



## Motoring offences in Wales, 2020

2 February 2022

SB 2/2022

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic had a significant impact on road traffic and police recorded road accidents and casualties in Wales in 2020 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 2020 police and traffic wardens issued 63,400 FPNs in Wales, a 15% reduction compared to 2019. Speed limit offences accounted for 80% of FPNs in 2020.
- Since 2012, the number of FPNs issued in Wales have seen an overall decrease from a high of 112,400.

#### Court proceedings

- 45,500 motoring offenders were prosecuted in Wales in 2020, a 20% decrease compared to 2019.

#### Accidents involving drink driving (2019 data)

- In 2019, an estimated 7% of all recorded accidents in Wales involved one or more drivers impaired by alcohol. For accidents resulting in killed or seriously injured casualties the proportion was higher, at 9%.
- 19% of motor vehicle drivers killed in Wales, were found to have had a blood alcohol level over the legal limit.

#### Screening breath tests

- In 2020, 24,800 screening breath tests were carried out in Wales a reduction from 32,500 in 2019. In 2020, 3,600 of these tests (14%) were either positive or refused, a 22% decrease compared with 2019.
- In 2020, there were 136 positive breath tests of drivers involved in accidents, a decrease of 47 (26%) compared with 2019.

### About this bulletin

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

- Fixed penalty notices by police & traffic wardens
- Court proceedings against motoring offenders
- Accidents involving alcohol or drug impaired drivers
- Screening 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 2020 calendar year will likely be impacted by restrictions in place 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 accidents and casualties in Wales in 2020. This should be considered and care should be taken when interpreting figures or comparing to previous years.

Road traffic volume decreased by 23.4% between 2019 and 2020 with road accidents and casualties decreasing by 33.9% and 36.4%, respectively, over the same time period. The decreases in road accidents and casualties were the largest annual decreases since records began in 1979. ([Police recorded road accidents: 2020](#))

## Introduction

This annual statistical bulletin looks at motoring offences in general, provides a more detailed look at drinking and driving in Wales for 2020 and also covers accidents involving drink driving that occurred in 2019.

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).

This bulletin also assesses the relationship between drink driving, road accidents and casualties in Wales in 2019 and 2020. It includes analysis by the Department for Transport (DfT) on accidents and casualties in accidents, and by the Transport Research Laboratory (TRL) on the blood alcohol concentration (BAC) from fatalities following traffic accidents. It presents information in three sections about:

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

## Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs)

### How many FPNs were issued by the police in Wales in 2020?

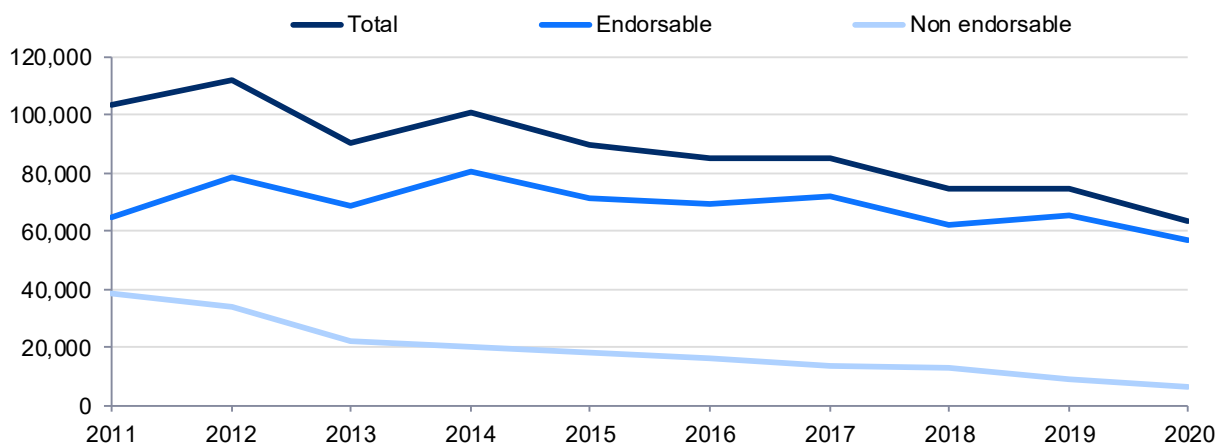
In 2020 police and traffic wardens issued 63,400 FPNs for motoring offences in Wales, a 15% reduction compared to 2019. Since 2012, there has been a gradual decrease in the number of FPNs issued in Wales.

Compared to 2019, there was a 13% decrease in endorsable FPNs (down 8,747) and a 26% decrease in non-endorsable FPNs (down 2,303) (Table 1 and Chart 1). Non-endorsable offences have fallen each year since 2012.

The 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.

In addition, coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions in 2020 resulted in reduced traffic volume which may have also contributed to the reduced numbers in FPNs.

**Chart 1: Endorsable and non-endurable FPNs issued in Wales, 2011-2020**



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

## Outcomes of FPNs in Wales in 2020

Of all the FPNs issued by the police in Wales, endorsable FPNs accounted for 89% and non-endorsable FPNs accounted for 11%.

**Table 1: Endorsable and non-endorsable FPNs, by outcome, Wales, 2019 and 2020**

	<i>Number and percent</i>			
	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>Change on year</b>	
<b>Endorsable FPNs <sup>(a)</sup></b>	<b>65,423</b>	<b>56,676</b>	<b>-8,747</b>	<b>-13%</b>
Fine paid	46,530	38,728	-7,802	-17%
Court action	15,864	14,481	-1,383	-9%
Cancelled	2,129	2,784	655	31%
Driver retraining	898	682	-216	-24%
Incomplete	2	1	-1	-50%
Fine registered	0	0	0	-
<b>Non-endorsable FPNs <sup>(b)</sup></b>	<b>9,013</b>	<b>6,710</b>	<b>-2,303</b>	<b>-26%</b>
Fine paid	4,454	3,417	-1,037	-23%
Court action	1,581	1,333	-248	-16%
Driver retraining	1,155	970	-185	-16%
Cancelled	1,462	852	-610	-42%
Fine registered	353	136	-217	-61%
Incomplete	8	2	-6	-75%
<b>Total FPNs</b>	<b>74,436</b>	<b>63,386</b>	<b>-11,050</b>	<b>-15%</b>
Total (excl. cancelled)	70,845	59,750	-11,095	-16%

Source: Police Powers and Procedures, 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.

- Percentage change not valid on baseline of zero.

- For both endorsable FPNs and non-endorsable FPNs “fine paid” accounted for the majority of outcomes, representing 68% of endorsable FPNs and 51% of non-endorsable FPNs.

Table 2 below shows the broad categories of FPNs issued in Wales. Despite decreasing between 2019 and 2020, speed limit offences remained the largest category in 2020 by far, accounting for 80% of all offences, 13 times more than the next largest category (Licence, insurance and record-keeping offences).

**Table 2: Broad categories of FPNs, Wales, 2019 and 2020**

	<i>Number and percent</i>			
	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>Change on year</b>	
Speed limit offences	60,073	50,924	-9,149	-15%
Licence, insurance and record-keeping offences	3,174	3,802	628	20%
Seat belt offences	3,872	2,871	-1,001	-26%
Vehicle test and condition offences	1,814	1,783	-31	-2%
Neglect of traffic signs and directions and of pedestrian rights	1,234	1,180	-54	-4%
Use of hand-held mobile phone while driving	970	680	-290	-30%
Obstruction, waiting and parking offences	2,049	634	-1,415	-69%
Careless driving (excluding use of hand-held mobile phone when drivir	518	618	100	19%
Lighting and noise offences	265	388	123	46%
Other Offences	276	269	-7	-3%
Work record or employment offences	161	207	46	29%
Miscellaneous motoring offences (excluding seat belt offences)	29	27	-2	-7%
Operator's licence offences	1	3	2	200%
<b>Total</b>	<b>74,436</b>	<b>63,386</b>	<b>-11,050</b>	<b>-15%</b>

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

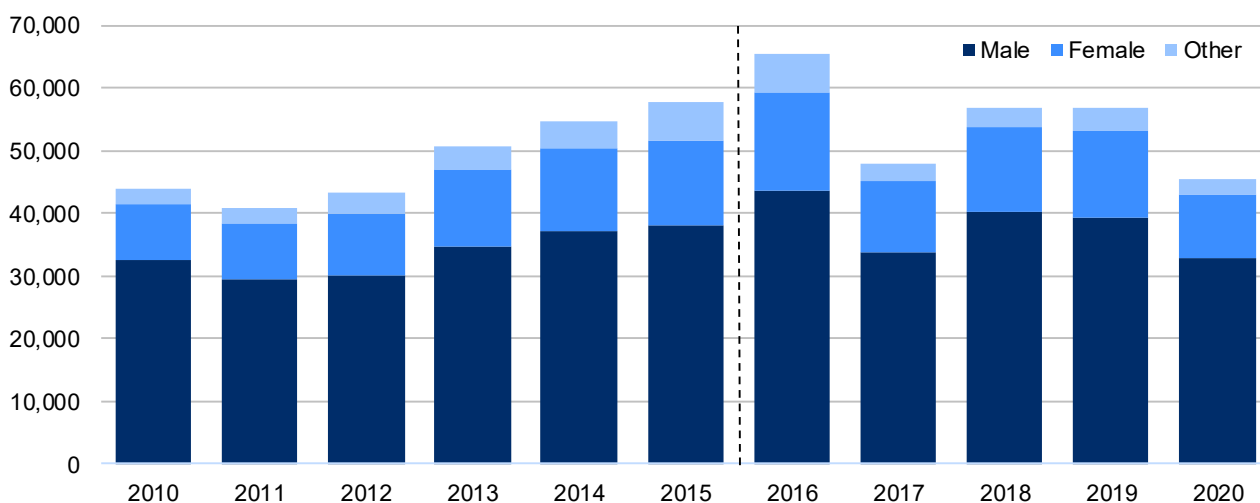
## Court proceedings

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

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

In 2020, 45,494 motoring offenders were prosecuted in Wales a 20% decrease compared with 2019. Of the total motoring offenders, 72% were male, 22% were female and 5% were categorised as either not known or 'other' defendants (these include companies and public bodies) (Chart 2). These proportions are similar to previous years.

**Chart 2: All motoring offenders in Wales by gender, 2010 to 2020** (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 majority of the large fall in 2017 was 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 could be due to the impact of COVID-19 travel restrictions

## Motoring offences by police force area

Table 3 shows the number of motoring offences prosecuted by each of the police forces in Wales in 2020. Compared to 2019, all four police forces saw a decrease in the number of motoring offences prosecuted; South Wales (-30%), Gwent (-13%), North Wales (-6%) and Dyfed-Powys (-3%) some of the decreases may be attributed to reduced traffic volume in 2020. Those prosecuted do not necessarily reside in the police area in which they are prosecuted.

In 2020, the conviction rate in Wales was 90%, a decrease of 0.3 percentage points compared to the previous year, with little variation between the police force areas.

**Table 3: Motoring offenders by police force area and outcome, 2020 (a,b)**

Outcome	North Wales	Dyfed-Powys	South Wales	Number and percent	
				Gwent	Wales
Found guilty	7,961	5,323	20,470	7,313	<b>41,067</b>
Conviction rate	91%	92%	89%	91%	<b>90%</b>
Proceedings terminated early	680	441	2,345	637	<b>4,103</b>
Dismissed (found not guilty after summary trial)	27	19	91	41	<b>178</b>
Committed for trial	34	18	59	26	<b>137</b>
Acquitted (CC)	-	-	8	-	<b>8</b>
Not Tried (CC)	-	-	1	-	<b>1</b>
Discharged at committal proceedings	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,702</b>	<b>5,801</b>	<b>22,974</b>	<b>8,017</b>	<b>45,494</b>

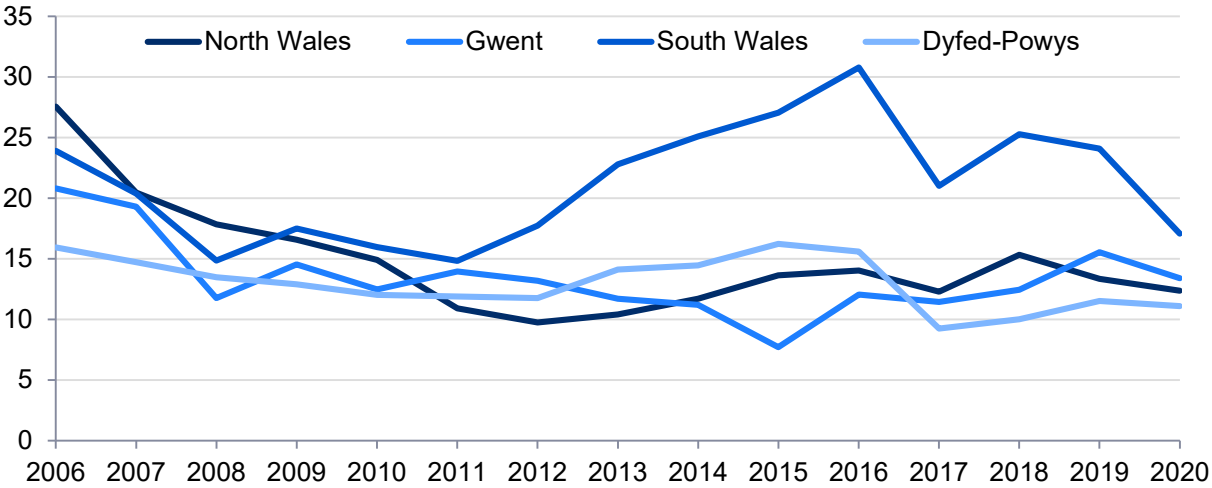
Source: Criminal Justice System statistics, Motoring data, Ministry of Justice (MoJ)

(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.

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.

**Chart 3: Rate of motoring offences per 1,000 population by police force area, 2006 to 2020 (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 – Accidents and Casualties

Police officers who attend road traffic accidents 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 accidents involving drink driving. These estimates are adjusted for likely under reporting of accidents.

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

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

The latest available Coroners courts data refers to 2019 and to allow comparisons with this information (which is presented later in this release) the data presented in this section also refers to 2019. Where 2020 data is available for police recorded crime, this has been included to provide additional context.

In 2019, the DfT estimates that 7% of all recorded accidents and 7% of all casualties in Wales involved one or more drivers impaired by alcohol. For accidents and casualties resulting in slight injuries only, the proportions were 5% and 6% respectively. For killed and seriously injured (KSI) however, drink driving accounted for 9% of accidents and 11% of casualties. The corresponding figures based solely on police officers' contributory factors were similar with 7% of KSI accidents and 8% of KSI casualties involving drivers impaired by alcohol (Table 4).

**Table 4: Accidents and casualties involved in alcohol or drug related accidents by severity, 2019**

	Total	Number and percent					
		DfT drink driving estimates <sup>(a)</sup>		Police recorded contributory factors			
				Alcohol-related		Drug-related <sup>(b)</sup>	
<b>Accidents</b>							
KSI <sup>(c)</sup>	1,057	100	9%	75	7%	46	4%
Fatal	94	10	11%	11	12%	6	6%
Serious	963	90	9%	64	7%	40	4%
Slight	3,273	180	5%	159	5%	51	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,330</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>2%</b>
<b>Casualties</b>							
KSI <sup>(c)</sup>	1,193	130	11%	92	8%	53	4%
Fatal	95	10	11%	11	12%	6	6%
Serious	1,098	120	11%	81	7%	47	4%
Slight	4,615	270	6%	234	5%	91	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,808</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>326</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>2%</b>

Source: Stats19, Welsh Government and Reported drinking and driving (RAS51), 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. Percentages calculated using rounded figures. Figures may not sum to totals due to rounding.

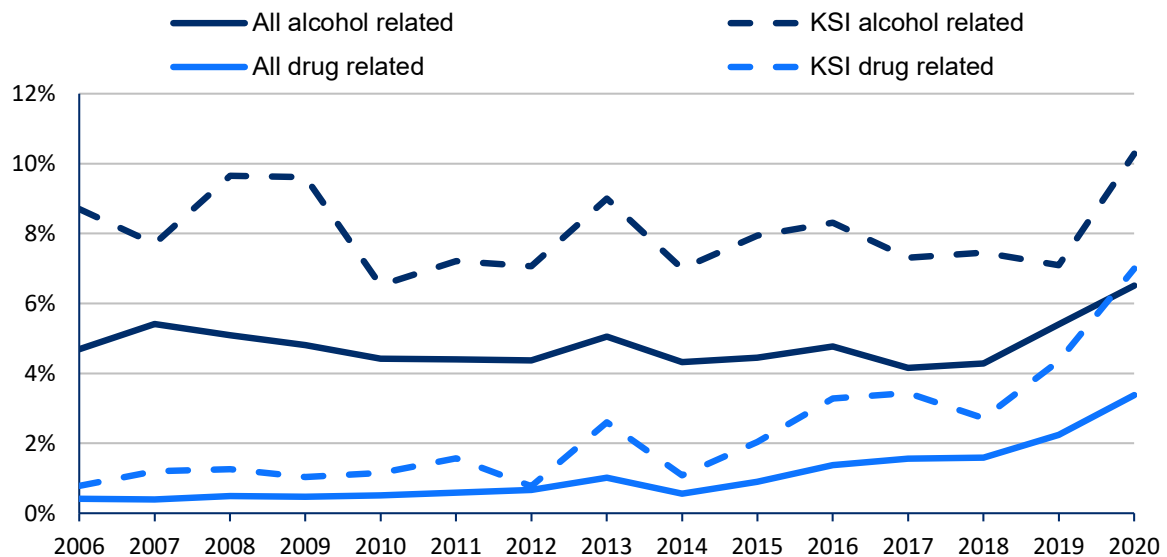
(b) Includes medicinal as well as illicit drugs.

(c) Killed or seriously injured.

According to police officers' views, in 2019 there were more than twice as many accidents caused by drivers impaired by alcohol than impaired by drugs. Historically, the trend in the proportion of alcohol related accidents has been fairly stable since 2006 with a slight downward trend overall. However, when looking at the latest available data, the proportion increased from 5.4% in 2019 to 6.5% in 2020. The proportion of drug related accidents has increased steadily over the series to 3.4% in 2020.

Due to the low number of accidents 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 accidents are more likely than non-alcohol or drug related accidents to result in a serious injury (Chart 4).

**Chart 4: Proportion of accidents involving alcohol and drug impaired drivers, 2006-2020 (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

Coroners Courts in England and Wales (Procurator Fiscal in Scotland) report on blood tests carried out on people killed in traffic accidents 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 5: Road traffic accident fatalities with blood alcohol concentration (BAC) over the legal limit, 2019**

	Total killed aged 16 and over	Number and percent <sup>(a)</sup>					
		Killed, aged 16 and over, with a known BAC					
		All tested	Below the drink drive limit (b)		Above the drink drive limit (b)		
<b>Wales</b>							
Motor vehicle drivers	31	15	48%	9	29%	6	19%
Motor vehicle passengers	10	*	*	*	*	*	*
Motorcycle riders <sup>(c)</sup>	22	15	68%	*	*	*	*
Pedal cyclists <sup>(c)</sup>	6	*	*	*	*	*	*
Pedestrians	26	12	46%	7	27%	5	19%
Other/Unknown	3	*	*	*	*	*	*
All	98	44	45%	32	33%	12	12%
<b>Great Britain</b>							
Motor vehicle drivers	563	320	57%	257	46%	63	11%
Motor vehicle passengers	249	60	24%	49	20%	11	4%
Motorcycle riders <sup>(c)</sup>	336	200	60%	174	52%	26	8%
Pedal cyclists <sup>(c)</sup>	100	*	*	*	*	*	*
Pedestrians	470	183	39%	112	24%	71	15%
Other/Unknown	34	*	*	*	*	*	*
All	1,752	796	45%	617	35%	179	10%

Source: Stats19, Welsh Government and Transport Research Laboratory (TRL), as collected from Coroners and Procurators Fiscal

(a) Percent of total killed.

(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 per 100ml of blood to 50mg per 100ml of blood.

(c) Includes passengers.

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

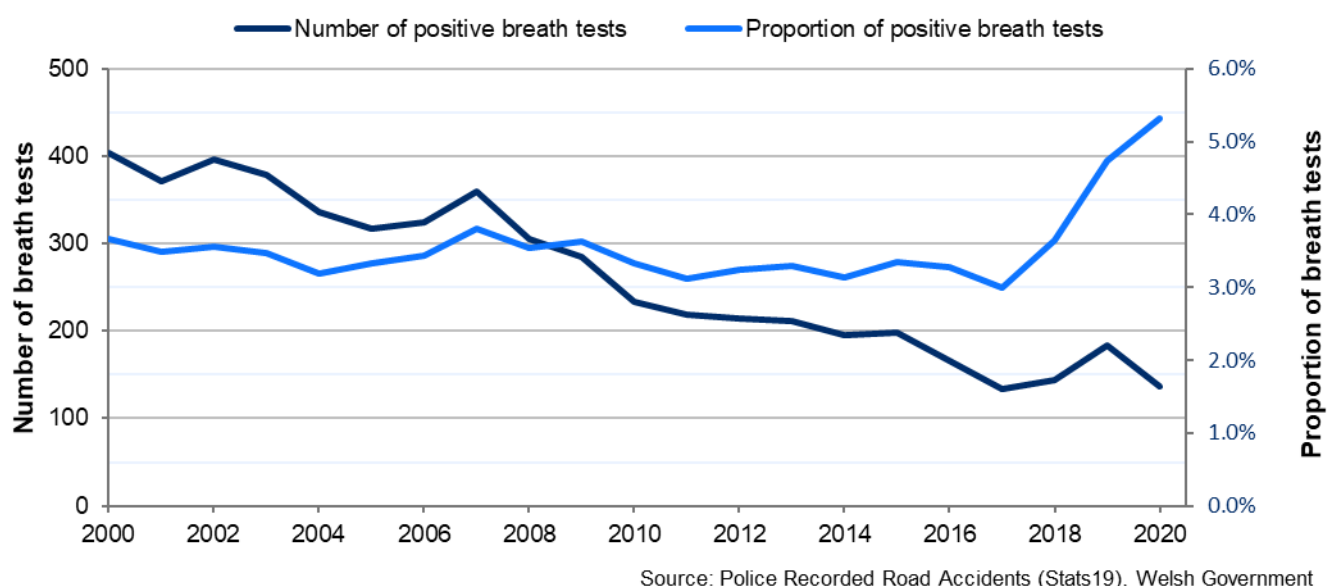
Table 5 shows that in 2019, 19% of motor vehicle drivers killed in Wales were found to have had a blood alcohol level over the legal limit. This percentage is higher than in Great Britain (11%), however, the number of road traffic accident fatalities in Wales in 2019 was 98 in total and so percentages for the different breakdowns are based on relatively small numbers and can be volatile.

## Breath tests of drivers involved in accidents

This section provides information on accidents 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 accidents, 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 accidents 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 the time and location of accidents involving drink driving.

**Chart 5: Number and proportion of drivers with positive breath tests involved in accidents, Wales, 2000-2020 <sup>(a)</sup>**



(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).

In 2020:

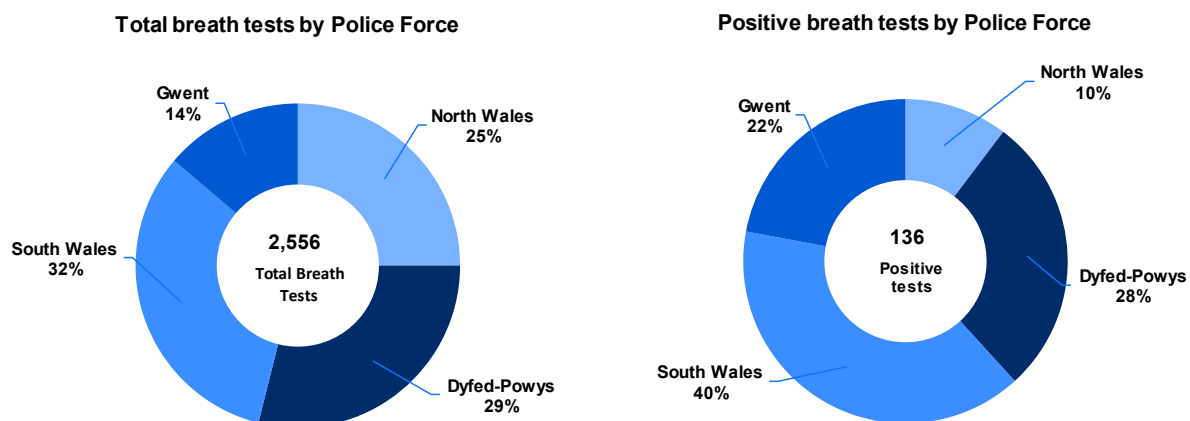
- 24,800 screening breath tests were carried out in Wales representing a 24% decrease on 2019.
- There were 136 positive breath tests of drivers involved in accidents. This was a decrease of 47 (26%) compared with 2019.

Despite the number of positive breath tests decreasing between 2019 and 2020, the proportion of tests that were positive increased from 4.7% in 2019 to 5.3% in 2020.

This is the first time that the proportion of positive breath tests has exceeded 5% since this time series began. However, it is worth noting that the total number of tests have seen an overall decrease which may reflect the impact of COVID-19 restrictions. Although the number of positive tests has also decreased, this is at a slower rate which will result in an increase in the proportion of positive tests.

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 accidents recorded in Wales over this time.

**Chart 6: Breath test results of drivers involved in accidents by police force area, 2020<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.

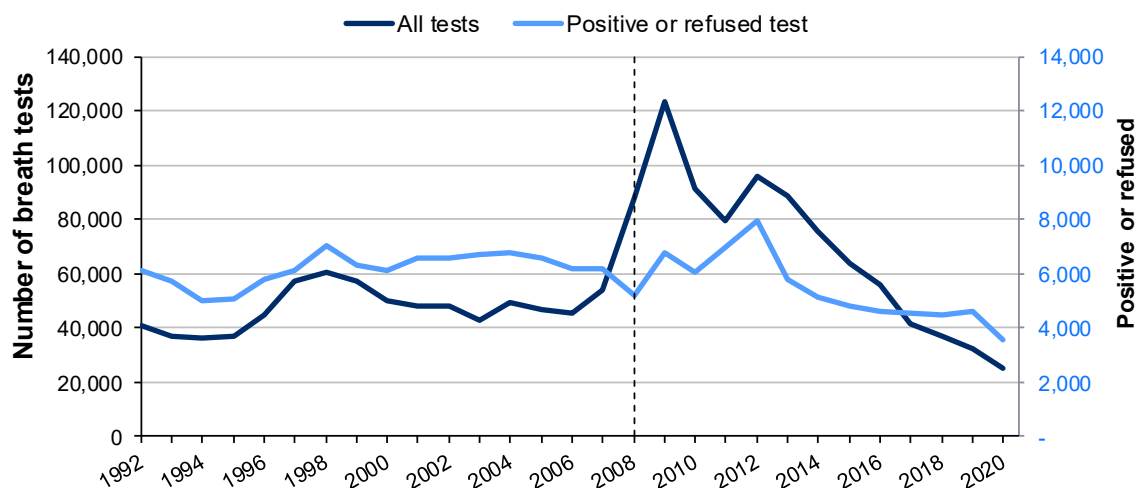
- In 2020, South Wales police accounted for the highest proportion of all breath tests in Wales at 32% and the highest proportion of positive tests at 40%.
- Although North Wales accounted for 25% of all breath tests in Wales, they had the smallest proportion of positive breath tests at 10%.

## Screening breath tests and enforcement action

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 accidents.

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 7). The increase was due to a new digital breath test system being implemented by many police forces. At its peak in 2009 there were 123,019 tests in Wales. In 2020 there were 24,820, a 24% reduction compared with 2019, this decrease is likely a reflection of reduced traffic due to COVID-19 restrictions.

**Chart 7: Screening breath tests, Wales, 1992 to 2020 (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 Gwent (4.8 per 1,000) whilst the highest was in North Wales (12.4 per 1,000). There were 3,557 positive or refused tests in 2020 representing a 22.3% 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 14% (Table 6). There has been a 55% 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 74%). Those screened for a breath test do not necessarily reside in the police area in which they are tested.

**Table 6: Screening breath tests by police force area, Wales, 2020**

	<i>Number and percent</i>				
	North Wales	Dyfed-Powys	South Wales	Gwent	<b>Wales Total</b>
<b>Number of breath tests</b>					
Total tests	8,698	3,957	9,291	2,874	<b>24,820</b>
Positive or refused	1,033	621	1,323	580	<b>3,557</b>
<i>Percentage positive or refused</i>	<i>11.9%</i>	<i>15.7%</i>	<i>14.2%</i>	<i>20.2%</i>	<b><i>14.3%</i></b>
<b>Rate of breath tests per 1,000 population <sup>(a)</sup></b>					
Rate of total tests	12.4	7.6	6.9	4.8	<b>7.8</b>
Rate of positive or refused	1.5	1.2	1.0	1.0	<b>1.1</b>

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

(a) Based on 2020 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. We now look at data for guilty verdicts:

**Table 7: Guilty verdicts for drink or drug driving offences, Wales 2020 <sup>(a)</sup>**

	<i>Number and percent</i>			
<b>Motoring Offence Group</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>Change on year</b>	
<b>Alcohol related offences</b>	<b>2,490</b>	<b>2,223</b>	<b>-267</b>	<b>-11%</b>
Driving with alcohol in the blood above the prescribed limit	2,339	2,091	-248	-11%
In charge of a motor vehicle with alcohol in the blood above the prescribed limit	113	99	-14	-12%
Driving or attempting to drive a vehicle whilst unfit through drink (impairment)	22	18	-4	-18%
In charge of a vehicle whilst unfit through drink (impairment)	16	15	-1	-6%
<b>Drug related offences</b>	<b>1,124</b>	<b>1,659</b>	<b>535</b>	<b>48%</b>
Driving with a controlled drug above specified limit	1,058	1,569	511	48%
Driving or attempting to drive a vehicle whilst unfit through drugs (impairment)	43	67	24	56%
In charge of a motor vehicle with a controlled drug above specified limit	19	17	-2	-11%
In charge of a vehicle whilst unfit through drugs (impairment)	4	6	2	50%
<b>Refusing a test</b>	<b>488</b>	<b>511</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>5%</b>
Driving and failing to provide specimen for analysis (breath, blood or urine)	441	463	22	5%
In charge of a motor vehicle and failing to provide specimen for analysis	35	35	0	0%
Failing to provide specimen for initial breath test	8	11	3	38%
Failing to allow specimens of blood to be subjected to laboratory test	4	2	-2	-50%
<b>All offences</b>	<b>4,102</b>	<b>4,393</b>	<b>291</b>	<b>7%</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.

- 4,393 offenders were found guilty of drink or drug driving offences in 2020, an increase of 291 (7%) on the previous year.
- 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 2,091 offences (48% 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)” decreased by 18% in 2020 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 accidents](#), an annual release which covers road accidents 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 accidents and safety statistics](#) accompanied by statistical tables presenting [information on reported drinking and driving](#) (RAS51) 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 accidents 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 accidents.

The information about blood tests carried out on people killed in traffic accidents 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 2020 and cases covering Wales and Great Britain during 12 months ending December 2020.

### 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 3](#) 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 well-being of Wales. The Act puts in place seven well-being goals for Wales. These are for a more equal, prosperous, resilient, healthier and globally responsible Wales, with cohesive communities and a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. Under section (10)(1) of the Act, the Welsh Ministers must (a) publish indicators ("national indicators") that must be applied for the purpose of measuring progress towards the achievement of the 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 2022 (provisional).

## **We want your feedback**

We welcome any feedback on any aspect of these statistics which can be provided by email to [stats.transport@gov.wales](mailto:stats.transport@gov.wales).

## **Open Government Licence**

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