

National and Local Road Traffic Collision Statistics:

Cambridgeshire

Introduction

Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) receives records of road traffic collisions that have occurred in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough on a weekly basis. Police forces collate collision data on behalf of the local authorities in their region and submit it to the Department for Transport (DfT) each year as part of the annual STATS19 submission.

The STATS19 dataset only includes injury collisions that took place on the public highway¹, involved at least one vehicle and were reported to the police within 30-days of the collision occurring. The dataset excludes collisions which are ruled not to be the result of a road traffic collision by a coroner (e.g. medical episodes, suicides etc). The collisions within scope of the STATS19 dataset are detailed in section 2 of the [DfT STATS20 guidance](#).

CCC works closely with the police to ensure that any collisions or casualties which do not meet the DfT definition of a road traffic collision are not included in the STATS19 dataset. The police and CCC submit the collision records to DfT at the end of March each year for the previous calendar year.

The DfT collate STATS19 data from police forces across Great Britain and this is released as a [national road traffic collision dataset](#), typically in September. The national dataset for 2023 was released by DfT on 26th September 2024. This note is intended to summarise a small number of differences between the [national](#) and [local](#) datasets and also aims to compare local and national trends.

Discrepancy between the local and national statistics

The DfT collate data from police forces across Great Britain at the end of March each year. When the DfT obtain local collision records for each area, the records retrieved are those that were complete at this moment in time. However, due to the nature of police investigations and the data collection process, it's often the case that more records are received, or corrections are made to existing records beyond 31st March. For this reason, some small differences are typically present between the national dataset and the 'live' data held locally.

¹ The Cambridgeshire public highway predominantly includes public roads and footpaths but does not include the guided busway. An adopted highway map is available online: [Highway records | Cambridgeshire County Council](#)

Cambridgeshire, excluding Peterborough:

The DfT national dataset suggests that 1,151 road traffic collisions occurred in Cambridgeshire (excluding Peterborough) in 2023. At the time of writing (Nov 2024), the local dataset suggests there were 1,147 collisions which is 4 fewer than the national dataset (-0.35%). See Table 1 for details.

Table 1: Road traffic collisions and casualties occurring in 2023 in Cambridgeshire, excluding Peterborough (CCC public highway)²

Cambridgeshire, excluding Peterborough						
	2023 Collisions			2023 Casualties		
	CCC	DfT	Diff	CCC	DfT	Diff
Fatal	20	20	-	20	20	-
Serious	284	282	+2	323	321	+2
Slight	843	849	-6	1231	1235	-4
Total	1,147	1,151	-4	1,574	1,576	-2

Peterborough:

The DfT national dataset suggests that 367 road traffic collisions occurred in Peterborough in 2023. At the time of writing (Nov 2024), the local dataset suggests there were 366 collisions which is 1 fewer than the national dataset (-0.27%). See Table 2 for details.

Table 2: Road traffic collisions and casualties occurring in 2023 in Peterborough (PCC public highway)¹

Peterborough						
	2023 Collisions			2023 Casualties		
	CCC	DfT	Diff	CCC	DfT	Diff
Fatal	2	2	-	3	3	-
Serious	75	75	-	84	84	-
Slight	289	290	-1	413	415	-2
Total	366	367	-1	500	502	-2

²CCC's locally held collision data was extracted on 11th November 2024 is subject to change. For example, an ongoing police investigation or a verdict from a coroner may result in a change to the data. The DfT's national data is sourced from table [ras0403](#) and will not capture retrospective changes if they were made beyond 31st March.

Reasons for the discrepancy

The discrepancy is caused by two factors, as outlined below.

Geographical boundaries

The main reason for the discrepancy between the local and national statistics is a difference in the interpretation of where some collisions took place, and therefore which district or county they occurred within.

The [DfT STATS20 guidance](#) suggests that the recorded collision location should reflect either:

- Where the first injury-causing impact occurred;
- Where a vehicle first lost control; or
- Where a vehicle first left the carriageway.

As the road network crosses multiple geographical boundaries, a small discrepancy in the perceived location of a collision can result in it being classed as occurring in a different district or even a different county.

For example, CCC consider collision 1383488 to have occurred in the district of Huntingdonshire on the CCC public highway; whereas the DfT have recorded it in Peterborough on the PCC public highway. Based on the information available, CCC consider collision 1383488 to have taken place in Huntingdonshire for two reasons:

- the junction approach where the collision took place is in Huntingdonshire.
- the police collision description suggests that the vehicle was in control as it left Peterborough (before the first impact) and that the first impact occurred within Huntingdonshire.

Based on the STATS20 guidance, the collision would therefore be considered to have taken place in Huntingdonshire.

This scenario has also occurred for a small number of collisions that took place close to the border with neighbouring counties, resulting in minor differences between locally held records, and those presented by the DfT.

Casualty Severity

A factor that has caused one further discrepancy is the severity classification. The police and CCC originally recorded collision 1286552 (South Cambridgeshire) as a slight injury collision but the police later amended this to be a serious injury collision. The DfT data captures this collision as a slight injury collision. It therefore appears that the DfT captured the data from the police database before this alteration took place. This is an important

distinction between the DfT data, which represents a snapshot of the data at a certain point in time, and the local data which provides a live picture.

Impact of the discrepancy

Whilst there are some discrepancies between the local and national datasets, the scale and number of discrepancies is considered to be small and is unlikely to materially affect any analysis conducted at a national or local level. As a result, no mitigating actions are considered necessary.

Comparison of local, national and regional statistics

This section compares the number of casualties in 2023 to a pre-COVID baseline (2017-2019 average). This comparison has been conducted on a local, regional and national level and exclusively uses DfT adjusted³ casualty figures to aid comparability across the different geographies. The percentage changes are presented in Figure 1.

Fatal casualties in Cambridgeshire have reduced from 30 to 20 per year (-34%) which is larger than the reduction achieved both regionally and nationally (-8 to -10%). Fatal casualties in Peterborough have reduced from 8 to 3 per year (-61%) which significantly outperforms the regional and national benchmark, although the percentage change will be more sensitive due to the smaller numbers in Peterborough.

Serious casualties in Cambridgeshire have reduced by 4% which matches the reduction achieved across Great Britain and is slightly better than the reduction in the East of England (-0.4%) and England (-2%). Serious casualties in Peterborough have reduced by 1%, which is between the regional and national benchmark.

Slight casualties in Cambridgeshire have reduced by 17% which is slightly worse than the reduction achieved regionally and nationally (-20% to -22%). Slight casualties in Peterborough have reduced by 30%, which outperforms the regional and national benchmark.

In total terms, casualties reduced by 15% in Cambridgeshire and by 27% in Peterborough. Compared to the regional reduction (-19%) and the national reduction (-17% to -18%), Cambridgeshire is performing in line with other areas, whilst Peterborough is exceeding other areas.

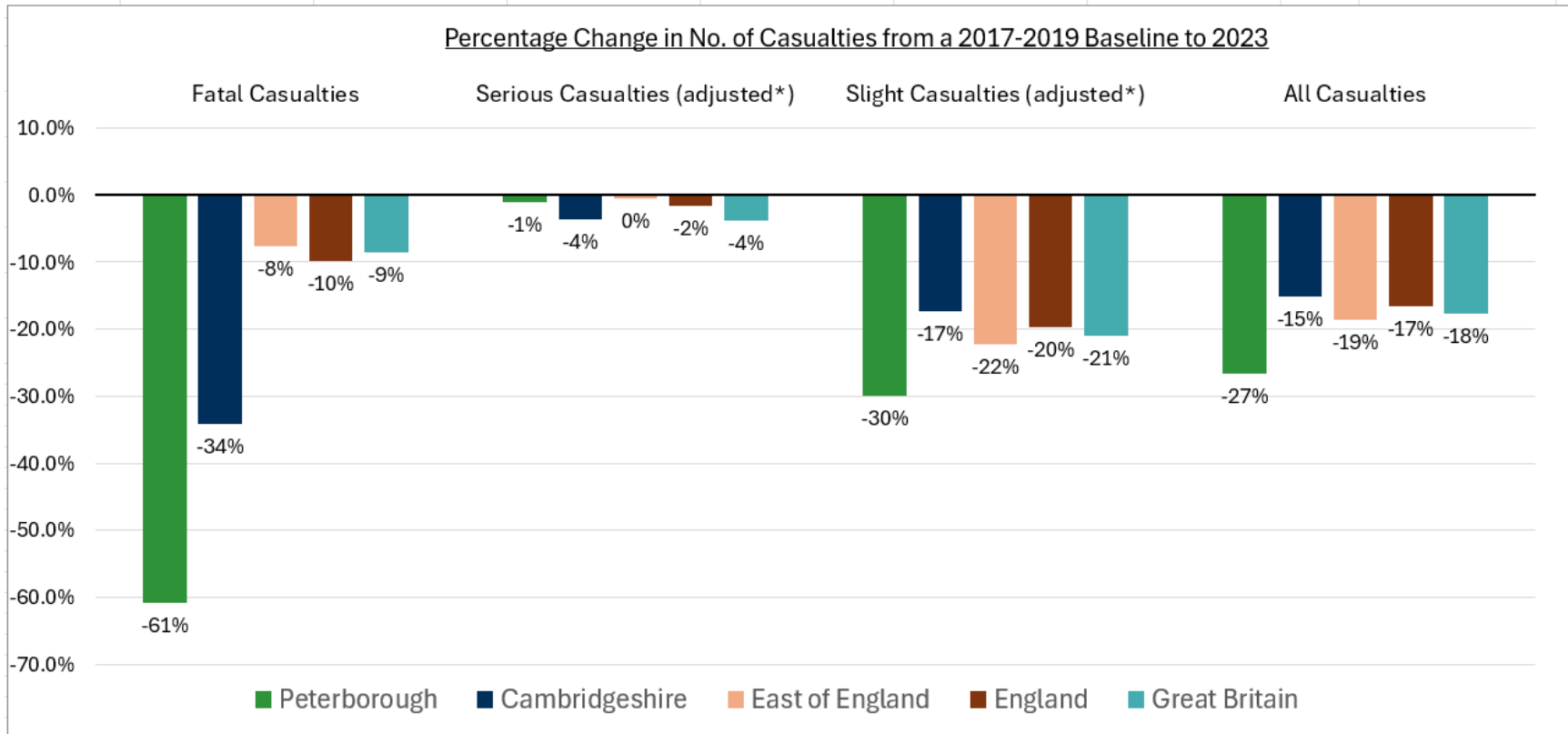
³ DfT publish both 'unadjusted' and 'adjusted' data. The unadjusted data is sourced direct from police forces regardless of the method of severity classification being used by each force. The adjusted data is intended to account for the differences in severity classification systems and make the data more comparable across different areas ([more information available here](#)).

Overview

Cambridgeshire has performed well in terms of fatal and serious casualty reduction, exceeding and meeting regional / national benchmarks but slight casualty reduction has been marginally below other areas. Peterborough has performed well in terms of fatal and slight casualty reduction, significantly exceeding regional and national benchmarks but serious casualty reduction has been marginally below other areas.

In terms of the reduction in killed or seriously injured (KSI) casualties, there has been a reduction of 6% in both Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

Figure 1: Percentage change in casualties by casualty severity and area



Glossary

Collision:

All road collisions involving personal injury or death occurring on the Public Highway which are reported to the police within 30 days of occurrence, and which involves at least one vehicle.

The collision severity is determined by the most severe injury suffered by any casualty within the collision. For example, in a collision where 1 person was seriously injured, and a further 4 people were slightly injured, this would be recorded as a 'Serious' collision.

Casualty:

Any persons killed or injured in a road collision, with the below exceptions:

- *Casualties which have been determined as a suicide by a coroner.*
- *Casualties which pass away during a road collision from natural causes, and whose death is not ascribed by a coroner to have been a result of the collision.*
- *Casualties injured where the only injury sustained is deemed to be the result of an illness rather than the road collision.*
- *Casualties who witness a collision and suffer shock but are not directly involved.*
- *Casualties who injure themselves after exiting a vehicle once the collision has occurred.*
- *Casualties who injure themselves while working on a stationary vehicle.*
- *Injuries experienced by unborn infants at the time of the collision.*

A collision can contain multiple casualties. If one casualty fits into the above list of exceptions, they are not reported by CCC or the DfT, but all other casualties within the collision are reported.

Useful links:

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough's Vision Zero Partnership (VZP) are working on reducing the number of Fatal and Serious casualties on the road network. You can read more about the VZP here: [About the Vision Zero Partnership](#).

Cambridgeshire County Council has published a Road Safety Dashboard, where you can view up-to-date information on reported collisions. This is available at the following link: [Cambridgeshire Road Safety Dashboard](#).