



AVZ Blog (July 2021) The true toll of road casualties and road crime

AVZ has produced three resources to remind campaigners and community representatives, including Police and Crime Commissioners, of the real toll of crashes and road crime.

1. Comparing road deaths and homicides

Road deaths are the most common violent death in the UK. Comparing the number of [road deaths to homicides](#) for the past five years in each police service area showed that road deaths outnumbered homicides by 2.3 in England and Wales. But the ratio was as high as 8.9 in Wiltshire and 7.8 in North Yorkshire. It was only in the major metropolitan area of London where homicides ever outnumbered road deaths.

The Home Office does not report the number of forensic collision investigators but it will be much less than the number of homicide detectives.

2. Under-reporting of road casualties

Many, if not most people, refer to the official road casualty statistics. But these are limited to those casualties reported to and by the police--an average of 25,000 serious injuries each year in England and Wales. The Department for Transport (DfT) is clear about this and refers to "reported road casualties".

Under-reporting has been known to be a problem for many decades. DfT invests in researching it and its best estimate is that there are around 70,000 serious casualties per year. This is 2.9 times that reported by police. DfT's estimate of those seriously injured ranged from a low of 40,000 to as high as 100,000.

Slight injuries are also significantly under-reported. See AVZ's briefing on [under-reporting](#) for more information. And please be sure to refer to reported road casualties when discussing the number of people injured in road crashes.

3. Motoring offences dominate Magistrates Court

Road crime outnumbers all other types of crime prosecuted at court. Overall offences dealt with by Magistrates Courts account for over 90% of all court cases. And motoring offences account for more than half of all proceedings in [Magistrates Courts](#) in England and Wales (54%). This ranged as high as 81% in Lincolnshire, and 75% in both West Mercia and West Yorkshire. Motoring offences dominated Magistrates Courts proceedings in over three-quarters of police areas.

Do not forget that most motoring offences are dealt with out of court. They result in fines and attendance on remedial driver training courses rather than in court cases.

We hope that these three resources will be useful to campaigners, journalists and other policy makers as well as Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs), to help highlight how extensive the toll is from road crashes and road danger.

Action Vision Zero is campaigning for a rethink on roads policing. We want to see a road danger reduction approach that focuses on the harm posed to others, particularly those walking and cycling. Please contact amy@actionvisionzero.org for more information on how you can be involved.