



accidents don't have to happen

Road safety statistics user feedback

RoSPA's response to Department for Transport's user survey

February 2024



Response to Department for Transport's user survey: Road safety statistics user feedback

Introduction

This is the response of The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) to the Department for Transport's user survey on road safety statistics. It has been produced following consultation with RoSPA's National Road Safety Committee. We have no objection to our response being reproduced or attributed.

The user survey seeks to gain understanding about the ways in which Department for transport road safety statistics are used and feedback from users on how they meet their needs.



Response to Department for Transport's user survey: Road safety statistics user feedback

About you

Please choose which of the following best represents your role.

RoSPA response

Other. RoSPA is an accident prevention charity.

Why are you interested in road safety statistics?

RoSPA response

RoSPA is a not-for-profit organisation that has worked for more than 100 years to help people recognise and reduce their risk of accidents, at home, on the road, at work and at leisure. RoSPA bases all of its activity on data and evidence. Given that the Government road safety statistics are the largest source of data on road collisions, RoSPA's road team uses the data very regularly to inform its policies, practices and areas of focus.

What is your biggest road safety concern?

RoSPA response

RoSPA's biggest road safety concern currently is that we are not seeing a reduction in the number of people killed and seriously injured on Great Britain's roads. In 2012, 1,754 people were killed on our roads and in 2022, 1,711 people were killed. This is a fall of just two per cent, compared to the 49 per cent decrease in deaths on our roads between 2002 and 2012.

RoSPA believes that there are a number of reasons that we are not seeing a decrease in the number of people killed and seriously injured on our roads, one being that in England, there is no national road safety strategy. The Government's action plan lapsed in 2021 and the long-awaited Road Safety Strategic Framework publication date has been delayed, with no indication of when this document will be made available. Strategic direction from central Government, based on a safe system approach and good quality data to inform evidence-based practice are needed to provide direction to practitioners and drive down the number of fatalities and serious injuries on our roads.

How easy do you find the data/information that you are seeking from Department for Transport's road safety statistics?



Response to Department for Transport's user survey: Road safety statistics user feedback

RoSPA response

Easy.

Where do you find road safety statistics information from?

RoSPA response

RoSPA's main source of information for road safety and injury data is the Government website for information on collisions, casualties, traffic, speed compliance, licensing and vehicle defects. Our teams in Scotland and Wales often refer to Scottish and Welsh government data. We also draw upon the hospital episode statistics and the National Child Mortality Database (NCMD) for injury data. For data in certain communities and locations, we also sometimes draw upon data from other organisations. For example, for data for London, we will sometimes use data published by Transport for London (TfL).



Response to Department for Transport's user survey: Road safety statistics user feedback

Your use of DfT's road safety statistics materials

How frequently do you use these parts of the Department's road safety statistics per year?

	Daily to weekly	Once a month	Once every few months	Once every year	Less than once every year	Never
Reports/factsheets	X					
Spreadsheet tables	X					
Data download tool	X					
Record Level Open (Publicly Accessible) Data						X
Record Level Licensed (Permission Required) Data						X
Dashboard		X				



Response to Department for Transport's user survey: Road safety statistics user feedback

Reports/Factsheets

Which of these publications/fact sheets do you use and how well do they meet your needs?

	Completely meets my needs	Partially meets my needs	Doesn't meet my needs	I don't use
Final annual reports		X		
Provisional reports		X		
e-scooters	X			
Collision factors, risk and outcomes				X
Road user risk				X
Injury severity and type of injury				X
Pedal cyclists	X			
Motorcyclists	X			
Pedestrians	X			
Older and younger drivers	X			
Deprivation				X

How could these publications be improved to better meet your needs?

RoSPA response

RoSPA finds the e-scooter, motorcyclist, pedestrian, pedal cyclist and older and younger driver factsheets very useful to be able to quickly identify trends and break down the data by road type, gender of road user and age group without the need to draw upon the tables contained in spreadsheets and data download tool. A factsheet on drivers of all ages and one on contributory factors in collisions would be useful additions.



Response to Department for Transport's user survey: Road safety statistics user feedback

The provisional and final casualty reports are also useful to be able to identify headline trends in collisions and casualties, but RoSPA will usually draw upon the tables and data download tool to complete more detailed analysis, provide responses to enquiries and to inform and update advice and information.

Are there any topics that we don't currently cover that would be useful to meet your needs:

RoSPA response

As highlighted above, RoSPA believes that a factsheet on drivers of all ages and contributory factors in collisions would be a useful addition. Given the huge rise in the number of vans and light goods vehicles on our roads with the ever-increasing online shopping and home delivery market, it would be useful to understand more about collisions involving these vehicles. This would help us to identify trends and be better able to provide information to employers and employees about how these collisions can be avoided. Vans and light goods vehicles were identified as being involved in more deaths of other road users than any other vehicle type, more even than HGVs in a report published by PACTS¹ in 2020. Therefore, a factsheet with trends for this group would be a useful addition.

¹ PACTS (2020) 'What kills most on roads? New analysis for the transport agenda'

<https://www.pacts.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/PACTS-What-kills-most-on-the-roads-Report-15.0.pdf>

Date accessed: 01/02/2024.



Response to Department for Transport's user survey: Road safety statistics user feedback

Spreadsheet data tables

How well do the spreadsheet tables we produce meet your needs?

RoSPA response

Partially meets my needs.

How can we improve the spreadsheet tables we produce to better meet your needs?

RoSPA response

RoSPA recognises that the statistics team have considerably reduced the number of tables produced to make it simpler for users to find the table they require, removing those that are less frequently used. RoSPA supports this move to make the website simpler for users to navigate and finds that the tables produced do provide the information to most queries.

RoSPA would like to see the return of the 'serious injury' and 'slight injury' only categories to many of the tables that break down by the severity of the injury, as many of the tables now group killed and serious injuries, meaning the user must calculate serious injuries separately.

Where data is not in a table, the RoSPA team can confidently use the data download tool to find the data required.

Do you find it easy to find the information you are seeking within the spreadsheet data tables?

RoSPA response

Easy.

Are there any additional topics where we could publish further spreadsheet data tables to meet your needs?

RoSPA response

No. RoSPA feels that the spreadsheet data tables published cover the majority of common statistical queries.



Response to Department for Transport's user survey: Road safety statistics user feedback

Data Download Tool

How well does the download tool meet your needs?

RoSPA response

Partially meets my needs.

How can we improve the download tool to better meet your needs?

RoSPA response

RoSPA believes that the data download service is a useful tool to enable practitioners to answer more complex queries or to be able to perform further analysis on casualty and collision data. RoSPA believes that this could be improved by adding more data to the tool, with all fields of the STATS19 form included. For example, journey purpose data is not included in the current data download tool. This would allow users to access more rich data and build a better understanding of the collisions occurring on our roads.

The reliability of the data download tool could also be improved, as it can at times take a long time or fail to produce reports.

Are there any topics that aren't currently covered in the data download tool that we should cover?

RoSPA response

Please see above response; RoSPA believes that, if possible, all STATS19 fields should be covered in the data download tool.

Would you like to be involved in shaping the new data download tool that is currently been developed?

RoSPA response

Yes.



Response to Department for Transport's user survey: Road safety statistics user feedback

Data dashboard

How well does our data dashboard meet your needs?

RoSPA response

Completely.

If there is anything else you would like to see visualised in the data dashboard, please explain it here:

RoSPA response

RoSPA believes that by adding more data and information to the data dashboard, it may become complex to use for those who are not experienced at looking at the road casualty data. For this reason, we would not suggest adding any more variables.



Response to Department for Transport's user survey: Road safety statistics user feedback

Upcoming changes to STATS19

Are you aware of forthcoming changes to STATS19?

RoSPA response

Yes.

Please provide any question or comments you have about the implementation of STATS19 changes:

RoSPA response

RoSPA is pleased to see that file and variable names in the open datasets and supporting documentation that use the word accident will be changed to collision in publications from the November 2023 release of provisional data, aligning with the recommendations of road safety professionals.

We are also pleased that e-scooter collisions will be more easily identifiable in the main statistics to help us understand more about this emerging form of transport. However, we hope that the e-scooters factsheet will continue to be published, as this document provides analysis of trends that can be easily used by those who are less confident analysing casualty data.

Finally, we hope that the additional 5-point severity codes being added to collision and casualty records (breaking down serious injuries into very serious, moderately serious and less serious) will help us to build a richer understanding of collisions and the proportion of people who have received more serious injuries as a result of a collision. We expect that detailed guidance, detailing the kinds of injuries that will fall into each category, will be shared with practitioners to allow them to understand the data.



Response to Department for Transport's user survey: Road safety statistics user feedback

Safe System Pillars

DfT's road safety stats aims to not only address the needs of our stakeholders, but also to ultimately provide data that can inform attempts to achieve Vision Zero. The safe system approach is one method to achieve this, which scrutinises various aspects of the driving environment.

How much are the safe system pillars being effectively addressed by Department for Transport's road safety statistics?

	Completely addressed	Partially addressed	Not addressed
Safe road use		X	
Safe vehicles		X	
Safe speeds		X	
Safe roads and roadsides		X	
Post-crash response			X

Please explain how we can address these pillars further.

RoSPA response

RoSPA believes that contributory factors data in part collects data regarding safe road users (e.g. identifying where a road user is distracted or behaving poorly), safe speeds (via exceeding the speed limit and inappropriate speed categories), safe vehicles (through vehicle defects) and safe roads and roadsides (through identifying road surface defects). However, this data is based on initial opinions of investigating officers and may underreport some factors, for example, mobile phone use by a motorist, where this is not clear in the first instance. A Road Safety Investigation Branch investigating the most serious crashes in depth and data and recommendations produced in Preventing Future Deaths reports by coroners could bolster this data to help us gain a more in-depth understanding of crash causes.

RoSPA believes that other forms of data may be better placed to address some of the pillars than the casualty data produced by Department for Transport. For example, in the safer vehicles pillar, data collected by modern vehicles by event data recorders may be better placed to identify if there was a defect with the vehicle involved in the crash, that would not be immediately obvious to the investigating officer, for example. However, more must be done to understand how this data can be anonymised and shared to inform the work of road safety practitioners. Post-crash care data will also be more likely to be collected in hospital data.

RoSPA has no further comments to make on the survey process, other than to thank Department for Transport for the opportunity to comment. We have no objection to our response being reproduced or attributed.



Response to Department for Transport's user survey: Road safety statistics user feedback

