



## Motoring offences in Wales, 2017-2018

10 December 2019  
SB 58/2019

### Main points

#### Fixed penalty notices (FPNs)

- In 2018 police and traffic wardens issued 74,500 FPNs in Wales, a decrease of 13% compared with 2017. Speed limit offences accounted for 73% of FPNs in 2018.
- In recent years FPNs have fallen steadily from over 112,000 in 2012.

#### Court proceedings

- 56,300 motoring offenders were prosecuted in Wales in 2018.
- The most common groups of offence were speed limit offences (17,300), vehicle registration and excise licence offences (10,700) and vehicle insurance offences (10,400).

#### Accidents involving drink driving

- In 2017, an estimated 5% 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 8%.
- 13% of motor vehicle drivers killed in Wales were found to have had a blood alcohol level over the legal limit, compared with 15% in Great Britain.

#### Screening breath tests

- In 2018, 37,000 screening breath tests were carried out in Wales. 4,500 of these tests (12%) were positive or refused, a fall of 1.6% compared with 2017.

Statistics on [motoring offenders](#) and [drink driving](#) used to be reported separately. We have now combined these into a single statistical release. We welcome feedback on this and any other transport statistics publications.

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### 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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## Introduction

This annual statistical bulletin looks at motoring offences in general, and also takes a detailed look at drinking and driving in Wales in 2017-18.

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 2017-18. 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:

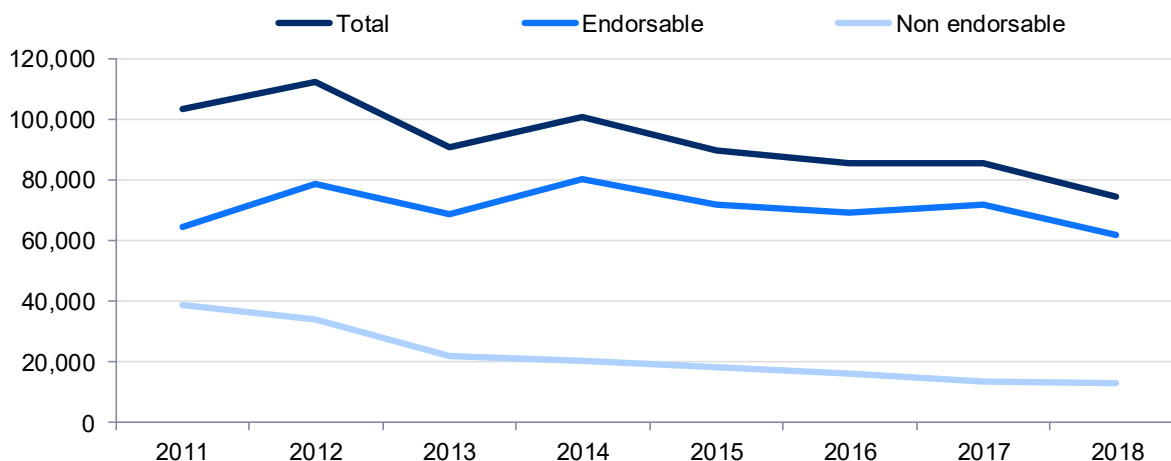
- The association between drink driving and accidents;
- The results of breath tests of drivers involved in accidents;
- Enforcement action relating to drink driving, involving screening breath tests and the outcomes of prosecution through the Courts system.

## Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs)

### How many FPNs were issued by the police in Wales in 2018?

In 2018, police (including traffic wardens) issued 74,544 FPNs for motoring offences in Wales, a 13% decrease on 2017. There was a 14% decrease in endorsable FPNs (down 10,004) and a 6% fall in non-endorsable FPNs (down 847) (Table 1 and Chart 1).

### Chart 1: Endorsable and non-endorsable FPNs issued in Wales, 2011-2018



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

### What are the trends in FPNs for motoring offences?

The number of FPN motoring offences fell by 13% in 2018, having been broadly stable for the previous three years. The larger fall in 2018 is driven by a 14% fall in endorsable offences compared with 2017.

Non-endorsable offences fell by 6%, continuing a consistent downward trend since 2013. This fall is likely to at least 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.

### Outcomes of FPNs in Wales in 2018 (Table 1)

Of all the FPNs issued by the police in Wales, endorsable FPNs accounted for 83% of FPNs and non-endorsable FPNs accounted for 17%.

In 2018:

- 68% were paid
- 21% resulted in court action
- 8% were cancelled
- 1% resulted in driver retraining
- 1% had fines registered
- 0.1% were incomplete.

When compared with 2017:

- court action increased by 17%
- cancelled FPNs decreased by 33%
- fines registered decreased by 22%
- fines paid decreased by 16%
- driver retraining decreased by 15%
- incomplete FPNs decreased by 10%.

**Table 1: Endorsable and non-endorsable FPNs, by outcome, Wales, 2017-2018**

	<i>Number and percent</i>			
	2018	2017	Change on year	
<b>Endorsable FPNs <sup>(a)</sup></b>	<b>61,904</b>	<b>71,908</b>	<b>-10,004</b>	<b>-14%</b>
Fine paid	44,083	53,483	-9,400	-18%
Court action	14,250	12,255	1,995	16%
Cancelled	2,655	5,098	-2,443	-48%
Driver retraining	910	1,066	-156	-15%
Fine registered	3	4	-1	-25%
Incomplete	3	2	1	50%
<b>Non-endorsable FPNs <sup>(b)</sup></b>	<b>12,640</b>	<b>13,487</b>	<b>-847</b>	<b>-6%</b>
Fine paid	6,849	7,369	-520	-7%
Cancelled	3,267	3,676	-409	-11%
Court action	1,664	1,349	315	23%
Fine registered	811	1,037	-226	-22%
Incomplete	49	56	-7	-13%
Driver retraining	0	0	0	-
<b>Total FPNs</b>	<b>74,544</b>	<b>85,395</b>	<b>-10,851</b>	<b>-13%</b>
Total (excl. cancelled)	68,622	76,621	-7,999	-10%

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.

Table 2 shows the broad categories of FPNs issued in Wales. Speed limit offences was by far the largest category in 2018, accounting for 73% of all offences, 12 times more than the next largest category.

**Table 2: Broad categories of FPNs, Wales, 2017-2018**

	<i>Number and percent</i>			
	2018	2017	Change on year	
Speed limit offences	54,498	63,887	-9,389	-15%
Obstruction, waiting and parking offences	4,541	5,348	-807	-15%
Seat belt offences	3,900	4,036	-136	-3%
Licence, insurance and record-keeping offences	3,725	3,865	-140	-4%
Neglect of traffic signs and directions and of pedestrian rights	2,322	2,681	-359	-13%
Vehicle test and condition offences	2,300	2,086	214	10%
Use of hand-held mobile phone while driving	1,349	1,640	-291	-18%
Careless driving (excluding use of hand-held mobile phone when driving)	689	587	102	17%
Lighting and noise offences	488	449	39	9%
Other Offences	421	461	-40	-9%
Work record or employment offences	261	317	-56	-18%
Miscellaneous motoring offences (excluding seat belt offences)	46	31	15	48%
Operator's licence offences	4	7	-3	-43%
<b>Total</b>	<b>74,544</b>	<b>85,395</b>	<b>-10,851</b>	<b>-13%</b>

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

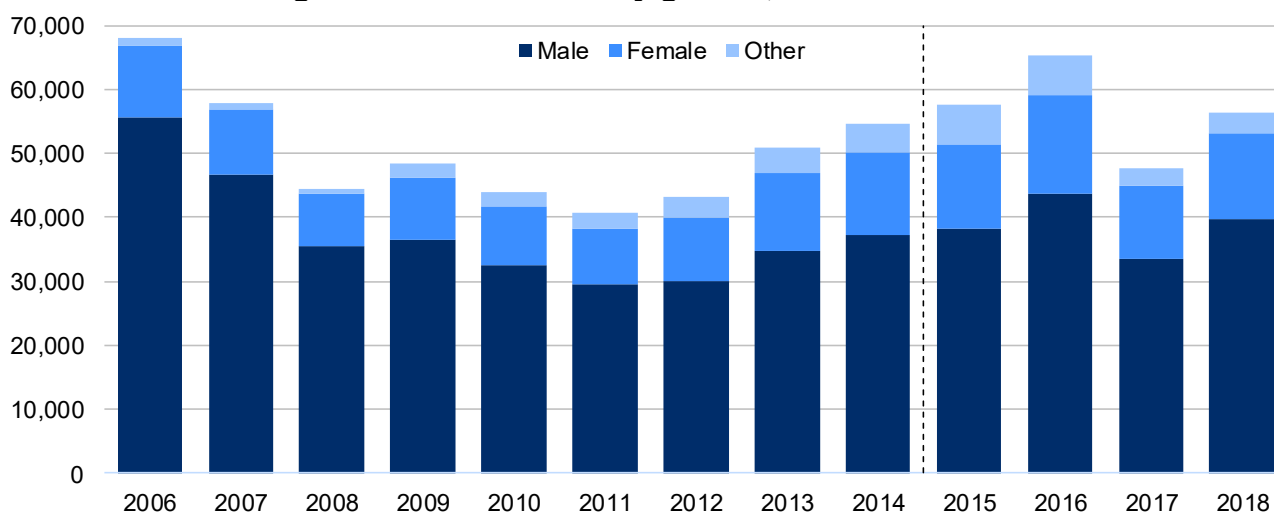
## Court proceedings

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 2018, 56,271 motoring offenders were prosecuted in Wales. This was an increase of 18% compared with 2017, though annual changes do not necessarily reflect actual changes in the number of prosecutable offences committed in Wales (see note C below Chart 2). Of the total motoring offenders, 70% were male, 24% were female and 5% were categorised as ‘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, 2006 to 2018** <sup>(a)(b)</sup>



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

- (a) Other includes and offences committed by persons with unknown gender, companies and public bodies.
- (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.

## Motoring offenders by offence

Of all motoring offenders, “speed limit offences” was the highest offence group prosecuted, making up 31% of all offenders. The next two most common were “vehicle registration and excise licence offences” (19%) and “vehicle insurance” (18%) (Table 3). In all categories significantly more males were prosecuted than females. The [Department for Transport’s National Travel Survey](#) shows that on average men drive further and make a greater number of trips than women, which may contribute to the higher number of offences committed by male drivers.

**Table 3: Motoring offenders in Wales by gender and offence, 2018 (a)(b)**

Motoring offences broader groups	<i>Number</i>		
	Male	Female	Total (c)
Speed limit offences	12,241	4,731	17,282
Vehicle registration and excise licence offences	6,620	2,773	10,687
Vehicle Insurance	7,344	2,582	10,350
Miscellaneous	5,804	1,799	8,526
Driving etc after consuming alcohol or taking drugs	3,231	738	4,013
Neglecting road regulations (other than speeding)	1,118	349	1,488
Driving licence related	955	140	1,105
Careless driving offences (excl. mobile phone offences)	560	155	723
Vehicle test offences	376	123	503
Defective vehicle parts	397	88	491
Dangerous Driving	314	24	339
Accident offences	256	53	313
Unauthorised taking or theft of a vehicle	277	18	297
Causing death or bodily harm	85	9	94
Work record and employment offences	37	0	38
Vehicle/driver related	19	1	22
<b>Total</b>	<b>39,634</b>	<b>13,583</b>	<b>56,271</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.

(c) Includes offences committed by 'other defendants', including companies and public bodies and persons with 'unstated' gender.

### Compared with 2017:

- The number of male offenders prosecuted for speeding and vehicle registration and excise offences increased by 21% and 50% respectively. The number of female offenders increased by 15% and 56% for the same offences.
- The number of offenders prosecuted for driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs also increased for both males (19%) and females (9%).
- The number of prosecutions for “neglecting road regulations” decreased in males by 24% and in females by 27%.

## Motoring offenders by police force area

Table 4 shows the number of motoring offenders prosecuted by each of the police forces in Wales. The number of prosecutions increased in all four police areas in 2018. There was a 24% increase in North Wales, 20% in South Wales, 9% in Gwent and 7% in Dyfed-Powys.

In 2018, the conviction rate in Wales was 91%, the same as the previous year, and with little variation between the police force areas.

**Table 4: Motoring offenders by police force area and outcome, 2018**

Outcome	Number and percent				
	North Wales	Dyfed-Powys	South Wales	Gwent	Wales
Found guilty	9,715	4,587	30,088	6,679	<b>51,069</b>
Conviction rate	92%	91%	90%	92%	<b>91%</b>
Proceedings terminated early	770	412	3,103	509	<b>4,794</b>
Dismissed (found not guilty after summary trial)	67	37	131	53	<b>288</b>
Committed for trial	22	5	60	20	<b>107</b>
Acquitted (CC)	2	-	7	3	<b>12</b>
Not Tried (CC)	-	-	-	1	<b>1</b>
Discharged at committal proceedings	-	-	-	-	<b>-</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,576</b>	<b>5,041</b>	<b>33,389</b>	<b>7,265</b>	<b>56,271</b>

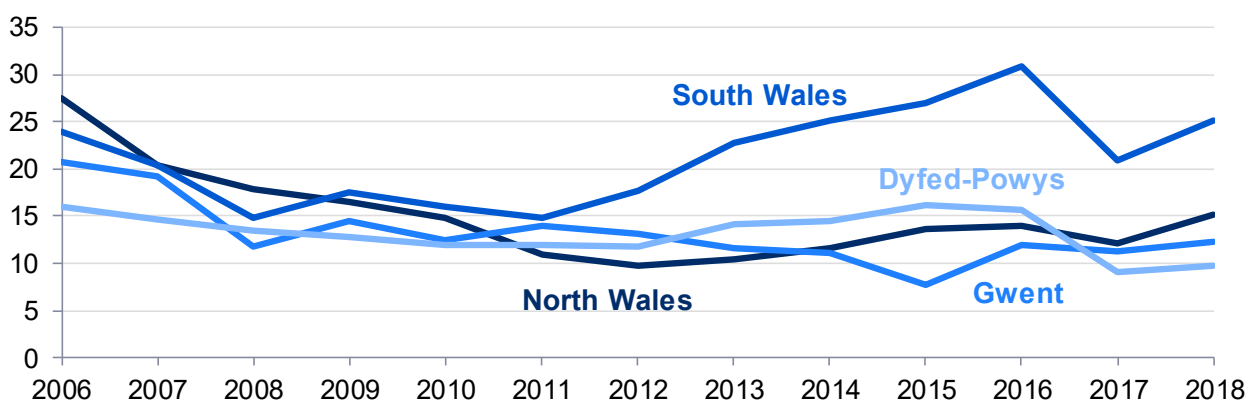
Source: Criminal Justice System statistics, Motoring data, Ministry of Justice (MoJ)

(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. This reached a peak in 2016 with 31 offences per 1,000 people, almost double that of the second highest (Dyfed-Powys, 16 offences per 1,000 population). The rates in the other three police force areas have been variable, but they have generally remained within 10 offences per 1,000 people of each other (Chart 3).

**Chart 3: Rate of motoring offences per 1,000 population by police force area, 2006 to 2018 (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 are more likely to involve drink driving?

In 2017, the DfT estimates that 5% of all recorded accidents and casualties in Wales involved one or more drivers impaired by alcohol. For accidents and casualties resulting in slight injuries only, the proportions were 4% and 5% respectively. For fatalities and serious injuries (KSI) however, drink driving resulted in 8% of accidents and casualties. The corresponding figures based solely on police officers' contributory factors were similar with 7% of KSI accidents and 8% of KSI casualties being caused by drivers impaired by alcohol (Table 5).

**Table 5: Accidents and casualties involved in alcohol or drug related accidents by severity, 2017**

	<i>Number and percent</i>						
	Total	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>	930	70	8%	68	7%	32	3%
Fatal	96	10	10%	9	9%	10	10%
Serious	834	60	7%	59	7%	22	3%
Slight	3,618	150	4%	121	3%	39	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,548</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>2%</b>
<b>Casualties</b>							
KSI <sup>(c)</sup>	1,060	90	8%	89	8%	49	5%
Fatal	101	10	10%	9	9%	10	10%
Serious	959	80	8%	80	8%	39	4%
Slight	5,134	240	5%	196	4%	84	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,194</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>285</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>133</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. Figures may not sum to totals due to rounding.

(b) Includes medicinal as well as illicit drugs.

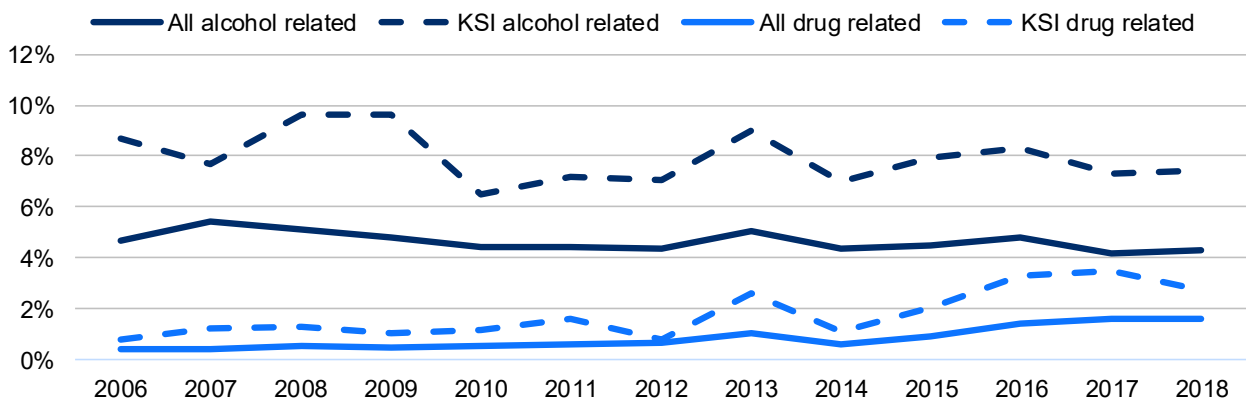
(c) Killed or seriously injured.



According to police officers' views in 2018, there were twice as many accidents caused by drivers impaired by alcohol than impaired by drugs. The proportion of alcohol related accidents has been fairly stable since 2006 with a slight downward trend overall. The proportion of drug related accidents has increased steadily over the series.

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, 2006-2018 (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 6: Proportion of road traffic accident fatalities with blood alcohol concentration (BAC) over the legal limit, 2017**

	Total killed aged 16 and over	Killed, aged 16 and over, with a known BAC			
		All tested		Over the drink drive limit <sup>(b)</sup>	
<b>Wales</b>					
Motor vehicle drivers	39	21	54%	5	13%
Motor vehicle passengers	13	3	23%	3	23%
Motorcycle riders <sup>(c)</sup>	23	13	57%	0	0%
Pedal cyclists <sup>(c)</sup>	4	1	25%	0	0%
Pedestrians	19	5	26%	2	11%
Other/Unknown	0	0	-	0	-
All	98	43	44%	10	10%
<b>Great Britain</b>					
Motor vehicle drivers	606	393	65%	88	15%
Motor vehicle passengers	229	86	38%	19	8%
Motorcycle riders <sup>(c)</sup>	347	234	67%	22	6%
Pedal cyclists <sup>(c)</sup>	99	43	43%	3	3%
Pedestrians	448	205	46%	74	17%
Other/Unknown	16	4	25%	0	0%
All	1,745	965	55%	206	12%

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.

- Percentage change not valid on baseline of zero.

Table 6 shows that in 2017:

- 13% of motor vehicle drivers killed in Wales, were found to have had a blood alcohol level over the legal limit, which is lower than the percentage in Great Britain (15%).
- None of the tested motorcyclists or pedal cyclists killed in Wales were found to have had a blood alcohol level over the legal limit.

**Table 7: Road traffic fatalities by level of blood alcohol concentration (BAC), 2017 (a)***Number*

	Total tested	BAC below limit <sup>(b)</sup>		BAC above limit <sup>(b)</sup>			
		50 and below	50 - 80	80 - 100	100 - 150	150 - 200	Over 200
<b>Wales</b>							
Motor vehicle drivers	<b>21</b>	14	2	0	1	1	3
Motor vehicle passengers	<b>3</b>	0	0	1	2	0	0
Motorcycle riders <sup>(c)</sup>	<b>13</b>	13	0	0	0	0	0
Pedal cyclists <sup>(d)</sup>	<b>1</b>	1	0	0	0	0	0
Pedestrians	<b>5</b>	3	0	1	0	1	0
Other/Unknown	<b>0</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0
All	<b>43</b>	31	2	2	3	2	3
<b>Great Britain</b>							
Motor vehicle drivers	<b>393</b>	296	9	9	19	25	35
Motor vehicle passengers	<b>86</b>	65	2	1	6	4	8
Motorcycle riders <sup>(c)</sup>	<b>234</b>	210	2	2	4	4	12
Pedal cyclists <sup>(d)</sup>	<b>43</b>	39	1	0	1	1	1
Pedestrians	<b>205</b>	128	3	7	12	17	38
Other/Unknown	<b>4</b>	4	0	0	0	0	0
All	<b>965</b>	742	17	19	42	51	94

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) 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 passengers.

Blood alcohol tests were carried out for 43 people killed in road traffic accidents in Wales in 2017.

Table 7 shows the blood alcohol concentration readings for those tests.

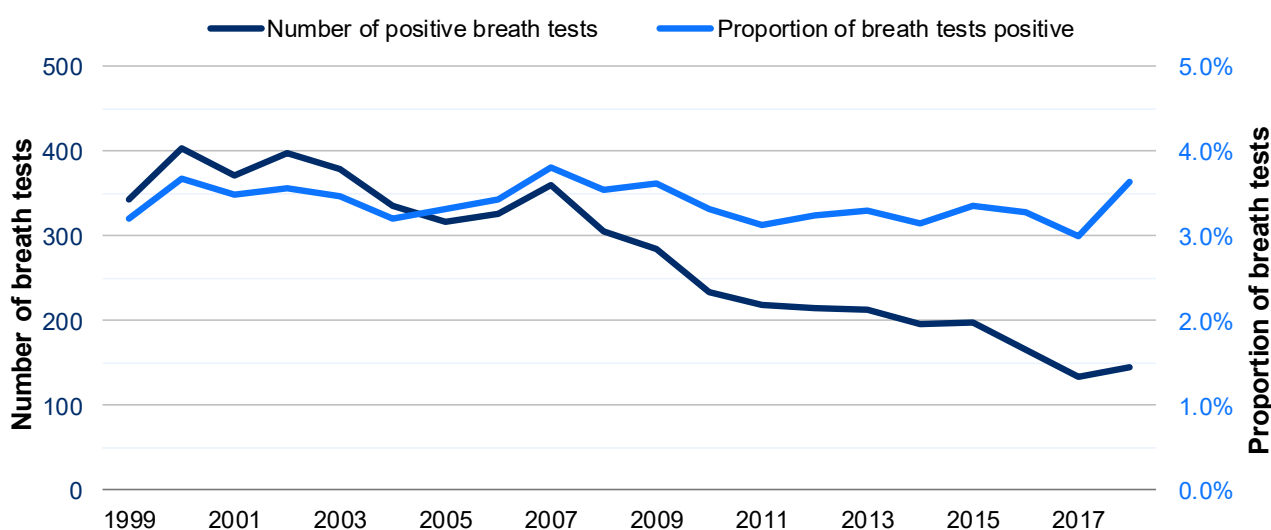
- Of the 5 killed motor vehicle drivers who tested over the limit in Wales, 3 had a blood alcohol level over 200mg per 100 ml of blood, at least 2.5 times the legal BAC limit for drivers.

## Breath tests of drivers involved in accidents

This section provides information about accidents where one or more of the drivers involved had breath alcohol levels above the legal limit for driving (currently 35mg 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 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. This is likely to be because 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, 1999-2018<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).

- In 2018, there were 144 positive breath tests of drivers involved in accidents. This was an increase of 10 (7%) compared with 2017.
- The proportion of tests that were positive increased from 3.0% in 2017 to 3.6% in 2018.
- Over the long term, the total number of breath tests has fallen since 2000. However this corresponds to a similar fall in the number of accidents recorded in Wales.
- The proportion of positive breath tests has been between 3% and 4% since 1999.

**Table 8: Breath test results of drivers involved in accidents by police force area, 2018 (a)**

	<i>Number and percent</i>				
	North Wales	Dyfed-Powys	South Wales	Gwent	Wales Total
<b>Breath test taken</b>	<b>905</b>	<b>1,196</b>	<b>1,337</b>	<b>518</b>	<b>3,956</b>
Positive results	20	43	63	18	<b>144</b>
Negative results	885	1,153	1,274	500	<b>3,812</b>
<i>Percentage positive</i>	2.2%	3.6%	4.7%	3.5%	<b>3.6%</b>
<b>Breath test not taken</b>	<b>702</b>	<b>917</b>	<b>1,119</b>	<b>657</b>	<b>3,395</b>
Refused to provide	2	4	1	1	<b>8</b>
Driver not contacted	312	518	233	110	<b>1,173</b>
Tests not requested (b)	298	218	782	495	<b>1,793</b>
Medical reasons	90	177	103	51	<b>421</b>
<b>Total drivers</b>	<b>1,607</b>	<b>2,113</b>	<b>2,456</b>	<b>1,175</b>	<b>7,351</b>

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

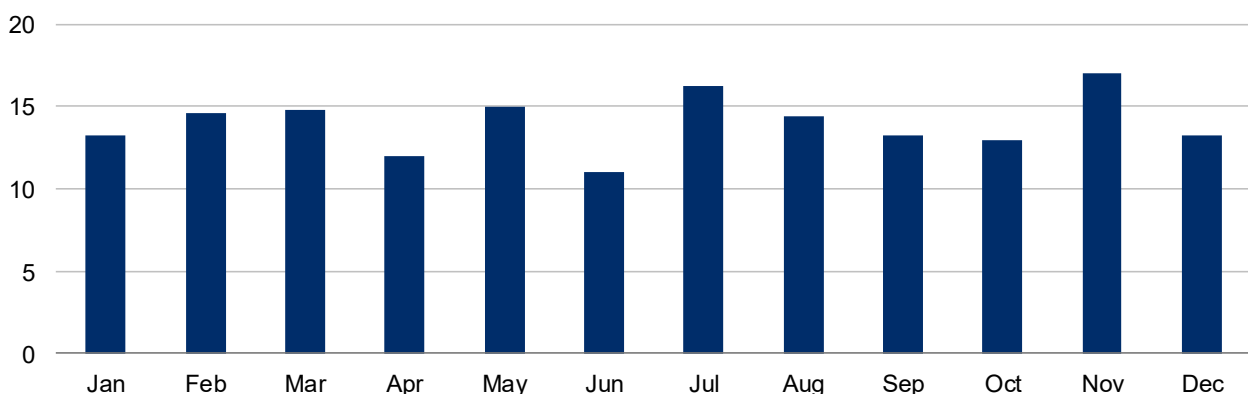
(a) Excludes drivers not covered by sections 6(1) or 6(2) of the Road Traffic Act 1988, i.e. pedal cyclists and other non-motor vehicle drivers.

(b) Includes cases in which injury or circumstances rendered a breath test impracticable and cases which are judged to have been incorrectly recorded.

- In 2018, South Wales had the highest proportion of positive tests at 4.7% of drivers tested (up from 3.5% in 2017).
- North Wales had the lowest proportion at 2.2% (down from 2.4% in 2017).
- Over the year, the proportion of positive tests in Dyfed-Powys and Gwent increased by 0.7 and 0.6 percentage points respectively.

Information at a local authority level is available on request from Welsh Government. StatsWales data tables are currently being developed and links to the published tables will be updated in the [Links to data](#) section when available.

**Chart 6: Positive breath tests of drivers involved in accidents, by month, Wales, average 2014-2018**

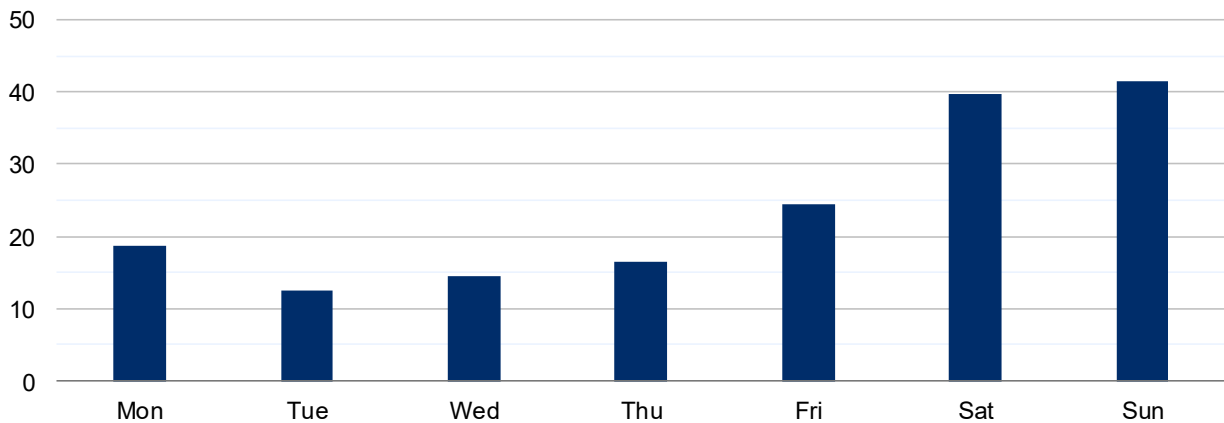


Source: Police Recorded Road Accidents (Stats19), Welsh Government

Chart 6 shows:

- There is no obvious seasonal trend in positive breath tests, although June has seen the lowest number in each of the last three years.
- Over the past five years November saw the highest number of positive breath tests.

**Chart 7: Positive breath tests of drivers involved in accidents, by day of the week, Wales, average 2014-2018**

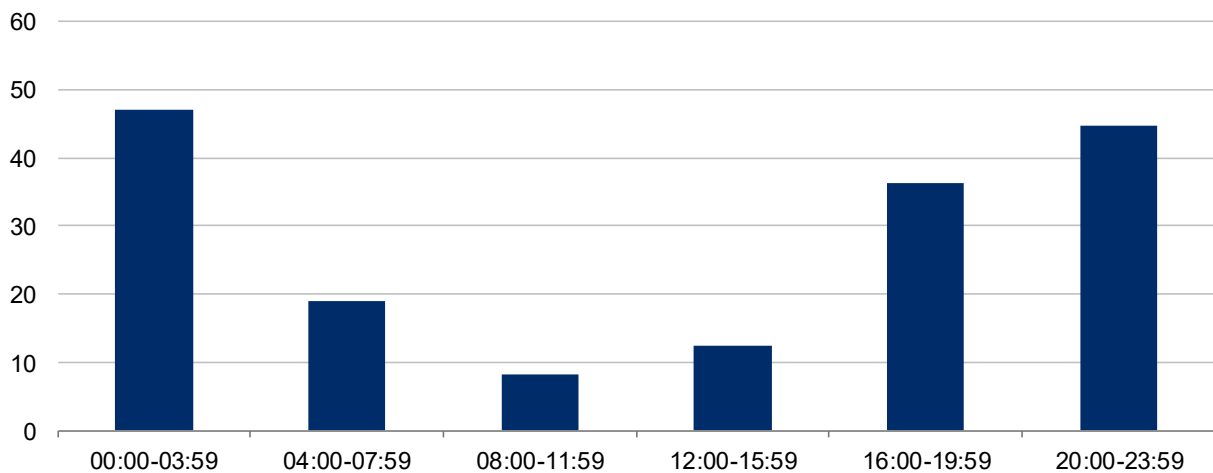


Source: Police Recorded Road Accidents (Stats19), Welsh Government

Chart 7 shows:

- Saturdays and Sundays consistently see the highest number of positive tests, suggesting that one cause of the deviation in the monthly numbers (Chart 6) could be the number of weekends falling in each month.

**Chart 8: Positive breath tests from drivers involved in accidents, by time of day, Wales, average 2014-2018**



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

Chart 8 shows:

- Drivers involved in accidents are more likely to test positive outside of traditional working hours
- The period between 20:00 to 03:59 accounted for 55% of all drivers testing positive for alcohol over the last five years.

## Screening breath tests and enforcement action

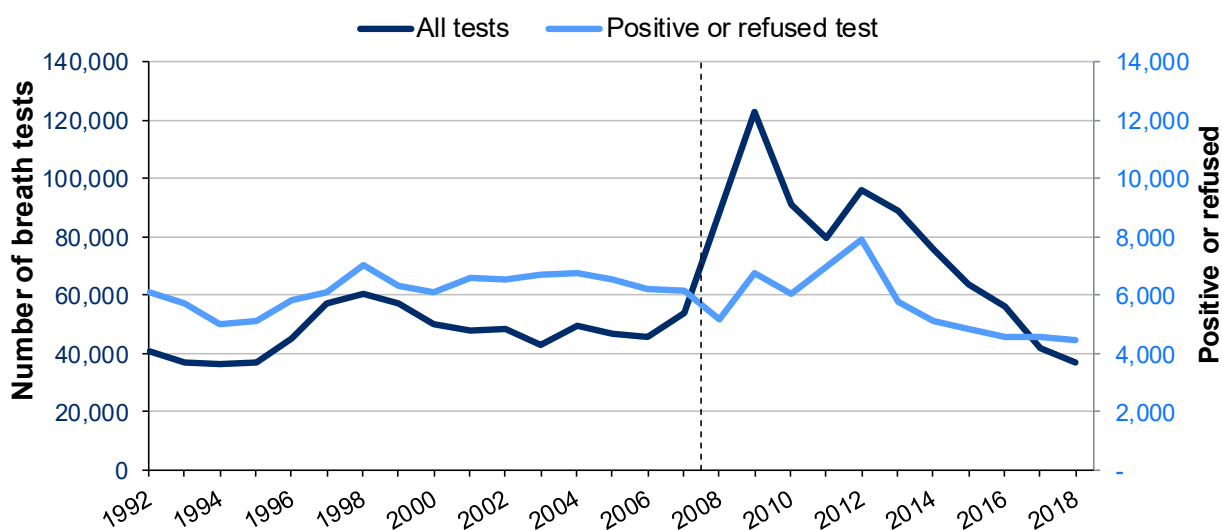
This section covers screening breath tests and police and court action in relation to drink driving offences. The majority of screening breath tests are not carried out in relation to road accidents.

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 9). 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 2018 there were 36,975, an 11% fall compared with 2017.

There were 4,474 positive or refused tests in 2018. This was similar to the previous year, but the lowest figure since the series began in 1992. Although as the total number of tests has continued to fall, the percentage of positive or refused tests was the highest since 2007, now standing at 12% (Table 9). There was a 63% fall in the number of positive or refused tests since 2012, but this largely reflects the fall in the number of tests carried out over the same period (down 62%).

The relationship between the total amount of testing and the number of positive or refused tests is not straight forward. It is not possible to identify how much of the change in positive / refused tests is attributable to changes in testing overall, changes in the actual number of offences committed or changes in recording practices.

**Chart 9: Screening breath tests, Wales, 1992 to 2018** (a)(b)(c)



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

- (a) From April 2008 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 (4.0) whilst the highest was in North Wales (17.4). Because of this variation, it is difficult to compare across areas. For example although Gwent had the highest percentage of positive/refused tests (18%), the proportion compared to its population was the lowest (0.7) (Table 9).

**Table 9: Screening breath tests by police force area, Wales, 2018**

	<i>Number and percent</i>				
	North Wales	Dyfed-Powys	South Wales	Gwent	Wales Total
<b>Number of breath tests</b>					
Total tests	12,143	8,339	14,114	2,379	<b>36,975</b>
Positive or refused	1,441	794	1,811	428	<b>4,474</b>
<i>Percentage positive or refused</i>	<i>11.9%</i>	<i>9.5%</i>	<i>12.8%</i>	<i>18.0%</i>	<b><i>12.1%</i></b>
<b>Rate of breath tests per 1,000 population <sup>(a)</sup></b>					
Rate of total tests	17.4	16.1	10.6	4.0	<b>11.8</b>
Rate of positive or refused	2.1	1.5	1.4	0.7	<b>1.4</b>

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

(a) Based on 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 10: Guilty verdicts for drink or drug driving offences, Wales 2017 <sup>(a)</sup>**

<b>Motoring Offence Group</b>	<i>Number and percent</i>			
	<b>2018</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>Change on year</b>	
<b>Alcohol related offences</b>	<b>2,443</b>	<b>2,393</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>2%</b>
Driving with alcohol in the blood above the prescribed limit	2,353	2,285	68	3%
In charge of a motor vehicle with alcohol in the blood above the prescribed limit	72	95	-23	-24%
Driving or attempting to drive a vehicle whilst unfit through drink (impairment)	10	7	3	43%
In charge of a vehicle whilst unfit through drink (impairment)	8	6	2	33%
<b>Drug related offences</b>	<b>1,041</b>	<b>561</b>	<b>480</b>	<b>86%</b>
Driving with a controlled drug above specified limit	988	506	482	95%
Driving or attempting to drive a vehicle whilst unfit through drugs (impairment)	39	41	-2	-5%
In charge of a motor vehicle with a controlled drug above specified limit	10	11	-1	-9%
In charge of a vehicle whilst unfit through drugs (impairment)	4	3	1	33%
<b>Refusing a test</b>	<b>398</b>	<b>336</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>18%</b>
Driving and failing to provide specimen for analysis (breath, blood or urine)	367	312	55	18%
In charge of a motor vehicle and failing to provide specimen for analysis	26	21	5	24%
Failing to provide specimen for initial breath test	3	3	0	0%
Failing to allow specimens of blood to be subjected to laboratory test	2	0	2	-
<b>All offences</b>	<b>3,882</b>	<b>3,290</b>	<b>592</b>	<b>18%</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.







- 3,882 offenders were found guilty of drink or drug driving offences in 2018. This was an increase of 592, or 18%, on the previous year.
- The majority of guilty verdicts were for “driving with alcohol in the blood above the prescribed limit”, which accounted for 2,443 offences (61% of all offences). The largest



increase on the year was for “driving with a controlled drug above the specified limit” (up 482, or 95%). Drug driving convictions have increased significantly across Great Britain in recent years. However, it is not possible to estimate the extent to which this actually reflects increases in drug driving, because it corresponds to significantly increased testing and enforcement activity by police forces.

## Links to data

Additional breakdowns of these data are available on [StatsWales](#).

Measure	Data Link
<a href="#">Fixed penalty notices (FPNs)</a>	
<a href="#">Motoring offenders proceedings at court</a>	
<a href="#">Screening breath tests</a>	
Accidents involving drunk drivers	In development
Blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of road traffic accident fatalities	In development
Breath tests of drivers involved in accidents	In development
<a href="#">Police powers and procedures, FPNs and breath tests (Home Office)</a>	 Home Office
<a href="#">Criminal justice statistics (December), Court proceedings (Ministry of Justice)</a>	
<a href="#">Reported drinking and driving (Department for Transport)</a>	 Department for Transport

## Notes

### 1 Context

#### 1.1 Related publications

Welsh Government publishes an annual bulletin on [Police recorded road accidents](#).

Equivalent data for England can be found at the 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](#)'.

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 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.

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

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

### 2 Data sources

The information about fixed penalty notices for driving offences comes 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 in 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 is statistical data about road traffic accidents and casualties compiled by the police and forwarded 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 comes from the Transport Research Laboratory as collected from Coroners Courts in England and Wales (Procurator Fiscal in Scotland).

The information on screening breath tests comes 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 most traffic wardens are now employed by local authorities, and their activities are not covered here.

The information below shows the local authorities in Wales who have taken over the responsibility for parking enforcement and when this occurred:

Neath Port Talbot	1 June 1999	Pembrokeshire	1 Feb 2011
Carmarthenshire	1 Feb 2004	Powys	1 April 2011
Denbighshire	1 July 2004	Merthyr Tydfil	11 Jan 2012
Conwy	1 Sept 2006	Ceredigion	4 June 2012
Gwynedd	1 April 2007	Rhondda Cynon Taff	1 Aug 2012
Isle of Anglesey	1 April 2007	Bridgend	1 April 2013
Wrexham	1 March 2008	Vale of Glamorgan	1 April 2013
Swansea	1 Sept 2008	Flintshire	1 Oct 2013
Cardiff	5 July 2010		

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 and 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 raw data understates the role of alcohol for pedestrians and cyclists, the raw data are probably a fair guide 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:

- Percentage change not valid on baseline of zero.

## 6 Key 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.

### 6.2 Accuracy

See section 5.5 below.

### 6.3 Timeliness and punctuality

The statistics in this bulletin relate to cases in Wales in 2018 and cases covering Wales and Great Britain during 12 months ending December 2017.

### 6.4 Accessibility and clarity

This statistical bulletin is pre-announced and then published on the [Statistics for Wales](#) website and is accompanied by tables on [Statswales](#). Historically, this information was released in Chapter 5 of 'Welsh Transport Statistics'.

### 6.5 Comparability and coherence

#### FPN data from police powers and procedures

- 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. Therefore data should be combined for these which explain why a police force specific breakdown for this data is not presented in this bulletin.
- 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.

## **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 the table 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' show 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 Well-being goals, and (b) lay a copy of the national indicators before the National Assembly. The 46 national indicators were laid in March 2016 and this release does not include any of the national indicators.

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-2018>

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

## **Next update**

December 2020 (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).

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