



Drinking and driving in Wales, 2016 - 2017

12 Dec 2018

SB 81/2018

Key points

There was an increase in the drivers/riders of motorised vehicles killed in traffic accidents above the drink drive limit, with 9 fatalities in 2016.

12 per cent of drivers/riders of motorised vehicles and 18 per cent of motorcyclist drivers/riders killed in traffic collisions were above the drink drive limit (Coroner's Court data).

In 2017, 285 accidents resulting in personal injury occurred where an alcohol related contributory factor was recorded.



6.3 per cent of all accidents had an alcohol related contributory factor recorded. This is a 1.2 percentage point increase on the 2016 figure (Road Accident, STATS19 Data).

In 2017, 133 accidents occurred where a drug related contributory factor was recorded.



This is a 19 per cent increase on the 2016 figure. For every 2 accidents where the impaired by alcohol contributory factor was used, there was 1 accident where the impaired by drugs contributory factor was used (Road Accident, STATS19 data).

In 2017, 70 accidents were considered to be due to pedestrian(s) being impaired by alcohol.



Compared with 2016, this was an increase of 13 per cent (Road Accident, STATS19 data).

The percentage of positive breath tests from drivers involved in accidents fell slightly from 4.7 per cent in 2016 to 4.6 per cent in 2017.

There is considerable variation between the months of the year and the same months of different years. Drivers were more likely to test positive on Fridays and Saturdays than on all other days of the week. 68 per cent of drivers testing positive were tested between 18:00 and 03:59 (Road Accident, STATS19 data).

About this bulletin

This annual statistical bulletin assesses the relationship between drink driving, road accidents and casualties.

In this bulletin

We present information in 5 sections:

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Introduction

This annual statistical bulletin assesses the relationship between drink driving, road accidents and casualties in Wales in 2017. It also includes analysis on 2016 accidents completed 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 four 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; and
- Drinking and pedestrian casualties.



Drink driving and accidents

This section reviews the relationship between drink driving and traffic accidents. It provides estimates of the proportion of accidents where one or more of the drivers involved had blood alcohol levels above the legal limit for driving (currently 80mg of alcohol per 100ml of blood). It also looks at pedestrians involved in road traffic accidents with blood alcohol levels above the legal limit for drivers.

There are three data sources:

1. Figures from police forces about road accidents reported to the police that involve personal injury on the **STATS19 statistical form**. This contains information about breath tests on drivers involved in accidents. From 2005 onwards, information collected on the STATS19 form included police officers' views about contributory factors that led to an accident. These factors include the driver (or pedestrian) being impaired by alcohol or drugs (Illegal or medicinal).
2. Data from **Coroners Courts in England and Wales**, which report on blood tests carried out on people killed in traffic accidents.
3. **The Department for Transport** (DfT) drinking and driving data brings data from 1 and 2 above together to estimate the number of personal injury road accidents involving drivers with illegal blood alcohol levels in Great Britain which include component figures for Wales.

The available information about drink driving and accidents suggests that drivers with blood alcohol levels above the legal limit for driving were involved in a significant minority of accidents in Wales.

Comparison of data sources

The data show that drink driving accounted for a minority of all road accidents and casualties. Due to the relatively small number of fatal accidents, the most robust figures can be compiled by taking **killed and serious injury accidents (KSI)** together.

Table 1: Comparison of the percentage of drivers impaired by alcohol involved in accidents by accident severity, 2016.

Accident Severity	<i>Number and per cent</i>					
	Road Accident Data (a)		Coroners Court Data (b)		DfT drink driving estimates (b)	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
KSI	83	9			90	9
Fatal	9	7	21	21	20	21
Serious	74	9			70	8
Slight	149	4			340	9
Total	232	5			430	9

Notes

(a) Includes all accidents with known contributory factors

(b) Please note that this does include non-motorised vehicles

- For **fatal accidents** where drivers or passengers were over the blood alcohol limit in Wales in 2016: The DfT estimates vehicle drivers or passengers were involved in **21** per cent of fatal accidents in Wales (19 per cent of fatal casualties, see [Table 2](#)). The corresponding figure from the contributory factors data showed 19 per cent of fatal accidents involved one or more drivers or passengers impaired by alcohol ([Table 3](#)). The coroners' court data showed that of the 81 motor vehicle and motorcycle drivers/riders killed, 38 were tested for blood alcohol and 9 of these were found to have over the legal limit of alcohol in their blood.
- For **serious injury accidents**: The DfT estimates vehicle drivers or passengers over the blood alcohol limit were involved in 6 per cent of these accidents (7per cent of serious casualties). The contributory factors data showed that 11 per cent of these accidents involved drivers or passengers that were impaired by alcohol.
- For **all accidents**: The DfT estimates vehicle drivers or passengers over the blood alcohol limit were involved in 6 per cent of these accidents (6 per cent of casualties). The contributory factors data showed that 6 per cent of these accidents involved drivers or passengers that were impaired by alcohol.

Department for Transport (DfT) estimates

DfT's¹ estimates of the numbers of road injury accidents involving drivers or passengers with illegal blood alcohol levels are based on police data and on Coroners Court information. These are summarised in [Table 2](#) below.

Table 2: Accidents involving drivers or passengers with illegal alcohol levels, by severity, Wales and Great Britain, 2016

	<i>Number and per cent</i>				
	Fatal	Serious	KSI (a)	Slight	Total (b)
Wales					
Estimates of alcohol-related (c)(d):					
Accidents	20	50	70	210	280
Casualties	20	70	80	340	420
Numbers of all road traffic:					
Accidents	95	880	975	3,946	4,921
Casualties	103	1,005	1,108	5,747	6,855
Alcohol-related as proportion of all (d):					
Accidents (%)	21	6	7	5	6
Casualties (%)	19	7	7	6	6
Great Britain					
Estimates of alcohol-related (c)(d):					
Accidents	220	1,000	1,220	4,860	6,070
Casualties	230	1,250	1,480	7,550	9,040
Numbers of all road traffic:					
Accidents	1,695	21,725	23,420	113,201	136,621
Casualties	1,792	24,101	25,893	155,491	181,384
Alcohol-related as proportion of all (d):					
Accidents (%)	13	5	5	4	4
Casualties (%)	13	5	6	5	5

Source: WG analysis of data from Department of Transport (DfT)

Notes:

(a) Killed or seriously injured.

(b) Current drink drive limit is 80mg per 100ml of blood.

(c) Estimated numbers, adjusted for under-reporting. As these are estimated figures, they are here rounded to nearest "10". As a result, the corresponding percentage figures are less precise.

(d) Figures may not sum to total due to rounding.

Figures for **drivers or passengers** show that alcohol is more likely to feature as a contributory factor to serious accidents than to less serious accidents.

For all motor vehicles (motorcycles, cars and other vehicles together) in Wales:

- 7 per cent of KSI accidents and 7 per cent of KSI casualties involved a driver or passenger being impaired by alcohol
- 5 per cent of slight accidents and 6 per cent of slight casualties involved a driver or passenger being impaired by alcohol.

¹ Reported drinking and driving (RAS51)

Information based on police officers' views of contributory factors

Police officers who attend road traffic accidents record their views around the factors likely to have contributed to the incidents. These contributory factors are the police officers initial views of the causes of the accident. These are summarised for 2016 and 2017 in [Table 3](#).

Table 3: Accidents and casualties where alcohol and drug related contributory factors were recorded, by severity, Wales, 2016 and 2017

	<i>Number and per cent</i>									
	Fatal		Serious		KSI (a)		Slight		Total	
	2016	2017	2016	2017	2016	2017	2016	2017	2016	2017
All accidents										
Impaired by alcohol	12	17	143	95	155	112	215	173	370	285
Impaired by drugs	18	21	41	42	59	63	53	70	112	133
Total number of accidents	95	96	880	834	975	930	3,946	3,618	4,921	4,548
As percentage of total accidents										
Impaired by alcohol (%)	13	18	16	11	9	12	4	5	5	6
Impaired by drugs (%)	19	22	5	5	3	7	1	2	1	3
Pedestrian involved in an accident (b)										
Pedestrian impaired by alcohol	2	1	17	22	19	23	43	47	62	70
Pedestrian impaired by drugs	1	2	3	1	4	3	7	11	11	14
Total number of pedestrian Casualties	16	23	195	171	211	194	582	540	793	734
As percentage of pedestrian casualties (c)										
Pedestrian impaired by alcohol (%)	13	4	9	13	10	12	8	9	8	10
Pedestrian impaired by drugs (%)	6	9	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	2

Source: WG analysis of data from STATS19 statistical form from the police

Notes:

(a) KSI = Killed or seriously injured

(b) The comparison of accidents and casualties is strictly incorrect, as they refer to different aspects of the incident. Any validity in the comparison depends on the following assumptions: (i) That only adults are impaired by alcohol or drugs; (ii) That only one adult pedestrian who is "impaired by alcohol (or drugs)" is involved in these accidents; (iii) That the pedestrian involved in these accidents, and who was "impaired by alcohol (or drugs)", was a casualty (i.e. not uninjured).

(c) Pedestrians involved in an accident (as a casualty or uninjured)

- There were 2.1 times as many accidents involving the contributory factor impaired by alcohol as there were accidents involving the contributory factor impaired by drugs in 2017. This ratio fell from 3.3 times as many drink drive accidents in 2016. The change was driven by a 23 per cent fall in the number of drink drive accidents in 2017 when compared to 2016.
- Drinking by pedestrians is an important factor in accidents involving pedestrians. Police reported a total of 70 pedestrians impaired by alcohol in 2017, such that it contributed to an accident taking place (whether the pedestrian was a casualty or not).
- There were 5 times as many accidents involving pedestrians impaired by alcohol in 2017 as there were involving pedestrians impaired by drugs (including illegal and medicinal).

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. This information is used to derive the DfT estimates presented above. The underlying data shows ([Table 4](#)):

- the proportion of those killed in traffic accidents in Wales that had a blood test
- the proportion of those killed where a blood test showed blood alcohol levels above 80mg per 100ml of blood. (Some fatalities do not receive a blood test but may have had alcohol in their blood. This percentage therefore represents a minimum level for the overall incidence of alcohol-related fatalities).

Table 4: Road traffic accident fatalities and blood alcohol concentration (BAC) results as a proportion of total killed, 2016

Number and per cent					
	Total killed aged 16 and over (a)	Killed, aged 16 and over, with a known BAC (b)			
		Number		Percentage of total killed	
		All	Over 80mg per 100ml (c)	All	Over 80mg per 100ml (c)
Wales					
Motor vehicle drivers	43	21	5	49	12
Motor vehicle passengers	16	3	0	19	0
Motorcycle riders (d)	22	14	4	64	18
Pedal cyclists (e)	3	1	0	33	0
Pedestrians	14	5	4	36	29
Other/Unknown	4	2	0	50	0
All	102	46	13	45	13
Great Britain					
	613	373	80	61	13
Motor vehicle drivers					
Motor vehicle passengers	255	73	13	29	5
Motorcycle riders (d)	318	221	17	69	5
Pedal cyclists (e)	94	37	2	39	2
Pedestrians	414	184	53	44	13
Other/Unknown	29	9	1	31	3
All	1,723	897	166	52	10

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

Notes:

(a) From STATS19, that is the police record of accidents and casualties.

(b) These figures are lower than the "total killed" because:

- Coroners will only record the BAC if the victim dies within 12 hours of the accident; it is estimated that 80% of victims die within 12 hours, the remaining 20% die later.

- Coroners' practices differ: many only measure when victim is "considered at fault"; or only when blood alcohol is likely to be a factor in the death.

- Some coroners do not send information to TRL.

(c) 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.

(d) Includes motorcycle passengers.

(e) Includes pedal cycle passengers.

- 12 per cent of motor vehicle drivers killed (mostly car drivers) were found to have had a blood alcohol level over the legal limit.
- Of the 22 motorcyclists killed, 4 were found to have had a blood alcohol level over the legal limit.
- 29 per cent of pedestrian fatalities were found to have had a blood alcohol level over the legal limit.

Table 5: Road traffic fatalities by level of blood alcohol concentration (BAC), 2016

Number and per cent						
	Number of people	Killed, aged 16 and over, with a known BAC				
		Percentage with a BAC (in mg per 100ml of blood) of over:				
		50 (a)	80 (a)	100	150	200
Wales						
Motor vehicle drivers	21	29	24	24	14	10
Motor vehicle passengers	3	0	0	0	0	0
Motorcycle riders	14	29	29	29	21	14
Pedal cyclists	1	0	0	0	0	0
Pedestrians	5	80	80	60	60	40
Other/Unknown	2	0	0	0	0	0
All	46	30	28	26	20	13
Great Britain						
Motor vehicle drivers	373	23	21	21	16	9
Motor vehicle passengers	73	18	18	16	12	4
Motorcycle riders (b)	221	11	8	7	6	3
Pedal cyclists (c)	37	11	5	5	5	5
Pedestrians	184	30	29	27	22	14
Other/Unknown	9	11	11	0	0	0
All	897	21	19	18	14	8

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

(a) 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.

(b) Includes motorcycle passengers.

(c) Includes pedal cycle passengers.

Blood alcohol tests were carried out for 46 people killed in road traffic accidents in Wales in 2016. [Table 5](#) gives the proportion of these people with blood alcohol over various levels.

- 13 per cent of all fatalities had a blood alcohol level over 200mg per 100 ml of blood, at least 2½ times the legal BAC limit for drivers.
- 28 per cent were over the drink drive limit in Wales and England (80mg alcohol per 100ml blood) and a further 2 per cent were over the Scottish drink drive limit of 50mg per 100 ml of blood.

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 test drivers at the scene of accidents for the levels of alcohol in their breath. While they aim to test every driver, sometimes that is not possible for various reasons which are outlined in [Table 6](#) below and include where the driver:

- refused to provide
- was not contacted

and where the breath test

- was not requested
- was not provided for medical reasons.

For these reasons, the numbers of positive breath tests following accidents suggests a lower incidence of drink driving than the Department for Transport's estimates above. 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.

Table 6: Drivers involved in accidents: Breath test results, Wales, 2012 to 2017 (a)

	<i>Number and per cent</i>					
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Breath test taken						
Positive results	136	145	127	140	117	97
Negative results	3,134	2,982	2,962	2,747	2,364	2,003
Total tests	3,270	3,127	3,089	2,887	2,481	2,100
Percentage positive	4.2%	4.6%	4.1%	4.8%	4.7%	4.6%
Breath test not taken						
Refused to provide (b)	10	12	8	11	8	14
Driver not contacted (c)	410	351	357	345	271	211
Tests not requested (d)	607	652	735	731	715	736
Medical reasons (e)	485	473	487	462	462	489
Total non Test	1,512	1,488	1,587	1,549	1,456	1,450
Total number of drivers (f)	4,782	4,615	4,676	4,436	3,937	3,550

Source: WG analysis of the STATS19 statistical form from Police

Notes:

(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) "Refused to provide" means refused to provide irrespective of whether prosecution followed or not.

(c) "Not contacted" denotes when the driver absented himself/herself from the scene of the accident.

(d) "Not requested" includes the following: (i) cases where it was decided not to request a breath test;

(ii) cases in which injury or circumstances rendered a breath test impracticable and;

(iii) cases which are judged to have been incorrectly recorded.

(e) Tests not provided for medical reasons are shown separately.

(f) Totals may not sum due to "not applicable" category

- The total number of breath tests taken has decreased annually for each of the last five years and the 2017 figure represents a 36 per cent decrease since 2012.
- The number of positive breath tests has fluctuated, with the 2017 figure (97) representing a 29 per cent fall since 2012.
- In 2017 there was a fall in the proportion of positive breath tests from 4.7 per cent to 4.6 per cent. The proportion has stayed between 4.1 and 4.8 per cent since 2012.

Table 7: Breath test results on drivers involved in accidents by Police force areas, 2016 to 2017 (a)

	<i>Number and per cent</i>							
	North Wales		Gwent		South Wales		Dyfed-Powys	
	2016	2017	2016	2017	2016	2017	2016	2017
Breath test taken								
Positive results	23	19	14	14	43	40	37	24
Negative results	548	522	275	235	878	655	663	591
Total tests	571	541	289	249	921	695	700	615
Percentage change (positive)		-17%		0%		-7%		-35%
Breath test not taken								
Refused to provide (b)	0	3	1	2	4	6	3	3
Driver not contacted (c)	88	76	43	23	28	19	112	93
Tests not requested (d)	53	69	182	215	421	355	59	97
Medical reasons (e)	93	94	37	54	133	133	199	208
Total non Test	234	242	263	294	586	513	373	401
Total number of drivers (f)	805	783	552	543	1507	1208	1073	1016

Source: WG analysis of the STATS19 statistical form from Police

Notes:

- (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) "Refused to provide" means refused to provide irrespective of whether prosecution followed or not.
- (c) "Not contacted" denotes when the driver absented himself/herself from the scene of the accident.
- (d) "Not requested" includes the following: (i) cases where it was decided not to request a breath test, (ii) cases in which injury or circumstances rendered a breath test impracticable and, in addition, the figures now include, (iii) cases which are judged to have been (ii) cases in which injury or circumstances rendered a breath test impracticable and, in addition, the figures now include, (iii) cases which are judged to have been incorrectly recorded.
- (e) Tests not provided for medical reasons are shown separately.
- (f) Totals may not sum due to "not applicable" category

[Table 7](#) shows:

- The number of breath tests carried out fell in all of the Police Force areas in Wales in 2017.
- The number and proportion of *positive* breath tests also fell in three of the Police Force areas and remained unchanged in Gwent.
- South Wales Police carried out the largest number of tests (695), followed by Dyfed-Powys Police (615), North Wales Police (541) and Gwent Police (249).

Accidents involving a driver above the legal limit for alcohol



[Table 8](#) and [Table 9](#) and [Chart 1](#) provide more background information about accidents involving drivers above the legal limit for alcohol.

Table 8: Casualties from accidents where at least one driver had a positive breath test, Wales, 2013 to 2017

	<i>Number</i>				
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
January	5	6	9	10	9
February	10	10	13	15	9
March	19	12	11	17	7
April	11	14	4	7	8
May	8	21	6	7	9
June	10	12	13	7	7
July	15	5	16	15	11
August	12	9	13	7	7
September	14	10	10	9	5
October	10	9	14	7	6
November	16	12	20	5	8
December	15	7	11	11	11
All months	145	127	140	117	97

Source: WG analysis of the STATS19 statistical form from Police

[Table 8](#) shows:

- Considerable variation between the months of the year and the same months in different years.
- Total positive tests in 2017 were 33 per cent lower than in 2013.
- A 17 per cent fall in positive tests between 2016 and 2017.
- In 2017, September recorded the lowest casualties (5) and July and December the highest (11).

Table 9: Positive breath tests of drivers involved in accidents, by day of the week, Wales, 2015 to 2017

	<i>Number and per cent</i>					
	2015		2016		2017	
Day of week	Number	Per cent (a)	Number	Per cent (a)	Number	Per cent (a)
Monday	13	3.0	9	2.7	5	1.7
Tuesday	7	1.7	7	2.1	14	4.5
Wednesday	13	3.5	11	3.2	14	4.6
Thursday	27	5.6	18	4.6	13	3.8
Friday	27	6.5	32	8.8	19	7.5
Saturday	40	11.5	28	9.1	22	8.4
Sunday	13	3.1	12	3.1	10	3.1
All days	140	4.8	117	4.7	97	4.6

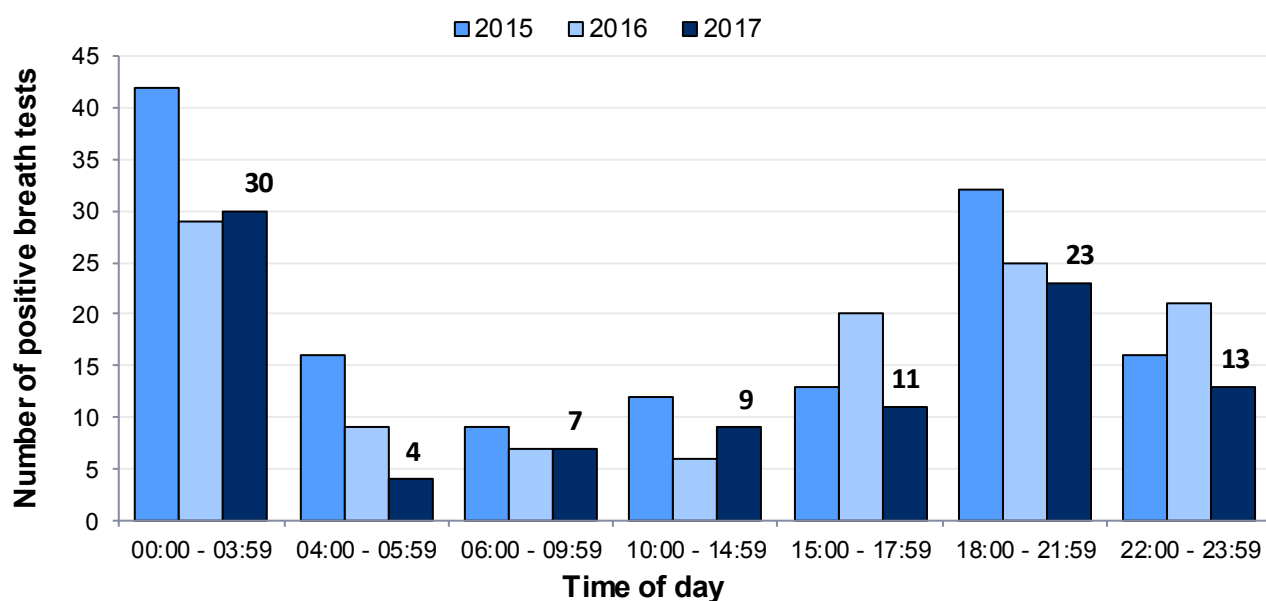
Source: WG analysis of the STATS19 statistical form from Police

Notes:

(a) Positive tests as a percentage of all breath tests of drivers involved in accidents on the given day.

[Table 9](#) shows the number of positive breath tests recorded by the days of the week and the proportion of all tests that were positive. Fridays and Saturdays consistently see the highest number and proportion of positive tests, suggesting that one cause of the deviation in the monthly numbers ([Table 8](#)) could be the number of weekends falling in each month, which varies from year to year.

Chart 1: Positive breath tests from drivers involved in accidents, by time of day, Wales, 2015 to 2017



Source: WG analysis of the STATS19 statistical form from Police

[Chart 1](#) shows the number of positive tests by grouped time periods. It highlights that:

- Drivers involved in accidents are more likely to test positive outside of traditional working hours
- In 2017, the period between 18:00 to 03:59 accounted for 68 per cent of all accidents involving positive testing drivers, a similar proportion to previous years.

Table 10: Breath tests of drivers involved in accidents, by local authority, 2016 to 2017

	number and per cent						
	2016			2017			Positive
	Positive		Negative	Positive		Negative	per
Police Force Region	number	per cent	number	number	per cent	number	100,000
North Wales Police	23	4.0	548	19	3.5	522	2.7
Isle of Anglesey	1	2.4	41	3	7.1	39	4.3
Gwynedd	4	3.6	107	3	2.5	117	2.4
Conwy	5	4.9	98	4	3.7	105	3.4
Denbighshire	3	2.7	107	3	3.4	86	3.2
Flintshire	3	2.6	114	4	3.9	99	2.6
Wrexham	7	8.0	81	2	2.6	76	1.5
Gwent Police	14	4.8	275	14	5.6	236	2.4
Caerphilly	2	2.9	66	4	5.6	68	2.2
Blaenau Gwent	2	7.7	24	4	16.7	20	5.7
Torfaen	2	4.0	48	1	3.1	31	1.1
Monmouthshire	5	9.3	49	2	3.8	50	2.1
Newport	3	3.3	88	3	4.3	67	2.0
South Wales Police	43	4.7	878	40	5.8	653	3.0
Swansea	7	3.3	206	11	6.6	155	4.5
Neath Port Talbot	6	4.7	121	6	5.6	101	4.2
Bridgend	7	7.3	89	6	8.0	69	4.2
The Vale of Glamorgan	4	5.4	70	1	2.1	47	0.8
Cardiff	7	3.6	188	6	4.4	130	1.7
Rhondda Cynon Taff	10	6.1	155	10	8.2	112	4.2
Merthyr Tydfil	2	3.9	49	0	0.0	39	0.0
Dyfed-Powys Police	37	5.3	663	24	3.9	592	4.6
Pembrokeshire	7	5.3	126	6	4.4	131	4.8
Carmarthenshire	13	5.5	223	10	5.1	186	5.4
Powys	9	4.0	217	4	2.1	187	1.6
Ceredigion	8	7.6	97	4	4.3	88	2.8
Wales	198	7.7	2,364	97	4.6	2,003	3.1

Source: WG analysis of the STATS19 statistical form from Police

Notes:

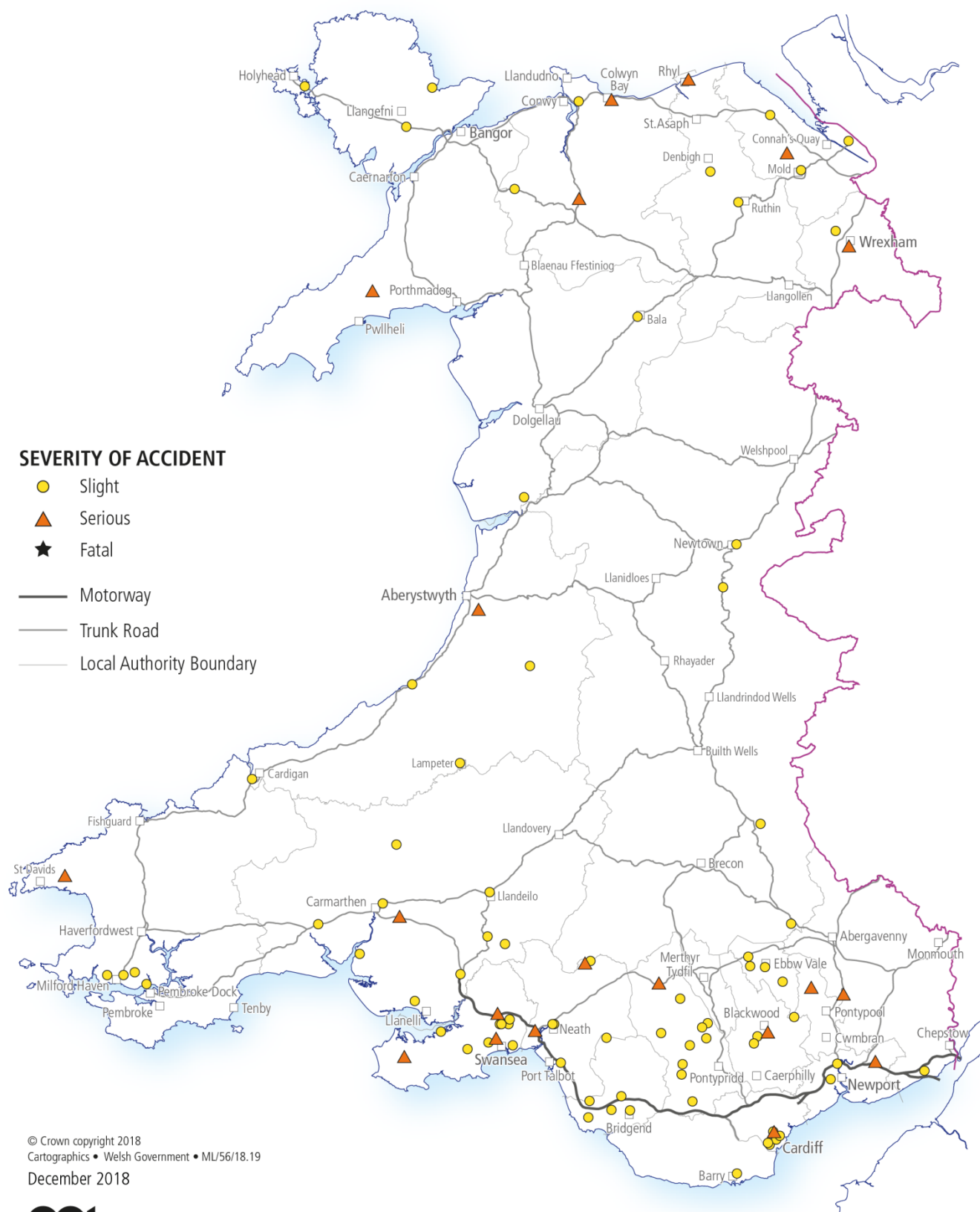
(a) positive per 100,000 population uses the mid-2017 population estimates and is the rate of positive tests per 100,000 population.

[Table 10](#) shows the breakdown of positive breath tests of drivers involved in accidents by Police Force areas and Local Authorities, and gives the number of positive tests per 100,000 of the population. (Since the numbers are small at Local Authority level, the rates should be regarded as indicative only). It shows that in 2017:

- There was a 51 per cent fall in the number of positive breath tests for drivers involved in accidents in Wales, from 198 to 97. This was 3.1 positive tests per 100,000 of the population.
- South Wales Police recorded the highest number of positive tests (40), but the highest rate was in Dyfed-Powys, at 4.6 per 100,000 of the population. The lowest rate was in Gwent (2.4 per 100,000 of the population).

[Map 1](#) below shows the locations of the 97 accidents where at least one driver had a positive breath test in Wales in 2017 (as shown in [Table 10](#)).

Map 1: Accident location where at least one driver was tested positive for alcohol in Wales in 2017



Enforcement action

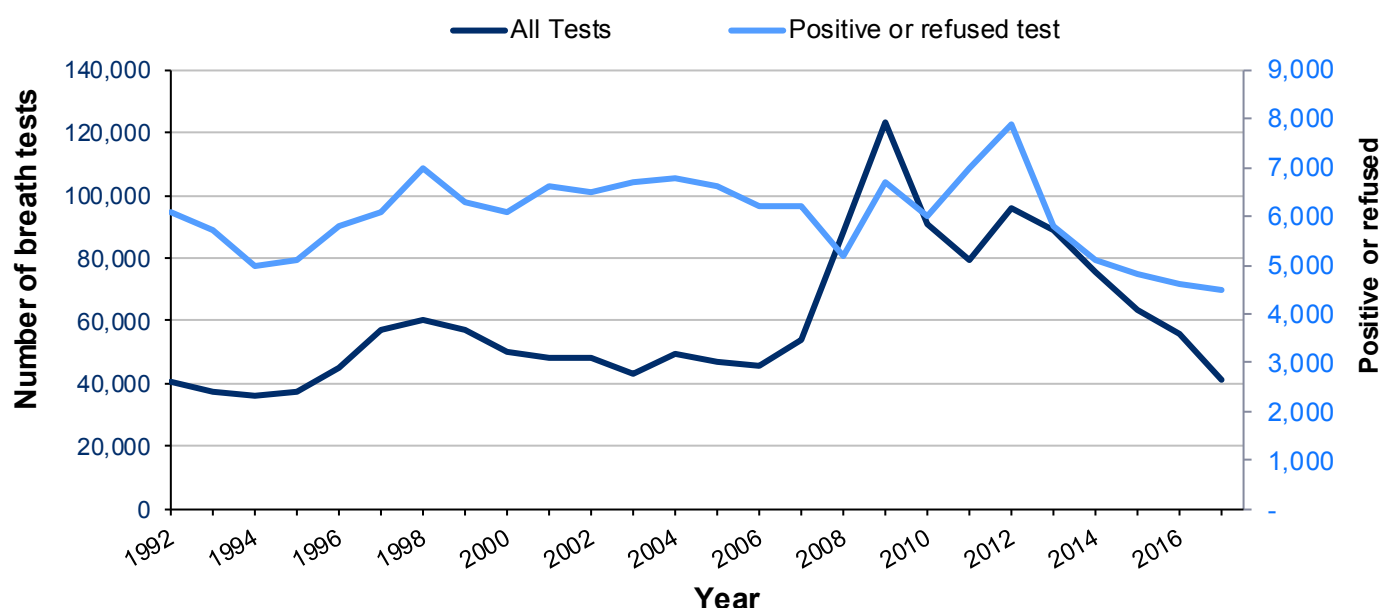


To complete the picture of drink driving in Wales, this section summarises police and court action in relation to drink driving motoring offences. Those included may or may not have been in an accident.

The number of annual screening breath tests increased dramatically between 2007 and 2009, before falling back to the 2000-2007 levels in the last two years ([Chart 3](#)). This increase was 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. At its peak in 2009 there were 123,000 tests, and in 2017 there were 41,500, a 26 per cent fall compared with 2016.

There were 4,500 positive or refused tests in 2017. This was the lowest figure since the series began in 1992, however the rate of positive or refused tests (11 per cent) was the highest since 2007 ([Table 11](#)). There was a 43 per cent 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 57 per cent). The relationship between the total amount of testing and the number of positive or refused tests is not straight forward ([Chart 3](#)). 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 3: Motoring offences: Screening breath tests, Wales, 1992 to 2017 (a) (b) (c)



Source: Welsh Government analysis of Home Office data

Notes:

- (a) Every effort is made to ensure that the figures presented are accurate and complete. However, it is important to know that these data have been extracted from large administrative data systems generated by police forces.
- (b) Due to under-reporting, the positive breath tests figure has been replaced by court proceedings for Dyfed-Powys and South Wales police forces since 1988, and for Gwent police force since 2001.
- (c) From April 2003 Gwent changed to a different system of recording breath tests which resulted in a shortfall of total screenings.

Table 11: Motoring offences: screening breath tests, Wales, 2000 to 2017 (a), (b)*Number (nearest hundred), Per cent*

Year	Negative test results	Percentage positive or refused	All tests
2000	44,100	12.2%	50,200
2001	41,300	13.8%	47,900
2002	41,700	13.6%	48,200
2003	36,300	15.6%	43,000
2004	42,500	13.8%	49,200
2005	40,400	14.0%	47,000
2006	39,500	13.5%	45,700
2007	47,700	11.5%	53,900
2008	83,000	5.9%	88,200
2009	116,300	5.5%	123,000
2010	84,900	6.6%	90,900
2011	72,600	8.8%	79,600
2012	88,200	8.2%	96,100
2013	83,000	6.5%	88,800
2014	70,700	6.7%	75,800
2015	58,700	7.6%	63,500
2016	51,300	8.2%	55,900
2017	37,000	11.0%	41,500

Source: Welsh Government analysis of Home Office data

Notes:

(a) 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 police forces.

(b) From April 2003 Gwent changed to a different system of recording breath tests which resulted in a shortfall of total screenings.

Table 12: Guilty verdicts for drink or drug driving offences, Wales, 2013 to 2017 (a) (b)(c)

Age group	<i>Number</i>				
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Under 18	21	17	15	14	10
18-20	209	185	211	201	169
21 and over	2,791	2,828	2,959	2,920	2,613
All ages	3,021	3,030	3,185	3,135	2,792

Source: WG analysis of the Criminal justice statistics data, Ministry of Justice

Notes:

(a) Offences of driving are defined as driving or in charge of a motor vehicle whilst impaired by

(b) Includes offences under road traffic act 1988 sections 4 (1&2), 5 (1A&B), 6 (6), 7 (6A).

(c) As part of additional quality assurance in 2016, a small number of offence codes were reclassified between offence types to better reflect their legal basis. This applies from 2011.

[Table 12](#) shows:

- 2,792 offenders were found guilty of driving after consuming alcohol or taking drugs in 2017.
- 94 per cent (2,613 offenders) were over the age of 21, 6 per cent (169 offenders) were aged between 18-20 and 0.4 per cent (10 offenders) were under 18.

Table 13: Number of people by age group found guilty for alcohol/drug related driving offences, Wales, 2017 (a) (b) (c) (d)

Motoring Offence Group	Number			
	Under 18	18-20	21 and over	All ages
Driving with alcohol in the blood above the prescribed limit	8	151	2126	2,285
Driving with a controlled drug above specified limit	0	0	8	8
Attempting to drive with a controlled drug above specified limit	0	0	0	0
Driving and failing to provide specimen for analysis (breath, blood or urine)	1	11	300	312
In charge of motor vehicle with alcohol in the blood above the prescribed limit	0	3	92	95
In charge of a motor vehicle with a controlled drug above specified limit	0	1	10	11
In charge of motor vehicle and failing to provide specimen for analysis	0	0	21	21
In charge of a stolen vehicle whilst unfit through drink (impairment)	0	1	5	6
In charge of a stolen vehicle whilst unfit through drugs (impairment)	0	0	3	3
Unfit to drive through drink (impairment)	0	1	6	7
Unfit to drive through drugs (impairment)	1	1	39	41
Unfit to drive through drink and drugs (impairment)	0	0	0	0
Failing to provide specimen for initial breath test	0	0	3	3
Failing to allow specimens of blood to be subjected to laboratory test	0	0	0	0
All offences	10	169	2,613	2,792

Source: Welsh Government analysis of criminal justice statistics, Ministry of Justice data

Notes:

(a) Offences of driving are defined as driving or whilst in charge of a motor vehicle whilst impaired by drink or drugs or whilst above the specified limit for alcohol.

(b) Includes Offences Under Road Traffic Act 1988 sections 4(1)(2), 5(1)(A)(B), 6(6), 7(6)(A).

(c) '-' = Nil

(d) As part of additional quality assurance in 2016, a small number of offence codes were reclassified between offence types to better reflect their legal basis. This applies from 2011.

In 2017, for all ages shows([Table 13](#)):

- 82 per cent were for driving with alcohol in the blood above the prescribed limit.
- 0.3 per cent were driving with a controlled drug above the specified limit.
- 11 per cent were for driving and failing to provide a specimen for analysis.
- 1.5 per cent were unfit to drive through drugs.
- 3.4 per cent were found guilty of being in charge of a vehicle with alcohol above the legal limit.

Drinking and pedestrian casualties in 2017

This section looks at accidents for which police officers judged that pedestrians being impaired by alcohol were contributory factors.



Table 14: Pedestrian casualties impaired by alcohol (aged 16 and over), by gender and severity, Wales, 2017

	All pedestrian casualties aged 16 and over	Impaired by alcohol		
		Number		
		Male	Female	Total
Killed	19	1	0	1
Serious	131	18	4	22
Slight	393	37	10	47
<i>All casualties</i>	<i>543</i>	<i>56</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>70</i>

Source: WG analysis of the STATS19 statistical form from Police

- 13 per cent (70 casualties) of all pedestrian casualties were impaired by alcohol
- Males accounted for 80 per cent of all pedestrian casualties impaired by alcohol.

Table 15: Pedestrian casualties impaired by alcohol, by gender and age, Wales, 2017

Age group	Pedestrian casualties impaired by alcohol									All pedestrian casualties		
	Male			Female			Total			Number		
	KSI	Slight	Total	KSI	Slight	Total	KSI	Slight	Total	KSI	Slight	Total
0-15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	40	147	187
16-19	1	5	6	0	1	1	1	6	7	10	47	57
20-24	2	3	5	0	2	2	2	5	7	16	45	61
25-29	3	4	7	0	3	3	3	7	10	6	42	48
30-39	4	10	14	1	2	3	5	12	17	22	69	91
40-49	4	4	8	2	0	2	6	4	10	20	39	59
50-59	5	7	12	0	1	1	5	8	13	21	58	79
60-69	0	2	2	0	1	1	0	3	3	11	36	47
70+	0	2	2	1	0	1	1	2	3	41	61	102
Unknown	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3
Total	19	37	56	4	10	14	23	47	70	187	547	734

Source: WG analysis of the STATS19 statistical form from Police

Table 15 shows the age breakdown for pedestrian casualties impaired by alcohol. It shows:

- There were ten times as many pedestrian casualties not impaired by alcohol as there were impaired by alcohol.
- The 30-39 age group had the highest number of pedestrian casualties impaired by alcohol.
- There were only 6 impaired by alcohol pedestrian casualties aged 60+.

Table 16: Pedestrian casualties impaired by alcohol, by severity and time of day, Wales, 2017

Time of Day	KSI	Slight	<i>Number</i>
			Total
06:00 - 09:59	1	0	1
10:00 - 13:59	0	5	5
14:00 - 17:59	2	9	11
18:00 - 21:59	10	8	18
22:00 - 01:59	1	6	7
02:00 - 05:59	9	19	28
Total	23	47	70

Source: WG analysis of the STATS19 statistical form from Police

- 87 per cent of KSI and 70 per cent of slight casualties occurred between the hours of 18:00 and 05:59.

Notes

1 Context

1.1 Related publications

- The Department for Transport produce a series of 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 Department of the Environment in Northern Ireland produce an annual statistical report on '[Road Safety](#)' which includes information on fatalities attributed to alcohol.

2 Data source

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 court proceedings in relation to drink driving reproduces the statistics compiled by the Ministry of Justice in their '[Criminal Justice Series](#)'.

3 Coverage

The coverage of the Coroners Courts data is as follows:

- The blood test is only carried out if the victim dies within 12 hours of the accident (so only cover 80 per cent of road traffic accident fatalities), and is aged 16 and over;
- Across all types of victim, the average coverage is 75 per cent of these 'victims dying within 12 hours'. This is because (1) some coroners do not send in data and (2) Coroners practise differs, many only measure blood alcohol when victim is 'considered at fault'; and sometimes only when blood alcohol is likely to be a factor.
- This gives 60 per cent 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 (around 70 per cent) but less for passengers, pedestrians, and pedal cyclists (40-50per cent). 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 Drink drive definitions

A **drink drive accident** is an incident on a public road in which someone is killed or injured and where one or more of the drivers or rider involved:

- Refused to give a breath test when requested by the Police, or
- Failed a roadside test by registering over 35 micrograms of alcohol per 100 millilitres of breath, or
- Was subsequently found to have more than 80 milligrams of alcohol per 100 millilitres of blood.

In addition to these drink drive accidents, a proportion of accidents involve pedestrians whose behaviour was affected by alcohol (or who were subsequently found to have alcohol in their blood). It is also clear from the STATS19-based information about 'contributory factors' to accidents, and other research, that drugs (both illegal and medicinal) are also a factor in some traffic accidents.

4.2 Other definitions

A casualty is defined as a person killed or injured in an accident. One accident may give rise to several casualties. Casualties are subdivided into killed, seriously injured and slightly injured categories.

Casualties reported as killed include only those cases where death occurs in less than 30 days as a result of the accident. They do not include those who died as a result of natural causes (e.g. heart attack) rather than as a result of the accident, nor do they include confirmed suicides or murder victims.

4.3 Changes to legislation and practise

A summary of the legislation and changes to police procedures:

- The Road Safety Act 1967 made it illegal to drive with a blood alcohol concentration of more than 80mg per 100ml and introduced roadside screening for alcohol for the first time.
- The Transport Act 1981 introduced additional measures to curtail drinking and driving including evidential breath testing and stiffer penalties. The fall has been fairly regular since 1980, but with a sharp decline in 1983 when the law relating to drink/driving was changed and evidential breath-testing was introduced by the 1981 Transport Act. Evidential breath testing was introduced in 1983 to supplement the taking of blood samples. This Act also introduced compulsory seat belt wearing and new procedures for licensing learner motorcyclists.
- Section 6 of the Road Traffic Act (1988) allows the police to test any driver involved in an accident, whether or not anyone is injured. The act stipulates that where there has not been a road accident, the police can only take a roadside breath test following a moving traffic offence, or if there is suspicion of alcohol use.
- In April 1996 the Association of Chief Police Officers in England and Wales (ACPO) adopted a policy of breath testing all drivers involved in road accidents which the police deal with or attend, whether injuries are involved or not. Before this, all Scottish police forces, and some in England and Wales, already operated similar policies, but in some cases for injury accidents only.

5 Symbols

In tables where figures have been rounded to the nearest final digit, there may be an apparent discrepancy between the sum of the constituent items and the total shown.

The following symbol has been used throughout the bulletin: “–“ which is “not applicable”

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

Each year, the four police forces in Wales launch the All Wales Christmas Anti Drink/Drug Driving Campaign, a campaign to crackdown on drink driving and driving under the influence of drugs over the Christmas period, and the latest drink drive statistics are used in the campaign publicity material.

6.2 Accuracy

1. For DfT estimates: The basis of the figures is described in the DfT [article about drinking and driving](#). Briefly, they combine the data from the STATS19 about any drivers or riders that either fail their breath test or refuse to take a test, together with data from Coroners about the blood alcohol levels of road users who dies within 12 hours of an accident. The estimates are adjusted to take account of cases where drivers were not tested because they left the scene of the accident, or where blood alcohol levels were not reported because, for example, they died more than 12 hours after the accident.
2. For Contributory factors: These figures are based in police officers' views, so figures are based on a subjective view of an accident. The police officers may miss out on drivers that are not obviously drunk; they also have a choice about which contributory factors to enter so may miss out alcohol in favour of a literal description of the accident (e.g. junction overshoot, travelling too fast for the conditions etc). Taking these factors together suggest that these figures will tend to under-estimate the role of alcohol in accidents.

6.3 Timeliness and punctuality

The statistics in this bulletin relate to cases in Wales in 2017 and cases covering Wales and Great Britain during 12 months ending December 2016.

6.4 Accessibility and clarity

This Statistical Bulletin is pre-announced and then published on the Statistics & Research website.

6.5 Comparability and coherence

See sections 1.1 and 2.

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.

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 includes none of these 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: <http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/drinking-driving/?lang=en>.

Further tables of data are available at: from [StatsWales](#).

Next update

December 2019 (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

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