

Road Safety Factsheet

Sustainable Development Goals

March 2020

On January 1 2016, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development officially came into force. These Goals had been adopted by world leaders in September 2015 at a UN summit.

The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals act as a blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. They address the global challenges we face, including those related to poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace and justice. There are 17 Goals, all of which are interconnected. The aim is that all 17 goals are achieved by 2030.

While the Sustainable Development Goals are not legally binding, governments are expected to take ownership and establish national frameworks for the achievement of the 17 Goals. Countries have the primary responsibility for follow-up and review of the progress made in implementing the Goals.

Goal three focuses on good health and wellbeing. The rationale behind this is that ensuring healthy lives and promoting good wellbeing for all at all ages is essential to sustainable development.

The Goal three targets¹ are:

3.1 By 2030, reduce the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births.

3.2 By 2030, end preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years of age, with all countries aiming to reduce neonatal mortality to at least as low as 12 per 1,000 live births and under-5 mortality to at least as low as 25 per 1,000 live births.

3.3 By 2030, end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases and combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases.

3.4 By 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being.

3.5 Strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol.

3.6 By 2020, halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents. The indicator for this measure is rates (deaths per 100,000 population), but the target is set for the absolute number of road deaths.

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The Stockholm Declaration has called for a new goal to halve road deaths by 2030 at the 3rd Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety.

3.7 By 2030, ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes.

3.8 Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all.

3.9 By 2030, substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination.

3.A Strengthen the implementation of the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control in all countries, as appropriate.

3.B Support the research and development of vaccines and medicines for the communicable and non-communicable diseases that primarily affect developing countries, provide access to affordable essential medicines and vaccines, in accordance with the Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health, which affirms the right of developing countries to use to the full the provisions in the Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights regarding flexibilities to protect public health, and, in particular, provide access to medicines for all.

3.C Substantially increase health financing and the recruitment, development, training and retention of the health workforce in developing countries, especially in least developed countries and small island developing States.

3.D Strengthen the capacity of all countries, in particular developing countries, for early warning, risk reduction and management of national and global health risks

Road Safety in the UK

In 2018, there were 1,784 reported road deaths, similar to the level seen since 2010. There were 25,511 serious injuries and a total of 160,597 reported casualties of all severities. This figure is 6% lower than in 2017 and is the lowest level on record.

However, the number of fatal and serious injuries on Great Britain's roads has not decreased significantly. The trend in the number of fatalities has been broadly flat since 2010. Previously, and particularly between 2006 and 2010, the general trend was for fatalities to fall. Since that point, most of the year on year changes are either explained by one-off causes or natural variation. The number of fatalities in 2018 (1,784) was 1% less compared to 1,793 fatalities in 2017. The number of serious injuries has risen 2% since 2017.

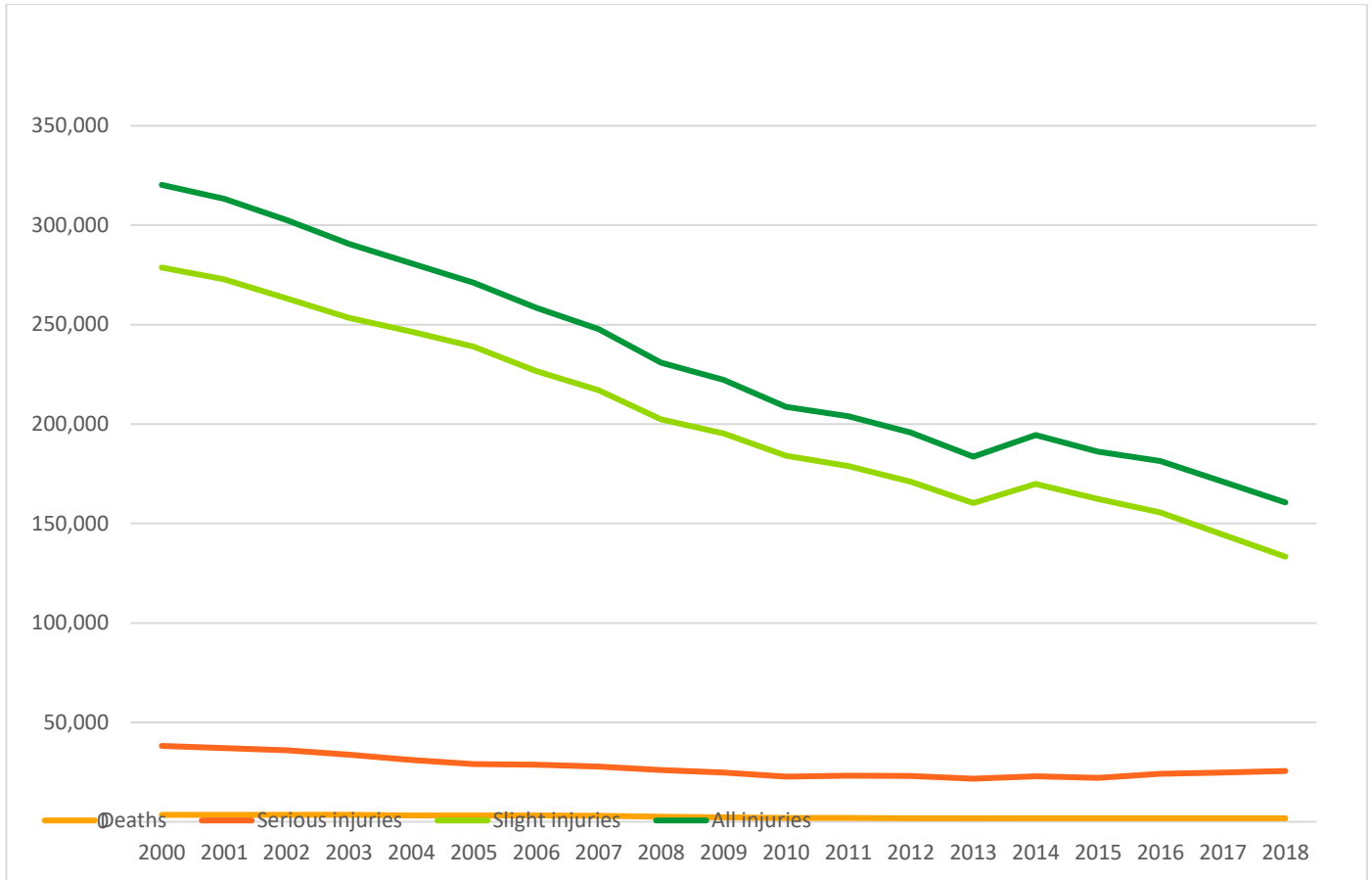
UK Road Safety 2000-2018

Table 1: Number of casualties by severity, 2000-2018, Great Britain

Year	Killed	Seriously injured (unadjusted)	Slightly injured	Total
2000	3,409	38,155	278,719	320,283
2001	3,450	37,110	272,749	313,309
2002	3,431	35,976	263,198	302,605
2003	3,508	33,707	253,392	290,607
2004	3,221	31,130	246,489	280,840
2005	3,201	28,954	238,862	271,017
2006	3,172	28,673	226,559	258,404
2007	2,946	27,774	217,060	247,780
2008	2,538	26,034	202,333	230,905
2009	2,222	24,690	195,234	222,146
2010	1,850	22,660	184,138	208,648
2011	1,901	23,122	178,927	203,950
2012	1,754	23,039	170,930	195,723
2013	1,713	21,657	160,300	183,670
2014	1,775	22,807	169,895	194,477
2015	1,730	22,144	162,315	186,189
2016	1,792	24,101	155,491	181,384
2017	1,793	24,831	144,369	170,993
2018	1,784	25,511	133,302	160,597

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Graph 1: Numbers of casualty by severity, 2000-2018, Great Britainⁱⁱ

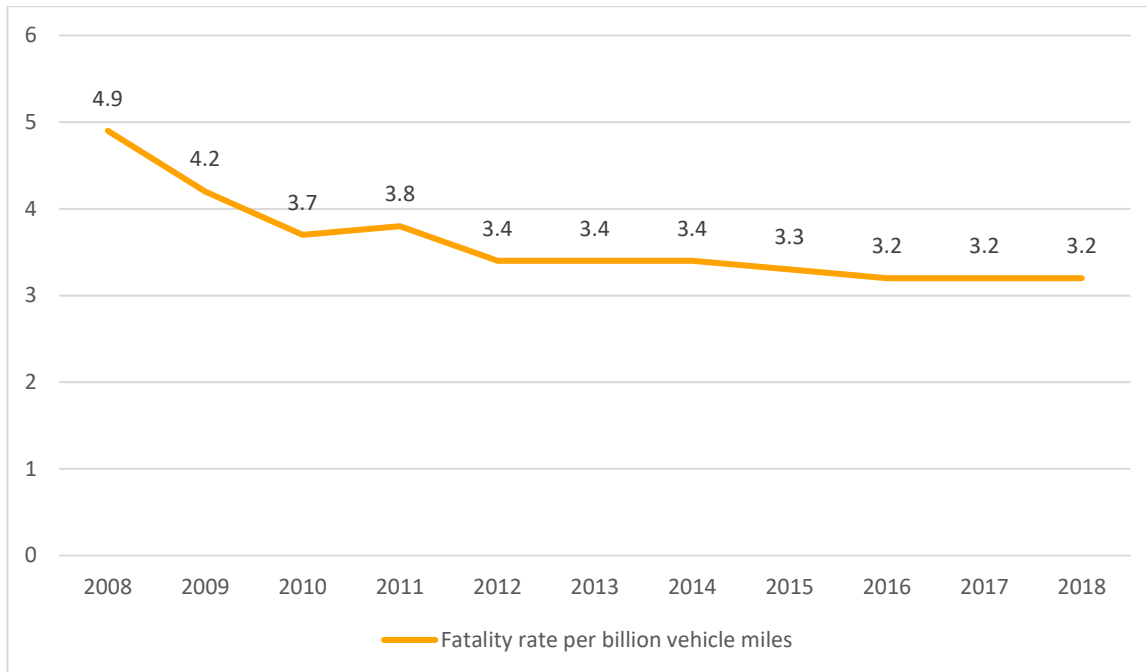


As table 1 and graph 1 show, road deaths and injuries have fallen significantly since 2000, although the decreases seen in earlier years have levelled out, particularly in the last ten years. Road deaths have fallen 48% since 2000, but less than 0.5% since 2016, when the UN Sustainable Development Goals were introduced. Road related casualties of all severities have followed a similar trend, falling 50% since 2000, but just 11% since 2016.

Reported Road Casualty data published by the Department for Transport show that the death rate per billion vehicle miles for all drivers and riders has fallen by 33% in the period 2008 to 2018. The graph on the next page shows the fatality rate for all drivers and riders per billion vehicle miles from 2008 to 2018. However, this has flat lined, particularly since 2012.

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Graph 2: Fatality rate for all drivers and riders per billion vehicle miles, 2008-2018, Great Britain



The Five Pillar Approach

A five pillar approach to road safety has been adopted as a framework for the decade for action on road safety (2011-2020). This is based on the Safe System approach.

Safe System is the generic term for approaches such as ‘Vision Zero’, ‘Sustainable Safety’ and ‘Towards Zero’. It is based primarily on Vision Zero, recognising that human beings’ lives and health should never be compromised by their need to travel. Vision Zero states that any fatal or serious injuries that occur within the road system are unacceptable. This is considered best practice in road safety according to the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

The key objective for those managing the roads is that, as road users will continue to make mistakes, when crashes do occur, high severity outcomes such as serious injuries and death do not. Therefore, roads need to be equipped with a ‘forgiving’ infrastructure, taking into account the vulnerability of human beings. If a collision should occur, the forces involved should not be severe enough to cause fatal injury.

The five pillars of road safety are road safety management, infrastructure, safe vehicles, road user behaviour and post-crash care. For more information, see our [Safe Systems factsheet](#).

Road Safety Management

The Global Plan for the Decade of Action stated that countries should adhere to and implement UN legal instruments and encourage the creation of regional road safety instruments. They should encourage the creation of multi-sectoral partnerships and designation of lead agencies with the capacity to develop and lead

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the delivery of national road safety strategies, plans and targets, underpinned by the data collection and evidential research to assess countermeasure design and monitor implementation and effectiveness.

Safer roads and mobility

In a Safe System, roads are designed to reduce the risk of crashes occurring and the severity of injury, should a collision occur. One way in which this can be achieved is to segregate different kinds of road users and to segregate traffic moving in different directions or at a different speed. If this is not possible, a speed limit to protect the most vulnerable road users can be implemented.

The plan states that countries should raise the inherent safety and protective quality of road networks for the benefit of all road users, especially the most vulnerable (e.g. pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists). This will be achieved through the implementation of various road infrastructure agreements under the UN framework, road infrastructure assessment and improved safety-conscious planning, design, construction and operation of roads.

Safer vehicles

Vehicles are designed and regulated to minimise the occurrence and consequences of collisions. Making vehicles safer can involve installing 'active' safety measures, which can prevent collisions occurring, such as autonomous emergency braking or 'passive' safety measures, which protect occupants if a collision does occur, such as seatbelts and airbags. It is also vital to ensure that vehicles are roadworthy, that is, regulated to the highest standards.

Increasingly, roads and vehicles will be managed within an intelligent transport system relying on ever more autonomous vehicles and smart infrastructure. As safety becomes hardwired into vehicle technology and road design, there is potential to further reduce road casualties and deaths.

This pillar includes encouraging universal deployment of improved vehicle safety technologies for both passive and active safety through a combination of harmonization of relevant global standards, consumer information schemes and incentives to accelerate the uptake of new technologies.

Safer road users

As Safe Systems involve both those who manage and design the roads and those who use them to be responsible for eradicating serious injuries and fatalities on the roads, all road users are expected to use the roads safely and comply with the rules. Safe road users are competent at the basics of safe road use, including paying full attention to the road, adapting to the conditions of the road, travelling at lower speeds, not drinking alcohol or taking drugs and driving, not driving when tired and not close following the vehicle in front, nor using a hand held mobile phone.

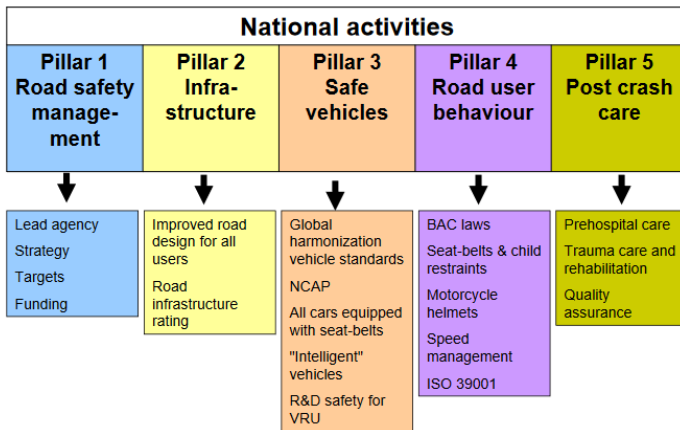
Activities for this pillar include developing comprehensive programmes to improve road user behaviour. This could include sustained or increased enforcement of laws and standards, combined with public awareness/education to increase seat-belt and helmet wearing rates, and to reduce drink-driving, speed and other risk factors.

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Post-crash response

The final pillar involves increasing responsiveness to post-crash emergencies and improving the ability of health and other systems to provide appropriate emergency treatment and longer term rehabilitation for crash victims.

The image below summarises the approach and activities for the decade.



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It was decided that activities over the decade should take place at local, national, regional and global levels, but the focus would be on national and local level actions. Within the legal constructs of national and local governments, countries were encouraged to implement activities according to five pillars.

International Progress

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), there were 1.35 million road traffic deaths globally in 2016 and between 20 and 50 million more people suffered non-fatal injuries and/or disabilities. The majority (90%) of these collisions occurred in low-and middle-income countries and involved vulnerable road users (pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists)^{iv}. This is despite these countries owning just 54% of vehicles^v.

There has been very little progress over the last decade despite concerted efforts. Road traffic fatality rates remain unacceptably high in Africa and Southeast Asia. However, some progress has been made in some regions and countries.

The following progress reports were published by the United Nations detailing progress on Goal 3^{vi}.

2016- setting of Sustainable Development Goal

WHO statistics show that around 1.25 million people died from road traffic injuries in 2013. Halving the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents by 2020 is an ambitious goal given the dramatic increase in the number of vehicles, which nearly doubled between 2000 and 2013.

Progress in 2017

Since 2000, impressive advancements have been made on many health fronts. However, to meet the Sustainable Development Goals health targets by 2030, progress must be accelerated, in particular in regions with the highest burden of disease.

In 2013, about 1.25 million people died from road traffic injuries, the leading cause of death among males between 15 and 29 years of age. Road traffic deaths have increased by about 13 per cent globally since 2000.

Progress in 2018

Many more people today are living healthier lives than in the past decade. Nevertheless, people are still suffering needlessly from preventable diseases, and too many are dying prematurely. Overcoming disease and ill health will require concerted and sustained efforts, focusing on population groups and regions that have been neglected.

Progress in 2019

Major progress has been made in improving the health of millions of people, increasing life expectancy, reducing maternal and child mortality and fighting against leading communicable diseases. However, progress has stalled or is not happening fast enough with regard to addressing major diseases, such as malaria and tuberculosis, while at least half the global population does not have access to essential health services and many of those who do suffer undue financial hardship, potentially pushing them into extreme poverty. Concerted efforts are required to achieve universal health coverage and sustainable financing for health, to address the growing burden of non-communicable diseases, including mental health, and to tackle antimicrobial resistance and determinants of health such as air pollution and inadequate water and sanitation.

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Progress in road safety globally was poor. The number of road traffic deaths climbed from 1.25 million in 2013 to 1.35 million in 2016. Road traffic injury is the leading cause of death for children and young adults aged 5 to 29.

References

ⁱ UN (not dated) 'Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages'

<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/health/>

ⁱⁱ Department for Transport (2019) Table RAS50059, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/ras30-reported-casualties-in-road-accidents#casualties-in-accidents-since-1979>

ⁱⁱⁱ World Health Organisation (not dated) 'A Decade of Action for Road Safety' https://www.who.int/roadsafety/ministerial_conference/a_decade_of_action.pdf

^{iv} **World Health Organisation (2018) 'Global status report on road safety 2018'**

https://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/road_safety_status/2018/en/

^v UNECE (2018) 'Road safety issues and policy interventions in SPECA countries'

https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/trans/doc/2018/speca/23.4_Item_4.7_Road_Safety.pdf

^{vi} UN (not dated) 'Progress and information' <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg3>