffic Collision Statistics](#) which includes information on fatalities attributed to alcohol.

The Department for Transport produce a series of annual reports on [Road Collisions and safety statistics](#) accompanied by statistical tables presenting [information on reported drinking and driving](#) (RAS20) in Great Britain.

## 2 Data sources

The information on fixed penalty notices for driving offences is sourced from the data series compiled by the Home Office in [Police Powers and Procedures England and Wales](#)

The Ministry of Justice produce a motoring pivot table analytical tool for England and Wales as part of their [criminal justice statistics](#). This data comes from the court proceeding database and the statistics on prosecutions, convictions and sentencing are either derived from the LIBRA case management system, which holds the magistrates' courts records, or the Crown Court's CREST system which holds the trial and sentencing data. The data includes offences where there has been no police involvement, such as those prosecutions instigated by government departments, private organisations and individuals.

The STATS19 statistical data includes data about road traffic Collisions and casualties compiled by the police and is submitted to the Welsh Government. It provides information on drivers that either fail their breath test or refuse to take a test, and police officers' views of the contributory factors involved in road Collisions.

The information about blood tests carried out on people killed in traffic Collisions is sourced from the Transport Research Laboratory as collected from Coroners Courts in England and Wales (Procurator Fiscal in Scotland).

The information on screening breath tests is sourced from a data series compiled by the Home Office in [Police Powers and Procedures England and Wales](#)

## **3 Coverage**

### **3.1 Police Powers and Procedures, Home Office**

The coverage in 'Police Powers and Procedures' includes the use of police powers to issue fixed penalty notices for motoring offences. This is broken down by offence type and how they were dealt with (e.g. penalty paid or fine registered at court). The data presented are drawn from returns from police forces in England and Wales.

The figures also include notices issued by police employed traffic wardens for parking offences. It should be stressed here that responsibility for civil parking enforcement has changed historically from police to local authorities.

By 2013, all local authorities had taken on this responsibility, for more information on when the change in responsibility for parking enforcement occurred in different local authorities, please see previous versions of this [statistical release](#).

Motoring offences recorded by local authorities are not covered by the statistics presented in this release.

Statistics on Vehicle Defect Rectification notices for motoring offences no longer appear in this bulletin as they were withdrawn from 2009.

### **3.2 Coroners Courts data**

A blood test is only carried out if the casualty dies within 12 hours of the accident and is aged 16 or over. It is estimated that 80% of road traffic accident fatalities die within 12 hours, the remaining 20% die later.

Across all types of fatalities, the average coverage is 75% of dying within 12 hours. This is because (1) some coroners do not send in data and (2) coroners practice differs, many only measure blood alcohol when the person is 'considered at fault'; and sometimes only when blood alcohol is likely to be a factor.

This gives 50-60% overall coverage of traffic fatalities in these figures;

However, this level of coverage varies by the type of victim. There is a reasonably high coverage of drivers (60-70%) but less for passengers, pedestrians, and pedal cyclists (40-50%). So whilst the

underlying data understates the role of alcohol for passengers, pedestrians and cyclists, the underlying data provide sufficient data for drivers.

## 4 Definitions

### 4.1 Endorsable FPNs

Where a financial penalty is accompanied by points on a driving licence. Endorsable offences include those detected by automatic cameras for which a conditional offer of a fixed penalty was made and which can only be counted if made substantive i.e. if paid.

### 4.2 Non-endorsable FPNs

Where a financial penalty was issued, without any points being put on a driving licence.

### 4.3 Breath tests

The police can require a person to take a screening breath test if they have reasonable cause to suspect that the person has been driving or attempting to drive with alcohol in their body (Section 6 of the Road Traffic Act 1988), that they have committed a moving traffic offence, or that the person has been involved in an accident. A person failing to provide a breath test is guilty of an offence, unless there is a reasonable excuse.

## 5 Symbols

The following symbol has been used throughout the bulletin in tables:

- Percentage change not valid on baseline of zero.
- \* Figure suppressed due to disclosure

## 6 Quality information

This section provides a summary of information on this output against five dimensions of quality: Relevance, Accuracy, Timeliness and Punctuality, Accessibility and Clarity, and Comparability.

### 6.1 Relevance

The statistics are used both within and outside the Welsh Government to monitor trends in driving offences and as a baseline for further analysis.

Breath test statistics are used to measure the effectiveness of drink–drive campaigns by police forces.

Statistics on [motoring offenders](#) and [drink driving](#) used to be reported separately. We combined these into a single statistical release for the 2018 release which was [published in December 2019](#).

### 6.2 Accuracy

Please See section 6.5 below.

### 6.3 Timeliness and punctuality

The statistics in this bulletin relate to cases in Wales in 2021 and cases covering Wales and Great Britain during 12 months ending December 2021.

## 6.4 Accessibility and clarity

This statistical bulletin is pre-announced and published on the [Statistics for Wales](#) website and is accompanied by tables on [Statswales](#).

## 6.5 Comparability and coherence

### FPN data from police powers and procedures

- From June 2012, PentiP, a new national system for processing FPNs, was introduced in police forces across England and Wales, replacing the Vehicle Procedures and Fixed Penalty Office (VP/FPO) system. VP/FPO data, supplied to the Home Office by individual police forces, are presented in this bulletin for the years 2007 to 2011 so that comparisons can be made on the number of FPNs issued during that period. Data for all forces from 2011 have been extracted centrally from PentiP, allowing comparisons to be made from 2011 onwards. In general, PentiP figures are slightly lower than equivalent ones from VP/FPO; PentiP figures for FPNs issued in England and Wales in 2011 are approximately 5% lower than those drawn from VP/FPO. The user guide ([User Guide to Police Powers and Procedures](#)) contains further information relating to definitions, legislation, procedure and the change to PentiP.
- North Wales, South Wales and Gwent do not record all outcomes on the PentiP system.
- The majority of camera-detected FPNs dealt with in the Dyfed Powys, Gwent and South Wales police force areas currently cannot be separated on the PentiP system by police force area with the majority being shown as recorded by South Wales police. Due to this, only Wales level data is presented in this bulletin as it is not possible to provide a police force specific breakdown.

### Ministry of Justice Court Proceedings Database

- Due to a data processing issue figures are not available for the offence “Driving a motor vehicle with a proportion of specified controlled drug above specific limit” in calendar year 2017. Since Q2 2016, the data has been missing from the Court Proceedings Database at magistrates’ courts and investigations are being taken to identify and rectify the issues.
- The figures given in [Table 2](#) relate to defendants for whom these offences were the principal offences for which they were dealt with. When a defendant has been found guilty of two or more offences it is the offence for which the heaviest penalty is imposed. Where the same disposal is imposed for two or more offences, the offence selected is the offence for which the statutory maximum penalty is the most severe.
- Every effort is made to ensure that the figures presented are accurate and complete. However, it is important to note that these data have been extracted from large administrative data systems generated by the courts and police forces. As a consequence, care should be taken to ensure data collection processes and their inevitable limitations are taken into account when those data are used.
- A defendant who is committed from magistrates’ courts to the Crown Court may not have both courts’ processes complete within the same year, in which case they would be

counted for each stage in the year that the court where it took place completed. This means that for a given year convictions may exceed prosecutions or sentences may not equal convictions. Defendants who appear before both courts may also be convicted at the Crown Court for a different offence to that for which they are counted as having been originally proceeded against at magistrates' court, where the offence is changed after committal.

### **Coroners Courts data**

- Figures are lower than all road traffic accident fatalities. See section 3.2 above

### **Breath test data from police powers and procedures**

- Figures for 'total breath tests' showed a large increase from 2007 to 2009 due to a new digital breath test system being implemented by many police forces. Previously, with paper reporting, negative breath tests tended to be under-reported by forces.
- In some cases, officers from neighbouring forces may carry out breath tests in territory covered by other forces. In such cases, a breath test will be recorded against the force who owns the equipment. It is not always possible to identify which force actually conducted the breath test.

### **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.

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 November 2011 [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:

- Combined two releases into one to improve user experience
- Improved our understanding of the various data sources and the methodology behind them, including their strengths and limitations
- 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 well-being goals and associated technical information is available in the [Well-being 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/motoring-offences>

Further tables of data are available on [StatsWales](#).

## **Next update**

December 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).

## **Open Government Licence**

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