



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

STATISTICS, DOCUMENT

Police recorded road collisions: 2023

Data on severity of injury and type of road user for 2023.

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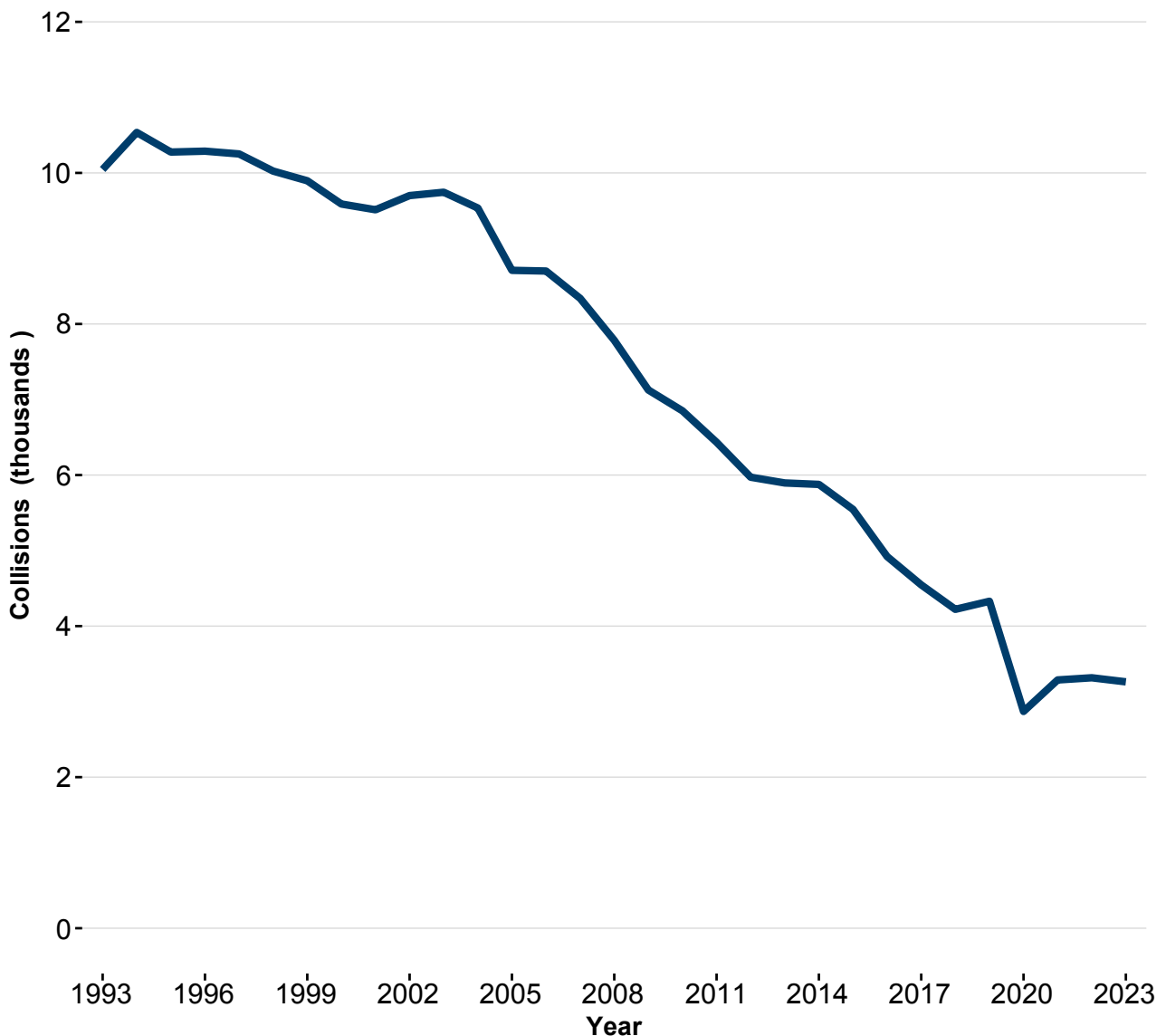
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Main points

The focus of this release is on police recorded road collisions that occurred in 2023 with a brief overview on casualties. A complete analysis of road casualties in 2023 will be published in our [Reported road casualties bulletin](#) in June 2024.

- In 2023 police in Wales reported a total of 3,262 road collisions, slightly lower than in 2022, decreasing by 1.6%, and 24.7% lower than in 2019 (prior to the COVID-19 pandemic)
- Of these collisions, 87 were classed as fatal collisions, 891 were serious and 2,284 were classed as slight.
- During 2023, police reported road collisions resulted in 4,348 casualties. Of these casualties, 98 were fatalities, 1,028 people were seriously injured and 3,222 people were slightly injured.

Figure 1: Reported road collisions, Wales, 1993 to 2023



Description of Figure 1: The line chart shows a time series of police reported road collisions for the whole of Wales from 1993 to 2023.

Source: Road collision statistics, Welsh Government

- Looking at the long-term trend, there has been an overall fall in road collisions reported by police in Wales.
- In recent years, the number of collisions resulting in fatal injury has been relatively stable (Figure 3), with the overall decline in collisions accounted for by a continued fall in 'slight' injury collisions.
- The default speed limit on restricted roads in Wales changed on 17 September 2023 from 30mph to 20mph which significantly affected the length of roads by speed limit. This is discussed throughout the release.

Given the increased interest in collisions data since the roll out of the 20mph default speed limit, the bulletin includes additional context to help improve interpretation and understanding of the expected impact. We have also published a [Chief Statistician's update](#) on the same.

Definition and data coverage

The data presented in this report reflect the personal injury road collisions reported by police in Wales. While these data are the most detailed and reliable source of information on road collisions and casualties, they do not provide a complete record of all such incidents – for example, hospital, survey, and compensation claims data indicate that many non-fatal collisions are not reported to or reported by the police.

Overall, the available sources show that collisions reported to, and reported by, police represent only a subset of all personal injury road collisions, but that coverage of serious injuries and fatalities is good. [Further information is provided in the accompanying quality report.](#)

Changes to collisions data collection and reporting in 2023

There have been two changes that affected STATS19 data in 2023. The changes are:

1. Adoption of CRaSH system for reporting of road collisions

On 15 May 2023 Dyfed Powys police force was the first police force in Wales to migrate to the new standardised reporting tool (CRaSH - Collision Recording and Sharing) which is designed to provide a common way for police to collate and submit STATS19 data. CRaSH is an injury-based reporting system (IBRS), and the Department for Transport (DfT) have found that police forces using IBRS are likely to report more severe collisions than in the previous data collection.

This is further explained in our quality report, and we will continue to review how this impacts our data.

2. Introduction of the 20mph default speed limit

On 17 September 2023, the law changed the default speed limit on restricted roads in Wales from 30mph to 20mph. These are usually residential or busy pedestrian streets with streetlights. The changes will have affected most roads that were 30mph before 17 September, but not all. We have published a map on [DataMapWales](#) that shows which roads have stayed at 30mph.

This year we have introduced some additional commentary and context in this bulletin to help improve interpretation and understanding, as well as [published a Chief Statistician's update \(Digital and Data blog\)](#).

Data quality issues

Ahead of this release, we undertook additional validation of the road speed limit data as recorded by police officers at the scene of the collision. This additional validation was undertaken due to the change in the default speed limit on unrestricted roads on 17 September 2023, and wanting to ensure that the speed limit data had been correctly recorded.

This highlighted several inconsistencies, particularly relating to collisions where the attending police officer had recorded the speed the road where the collision occurred as 30mph, but information provided by local authorities suggested the road was 20mph at the time of the collision.

As a result of this additional validation, around 120 (25%) of collisions that occurred between 17 September and 31 December 2023 and were recorded as occurring on either a 20mph or 30mph road were found to have an inconsistent speed limit recorded and have manually been corrected following confirmation from local authorities.

This additional validation also highlighted some historical inconsistencies together with potential reasons for the inconsistencies. These will not be amended.

Further information is provided in the accompanying quality report.

Road collisions

Individual collisions can result in multiple casualties with different levels of injury severity. The severity of a collision is determined by the most seriously injured casualty in the collision. For example, if there are five casualties and one fatality,

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the collision will be classed as fatal.

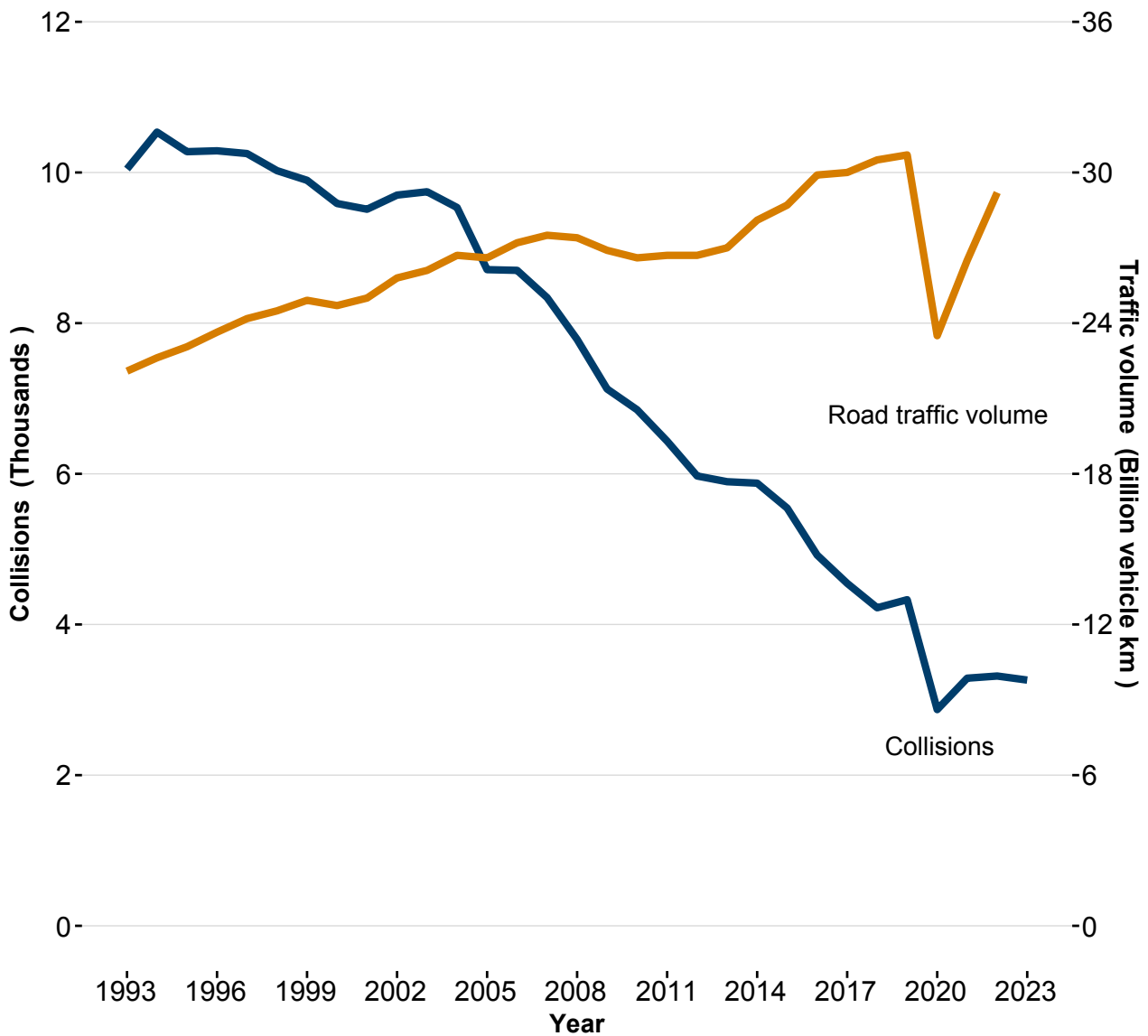
During 2023, 3,262 road collisions involving personal injury were reported by police in Wales. Of these collisions:

- 87 were classed as fatal.
- 891 were classed as serious.
- 2,284 were classed as slight.

Figure 2 illustrates the contrast between the downward trend in collisions on Welsh roads and the gradual increase in the volume of road traffic.

The introduction of compulsory wearing of seat belts in the 1980s and improvements to vehicle technology are likely to have contributed to the reduction in the number of collisions with personal injury. Traffic volume data shown in the chart is up to year 2022 only. 2023 road traffic volume data are not available at the time of publication.

Figure 2: Reported road collisions and traffic volume on Welsh roads, 1993 to 2023



Description of Figure 2: The line chart illustrates the contrast between the downward trend in collisions on Welsh roads since 1993 and the gradual increase in the volume of road traffic.

Source: Road collision statistics, Welsh Government

In 2023, the number of road collisions involving personal injury reported by police in Wales was slightly lower than 2022, decreasing by 1.6%.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, there were significant decreases in traffic volume and road collisions in Wales and, although levels have increased since, they have not returned to the levels observed in 2019. There were 24.7% fewer road collisions in 2023 than in 2019 (before the COVID-19 pandemic).

Road collisions with killed or seriously injured (KSI) casualties

There has been a long-term downward trend in the number of KSI collisions on Welsh roads, Figure 4. In 2023 there were 978 KSI collisions. Our [interactive road collisions dashboard](#), published alongside this bulletin, provides breakdown of data by features such as location and provides breakdowns of data by features such as location and demographic information about the casualties involved in more detail.

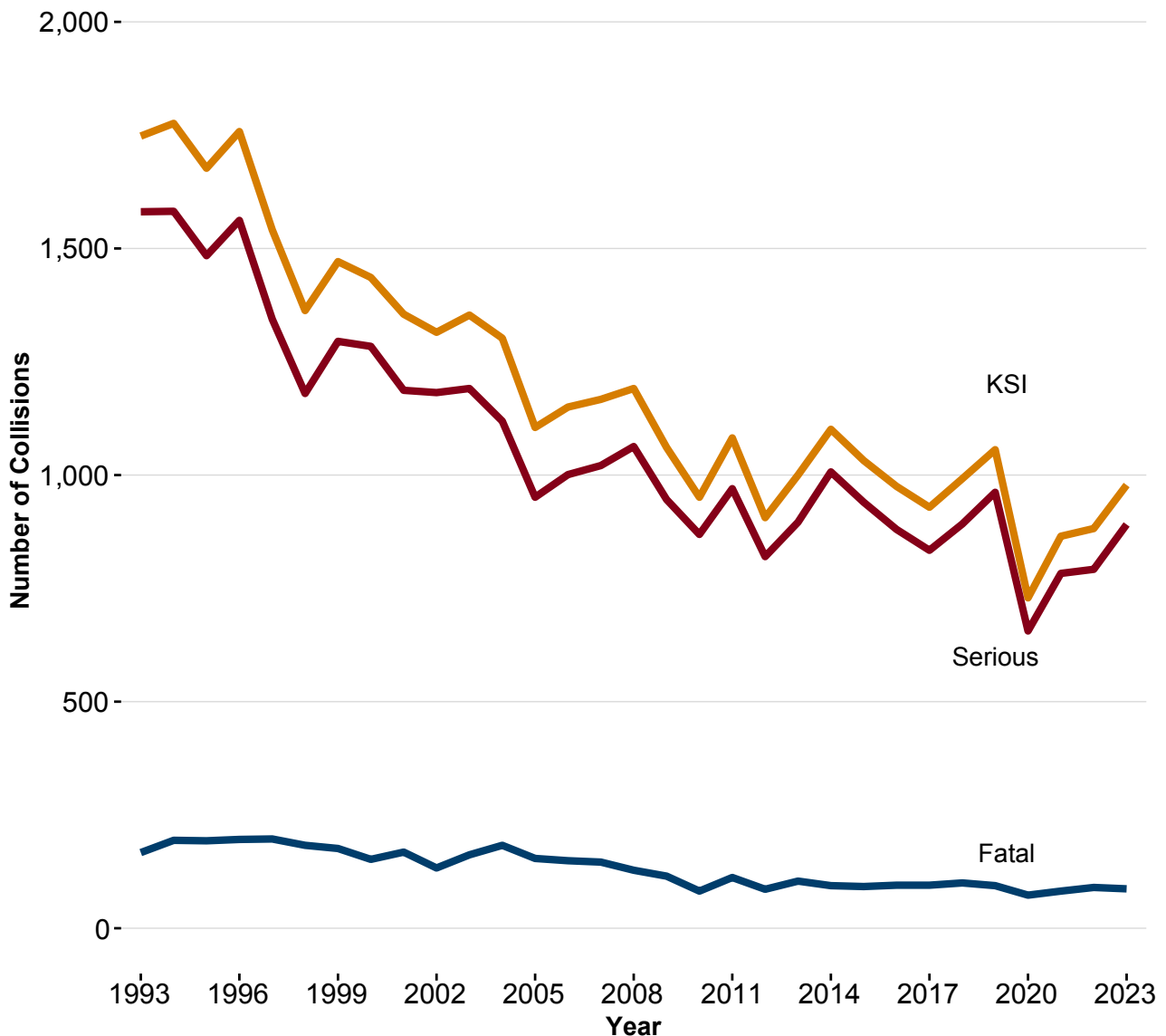
There were 87 reported fatal collisions in Wales in 2023. Looking at the historical trend, the number of reported fatal collisions has been broadly stable since 2010 after falling significantly over previous decades (Figure 3). Wales reported the lowest number of fatal collisions in 2020 (73) which is likely due to coronavirus (COVID-19) travel restrictions that saw reduced traffic levels on roads.

Care should be taken when interpreting changes in small numbers, such as fatal collisions per year. For detailed breakdowns or analysis of change over time it may be more appropriate to look at trends in total KSI collisions.

The number of KSI collisions that occurred in 2023 will be impacted by Dyfed

Powys police force migrating to CRaSH. We would expect to see an increase in reported serious collisions within the Dyfed Powys police force areas, and a decrease in reported slight collisions. This is discussed further in our quality report, and we will continue analysing the impact of the migration in the coming months.

Figure 3: Number of KSI collisions on Welsh roads 1993 to 2023 [Note 1]



Description of Figure 3: The line chart shows the time series of KSI collisions that have taken place on Welsh roads from 1993 to 2023. In 2023, there were 891 serious collisions.

[Note 1] In May 2023 Dyfed Powys police force migrated to Crash system for reporting road collisions. [Further information is provided in the accompanying quality report.](#)

Source: Road collision statistics, Welsh Government

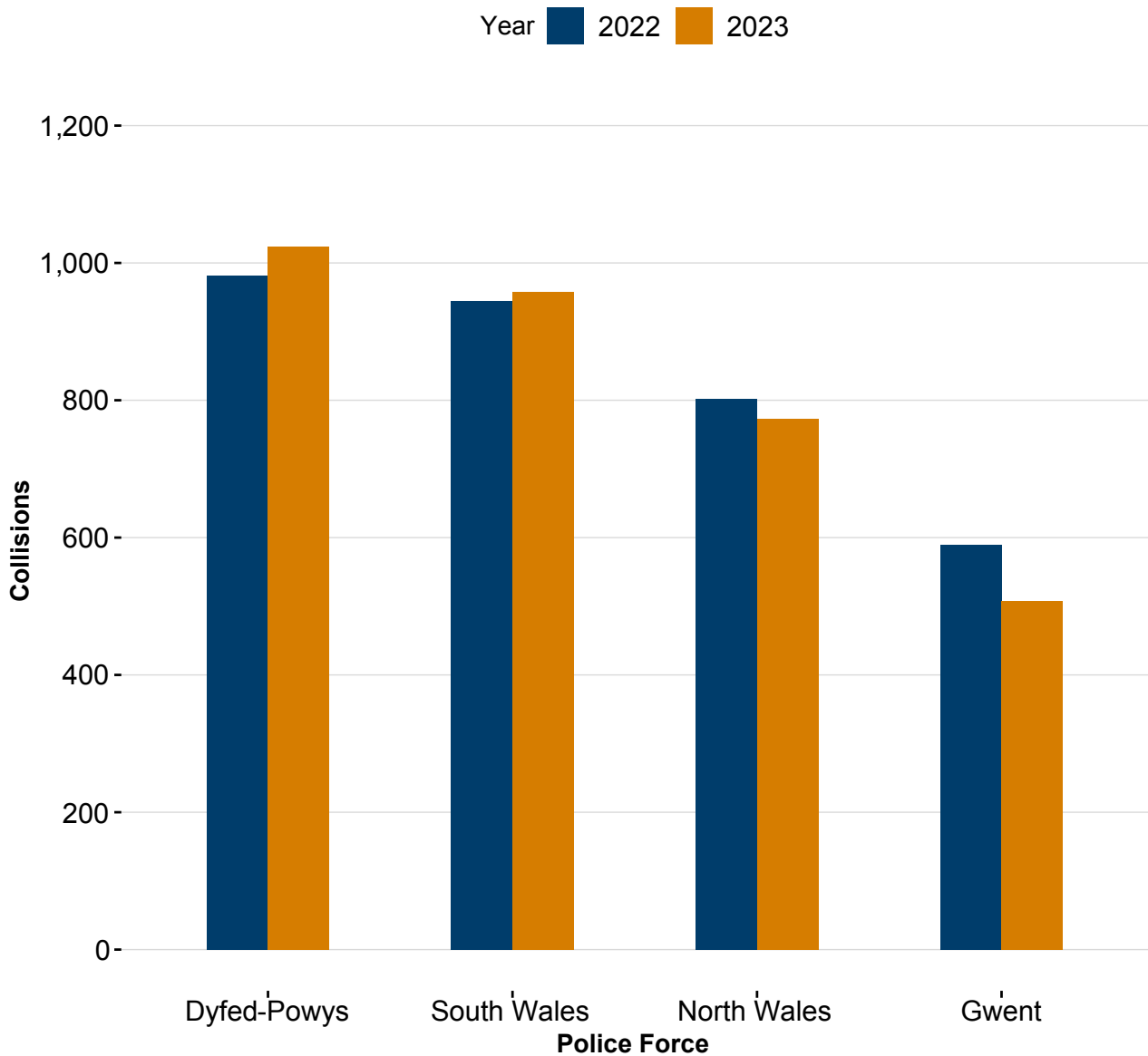
In 2023, there were 891 serious collisions, an increase of 99 on the previous year. Over time, the number of serious collisions has followed a similar trend to that of fatal collisions.

Road collisions by police force area

In 2023, police officers attended 97.7% of fatal collisions (this includes any fatalities that occurred 30 days post collision), 93.6% of serious collisions and 86.3% of slight collisions reported to the police.

Dyfed-Powys Police force reported the most collisions in 2023, a total of 1,024 (an increase of 4.4% on the previous year), followed by South Wales Police who reported 959 road collisions over the same time period (an increase of 1.5% on the previous year). North Wales Police reported 773 collisions in 2023 (a decrease of 3.6% on the previous year) and Gwent Police Force reported the lowest number of road collisions at 506 (a decrease of 13.9% on the previous year).

Figure 4: Reported road collisions by police force area, 2022 and 2023



Description of Figure 4: The bar chart shows total collisions that have taken place on Welsh roads by Police Force area in 2022 and 2023.

Source: Road collision statistics, Welsh Government

Road collisions by speed limit

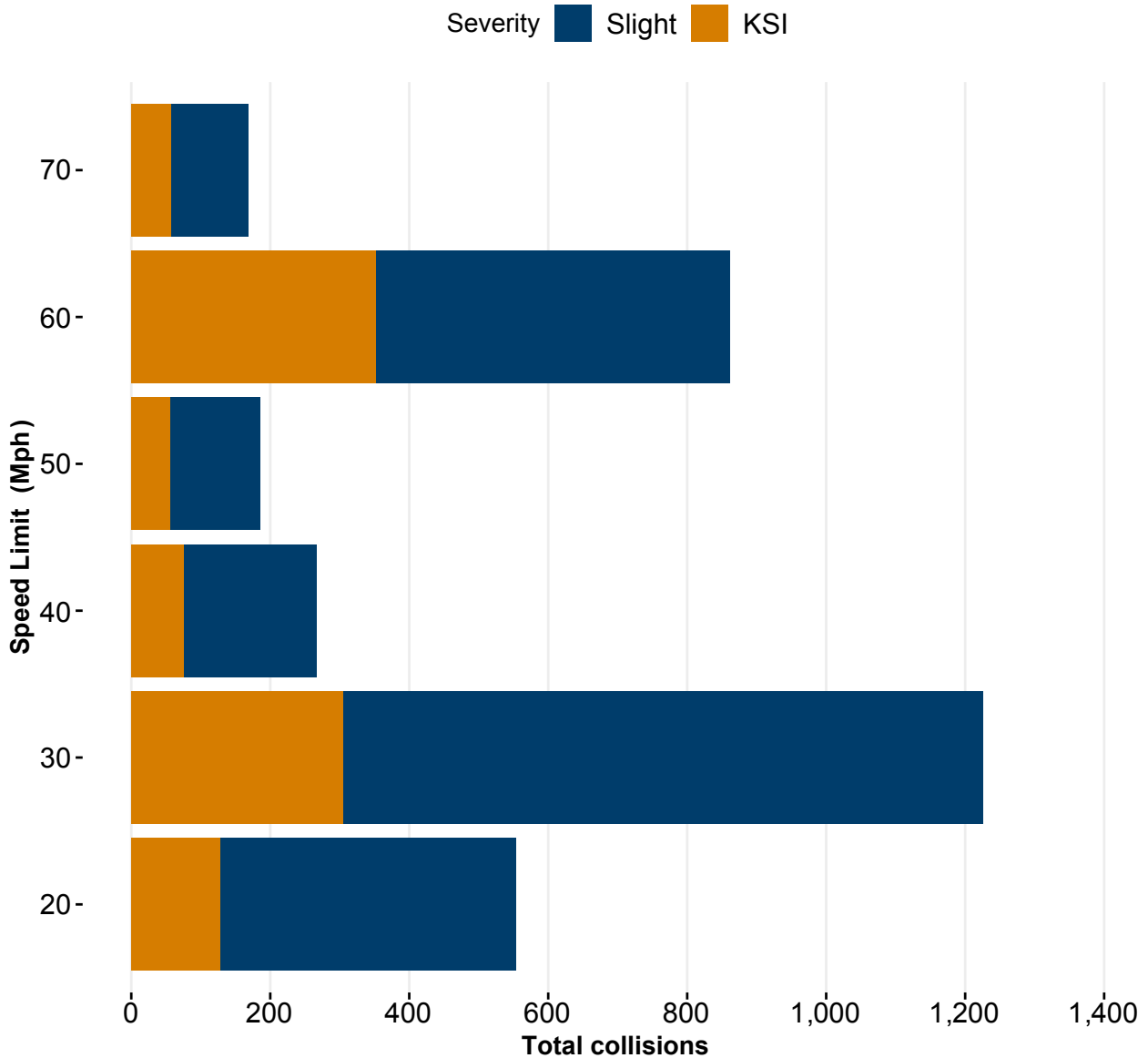
In this section we present total collisions by the speed limit of the road they occurred on. Some data quality issues have been identified relating to the recorded speed limit of the road where collisions occurred. This is explained in more detail at the beginning of the release and in the data quality report. As a result of these data issues, care should be taken when interpreting this data.

When considering the number of collisions by the speed limit of the road they occurred on, there are some important factors to consider:

- In 2022, the length of roads with a 20mph speed limit was 870km. On 17 September 2023, this increased to around 13,000km due to a change in default speed limit from 30mph to 20mph. Most roads that were 30mph were changed to 20mph.
- Road sections with a 30mph speed limit were reduced from 13,100km in 2022 to 980km in 2023.
- There are no official data sources currently available on the volume of traffic on roads with different speed limits. This is something we are continuing to explore.

Road sections with a 70mph speed limit had the lowest proportion of collisions in 2023, accounting for 5.2% of all collisions.

Figure 5: Reported road collisions by road speed limit, 2023 [Note 1]



Description of Figure 5: The bar chart shows total collisions by road speed limit, 2023.

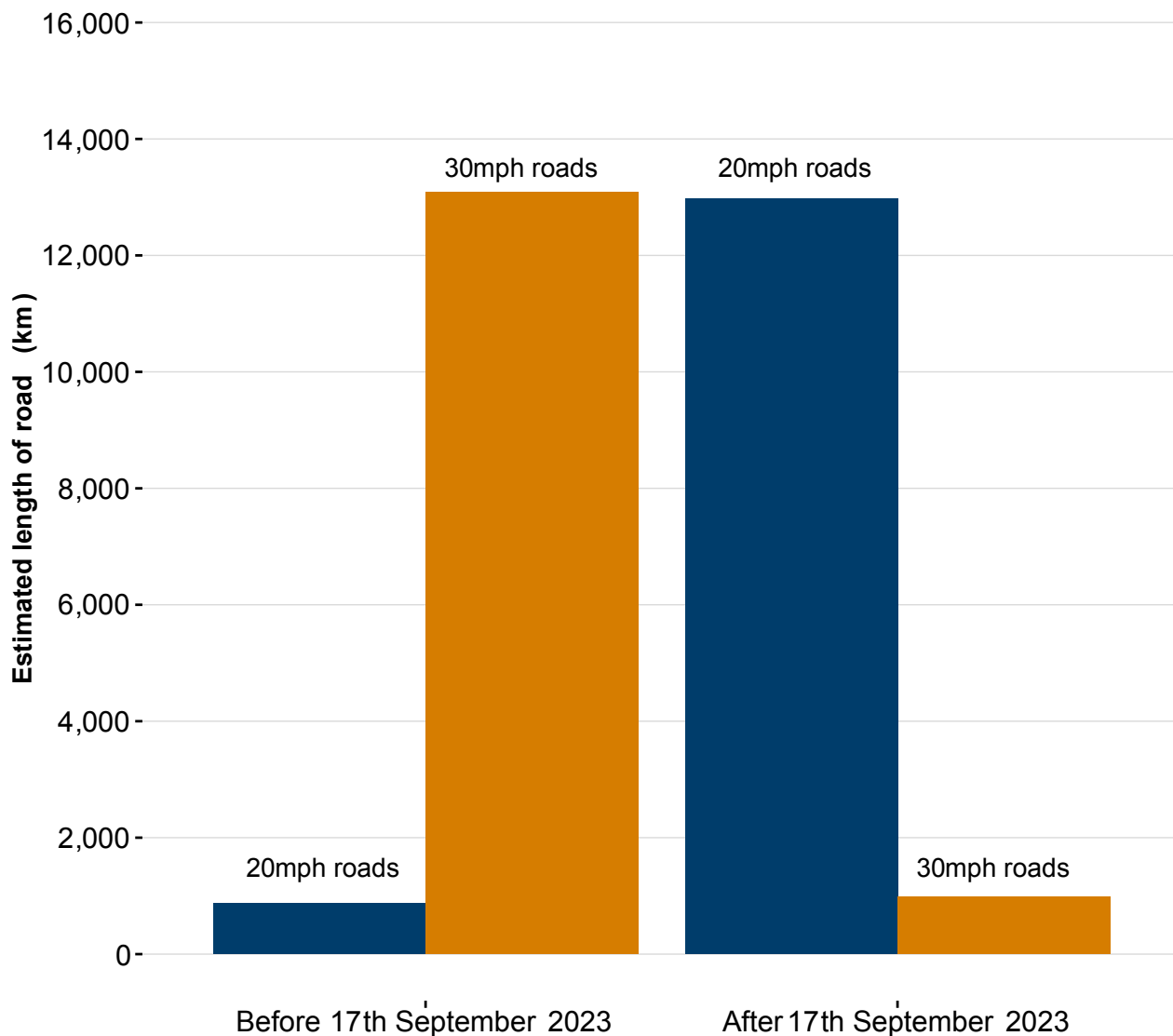
[Note 1] Wales adopted default 20mph speed limit in built up areas on 17th September 2023. The speed limit is as it was at the time of the collision.

Source: Road collision statistics, Welsh Government

KSI collisions occurring on 60mph roads accounted for the highest proportion (36.0%) of all KSI collisions reported in 2023 compared to roads with other speed limits.

Figure 6 shows the estimated length of 20mph and 30mph roads in Wales, before and after the introduction of the 20mph default speed limit on 17 September 2023.

Figure 6: Estimated length of road by speed limit before and after the introduction of the 20mph default speed limit, Wales [Note 1]



Description of Figure 6: A bar chart showing the estimated length of road in Wales by road speed limit before and after the introduction of the 20mph default

speed limit.

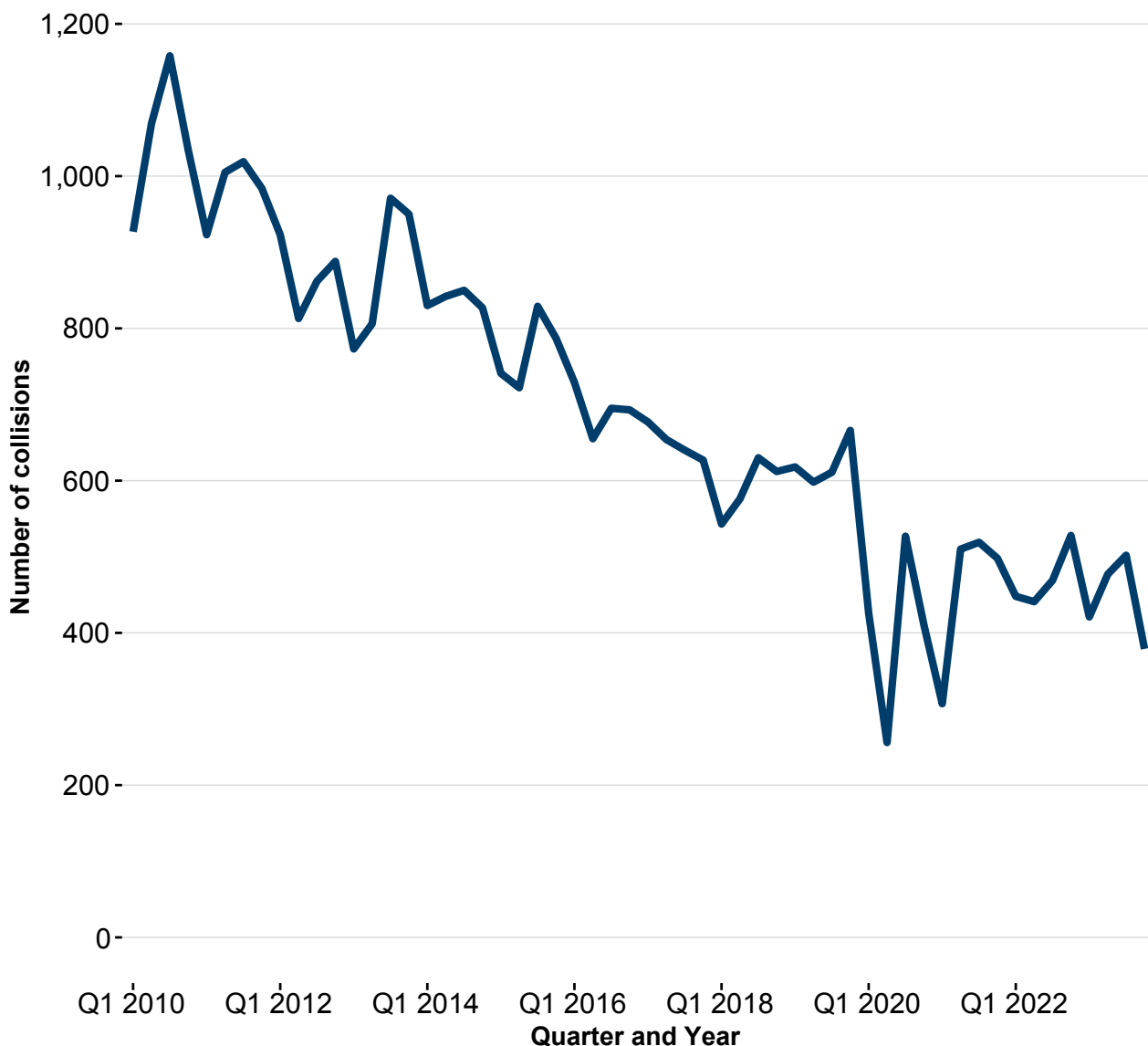
[Note 1] Estimates for before 17 September 2023 from road lengths data collection for 2020/21, Welsh Government. Estimates for after 17 September 2023 from spatial data returns by Welsh Highway Authorities as at 7th September 2023.

Source: Welsh Government analysis of road length data

The number of quarterly road collisions on roads with lower speed limits (20mph and 30mph), has generally been declining steadily over the last decade, but quarterly figures can be volatile. Care should be taken when interpreting this data over a short time period.

Road collisions data after the change to the 20mph default speed limit is currently limited to a short period of time (17 September to 31 December 2023) and the number of collisions that occur are volatile over the short term. We will continue to monitor this over time as more data becomes available. Our chief statistician's update includes more information.

Figure 7: Quarterly road collisions on roads with 20mph and 30mph speed limits (combined), Wales, 2010 to 2023



Description of Figure 7: The line chart shows the trend in number of reported collisions on roads with a 20mph or 30mph speed limit each quarter in Wales since 2010.

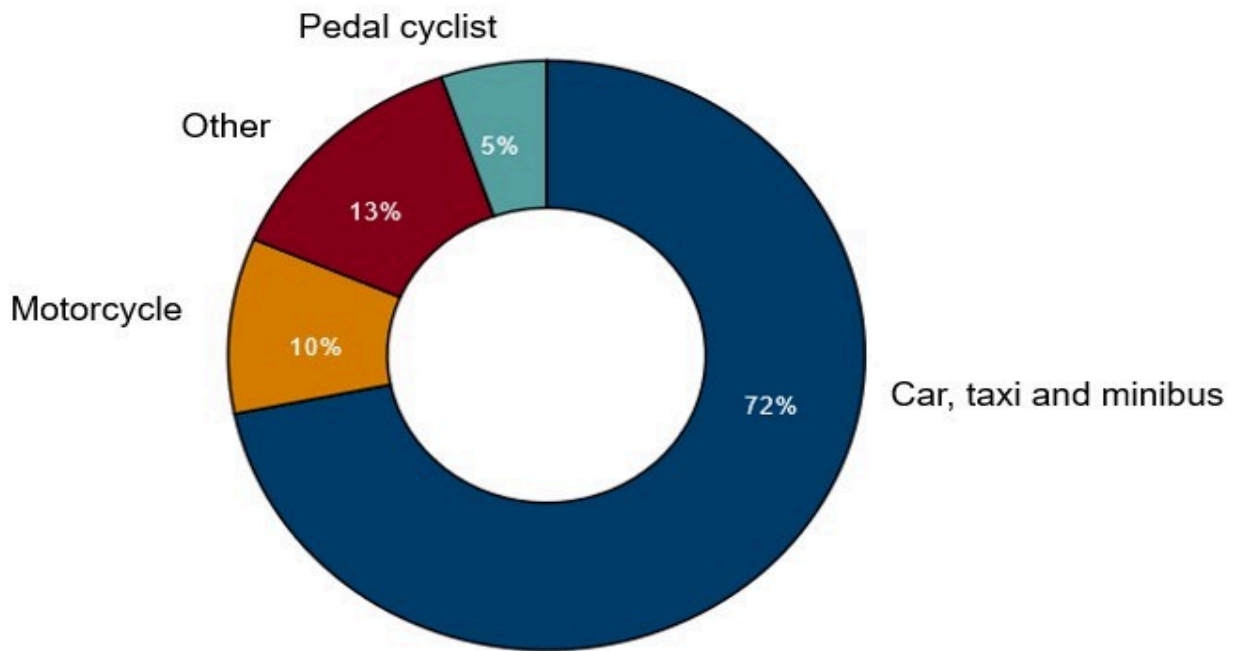
Source: Road collision statistics, Welsh Government

Road collisions by vehicle type

The proportions of road collisions by type of vehicle are shown in Figure 8. In 2023, 71.8% (4,066) of all vehicles in police-recorded road collisions were accounted for by 'cars, taxis, and minibuses,' followed by 'other vehicles' accounting for 13.2%. Pedal cycles accounted for the lowest proportion of road collisions at 5.4%.

Road collisions since 1996 have shown a decreasing trend in the number of road collisions for all vehicle types.

Figure 8: Proportions of types of vehicles involved in road traffic collisions, Wales, 2023 [Note 1]



Description of Figure 8: The pie chart shows proportion of vehicles involved in road collisions by type of vehicle. 72% of all vehicles in 2023 were accounted for by 'cars, taxi and minibus' (4,066) followed by 'other vehicles' (745).

[Note 1] Other: Includes buses, coaches, goods vehicles, invalid vehicles, motor caravans, other and unknown vehicles.

Source: Road collision statistics, Welsh Government

In previous years, both motorcycles and pedal cycles have made up a greater proportion of vehicles involved in police-recorded road collisions than their proportion of vehicle traffic on Welsh roads.

In 2022, motorcycles and pedal cycles represented 9% and 6% of vehicles recorded in collisions respectively but each contributed less than 1% of the total traffic on Welsh roads.

Road traffic data in Wales is not available for 2023 at the time of this publication.

Contributory factors (CFs)

Contributory factors (CFs) in road collisions are the key actions and failures that led directly to the collision. They show the opinion of attending police officers for why collisions occurred and provide clues around how they may have been prevented. Attending police officers may record up to 6 CFs for each collision from a list of 78 possible CFs. This analysis focuses on collisions which involve casualties who were either killed or seriously injured, as police officer attendance is much more common at these collisions.

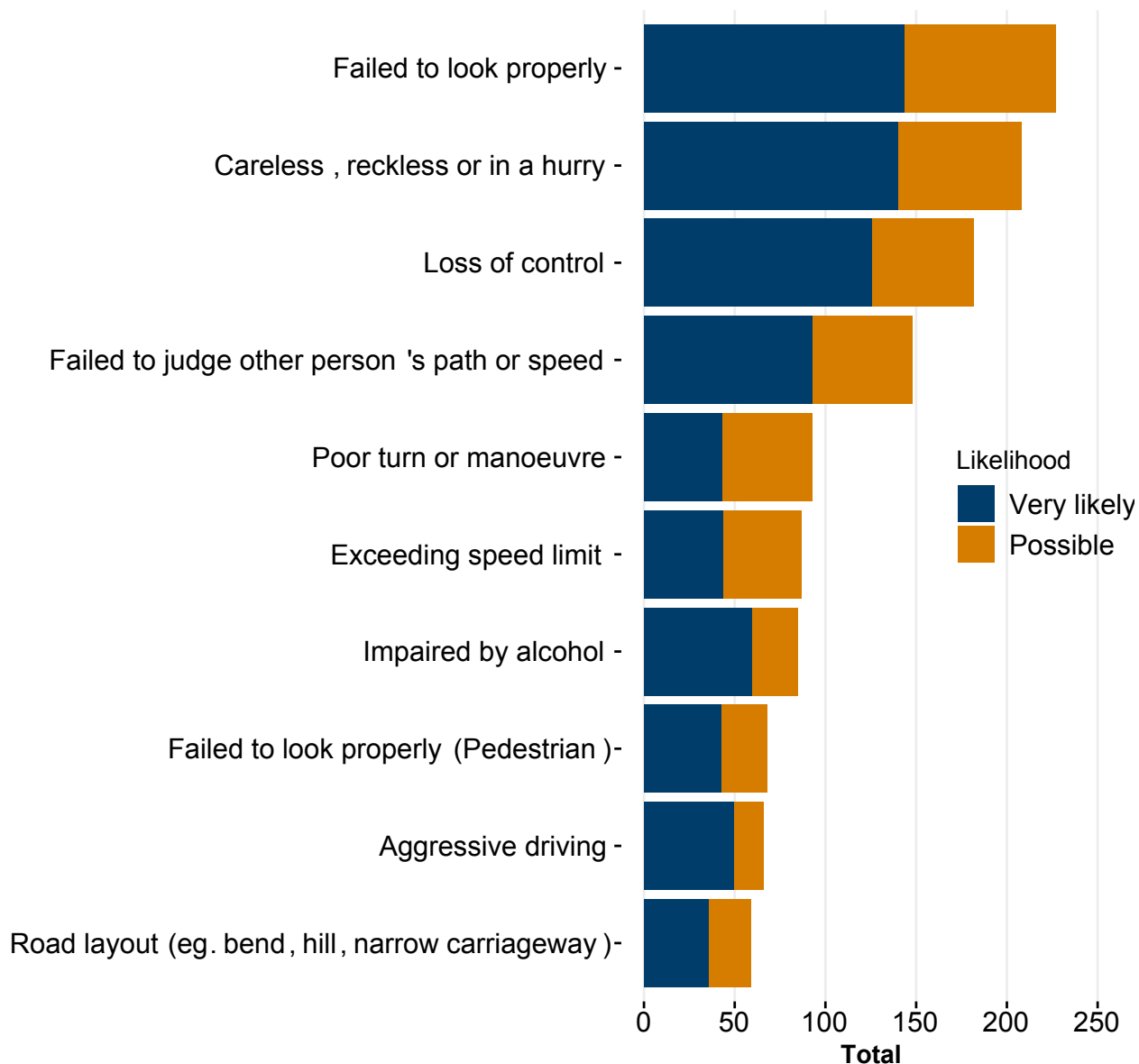
In 2023 a total of 2,129 CFs were reported as causes of Killed or Seriously injured collisions in Wales. Factors are identified on the basis of evidence, and this may come from various sources such as witness statements and vehicle and site inspections. CFs may be subjective and depend on the skill and experience of the investigating officer to reconstruct the events which led directly to the collision. They reflect the reporting officer's opinion at the time of reporting and are not necessarily the result of extensive investigation.

Figure 9 shows the most common CFs judged to be either possible or very likely causes for KSI collisions in 2023. The three most common contributory factors were:

- Failed to look properly (used 227 times),
- Careless, reckless or in a hurry (used 208 times)
- Loss of control (used 182 times).

Eight of the ten most commonly recorded CFs relate to drivers/riders, one relates to the road environment and one relates to pedestrians.

Figure 9: Most common causes of KSI collisions, 2023
[Note 1]



Description of Figure 9: The bar chart shows the number of times each of the most recorded contributory factors were recorded for KSI collisions in 2023 by likelihood. 'Failed to look properly' constituted the highest proportion of both possible likelihoods.

[Note 1] A total of 7 collisions from Dyfed Powys used the new Road safety factors (RSF) and not Contributory Factors (CFs) in indicating factors that contributed to the collision and these have been excluded from the analysis this year.

Source: Road collision statistics, Welsh Government

Contributory factors by speed limit

Most contributory factors are recorded in a similar proportion of KSI collisions attended by police officers at each speed limit. Some contributory factors that differed depending on a road's speed limit in 2023 are described here:

- Across all KSI collisions, a driver's 'loss of control' was recorded in 19.7% of collisions. On roads with a 20mph or 30mph speed limit a driver's 'loss of control' is recorded as a factor in 15.5% of KSI collisions.
- Actions of pedestrians were recorded as being at least partially responsible in 11.0% of all KSI collisions. On roads with a 20mph or 30mph speed limit, the proportion is higher at 21.1%, reflecting that roads with slower speed limits are more likely to be in built up areas (i.e. near schools, residential areas) where there are more pedestrians. Nearly all KSI collisions with a pedestrian 'failing to look properly' were on roads with a 20mph or 30mph speed limit.
- Of the 10 CFs that describe an action of a pedestrian as a factor in a collision, 'pedestrians failing to look properly' was the most commonly recorded. It was recorded as a factor in 7.3% of all KSI collisions but 15.7% of KSI collisions on 20mph or 30mph roads.

Reported road casualties

This section includes high level information on casualties, breakdowns of this data is available in our Reported Road Casualties Wales bulletin which will be published in June 2024. [The Reported Road Casualties Wales bulletin](#) will include further breakdowns such as type of road user, age and sex.

It is likely that KSI collisions and casualties in 2023 are affected by Dyfed Powys police force migrating to Crash. [This is further discussed in our quality report.](#)

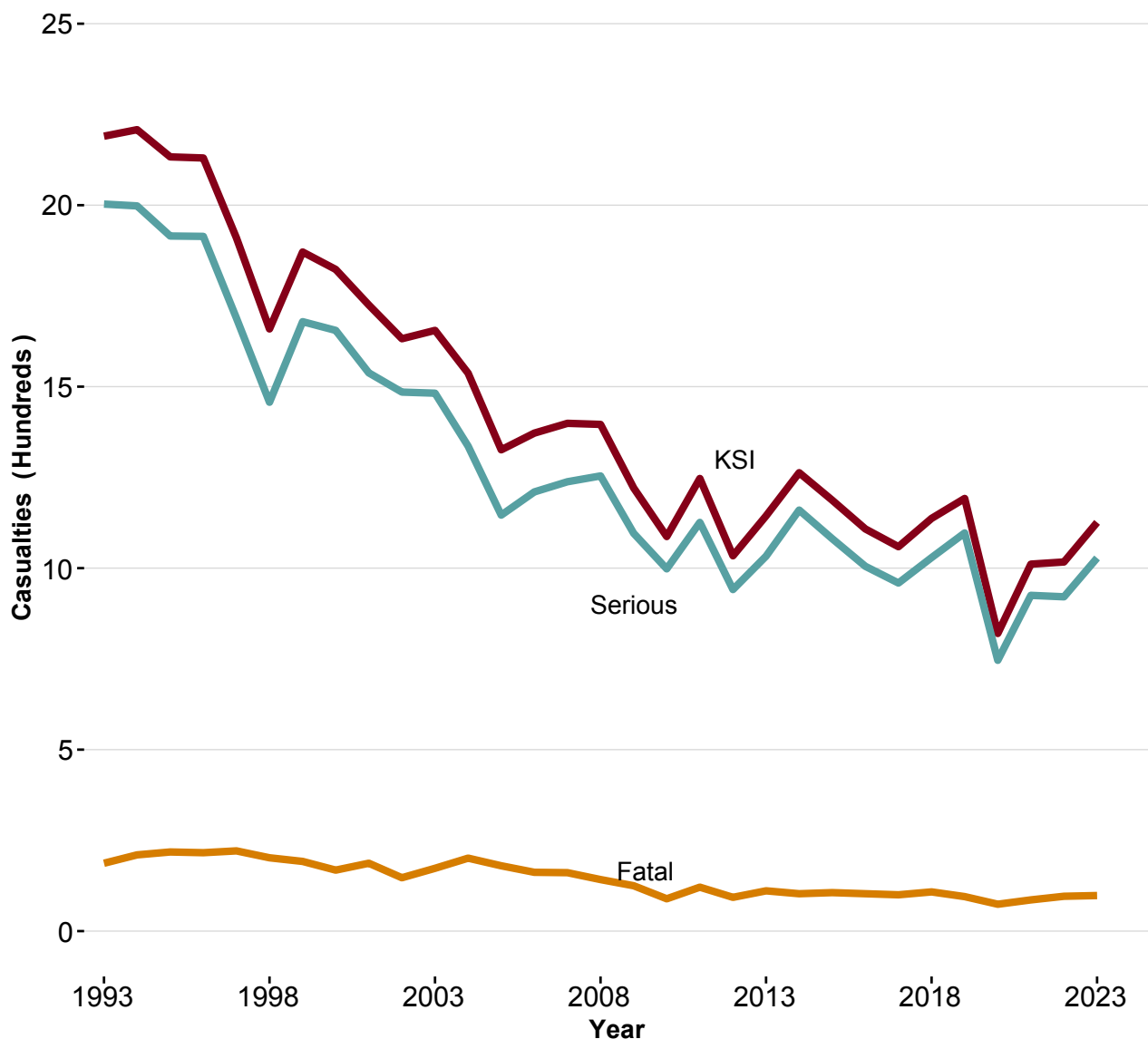
During 2023, police reported road collisions resulted in 4,348 casualties. Of these casualties:

- 98 were fatal
- 1,028 people were seriously injured
- 3,222 casualties were slightly injured

Figure 10 illustrates the trend in the number of fatal, serious and KSI casualties since 1993. Over this time there was a significant fall in KSI casualties, from 2,190 KSI casualties in 1993 to a low of 820 in 2020. Care should be taken in comparing with 2020 as the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic impacted collision and casualty figures.

In 2023, there was a total of 1,126 reported KSI road casualties in Wales.

Figure 10: KSI casualties by severity, 1993 to 2023



Description of Figure 10: The line chart shows the trend in KSI casualties by severity, 1993 to 2023. In May 2023 Dyfed Powys police force migrated to Crash system for reporting road collisions. **Further information is provided in the accompanying quality report.**

Source: Road collision statistics, Welsh Government

Road casualties by speed limit of road

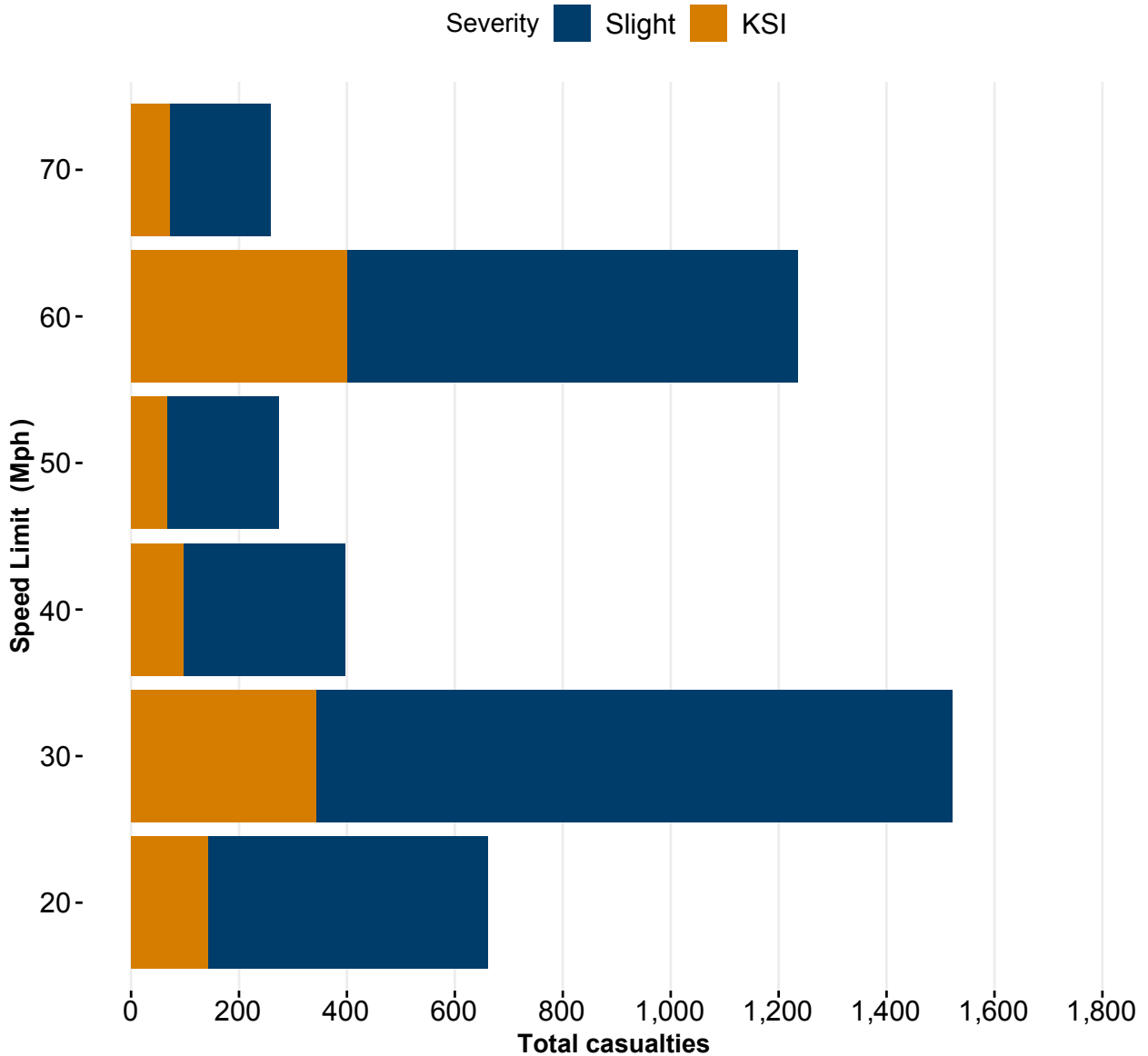
The reported casualties by speed limit data for 2023 indicate that there were 1,522 casualties on roads with a speed limit of 30mph, the highest number of casualties compared to other roads. This was followed by 60mph road sections with 1,235 casualties (as shown in figure 11). 30mph and 60mph road sections accounted for the majority of road sections in Wales prior to the change of the default speed limit in September 2023. Most pedestrian casualties were reported on roads with a speed limit of 30mph and 20mph.

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Figure 11: Reported road casualties by road speed limit, 2023

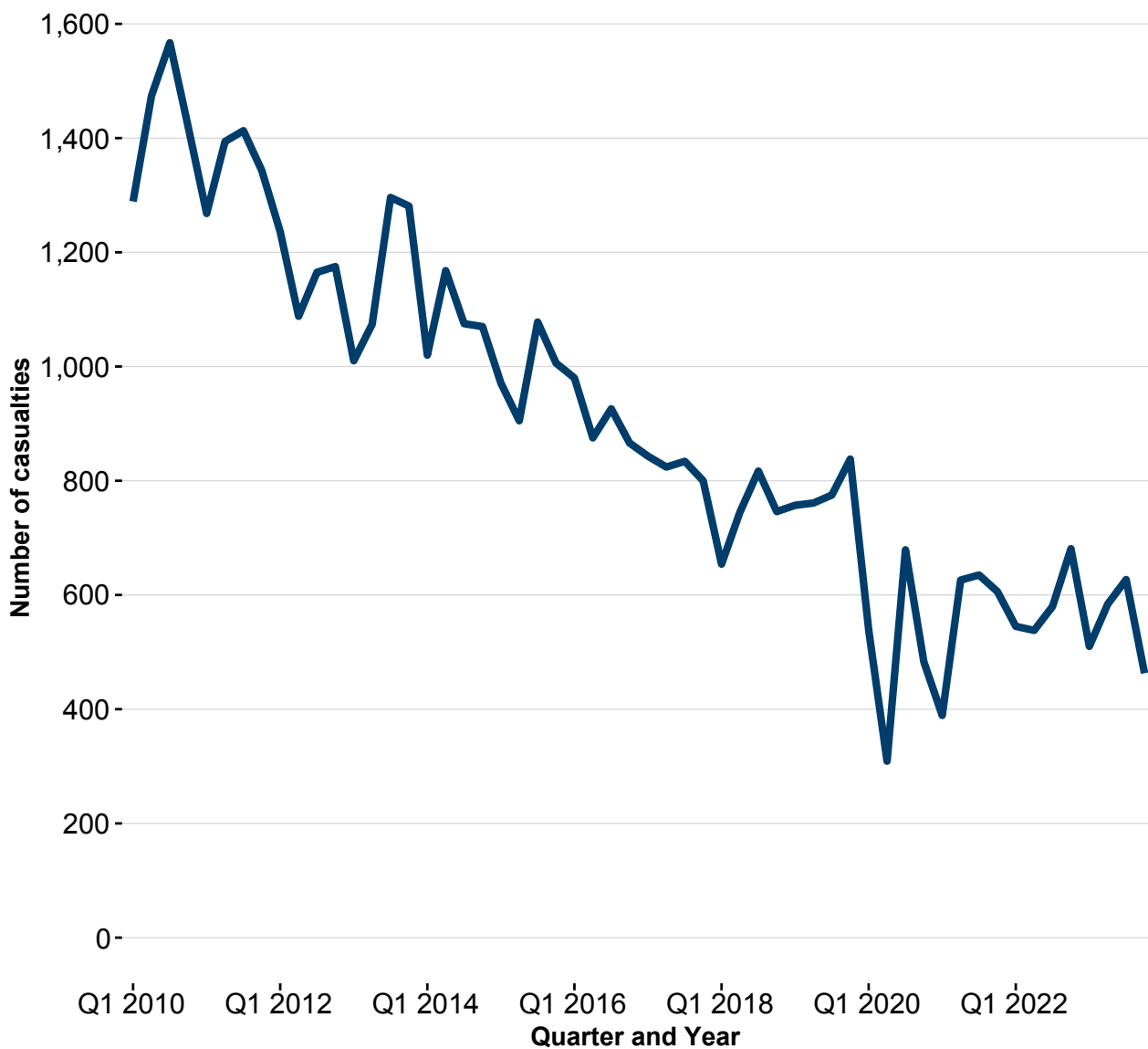


Description of Figure 11: The bar chart shows the number of casualties from police-recorded road collisions by road speed limit in Wales in 2023.

Source: Road collision statistics, Welsh Government

Figure 12 shows the long-term trend of the number of casualties from collisions that occurred on either 20mph or 30mph roads. The quarterly number of casualties in road collisions on roads with lower speed limits (20mph and 30mph), has generally been declining steadily over the last decade, but quarterly figures can be volatile. Care should be taken when interpreting this data over a short time period.

Figure 12: Casualties in collisions on roads with 20mph and 30mph speed limits, 2010 to 2023



Description of Figure 12: Chart showing quarterly number of casualties on 20mph and 30mph roads in Wales

Source: Road collision statistics, Welsh Government

Quality information

Detailed quality information is published in the accompanying quality report. Some key points are below.

These statistics only include road collisions which resulted in personal injury and for which information was reported by the police. It is known that there is an element of under-recording of such incidents, particularly for less severe incidents where police officers may not have been in attendance.

These statistics do not include collisions:

- That were not reported to the police
- That occurred on private land i.e. car parks or fields
- Where no personal injury was recorded
- Where the collision was later confirmed by a medical professional or coroner to be a suicide or medical episode

Details of the data collection and validation processes, strengths and limitations of the data, and revisions policy are provided in the quality report.

National Statistics status

The **United Kingdom Statistics Authority** has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the **Code of Practice for Statistics**. National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value, and it is our responsibility to

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maintain compliance with these standards. All official statistics should comply with all aspects of the Code of Practice for Statistics. They are awarded National Statistics status following an assessment by the UK Statistics Authority's regulatory arm. The Authority considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate. The designation of these statistics as National Statistics was confirmed in July 2013 following a **full assessment against the Code of Practice**.

Since the latest review by the Office for Statistics Regulation, we have continued to comply with the Code of Practice for Statistics, and have made the following improvements:

- Improved visuals by de-cluttering and standardising charts and tables.
- Introduced some additional commentary and context to help improve interpretation and understanding
- **Reviewed and expanded our Quality Report**
- **Published a Chief Statistician's update to aid user understanding of the data (Digital and Data blog)**.

It is Welsh Government's responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected of National Statistics. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, we will discuss any concerns with the Authority promptly. National Statistics status can be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained, and reinstated when standards are restored.

Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFG)

The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales. The Act puts in place seven wellbeing goals for Wales. These are for a more equal, prosperous,

resilient, healthier and globally responsible Wales, with cohesive communities and a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. Under section (10)(1) of the Act, the Welsh Ministers must (a) publish indicators (“national indicators”) that must be applied for the purpose of measuring progress towards the achievement of the wellbeing goals, and (b) lay a copy of the national indicators before Senedd Cymru. Under section 10(8) of the Well-being of Future Generations Act, where the Welsh Ministers revise the national indicators, they must as soon as reasonably practicable (a) publish the indicators as revised and (b) lay a copy of them before the Senedd. These national indicators were laid before the Senedd in 2021. The indicators laid on 14 December 2021 replace the set laid on 16 March 2016.

Information on the indicators, along with narratives for each of the wellbeing goals and associated technical information is available in the [Wellbeing of Wales report](#).

Further information on the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#).

The statistics included in this release could also provide supporting narrative to the national indicators and be used by public services boards in relation to their local wellbeing assessments and local wellbeing plans.

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

Contact details

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