

AVZ Briefing – Britain's Urban rural divide: who's getting hurt where

February 2026

Key points

- Almost all road safety strategies have Killed and Seriously Injured (KSI) casualty reduction targets, with no priority given to road deaths. This includes Department for Transport's new Road Safety Strategy which aims to reduce KSIs by 65% by 2035.
- Urban areas account for most KSIs whilst more road deaths occur in rural areas; serious injuries greatly outnumber road deaths, in urban areas by as much as 23 to 1.
- This should affect the priorities and actions in a road safety strategy and lead to more of a focus on reducing urban serious injuries.

Killed/seriously injured (KSI) and urban focus (Table 1 and Figure 1 overleaf)

- Almost 30% more KSIs occur in urban areas (54%) than rural areas (42%).
- This is due to the majority of vulnerable road user KSIs occurring in urban areas, including 85% of all pedestrian KSIs and 74% of all cyclist KSIs.
- A minority of motor vehicle occupant KSIs occur in urban areas, including 38% of car occupant KSIs and 24% van occupant KSIs.
- Serious injuries dominate, especially in urban areas where there are 24 SIs to every urban road death, compared to 10 SIs for every rural road death.

Fatalities and rural focus (Table 2)

- Almost twice as many people are killed on roads in rural areas (62%) than urban areas (32%).
- More cyclists are killed in rural areas (56%) than urban areas (44%)
- Fewer than one in three pedestrian deaths occur in rural areas (29%).

Table 1: Reported fatal and serious road casualties (2020-2024)¹

	Urban	Rural	Motorway
All	92,027	72,401	6,464
Pedestrian	25,435	4,462	192
Pedal Cyclist	15,774	5,456	10
Motorcyclist	15,431	12,939	435
Car Occupant	30,018	44,170	4,963
Van occupant	1,093	2,958	522
HGV Occupant	149	807	238
Bus occupant	1,727	687	42
Other vehicle occupant	2,400	922	62

Table 2: Reported road deaths (2020-2024)

	Urban	Rural	Motorway
All	3,920	7,642	826
Pedestrian	1,369	607	96
Pedal Cyclist	233	297	

¹ <https://maps.dft.gov.uk/road-casualties/index.html> (Great Britain)

Figure 1: Reported KSI urban rural share

