



UK Statistics
Authority

Road Casualty Statistics

*Department for
Transport*

Assessment Report 4

July 2009

Road Casualty Statistics

July 2009

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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 UK Statistics Authority's overall objective is to promote and safeguard the production and publication of official statistics that serve the public good. The Statistics Authority 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

Under the provisions of the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007, the UK Statistics Authority has a statutory function to assess sets of statistics against the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, with a view to determining whether it is appropriate for the statistics to be designated, or to retain their designation, as National Statistics.

Designation as National Statistics means that the statistics are deemed to be compliant with the Code of Practice. Whilst the Code is wide-ranging, designation may be broadly interpreted to mean that: the statistics meet identified user needs; are produced, managed and disseminated to high standards; and are well explained.

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

Designation as National Statistics will sometimes be granted in cases where some changes still need to be made to meet fully the requirements of the Code, on condition that steps are taken by the producer body, within a stated timeframe, to address the weaknesses. This is to avoid public confusion and does not reduce the obligation to comply with the Code.

Designation is granted on the basis of the information provided to the Statistics Authority, primarily by the organisation that produces the statistics. The information includes a range of factual evidence and also assurances by senior statisticians in the producer organisation. The views of users are also sought. Should further information come to light subsequently which changes the Authority's analysis, the Assessment report may be withdrawn and revised as necessary.

Once designated as National Statistics, it is a statutory requirement on the producer organisation to ensure that the set of statistics continues to be produced in compliance with the Code of Practice.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This is one of a series of reports prepared under the provisions of Section 14 of the *Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007*¹. The report covers the set of road casualty statistics produced by the Department for Transport (DfT).
- 1.2 DfT releases road casualty statistics in an annual statistical bulletin² in June each year and in a more detailed annual report³ in September each year. The Department also publishes quarterly estimates⁴ to allow in-year monitoring. Both annual and quarterly outputs have been assessed. Estimates for accidents involving illegal alcohol limits⁵ published in an annual statistical bulletin have also been included in this assessment in order to cover all published road accident statistics.
- 1.3 The Statistics Authority will be inviting comments on both the process for assessment and the presentation of Assessment reports, with a view to further development of the arrangements in the coming months. The forward programme of Assessments is at <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/programme-of-assessment/index.html> and further information on the principles and procedures for assessment is at <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/principles---procedures/index.html>.
- 1.4 The report is structured as follows:
- Section 2 Summary of findings**, highlighting the main strengths and weaknesses in relation to the Code of Practice. This summary includes the UK Statistics Authority's recommendation in relation to designation as National Statistics.
 - Section 3 Subject of the assessment**, an overview of the statistics and their history.
 - Section 4 Detailed assessment**, providing more details about the assessment of compliance against each principle and protocol of the Code of Practice.
 - Annex 1 Suggestions for improvement**
 - Annex 2 Summary of the assessment process and users' views.**
- 1.5 This report was prepared by the Authority's Assessment team, and approved by the Board of the Statistics Authority on the advice of the Head of Assessment.

¹ http://www.opsi.gov.uk/Acts/acts2007/pga/ukpga_20070018_en.pdf

² <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/statistics/datatablespublications/accidents/casualtiesmr/>

³ <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/statistics/datatablespublications/accidents/casualtiesgbar/>

⁴ <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/statistics/datatablespublications/accidents/rcgbq32008>

⁵ <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/statistics/datatablespublications/accidents/rcgb07drinkdrive>

2 Summary of findings

2.1 Recommendation for designation as National Statistics

- 2.1.1 The Statistics Authority confirms that the road casualty statistics published by DfT (see 1.2 above) are designated as National Statistics, subject to the implementation of the enhancements listed in section 2.4 below by November 2009.
- 2.1.2 Designation as National Statistics means that the statistics are deemed to be compliant with the Code of Practice, and thus that they meet identified user needs; are produced, managed and disseminated to high standards; and are well explained.
- 2.1.3 Designation also signifies that, subject to any caveats in this report, the Statistics Authority judges that the statistics are readily accessible, produced according to sound methods and managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

2.2 Summary of strengths and weaknesses

- 2.2.1 The Assessment team is satisfied that DfT statisticians engage actively and effectively with users of road casualty statistics. Quinquennial reviews provide an opportunity to fine-tune the data collection in order to meet users' specific needs to a considerable extent, whilst at the same time trying to contain the burden of form-filling placed on the police.
- 2.2.2 The road casualty statistics to which this report relates are drawn from information collected by police forces in Great Britain and cover all accidents involving a road vehicle (including pedal cycles) that result in a personal injury. The figures are widely recognised as being an incomplete count of both accidents and casualties, though DfT statisticians have told us that figures on fatalities are generally acknowledged to be robust.
- 2.2.3 DfT and others have undertaken research into the extent and nature of this under-recording of non-fatal injuries, but it has not yet been conclusive in terms of the scale of under-recording. The published statistics do not include estimation of the missing data.
- 2.2.4 DfT makes available a wide range of information about methods and quality. Research about the under-reporting of road accident casualties by the police is readily available, and clearly and accessibly documented in the relevant statistical publications.
- 2.2.5 However, the under-reporting of road accident casualties is a significant and intractable problem. The Authority has concluded a) that the published statistics may not be sufficiently reliable to meet all user needs; and b) that DfT needs to explain and contextualise the limitations of the statistics more fully at the time of publication.

2.3 Detailed recommendations

2.3.1 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 re-designation as National Statistics are listed in section 2.4 below. Other suggestions, which would improve the statistics and the service provided to users, but which are not central to their designation, are listed at annex 1.

2.4 Requirements for re-designation as National Statistics

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| 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 (para 4.13) |
| 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 (para 4.13) |
| 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 (para 4.13) |
| Requirement 4 | Publish a business case for investing additional resources to strengthen the evidence base in relation to road casualties (para 4.23) |
| 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 (para 4.26) |
| Requirement 6 | Publish the responsible statistician’s name in future releases (para 4.29) |
| Requirement 7 | Publish a Statement of Administrative Sources (para 4.34) |

3 Subject of the assessment

- 3.1 The first road accident statistics were collected in 1909. The current system (known as STATS19, after the form that the police complete) was introduced in 1949 and subsequently reviewed in 1979. Since then the Department has reviewed STATS19 every five years to ensure the relevance of the information collected. STATS19 collects information on the accident circumstances, the vehicle(s) involved, the driver(s) and the casualties.
- 3.2 The police complete STATS19 returns for accidents that become known to them within 30 days of occurrence. The system includes all accidents involving a road vehicle (including pedal cycles) and resulting in a personal injury. Accidents that involve pedestrians are included, as are accidents that involve stationary vehicles. Accidents where no personal injury is caused (e.g. vehicle damage only) or not involving a road vehicle (e.g. pedestrian accident) are not included. Police forces undertake to record details of injury accidents that they attend or which are reported to them, although this is not a statutory obligation.
- 3.3 DfT recognises that there is a degree of under-reporting of road accident casualties in the STATS19 system. Whilst DfT believes that very few (if any) fatal accidents do not become known to the police, research conducted on their behalf⁶ has shown that a significant proportion of non-fatal injury accidents are not reported to the police (in part because there is not always a legal duty to do so), and some which are reported are not recorded. Additionally there is evidence of a degree of under-estimation of the severity of injuries in STATS19.
- 3.4 DfT statisticians have pointed out to us that there is no complete source of data on road casualties – otherwise they would use it. And whilst there are other related sources of information they are partial, and are collected for different purposes, and have their own reliability problems.
- 3.5 As a case in point, DfT has compared STATS19 data with hospital admissions statistics, both to improve understanding of the trends in accidents and casualties, and to consider whether the hospitals data help understand the nature of under-reporting in the STATS19 data. Work on matching individual records has been (and continues to be) undertaken and the discrepancies between the two sets of figures are believed to be due to a combination of the under-estimation of injury severity on the police recording system, and changes in hospital admissions practices.
- 3.6 From January 2007, the National Travel Survey⁷ has included questions on experiences of road accidents, to provide a complementary (survey-based) source of information on road accidents.
- 3.7 Estimates of accidents involving illegal alcohol levels use both STATS19 data (breath test failures and refusals) and Coroners' data (information about the level of alcohol in the blood of road accident fatalities aged 16 or over who die within 12 hours of an accident). For the compilation of these statistics, DfT identifies accidents (incidents) involving illegal alcohol levels from STATS19 and Coroners' data, and identifies the resulting casualties (all road users

⁶ Under-reporting of road casualties: Phase 1. Road Safety Research Report No. 69, published 23 June 2006 <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/roadsafety/research/rsrr/theme5/underreportingofroadcasual.pdf>

⁷ <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/statistics/datatablespublications/personal/>

involved in the accident who are killed or seriously injured) through the STATS19 system. It is not always possible for the police to administer a breath test, nor is it always possible to obtain a post-mortem blood alcohol level. DfT statistics account for this missing data according to a published methodology. DfT statisticians reflect the lack of precision in the presentation of the estimates by rounding them to the nearest ten.

3.8 These statistics are used:

- To develop and monitor road safety policy, at the local and national level, to save lives and reduce injury on the roads, and to support the Government's road safety strategy 'Tomorrow's roads: safer for everyone'⁸; including the measurement of progress towards the Government's casualty reduction targets
- To develop and evaluate legislative changes
- To target road safety publicity, road and vehicle engineering measures, and
- To identify public health issues related to road safety.

3.9 Particularly at a local level, they are of value to local government, public services and the public.

⁸<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/roadsafety/strategytargetsperformance/tomorrowsroadssaferforeverone>

4 Detailed Assessment

Principle 1: Meeting user needs

The production, management and dissemination of official statistics should meet the requirements of informed decision-making by government, public services, business, researchers and the public.

- 4.1 DfT statisticians engage effectively with users, via formal consultations and reviews, surveys, and through active participation in the Transport Statistics User Group. Users' needs, in relation to data recorded by the police, the timeliness of publications, and specific tabulations and analyses, have been influential. Users themselves are generally satisfied with their opportunity to engage with DfT statisticians, finding them approachable and helpful.
- 4.2 The STATS19 system is steered by the Standing Committee on Road Accident Statistics (SCRAS), which includes policy officials within DfT and its agencies, the devolved administrations, other government departments, the police, and local authorities. One user considered that a broader membership of SCRAS might make user input more effective.
- 4.3 The major unmet user need is for statistical information about road casualties that reflect the well-documented fact that the STATS19 system under-records the numbers of those injured in road accidents and the severity of injuries:
- The National Statistician, Karen Dunnell, wrote⁹ to DfT's Head of Profession for statistics in the context of the 2006 National Statistics Quality Review of Road Accident Statistics¹⁰ saying "I was concerned to note the situation with under reporting of serious injury data. I therefore welcome the fact that you are making the extent of under reporting apparent in your statistical releases and that you are undertaking further work to establish whether there is any bias in the under reporting. I would be grateful if you could let me see the outcome of these investigations as soon as they become available".
 - A recent report by the National Audit Office said "there have been a number of studies of under-reporting, dating back to the 1970s, and from the limited data available it is estimated that there may be about twice as many casualties as are reported, although very few fatalities are unrecorded"¹¹. (DfT has told the Assessment team that this is actually its own estimate, supplied to NAO).
 - The House of Commons Transport Committee recommended in October 2008¹² that "Government commissions an independent review of the STATS19 system in order to establish its strengths and weaknesses". The

⁹ <http://www.ons.gov.uk/about-statistics/methodology-and-quality/quality/nat-stats-qual-revs/qual-revs-by-theme/travel-and-transport/rpse-frm-ns-to-trans-road-acc.pdf>

¹⁰ <http://www.ons.gov.uk/about-statistics/methodology-and-quality/quality/nat-stats-qual-revs/qual-revs-by-theme/travel-and-transport/index.html>

¹¹ http://www.nao.org.uk/publications/0809/improving_road_safety_for_ped.aspx

¹² <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmselect/cmtran/422/42202.htm>

Government's response was published in January 2009¹³. The Committee returned to the issue in July 2009¹⁴, when the Chair introduced the debate as follows:

- "The Committee was extremely concerned about the lack of reliability in the data on road injuries, particularly those in relation to serious injuries. Deaths on the roads declined by 18 per cent. during the period that we were considering; serious injuries declined by twice as much. We questioned the accuracy of the recording of serious injuries on the road, and specifically that of the STATS19 system. We were disappointed that although the Government's response acknowledged that there might be a problem, they did not propose any steps that we thought would deal with it. I am thinking particularly of the discrepancies between some of the reporting of serious accidents and data received by hospitals. We want the Government to do more on that issue, as we are not satisfied that the information that we are getting is accurate".

- 4.4 DfT statisticians have been researching the levels of under-reporting for a number of years¹⁵, most recently by linking police and hospital data at the national level (as recommended in the 2006 National Statistics Quality Review). However, given the importance of the existing road casualty statistics for setting and monitoring targets for reductions in casualties, the Assessment team has concluded that these statistics may not be sufficiently reliable to meet all user needs. We note though that DfT has told us that for uses such as the improvement of road safety by the use of appropriate engineering, education and enforcement, the under reporting is not a major issue.
- 4.5 Some users identified specific analytical needs. There is a limit to what can be included in publications, but DfT has told us that they will always do additional analysis if requested.

¹³ <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmselect/cmtran/136/13604.htm>

¹⁴ <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmhansrd/cm090702/debtext/90702-0016.htm#09070266000001>

¹⁵ <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/roadsafety/research/rsrr/theme5/underreportingofroadcasual.pdf>

Principle 2: Impartiality and objectivity

Official statistics, and information about statistical processes, should be managed impartially and objectively.

- 4.6 The production of the road casualty statistics complies with Principle 2 of the Code. DfT publish the statistics in an orderly and timely manner, via the National Statistics Publication Hub, and they are free-of-charge for all. DfT refer users with extensive needs to the Data Archive, where they can access a cut-down version of the underlying database.
- 4.7 DfT publicly document release practices, and a published departmental statistical revisions policy applies to road casualty statistics. However, one user expressed concern that DfT's published estimates of accidents in Great Britain do not reflect changes made to data published in Scotland – they felt that whilst the situation was understandable, the policy of never revising the data was inappropriate.
- 4.8 Where DfT statisticians have discovered errors in publications, they have produced erratum slips and corrected the online versions.
- 4.9 DfT statisticians describe methodological changes, typically arising from quinquennial reviews of STATS19, in the report of the review, and in the appropriate publication. For example, the 2005 Road Casualties Great Britain annual report described changes to definitions resulting from the 2002 quinquennial review. DfT statisticians have told us that any changes arising from the latest review will be announced when the report is finalised, and on the website.
- 4.10 In those statistical reports we have looked at in detail, the commentary is objective and impartial, and there were no suggestions otherwise from users.

Principle 3: Integrity

At all stages in the production, management and dissemination of official statistics, the public interest should prevail over organisational, political or personal interests.

- 4.11 We are not aware of any concerns about the integrity of the environment in which DfT produce and disseminate road casualty statistics. For example, DfT statisticians have told us that departmental press releases, whilst produced only infrequently – there have been none since 2006 - are separate from the statistical releases to which they relate.
- 4.12 DfT statisticians have publicly addressed the problem, noted above, of the under-reporting of the numbers of people seriously injured in the road casualty statistics – for example, at a seminar organised by the Transport Statistics User Group in May 2009.

Principle 4: Sound methods and assured quality

Statistical methods should be consistent with scientific principles and internationally recognised best practices, and be fully documented. Quality should be monitored and assured taking account of internationally agreed practices.

4.13 DfT statisticians document extensively the methods underlying the road casualty statistics, including the collection and processing, and quality assurance. Information about quality issues, including the implications of reporting levels, is widely available. However, users (and DfT statisticians themselves) clearly wish to see this issue resolved definitively. As part of the re-designation as National Statistics DfT should:

- 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 problem¹⁶ (Requirement 1)
- 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 - and should flag up the implications for continuity over time¹⁷ (Requirement 2)
- bring together as much relevant data as possible – including sources that DfT does not currently exploit – at the time it releases the statistics, in order to help explain the weaknesses in the STATS19 data, and the implications of these¹⁸ (Requirement 3). The NAO report ‘Improving road safety for pedestrians and cyclists in Great Britain’ (see footnote 11) provides some helpful examples of relevant sources of data.

4.14 Other developments bearing on the quality of road casualty statistics include:

- ongoing analysis of a matched dataset of injury and hospital admissions data;
- the development of a new electronic reporting system¹⁹ for use by the police, with the potential to improve the consistency and timeliness of the data; and
- the addition of questions on road safety to the National Travel Survey, with the potential to compare aggregate figures with those from STATS19 and from hospitals.

4.15 DfT statisticians work with their counterparts in Scotland and Wales in order to ensure that the published (GB) figures are consistent in terms of data collection and methodologies. DfT is involved in EU and OECD groups responsible for

¹⁶ In relation to Principle 4 Practice 2 of the Code of Practice

¹⁷ In relation to Principle 4 Practice 2 of the Code of Practice

¹⁸ In relation to Principle 4 Practice 2 of the Code of Practice

¹⁹ CRASH – the Collision Recording And Sharing project – a DfT collaboration with the National Policing Improvement Agency, to improve the reporting of accidents data by the use of mobile devices at the accident scene, feeding a database held on the Police National Computer.

the development of consistent international road accident statistics, and supplies both record level data and statistical aggregates.

- 4.16 One user noted that data recorded by the police on ‘contributory factors’ (to accidents) are likely to be particularly problematic, not least because a number of the factors are overlapping – such as loss of control, poor manoeuvre, travelling too fast, and so on. Another suggestion was that police officers might feel constrained in completing the form because they are concerned that the information they record may be used as evidence in court. These are important issues, as policy makers will want to look at the relationship between causes of, and trends in, accidents. We note that DfT point out (for example, in Road Casualties Great Britain: 2007²⁰) the subjective nature of these data.
- 4.17 It was also noted that the categorisation of reported injury as ‘serious’ or ‘slight’ was problematic, because:
- it relies on the police officer’s judgement at the time;
 - the category ‘seriously injured’ does not distinguish between those whose injuries have substantial lasting effects and those from which there is substantially complete recovery; and
 - as a corollary, initial ‘slight’ injuries may later turn out to be ‘serious’.

²⁰<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/statistics/datatablespublications/accidents/casualtiesgbar/roadcasualtiesgre-atbritain20071>

Principle 5: Confidentiality

Private information about individual persons (including bodies corporate) compiled in the production of official statistics is confidential, and should be used for statistical purposes only.

- 4.18 DfT's road casualty statistics meet the requirements of the Code for confidentiality. DfT holds some information that might enable the identification of individuals – such as the vehicle registration mark (VRM - used for matching purposes) and the home postcode – used to derive other geographical analyses, for example. The VRM data are not available to anyone; the postcode data are only available on a restricted basis to those undertaking analysis for DfT under contract.
- 4.19 The Department has internal guidance procedures on the release of data, and is currently reviewing the consistency of these procedures with departmental guidance on data handling.
- 4.20 DfT deposits record level data at the UK Data Archive – excluding the identifying variables described above, and other 'sensitive' data items. These are made available under standard terms set out in an End User Licence. This resource may enable the detailed analytical needs of some users to be met.

Principle 6: Proportionate burden

The cost burden on data suppliers should not be excessive and should be assessed relative to the benefits arising from the use of the statistics.

- 4.21 DfT statisticians assess the burden imposed upon police forces of recording details of road casualties, and report it in the quinquennial reviews of the STATS19 system. Providers are involved in the management and review process.
- 4.22 The development of a new electronic reporting system, mentioned earlier, is likely to reduce police costs in the medium term.

Principle 7: Resources

The resources made available for statistical activities should be sufficient to meet the requirements of this Code and should be used efficiently and effectively.

- 4.23 Our assessment is that the production of the existing suite of road casualty statistics is not resourced at a level sufficient to make rapid progress in improving the statistics and their public presentation. DfT has told us that it is investing additional resources – a new analytical post – to work on data sources such as hospital statistics and the National Travel Survey. However, given the significant and well-documented concerns relating to the under-reporting of casualties, DfT should publish a business case for investing additional resources to strengthen the evidence base in relation to road casualties, as part of the re-designation as National Statistics²¹ (Requirement 4).
- 4.24 DfT uses appropriate competence frameworks to recruit members of the team responsible for road casualty statistics. Users told us that they find the team helpful in addressing their queries.

²¹ In relation to Principle 7 Practice 1 of the Code of Practice

Principle 8: Frankness and accessibility

Official statistics, accompanied by full and frank commentary, should be readily accessible to all users.

- 4.25 Many of the requirements of Principle 8 of the Code are met in relation to road casualty statistics. Particular features include:
- The provision of data via the UK Data Archive
 - The availability of Excel tables on DfT's website
 - The contextualisation of casualty data within the government's strategy for reducing the different severities of accidents
 - The provision of additional analyses, and articles, in the annual publication 'Road Casualties Great Britain', whilst maintaining continuity in tables – a number of users noted the importance of this issue
 - The publication of ad hoc fact sheets, addressing requests from users for information on specific topics, such as Child or Pedal Cycle casualties
- 4.26 Given the significance of the issue of the under-reporting of road casualties, the published estimates should be described as clearly as possible. As part of the re-designation as National Statistics DfT should 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 police²² (Requirement 5).
- 4.27 The limitations of the STATS19 data are well-documented by DfT. Analytical articles on, for example, results of exercises matching Hospital Episode Statistics with STATS19 police data, are published in the Annual Reports²³.

²² In relation to Principle 8 Practice 2 of the Code of Practice

²³ <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/statistics/datatablespublications/accidents/casualtiesgbar/>

Protocol 1: User engagement

Effective user engagement is fundamental both to trust in statistics and securing maximum public value. This Protocol draws together the relevant practices set out elsewhere in the Code and expands on the requirements in relation to consultation.

4.28 The statistics from the STATS19 system are compliant with the requirements of the Code for user engagement. Regular consultation takes place, through a range of mechanisms and media; in many respects, the commitment to user consultation in respect of these statistics is exemplary.

Protocol 2: Release practices

Statistical reports should be released into the public domain in an orderly manner that promotes public confidence and gives equal access to all, subject to relevant legislation.

- 4.29 DfT's release practices are compliant with the requirements of the Code of Practice. DfT pre-announce the statistics on the Publication Hub, and their publication appears to be in an orderly and timely manner. Contact details for the road casualty statistics team and a generic email address are included in the statistical bulletins. As part of the re-designation as National Statistics DfT should publish the responsible statistician's name in future releases²⁴ (Requirement 6).
- 4.30 DfT statisticians have told us of only a single delay in the publication of road casualty statistics. They could not publish the quarterly estimates bulletin for Q2 2007 because data for some police forces were missing; they published the data alongside the Q3 estimates. The change was pre-announced.
- 4.31 Links to pre-release access lists are included with the relevant publication on the website. Pre-release access to the statistics *not* in their final form is confined to the DfT team responsible for the statistics, the Divisional Manager, and a contractor in TRL who adds additional codes to the data for the Highways Agency (which does not receive the data until after publication). DfT has told us that it will publish this list alongside the next publication.
- 4.32 DfT does not usually issue separate Ministerial press releases (see 4.11 above).

²⁴ In relation to Protocol 2 Practice 6 of the Code of Practice

Protocol 3: The use of administrative sources for statistical purposes

Administrative sources should be fully exploited for statistical purposes, subject to adherence to appropriate safeguards.

- 4.33 Statistics from STATS19 (which are a by-product of a largely administrative system) are broadly compliant with this protocol. The proposed introduction of the new electronic reporting system will help facilitate the flow of more standardised and timely data.
- 4.34 DfT should publish a Statement of Administrative Sources as part of the re-designation as National Statistics²⁵ (Requirement 7).

²⁵ In relation to Protocol 3 Practice 5 of the Code of Practice

Annex 1: Suggestions for improvement

A1.1 This annex includes some suggestions for improvement to the statistics drawn from the STATS19 system, in the interest of the public good. These are not formally required for re-designation, but the Assessment team considers that their implementation will improve public confidence in the production, management and dissemination of official statistics.

Suggestion 1 Consider extending the membership of the Standing Committee on Road Accident Statistics to include wider representation of users of road accident statistics (para 4.2)

Suggestion 2 Review the approach to taking on late revisions to accidents data (para 4.7)

Suggestion 3 Review the categories of 'contributory factors' to accidents, and the environment in which these data are recorded by the police (para 4.16)

Annex 2: Summary of assessment process and users' views

A2.1 This assessment was conducted from March to June 2009.

A2.2 The Assessment team met representatives of the DfT at an initial meeting in March 2009. Some background information was provided by the DfT during May 2009, and Written Evidence for Assessment was provided on 21 May 2009.

Summary of users contacted, and issues raised

A2.3 As part of the assessment, questionnaires were sent to more than 50 users and other interested parties. The Assessment team received 21 responses. The respondents were grouped as follows:

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Internal DfT | 1 |
| Local Government | 8 |
| Other Government Departments | 1 |
| Devolved Administrations | 2 |
| Academic | 2 |
| Media | 1 |
| Members Associations | 3 |
| Other | 3 |

A2.4 The main uses for the statistics were for monitoring trends, policy research and development, other research, and regional and local comparisons. In general users were satisfied with the presentation, accessibility and timeliness of the statistics, and with DfT's engagement and consultation with users, and but less satisfied with the quality of the data (including provision of quality measures and metadata) and comparability with other sources.

Key documents/links provided

Written Evidence for Assessment document

Road Casualties in Great Britain - Main Results

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/statistics/datatablespublications/accidents/casualtiesmr/>

Road Casualties in Great Britain - Annual Report

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/statistics/datatablespublications/accidents/casualtiesgbar/>

Road Casualties in Great Britain - Quarterly Estimates

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/statistics/datatablespublications/accidents/rcgbq32008>

Road Casualties in Great Britain - 2007 estimates for accidents involving illegal alcohol limits

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/statistics/datatablespublications/accidents/rcgb07drinkdrive>

