

Assessment of compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics

Statistics on Reported Road Casualties

(produced by the Department for Transport)

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About the UK Statistics Authority

The UK Statistics Authority is an independent body operating at arm's length from government as a non-ministerial department, directly accountable to Parliament. It was established on 1 April 2008 by the *Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007*.

The Authority's overall objective is to promote and safeguard the production and publication of official statistics that serve the public good. It is also required to promote and safeguard the quality and comprehensiveness of official statistics, and good practice in relation to official statistics.

The Statistics Authority has two main functions:

1. oversight of the Office for National Statistics (ONS) – the executive office of the Authority;
2. independent scrutiny (monitoring and assessment) of all official statistics produced in the UK.

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ASSESSMENT AND DESIGNATION

The *Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007* gives the UK Statistics Authority a statutory power to assess sets of statistics against the *Code of Practice for Official Statistics*. Assessment will determine whether it is appropriate for the statistics to be designated as National Statistics.

Designation as National Statistics means that the statistics comply with the *Code of Practice*. The *Code* is wide-ranging. Designation can be interpreted to mean that the statistics: meet identified user needs; are produced, managed and disseminated to high standards; and are explained well.

Designation as National Statistics should not be interpreted to mean that the statistics are always correct. For example, whilst the *Code* requires statistics to be produced to a level of accuracy that meets users' needs, it also recognises that errors can occur – in which case it requires them to be corrected and publicised.

Assessment reports will not normally comment further on a set of statistics, for example on their validity as social or economic measures. However, reports may point to such questions if the Authority believes that further research would be desirable.

Assessment reports typically provide an overview of any noteworthy features of the methods used to produce the statistics, and will highlight substantial concerns about quality. Assessment reports also describe aspects of the ways in which the producer addresses the 'sound methods and assured quality' principle of the *Code*, but do not themselves constitute a review of the methods used to produce the statistics. However the *Code* requires producers to "seek to achieve continuous improvement in statistical processes by, for example, undertaking regular reviews".

The Authority may grant designation on condition that the producer body takes steps, within a stated timeframe, to fully meet the *Code's* requirements. This is to avoid public confusion and does not reduce the obligation to comply with the *Code*.

The Authority grants designation on the basis of three main sources of information:

- i. factual evidence and assurances by senior statisticians in the producer body;
- ii. the views of users who we contact, or who contact us, and;
- iii. our own review activity.

Should further information come to light subsequently which changes the Authority's analysis, it may withdraw the Assessment report and revise it as necessary.

It is a statutory requirement on the producer body to ensure that it continues to produce the set of statistics designated as National Statistics in compliance with the *Code of Practice*.

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1 Summary of findings

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 This is one of a series of reports¹ prepared under the provisions of the *Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007*². The Act gives the Statistics Authority power to re-assess whether the *Code of Practice for Official Statistics*³ continues to be complied with in relation to official statistics already designated as National Statistics. This report covers the sets of statistics⁴ produced by the Department for Transport (DfT) and reported in:

- *Reported Road Casualties Great Britain Annual Report (RRC Annual)*; and
- *Reported Road Casualties in Great Britain: Quarterly Provisional Estimates and Main Results (RRC Quarterly)*.

1.1.2 The previous assessment of these sets of statistics was reported in Assessment Report 4⁵. They have been re-assessed as part of the Statistics Authority's ongoing programme of re-assessment. This is discussed further in annex 4.

1.1.3 Section 3 of this report adopts an 'exception reporting' approach – it includes text only to support the Requirements made to strengthen compliance with the *Code* and Suggestions made to improve confidence in the production, management and dissemination of these statistics. This abbreviated style of report reflects the Head of Assessment's consideration of aspects of risk and materiality⁶. The Assessment team nonetheless assessed compliance with all parts of the *Code of Practice* and has commented on all those in respect of which some remedial action is recommended.

1.1.4 This report was prepared by the Authority's Assessment team, and approved by the Assessment Committee on behalf of the Board of the Statistics Authority, based on the advice of the Head of Assessment.

1.2 Decision concerning designation as National Statistics

1.2.1 The Statistics Authority judges that the statistics covered by this report are readily accessible, produced according to sound methods and managed impartially and objectively in the public interest, subject to any points for action in this report. The Statistics Authority confirms that the statistics published in 1.1.1 are designated as National Statistics, subject to DfT implementing the

¹ <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment-reports/index.html>

² http://www.opsi.gov.uk/Acts/acts2007/pdf/ukpga_20070018_en.pdf

³ <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html>

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport/series/road-accidents-and-safety-statistics>

⁵ <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-4---road-casualty-statistics--27-july-2009.pdf>

⁶ <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment/guidance-about-assessment/criteria-for-deciding-upon-the-format-of-an-assessment-report.pdf>

enhancements listed in section 1.5 and reporting them to the Authority by September 2013.

- 1.2.2 DfT has informed the Assessment team that it has started to implement the Requirements listed in section 1.5. The Statistics Authority welcomes this.

1.3 Summary of strengths and weaknesses

- 1.3.1 DfT presents the statistics clearly in the reports; these are accompanied by comprehensive commentary. *RRC Annual* incorporates topics of particular interest, adding additional value from the statistics. DfT has undertaken work to improve the quality of the estimates and relate them to other sources of statistics that are published.
- 1.3.2 A wide community of users of these statistics is willing and able to contribute through formal and informal groups. DfT engages well with some of these users though there has been a 2 year gap since the last Standing Committee on Road Accident Statistics⁷ (SCRAS) meeting and this has left users unclear as to the current status of the group. Users who are not part of this group told us that they would like to know more about the development of the statistics.
- 1.3.3 Although DfT has done a great deal of work to consider other data sources, further work is required to understand and explain the differences between the various estimates of the total number and type of road casualties. Some users raised concerns to us regarding the known under-reporting of road casualties, principally relating to evaluating the bias caused by under-reporting.
- 1.3.4 The development of the Collision Recording And SHaring⁸ (CRASH) data collection system has taken longer than was expected and appears to have held back some engagement with users and further development of the statistics. Some users were concerned that the deployment of the CRASH system could create inconsistencies in the recording of accidents by the police.

1.4 Detailed recommendations

- 1.4.1 The Assessment team identified some areas where it felt that DfT could strengthen its compliance with the *Code*. Those which the Assessment team considers essential to enable designation as National Statistics are listed in section 1.5. Other suggestions, which would improve the statistics and the service provided to users but which are not formally required for their designation, are listed at annex 1.

1.5 Requirements for designation as National Statistics

Requirement 1	Take steps to engage more widely with users of the statistics and publish information about users' experiences of the statistics (para 3.1).
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⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/committees-and-user-groups-on-transport-statistics>

⁸ <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110503151558/http://dft.gov.uk/pgr/statistics/committeesusergroups/crash>

Requirement 2	Publish the updated methodology and assumptions used in the calculation of the valuation of accidents (para 3.4).
Requirement 3	Ensure that users are informed about the strengths and limitations of the RRC statistics, including estimates of the main sources of bias and other errors, in relation to their use (para 3.5).
Requirement 4	Continue to enhance the understanding of under-reporting of road casualties and publish the findings (para 3.6).
Requirement 5	Publish details of the arrangements to ensure that the privacy of individual information is sufficiently protected (para 3.7).
Requirement 6	Improve the analysis and presentation of information in the reports so that it aids user interpretation of the statistics (para 3.8).

2 Subject of the assessment

- 2.1 Statistics on road casualties were first published in 1909 and the basic approach to the production of the statistics has remained the same since then; the collection of data by the police at the scene, providing information about the circumstances of the accidents and casualties. This information is collected alongside the separate collection of evidence for use by the police. The statistics are published for Great Britain and its constituent countries.
- 2.2 Road casualty data are currently recorded in the STATS19 form⁹ and system, which was introduced in 1979. A guidance document, STATS 20¹⁰, is provided to support those who provide data returns. The STATS19 system stores data about personal injury accidents attended by the police, but not about accidents that do not result in personal injury.
- 2.3 The STATS19 collection is governed by the Standing Committee on Road Accident Statistics¹¹ (SCRAS), which met twice a year. The group is made up of data providers (police forces and local authorities) and users (such as DfT, the Home Office, the Scottish Government and the Welsh Government) and is responsible, among other things, for changes to the STATS19 collection and the collection of additional information. This group has not met since 2011, though DfT told us that another meeting is planned for the summer of 2013. Changes to the STATS19 collection are communicated through SCRAS reviews. In addition, the statistics are subject to quinquennial reviews with the most recent review being carried out in 2008¹². DfT also provides information and support to local authority networks, the Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety¹³ (PACTS), academics, interest and pressure groups, and other organisations and bodies.
- 2.4 In response to the requirements in Assessment Report 4¹⁴, the statistical reports were renamed 'Reported Road Casualties in Great Britain' in 2009. In March 2010, the House of Commons Transport Committee invited the UK Statistics Authority to investigate the extent to which DfT had sought an explanation for the divergence between the number of people killed in road traffic accidents and those seriously injured. The Authority subsequently published *Proposals to improve the reporting of road casualties*¹⁵ in January 2011; a Monitoring Review¹⁶ published in January 2013 noted that all recommendations from that report had been completed by DfT.
- 2.5 DfT publishes *Reported Road Casualties Great Britain Annual Report (RRC Annual)* each September, which presents statistics and more analysis and

⁹ <http://assets.dft.gov.uk/statistics/series/road-accidents-and-safety/stats19-road-accident-injury-statistics-report-form.pdf>

¹⁰ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/48824/stats20-2011.pdf

¹¹ See footnote 8

¹² <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110503210247/http://dft.gov.uk/pgr/statistics/committee/susergroups/scras/2008reviewstats19/%20>

¹³ <http://www.pacts.org.uk/>

¹⁴ See footnote 5

¹⁵ <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/monitoring/monitoring-reviews/monitoring-brief-1-2011---proposals-to-improve-the-reporting-of-road-casualties.pdf>

¹⁶ <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/monitoring/monitoring-reviews/monitoring-review-1-2013---monitoring-update---january-2013.pdf>

commentary about specific topics of interest. DfT publishes *Reported Road Casualties in Great Britain: Quarterly Provisional Estimates and Main Results (RRC Quarterly)* as provisional reports in August, November and February and a final report in June, incorporating revisions, if required, to the first three quarters of the previous calendar year. DfT has also released an anonymised dataset comprising STATS19 data¹⁷ each year since 2005 and deposits these datasets in the UK Data Archive¹⁸ for researchers, although DfT does not release data for contributory factors¹⁹. DfT has commissioned research to review the level of detail at which it would be appropriate to release data that includes contributory factors.

- 2.6 To address concerns about the known under-reporting of road casualty statistics, DfT has incorporated analysis based on the linking of STATS19 data to the Health & Social Care Information Centre's Hospital Episode Statistics²⁰ (HES) in its reporting and included additional questions in its National Travel Survey²¹ (NTS), asking survey respondents about road accidents that they had been involved in and whether these had been reported to the police. These are used to provide analyses of upper and lower estimates of the total number of road traffic accidents in addition to the estimates covering incidents with recorded casualties. Due to a delay in the availability of the estimates from the NTS, these analyses were not produced for 2011 but will be included along with the RRC estimates for 2012 in the 2012 *RRC Annual*.
- 2.7 DfT and the Home Office are developing a new data collection system, Collision Recording And SHaring²² (CRASH), which aims to provide a secure electronic system for collecting, validating and supplying RRC data. The system is intended to meet police requirements for recording evidential material on road traffic accidents as well as collecting and supplying electronic data about road traffic accidents to local authorities and DfT. Implementation of the CRASH system has taken a lot longer than was originally envisaged but is now at the end of the pilot phase and a decision is expected to be made by the CRASH project board during summer 2013 over whether to go ahead with the full roll-out of the system. The project was initially funded by DfT, but will be funded by the Home Office and police forces once it is operational. The Home Office will provide the resources for the roll-out of the system. The CRASH system will provide extra detail on the severity of serious injuries, classifying them as very, moderately or less severe, whether the casualties were wearing seat belts or cycling helmets, and what the most serious injury was. The system will provide the option of using mobile devices to record data at the site of an incident with a single entry covering both police and statistical requirements, intended to reduce the resource burden of the statistics and improve the quality of data recording.
- 2.8 DfT adopts standard EU definitions for the recording of road casualties and is required by EU legislation to supply the EC with individual road traffic accident

¹⁷ <http://data.gov.uk/dataset/road-accidents-safety-data>

¹⁸ <http://discover.ukdataservice.ac.uk/catalogue/?sn=6926&type=Data%20catalogue>

¹⁹ Contributory factors show the key actions and failures that directly led to the accident. They are based on the opinion of the reporting police officer and are therefore subjective

²⁰ <http://www.hscic.gov.uk/hes>

²¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport/series/national-travel-survey-statistics>

²² See footnote 9

records. DfT supplies anonymised data to the EC annually, along with additional data from Northern Ireland to create a UK return. There is no formal agreement with Northern Ireland, at present, for the provision of statistics to incorporate in the RRC reports, but DfT told us that a number of users have requested this and that it is working towards an agreement.

- 2.9 DfT has identified a wide range of uses and users of the statistics. Within DfT they are used for briefings, responses to Parliamentary Questions, enquiries, and as input to policy development and evaluation. DfT supplies anonymised data to bodies such as research and academic organisations. The statistics have been used as input into reports on road safety by PACTS, the National Audit Office²³, the Institute of Advanced Motorists²⁴, and the Association of British Insurers²⁵.
- 2.10 DfT told us that the statistics and associated outputs are produced by a team of five with the majority of costs being staff time and office overheads. There is no specific cost calculated for the collection and validation of the STATS19 dataset. In addition, the HES linkage project costs approximately £4,000 per year, and the coroner's data for drink and drive statistics costs approximately £57,500 per year. The additional questions added to the National Travel Survey have not had a cost separately calculated, but DfT told us that it has only a marginal additional cost.
- 2.11 The RRC reports are published in PDF, with supplementary tables published in Excel and CSV formats. This equates to a level 3 rating under the Five Star Scheme proposed in the *Open Data White Paper: Unleashing the Potential*²⁶.

²³ <http://www.nao.org.uk/report/department-for-transport-improving-road-safety-for-pedestrians-and-cyclists-in-great-britain/>

²⁴ <http://www.iam.org.uk/media-and-research/research/reports>

²⁵ <https://www.abi.org.uk/>

²⁶ http://data.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Open_data_White_Paper.pdf

3 Assessment findings

- 3.1 The statistics team engages with users through formal and informal means with the STATS19 data collection guided by the SCRAS. SCRAS was intended to meet twice a year, but it has not met since 2011. DfT told us that there were few topics that could be considered by SCRAS while CRASH was being developed. As the final decision on CRASH roll-out is approaching, a meeting of SCRAS has been scheduled for July 2013. DfT publishes little information about the uses and users of the statistics. DfT also publishes little information for users outside of the SCRAS group, such as on the progress of the CRASH project, and users told us that they could find no other way to get updates about other developments to the statistics. As part of the designation as National Statistics, DfT should take steps to engage more widely with users of the statistics and publish information about users' experiences of the statistics²⁷ (Requirement 1). In meeting this requirement, we suggest that DfT refer to the types of use put forward in the Statistics Authority's Monitoring Brief, *The Use Made of Official Statistics*²⁸ when documenting use.
- 3.2 DfT revises RRC statistics between the provisional and final reports to capture late and updated returns from data suppliers. DfT has published a revisions policy²⁹ that lists the purposes of revisions, and explains about scheduled, unexpected and substantial revisions. During the course of this assessment, DfT included a new section within the RRC reports to explain the nature and extent of revisions.
- 3.3 The statistics team told us that DfT does not normally charge for statistical outputs, although there have been exceptions where large or complex requests have been made, in line with the Freedom of Information guidelines and DfT's own charging policy. We suggest that DfT publish the charging policy relating to publications and requests for information, and circumstances where a charge may be applied, and provide a link within the RRC reports to this.
- 3.4 *RRC Annual* includes an article on the valuation of road accidents. The accident totals used in the valuation report take into account the under-reporting of accidents, which is estimated using the data collected in the NTS. From January 2013, coverage of the NTS will include only England. DfT told us that the valuation methodology will be updated to reflect this if it continues presenting statistics for GB. As part of the designation as National Statistics, DfT should publish the updated methodology and assumptions used in the calculation of the valuation of accidents³⁰ (Requirement 2). We suggest that in meeting this requirement DfT should develop and publish its intended approach for future valuation reports based on the changes to the coverage of the NTS.
- 3.5 The RRC reports include information about the strengths and weaknesses of the statistics, which is supported by additional information about the quality of them in individual chapters of *RRC Annual*. DfT has published documentation

²⁷ In relation to Principle 1, Practices 2 and 5 of the *Code of Practice*

²⁸ <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/monitoring/monitoring-reviews/monitoring-brief-6-2010---the-use-made-of-official-statistics.pdf>

²⁹ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/10958/revisions-policy.pdf

³⁰ In relation to Principle 4, Practice 1 of the *Code of Practice*

describing how the STATS19 data are collected³¹, what the data include and exclude, and definitions used. Some users who we contacted as part of this assessment noted their concerns relating to the different ways in which the data could be recorded, the varying length of time after an incident when it can be recorded, the coverage of the data, and the definitions used. The RRC reports include little information about potential sources of bias and errors in the data, or information about the dimensions of quality. As part of the designation as National Statistics, DfT should ensure that users are informed about the strengths and limitations of the RRC statistics, including estimates of the main sources of bias and other errors, in relation to their use³² (Requirement 3).

- 3.6 DfT has developed the statistics since Assessment Report 4, principally in presenting estimates to account for the known under-reporting of accidents through the linking with Hospital Episode Statistics (HES – see paragraph 2.7) and the inclusion of questions in the NTS. Users have noted these improvements and, along with the renaming of the statistical report to better reflect its content, see this as having improved the statistics. However, users told us that they still have concerns regarding under-reporting among specific subgroups of road users and in the recording of injury types and contributory factors. Users were concerned that this would lead to different levels of under-estimation of different subgroups. DfT is currently investigating the possibility of releasing additional detail on contributory factors but further work is needed to understand the range of under-reporting among road user subgroups. As part of the designation as National Statistics, DfT should continue to enhance its understanding of under-reporting of road casualties and publish the findings³³ (Requirement 4). In meeting the requirement, we suggest that DfT consider the opportunities for linking to other data sources in quantifying the difference between the RRC and HES estimates of the total number of road casualties caused by under-reporting, and seek to address concerns regarding the correct use of definitions and categories.
- 3.7 DfT has adopted appropriate disclosure controls for the anonymisation of data through the removal of variables, but has not published details of these measures. Access to the full dataset, excluding personal details, is provided to researchers who sign the appropriate license agreements. A report has been produced by ONS, funded by the Quality Improvement Fund³⁴ to consider what additional detail could be released to researchers and broader users on contributory factors. As part of the designation as National Statistics, DfT should publish details of the arrangements to ensure that the privacy of individual information is sufficiently protected³⁵ (Requirement 5). In meeting this requirement, we suggest that DfT publish the report produced by ONS on the publishable level of detail for contributory factors.
- 3.8 The RRC reports include commentary to describe the statistics, supported by a range of graphs and tables. *RRC Annual* is long and is sub-divided into

³¹ <https://www.gov.uk/transport-statistics-notes-and-guidance-road-accident-and-safety>

³² In relation to Principle 4, Practice 2 of the *Code of Practice*

³³ In relation to Principle 4, Practice 2 of the *Code of Practice*

³⁴ <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/method-quality/quality/the-work-of-the-ONS-quality-centre/quality-improvement-fund/index.html>

³⁵ In relation to Principle 5, Practice 4 of the *Code of Practice*

chapters, which can be accessed individually. The commentary in *RRC Annual* helps to explain the statistics, but relevant messages are sometimes difficult to find among all the information that is presented. The statistics are presented across a large number of tables, and the tables and charts lack correct labelling in some instances. *RRC Quarterly* gives an accessible insight into the main points but does not include other key messages such as accident rates, which are presented in *RRC Annual*. As part of the designation as National Statistics, DfT should improve the analysis and presentation of information in the reports so that it aids user interpretation of the statistics³⁶ (Requirement 6). We suggest that in meeting this requirement DfT should consider the points detailed in annex 2, in particular the inclusion of statistics for accident rates (for example, casualties per billion passenger miles) in *RRC Quarterly*.

³⁶ In relation to Principle 8, Practice 2 of the *Code of Practice*

Annex 1: Suggestions for improvement

A1.1 This annex includes some suggestions for improvement to DfT's reported road casualties statistics, in the interest of the public good. These are not formally required for designation, but the Assessment team considers that their implementation will improve public confidence in the production, management and dissemination of official statistics.

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Suggestion 1 | Refer to the types of use put forward in the Statistics Authority's Monitoring Brief, <i>The Use Made of Official Statistics</i> when documenting use (para 3.1). |
| Suggestion 2 | Publish the charging policy relating to publications and requests for information, and circumstances where a charge may be applied, and provide a link within the RRC reports to this (para 3.3). |
| Suggestion 3 | Develop and publish the intended approach for future valuation reports based on the changes to the coverage of the NTS (para 3.4). |
| Suggestion 4 | Consider the opportunities for linking to other data sources in quantifying the gap between the RRC and HES statistics caused by under-reporting, and seek to address concerns regarding the correct use of definitions and categories (para 3.6). |
| Suggestion 5 | Publish the report produced by ONS on the publishable level of detail for contributory factors (para 3.7). |
| Suggestion 6 | Consider the points detailed in annex 2 when improving the release, in particular the inclusion of statistics for accident rates (for example, casualties per billion passenger miles) in <i>RRC Quarterly</i> (para 3.8). |

Annex 2: Compliance with Standards for Statistical Reports

- A2.1 In November 2012, the Statistics Authority issued a statement on *Standards for Statistical Reports*³⁷. While this is not part of the *Code of Practice for Official Statistics*, the Authority regards it as advice that will promote both understanding and compliance with the *Code*. In relation to the statistical reports associated with the reported road casualties statistics, this annex comments on compliance with the statement on standards.
- A2.2 In implementing any Requirements of this report (at paragraph 1.5) which relate to the content of statistical reports, we encourage the producer body to apply the standards as fully as possible.

Include an impartial narrative in plain English that draws out the main messages from the statistics

- A2.3 *RRC Annual* is a long report that is divided into chapters, with key points at the beginning of each chapter. The latest figures are tabulated and the commentary explains what the statistics show, however, much of the useful commentary is hard to find between the data tables in each chapter.
- A2.4 In *RRC Annual*, it is difficult to access the correct data tables on the web page as they are not hyperlinked within the text. The index³⁸ to the data tables is presented on the web page separately to *RRC Annual*, which allows data to be accessed directly without the need to open the document.
- A2.5 *RRC Annual* presents statistics for accident rates, for example, per billion passenger miles and per million population, to support the interpretation of changes in the number and type of casualties. These rates are not presented in *RRC Quarterly*.
- A2.6 The RRC reports do not include information to draw out messages and present a narrative on the changes over time in the broader measure of road accidents that incorporates additional data sources.

Include information about the context and likely uses of the statistics

- A2.7 In response to changing stakeholder requirements, some of the chapters comprising *RRC Annual* are changed each year, in consultation with data users. However, the rationale for this, the users and uses to which the data are put are not discussed in each new chapter.

Include information about the strengths and limitations of the statistics in relation to their potential use

- A2.8 The RRC reports include a section called 'Strengths and weaknesses of the data' and detail the fact that the STATS19 dataset covers only accidents where an injury occurred that were reported to the police. The STATS19 dataset has been consistent over many years and so the information derived from it can be

³⁷ <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/news/standards-for-statistical-reports.html>

³⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/road-accidents-and-safety-statistical-tables-index>

used in trend and category analyses. The statistics team has used estimates from the NTS to estimate the level of under-coverage between the number of injury accidents reported and those not reported, but *RRC Annual* includes no link to the explanation of the limitations or bias of the NTS estimates.

A2.9 Statistics presented in *RRC Annual* use many other data sources (such as Ministry of Justice's coroner's data, ONS's Crime Survey data for England and Wales, HES, valuation data and roadside breath alcohol screening tests) as comparators and to compile the chapters in the report. However, each of these different data sources does not link to appropriate descriptions of strengths and limitations in relation to their use.

Be professionally sound

A2.10 *RRC Annual* presents information in tables and charts, which help the reader to understand the data, but the tables and charts are not always fully labelled, nor the source of the data always identified and linked.

Include, or link to, appropriate metadata

A2.11 *RRC Annual* chapters or tables do not hyperlink to the data tables where mentioned in the text and to earlier data series, where these are available, which would facilitate accessibility to the statistics.

A2.12 The RRC reports do not link to the DfT revisions policy and appropriate methodologies.

A2.13 There is no comprehensive quality and methodology report about the STATS19 data source which is linked to the RRC reports.

A2.14 Neither RRC report provides links to other government publications about road casualties, such as that published by Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland, which would be helpful for comparative purposes.

Annex 3: Summary of assessment process and users' views

A3.1 This assessment was conducted from January to May 2013.

A3.2 The Assessment team – Caroline Jones and Neil Wilson – agreed the scope of and timetable for this assessment with representatives of the Department for Transport in January 2013. The Written Evidence for Assessment was provided on 21 February. The Assessment team subsequently met the Department for Transport during March to review compliance with the *Code of Practice*, taking account of the written evidence provided and other relevant sources of evidence.

Summary of data users and data suppliers contacted, and issues raised

A3.3 Part of the assessment process involves our consideration of the views of users. We approach some known and potential users of the set of statistics, and we invite comments via an open note on the Authority's website. This process is not a statistical survey, but it enables us to gain some insights about the extent to which the statistics meet users' needs and the extent to which users feel that the producers of those statistics engage with them. We are aware that responses from users may not be representative of wider views, and we take account of this in the way that we prepare Assessment reports.

A3.4 The Assessment team received 38 responses from the user consultation. The respondents were grouped as follows:

European body	2
Academic user	7
Central government user	6
Interest and pressure group	8
Local authority	3
Data supplier	12

A3.5 We received a large number of responses from users of the statistics. Users told us that they make use of both the high-level statistics and the detailed data tables. Some users noted the value of the statistics, despite the known recording problems, and that they felt that it was important to continue to support them. Users also commented that they found the statistics team to be helpful, fast and accurate in answering their questions.

A3.6 While users appreciated the efforts made by the statistics team to compare estimates of STATS19 injury accidents to HES injury accidents, concerns were expressed that hospital data were not ideal for this purpose and more research could be done to explore the different types and number of road casualties found when using different data sources. It was noted that the known issue of under-reporting of injury accidents was not just a problem for the UK and other countries had similar under-reporting problems.

- A3.7 Data suppliers mentioned that there was a positive working relationship with members of the statistics team, who were clear, approachable and helpful in answering queries.
- A3.8 Data suppliers had mixed views regarding the level of consultation, reflecting the different groups that the suppliers participated in. Some suppliers did feel adequately consulted, but others felt that the opportunity for two way consultation was inadequate.
- A3.9 Suppliers noted that they expect the CRASH system to be more effective in capturing data, although one supplier noted the possibility of police forces struggling to provide the resource needed to get the data captured once they become the processing agents. Suppliers appeared to expect that the new CRASH system would reduce some data recording issues, but that the roll-out could be patchy, with only some areas providing improved data..

Key documents/links provided

Written Evidence for Assessment document

Annex 4: Summary of Requirements from Assessment Report 4

A4.1 The set of statistics published in *Reported Road Casualties* was assessed under the previous title of *Road Casualty Statistics* in Assessment Report 4, published in July 2009³⁹. They have been re-assessed as part of the Statistics Authority's on-going programme of re-assessment.

A4.2 Assessment Report 4 identified the following Requirements in relation to the statistics being re-assessed here:

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Requirement 1 | Develop a best approximation of the numbers of casualties based on research into the under-counting associated with the STATS19 form. These estimates should then be included in the published counts to inform the user of the scale of the problem. |
| Requirement 2 | Publish plans to improve the reporting of data by police forces - both to report more accidents, and to improve the classification of the severity of injuries – flagging up the implications for continuity over time. |
| Requirement 3 | Bring together as much relevant data as possible – including sources that are not currently exploited – at the time the statistics are released in order to help explain the weaknesses in the STATS19 data, and the implications of these. |
| Requirement 4 | Publish a business case for investing additional resources to strengthen the evidence base in relation to road casualties. |
| Requirement 5 | Change the titles of future publications – for example, to “Police recorded road casualty statistics”; and change statistical commentary and tables, to reflect the fact that the statistics are derived from information reported to the police. |
| Requirement 6 | Publish the responsible statistician's name in future releases. |
| Requirement 7 | Publish a Statement of Administrative Sources. |

A4.3 The Statistics Authority confirmed the National Statistics designation of these statistics in a letter to DfT on 17 December 2009⁴⁰.

A4.4 Two Requirements within this report relate to aspects of *Code* compliance that resulted in Requirements in Assessment Report 4. These are:

³⁹ <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-4---road-casualty-statistics--27-july-2009.pdf>

⁴⁰ <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment-reports/confirmation-of-designation-letters/letter-of-confirmation-as-national-statistics---assessment-report-4.pdf>

Requirement 3 Ensure that users are informed about the strengths and limitations of the RRC statistics, including estimates of the main sources of bias and other errors, in relation to their use (para 3.5).

Requirement 6 Improve the analysis and presentation of information in the reports so that so that it aids user interpretation of the statistics (para 3.8).

A4.5 Requirements 1, 2 and 3 in Assessment Report 4 related to Principle 4, Practice 2 of the *Code of Practice* and resulted from demand from users and DfT statisticians for a resolution to the under-reporting of road casualties. In meeting these Requirements, DfT used data from HES and NTS to create upper and lower estimates of the total number of road traffic accidents and continued the development of CRASH. Since the previous Assessment, following the inclusion in *RRC Annual* of data linkage and other sources of data from which the additional estimates of road casualties are made, more information should be published about the quality of all of these estimates, leading to Requirement 3 in this Report.

A4.6 Requirement 5 in Assessment Report 4 related to Principle 8, Practice 2 of the *Code of Practice* and resulted from the need to update the title of the release, commentary, and tables to better reflect the fact that the statistics were derived from information reported to the police. In meeting this Requirement, DfT renamed the publication to *Reported Road Casualties Great Britain* and made a number of updates to the commentary and tables. Following the inclusion of new topics in *RRC Annual* since the previous Assessment, a number of areas for improvement were identified within the current commentary, leading to Requirement 6 in this Report.

