

Annual Assessment of Highways England's Performance: April 2018 – March 2019

Safety performance update: October 2019

The latest road casualty statistics published by the Department for Transport show that 2,152 people were killed or seriously injured on the strategic road network in 2018 – an increase of 6% on the previous year.

The Office of Rail and Road independently monitors Highways England's management of the strategic road network – the main A roads and motorways in England. We hold it to account for delivering improvements for road users, including improving safety.

On 26 September 2019, the Department for Transport published its road casualty statistics for 2018. We are now publishing this update to our assessment of Highways England's performance in 2018-19¹ using the new data.

Highways England has a target to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on the strategic road network by 40% by 2020, compared to the 2005-09 average baseline.

The latest figures show that 2,152 people were killed or seriously injured on the network in 2018². This is 6% higher than the previous year. There has now been a 30% reduction from the baseline. In 2018, there were 250 deaths on the strategic road network, which is 14 (6%) higher than in 2017. Of these, there were 85 deaths on motorways – a reduction of 6 (7%) from the previous year.

The increase in the number of people killed or seriously injured on the strategic road network in 2018 puts the company's delivery of its safety target at risk.

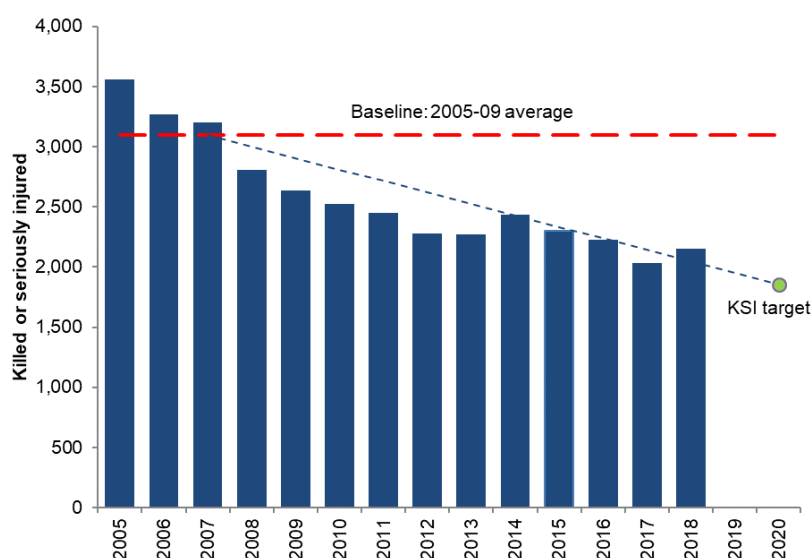
¹ https://orr.gov.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0003/41457/annual-assessment-of-highways-englands-performance-2019-web.pdf

² Figures for serious injuries reported here are adjusted in response to changes to the severity reporting systems used by a large number of police forces and may not match previous reported totals. Unadjusted figures show that 1,987 people were killed or seriously injured on the strategic road network in 2018, but this is not comparable with previous years. Further details are provided in the Department for Transport's annual road casualty report: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/reported-road-casualties-in-great-britain-annual-report-2018>

Adjusted road casualties on the strategic road network, 2017 and 2018

	2017	2018	Percentage change
Killed	236	250	+6
Seriously injured	1,799	1,902	+6
Killed or seriously injured	2,035	2,152	+6

Killed or seriously injured on the strategic road network, adjusted figures, 2005-2018³



The number of people killed or seriously injured since 2010 has declined slightly, but at a slower rate than before 2010. It is therefore vital that Highways England explores every avenue to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on its roads.

We are scrutinising the actions that Highways England is taking to improve safety. As we reported in our annual assessment in July 2019, we have seen the company deliver a range of interventions, aimed at improving the safety of its roads, targeting the vehicles that drive on them, and improving driver behaviour. But it must continue to strive for improvements.

³ The baseline and target presented in the chart are calculated from the Department for Transport's latest revised road casualty estimates and should be treated as provisional.

This year, the Office of Rail and Road will carry out a detailed review of Highways England's plans to improve safety and how it prioritises its expenditure to reduce casualties. We are also working with the sector to identify wider opportunities for improvement. We will report on the findings from this work in 2020.