

Reported road accidents involving young car drivers: Great Britain 2011

Road Accident Statistics Factsheet No. 1 – August 2012



Department
for Transport

Introduction

This factsheet presents summary information relating to the casualties in reported personal injury road accidents¹ involving young car drivers; all figures are based on data for 2011 unless otherwise stated.

Overview – Casualties in accidents involving young car drivers

Numbers: In Great Britain in 2011, there were a total of 151,474 reported personal injury road accidents. 22 per cent (33,322) of these involved at least one young (17 to 24 year old) car driver, and in total:

- 412 people were killed in accidents involving young car drivers (22 per cent of total road fatalities in 2011)
- 4,894 people were killed or seriously injured (KSI) (20 per cent of total road KSI casualties)
- 46,634 people were slightly injured (26 per cent of all slight injuries)
- 148 young car drivers were killed in 2011 (24 per cent of all car driver fatalities), and 1,552 young car drivers were killed or seriously injured (25 per cent of all car driver KSI casualties)

Trends: Reported killed or seriously injured (KSI) casualties in accidents involving young car drivers have decreased at steady rate since 2000.

Compared with 2010, the number of KSI casualties in young car driver related accidents in 2011 was 8 per cent lower, and the number of fatalities was 6 per cent lower – a reduction of 25 deaths.

Compared with the 2005-09 average, the numbers of KSI casualties in young car driver related accidents in 2011 was 35 per cent lower, and the number of fatalities was 46 per cent lower.

This reduction went against the overall increase in fatalities for all accidents - accidents involving young car drivers typically account for around a quarter of all road deaths.

Chart 1: Trend in KSI casualties in accidents involving young car drivers, GB 2000 – 2011

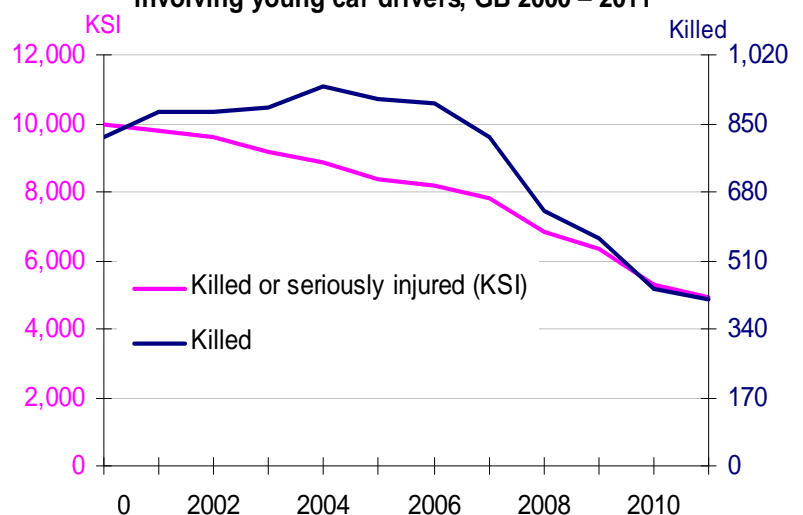
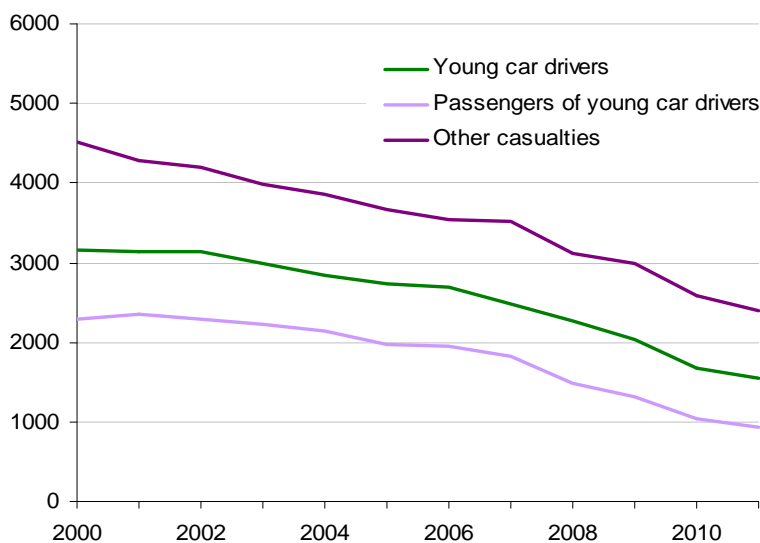


Chart 2: Killed and seriously injured casualties in accidents with young car drivers: GB 2000-2011



The number of young car drivers killed has decreased by 48 per cent from the 2005-2009 average, while passenger fatalities of young car drivers decreased by 54 per cent.

The number of other participants (occupants of other vehicles and pedestrians) killed in accidents with a young car driver fell by 39 per cent.

Killed or seriously injured young car drivers have decreased by 36 per cent from the 2005-2009 average, and the number of killed or seriously injured passengers of young car drivers have reduced by 45 per cent.

Other participants killed or seriously injured in accidents with a young driver have reduced by 28 per cent compared with the 2005-2009 average.

¹ A considerable proportion of non-fatal accidents are not reported to the police. More information on this can be found in article 6 of Reported Road Casualties GB 2011

Who is injured in accidents involving young car drivers?

An accident involving a young car driver has on average 1.55 casualties, of which 38 per cent are young drivers. When all types of accidents are considered, the average is 1.35 casualties per accident. In fatal accidents involving a young car driver, 36 per cent of fatalities are young drivers.

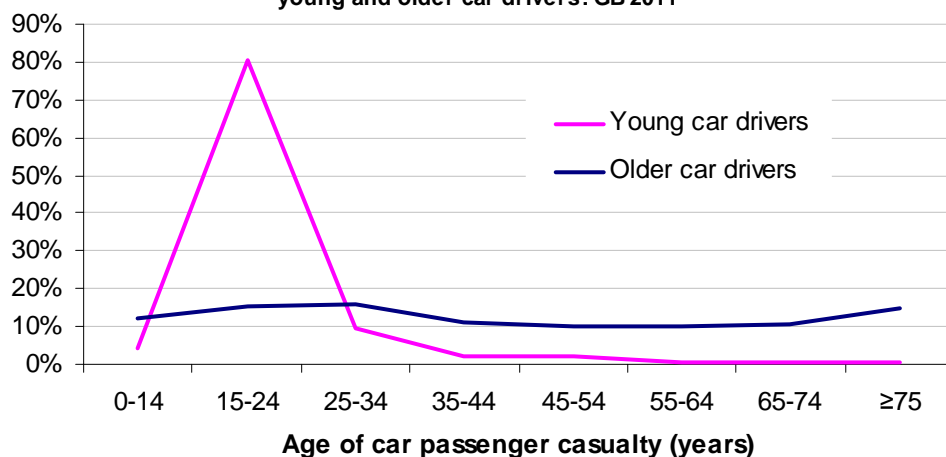
Table 1: Casualties from accidents involving car drivers: GB 2011

Type of casualty	Drivers aged 17-24			Drivers aged over 25		
	Total casualties	KSI casualties	Percentage	Total casualties	KSI casualties	Percentage
Car driver themselves	19,516	1,552	8%	64,057	4,601	7%
Car passenger	10,382	936	9%	29,312	2,006	7%
Occupants of other vehicles and pedestrians	21,630	2,406	11%	55,022	9,113	17%
All KSI casualties	51,528	4,894	9%	148,391	15,720	11%

Age: 27 per cent of young car drivers involved in accidents were aged 18 or 19. The majority of casualties in an accident involving young car drivers were aged 17 to 24 (56 per cent), as were the majority of the fatalities (59 per cent).

Passengers in accidents with young drivers are likely to be of the same age and sex as the young driver (in accidents involving older drivers, the KSI casualty ages are more evenly distributed). 80 per cent of passenger casualties in accidents involving young car drivers were aged 15-24.

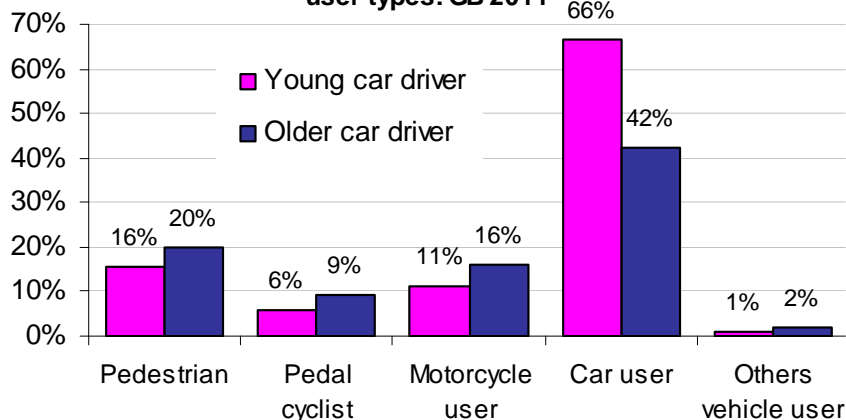
Chart 3: Ages of car passenger KSI casualties from accidents involving young and older car drivers: GB 2011



Road User Type: In 2011, 66 per cent (3,252) of those killed or seriously injured in an accident involving a young car driver were car users (48 per cent of these were the young car drivers themselves). 16 per cent (772) were pedestrians, 11 per cent (536) were motorcycle users, and 6 per cent (275) were pedal cyclists. In comparison with older drivers, young car drivers were more likely to be involved in accidents with car users but less likely to be involved with other users.

This could be because a higher proportion of accidents with a young car driver involve only a single vehicle with no pedestrian involvement than for older drivers (22 per cent compared with 11 per cent). This greater fraction of accidents where the only vehicle involved is the car for young drivers will increase the proportion of car user casualties more for young car drivers than for older car drivers.

Chart 4: Percentages of KSI casualties in accidents involving at least one car driver, broken down by road user types: GB 2011



Occupant: Young car drivers more often have seriously injured passengers than older car drivers (19 per cent of killed or seriously injured casualties in accidents involving young car drivers were car passengers, compared with 13 per cent for older car drivers).

Gender: Men accounted for 54 per cent of all casualties from accidents involving a young car driver, 68 per cent of KSI casualties and 75 per cent of fatalities in 2011 (for accidents involving older car drivers, the equivalent figures are 56, 66 and 73 per cent respectively).

When do accidents involving young car drivers happen?

Day of Week: In 2011 more accidents involving young car drivers happened on Friday than any other day of the week, with Sunday having the fewest. More accidents that were fatal or serious happened on a Saturday. 72 per cent of accidents involving young car drivers happened on weekdays, compared with 76 per cent of accidents involving an older driver.

Time of Day:

- The patterns shown (in **chart 5**) for accidents involving young car drivers are broadly similar to overall patterns for older drivers, and for all road accidents – however there is a clear difference in that young drivers are far more likely to be involved in an accident between the hours of 8pm and 4am, particularly on a weekend.
- On weekdays, most accidents involving young car drivers occur during the morning and evening peak periods – between 7am-9am and 3pm-7pm when most people are travelling to/from work. On weekends, most of these accidents occur during the afternoon.

Chart 5: Average numbers of accidents involving young car drivers, by Day and Time: GB 2011

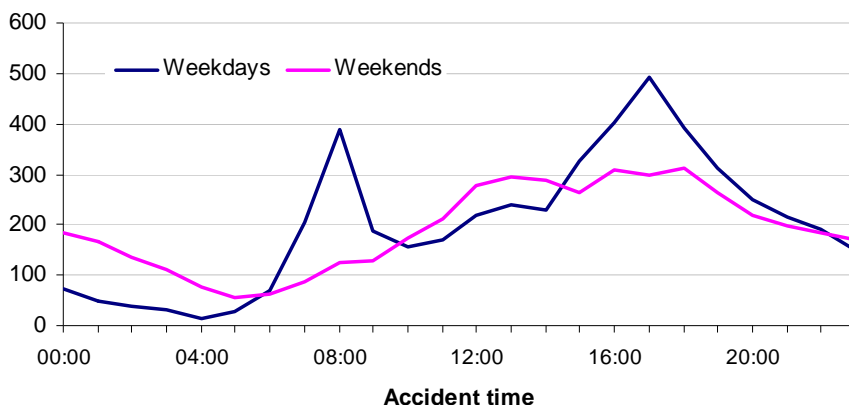
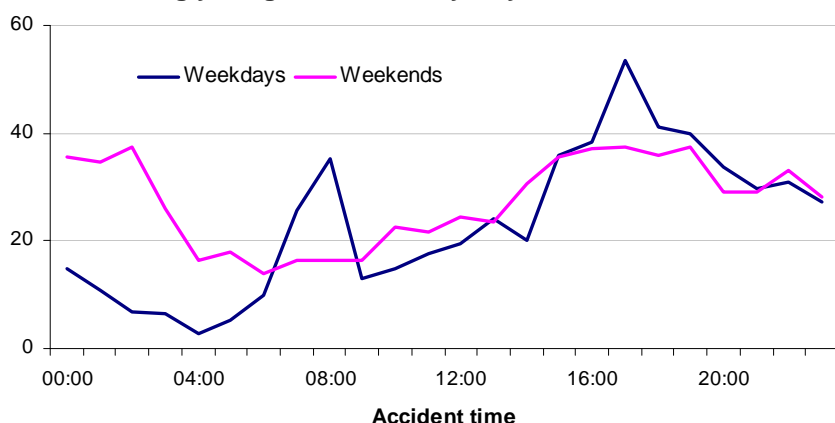


Chart 6: Average KSI numbers from accidents involving young car drivers, by Day and time: GB 2011

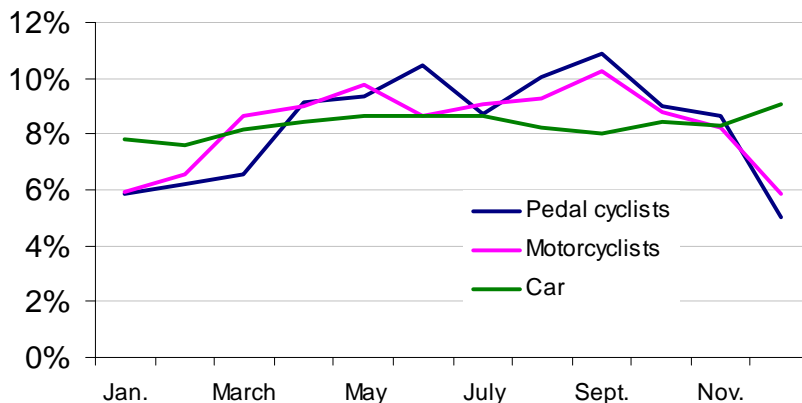


- A considerable number of accidents (9 per cent) occur between 8pm and 4am on Friday/Saturday and Saturday/Sunday. For fatal or serious accidents, this figure is 14 per cent (although note the numbers are smaller and subject to more fluctuation).
- The increased proportion of accidents for young car drivers could reflect that young people are more likely to be out at this time, or the finding that accidents involving young car drivers more often involve alcohol (see section on why accidents happen).

Month of Year:

- The number of accidents involving young car drivers is fairly constant throughout the year, with slightly more happening in December (9.1 per cent) – although these accidents tend to involve car drivers only. This pattern does not hold for fatal accidents which are slightly more common in August/September.
- Accidents involving young car drivers and pedal cyclists or motorcyclists are more common during the summer months, which is most likely due to the greater traffic of these vehicles during that time.

Chart 7: Proportion of accidents involving young car drivers, by Month and Road User: GB 2011



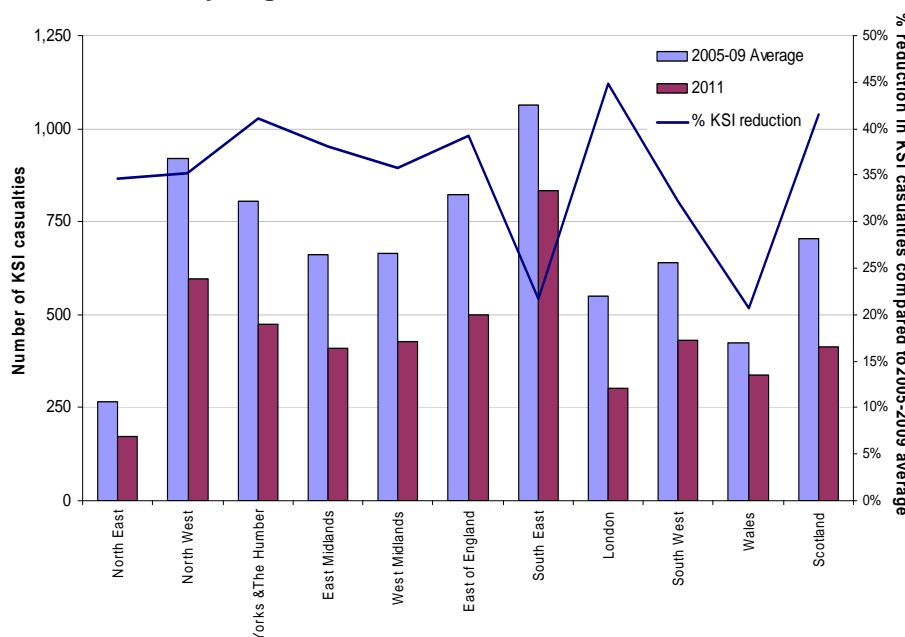
Where do accidents involving young car drivers take place?

Urban/rural: The majority (57 per cent) of accidents involving young car drivers happened in urban areas; these accidents accounted for 55 per cent of the casualties from accidents involving young car drivers. Accidents in urban areas were (on average) less serious than those in rural areas; 8 per cent of casualties in urban areas were killed or seriously injured, compared with 12 per cent in rural areas. For older drivers, a greater proportion of accidents occurred in urban areas (64 per cent); these accidents accounted for 61 per cent of the casualties from accidents involving older car drivers.

Region:

- 17 per cent of accidents involving young car drivers and 17 per cent of fatal and serious accidents involving young car drivers were in the South East region.
- The greatest reduction in accidents involving young car drivers (in percentage terms) compared with the 2005-09 average occurred in the North West (39 per cent), followed by the West Midlands and the North East (35 per cent and 33 per cent respectively).
- In 2011, London had the lowest rate of accidents involving young car drivers per 100,000 people. This possibly reflects the fact that London has a lower level of car ownership than other areas (NTS 2010).
- The region with the biggest reduction in KSI casualties compared with the 2005-2009 average is London, with the smallest reductions occurring in Wales, and the South East.

Chart 8: KSI casualties from accidents involving young car drivers, by Region GB 2011



Type of road: Most accidents (68 per cent) involving young car drivers occur on roads with speed limits of 40mph or below. Only 4 per cent of accidents involving a young car driver happened on motorways – equally 4 per cent of accidents involving older drivers happened on motorways.

- Non-built up roads account for 28 per cent of accidents involving a young car driver – where as only 22 per cent of accidents involving an older driver occurred on non-built up roads.
- 30 per cent of casualties and 40 per cent of killed or seriously injured casualties from accidents involving a young driver occurred on non-built up roads (25 and 33 per cent respectively for older drivers).
- Generally casualties from accidents involving young car drivers on built up roads are less severely injured (8 per cent of casualties are killed or seriously injured, compared with 13 per cent on non-built up roads).

Table 2: Number of accidents involving young car drivers and casualties from them, by road type: GB 2011

Road Type	Accidents		Casualties	
	number	%	number	%
Speed limit: ≤ 40 mph	22,581	68%	33,546	65%
A Roads	9,611		14,563	
Other Roads	12,970		18,983	
Speed Limit: 41- 70 mph	9,245	28%	15,203	30%
A Roads	5,496		9,217	
Other Roads	3,749		5,986	
Motorway	1,496	4%	2,779	5%
Total	33,322	100%	51,528	100%

Why do accidents involving young car drivers happen?

Contributory factors: Details of factors contributing to reported personal injury road accidents are recorded by the police. Whilst it is not possible to determine blame from these contributory factors they may offer some insight into common type of accidents. Not all accidents have these factors recorded (i.e. only accidents where a police officer attended the scene can be given factors), and an accident can be assigned more than one factor.

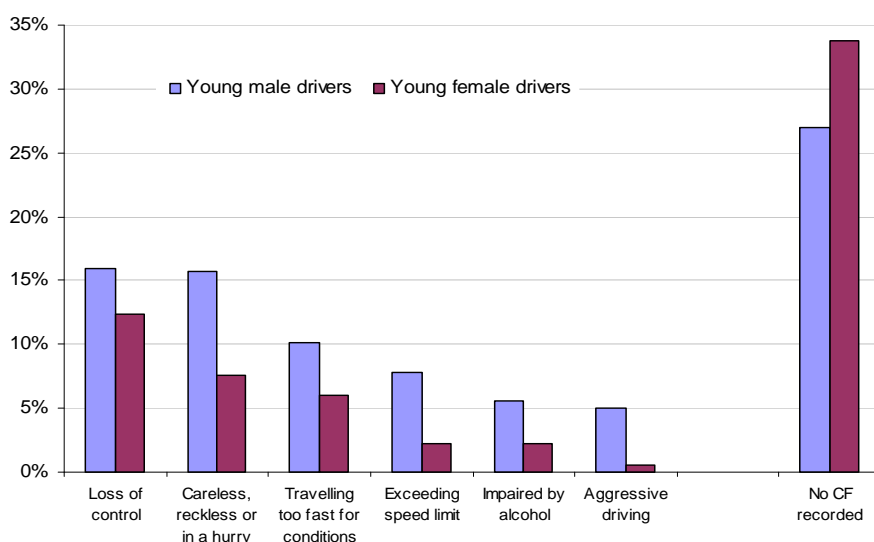
Table 3: Contributory factors in accidents involving car drivers

Contributory factor attributed to vehicles	Drivers aged 17- 24		Drivers aged ≥25	
	numbers	%	numbers	%
Failed to look properly	7,206	23%	33,472	24%
Loss of control	4,519	15%	8,445	6%
Failed to judge other person's path or speed	4,180	13%	17,615	13%
Careless, reckless or in a hurry	3,915	13%	10,449	7%
Learner or inexperienced driver/rider	2,923	9%	688	6%
Slippery road (due to weather)	2,724	9%	819	0%
Poor turn or manoeuvre	2,671	9%	10,405	7%
Travelling too fast for conditions	2,665	9%	4,427	3%
Exceeding speed limit	1,764	6%	2,647	2%
Sudden braking	1,655	5%	5,443	4%
No CF recorded	9,242	30%	63,440	45%
Total	31,163	100%	140,650	100%

Failed to look properly was the most commonly recorded factor for all ages of car drivers involved in accidents (assigned to almost 1 in 4 drivers). Young car drivers more often had a contributory factor assigned to them than older car drivers (70 per cent compared with 55 per cent).

Male young car drivers were more often assigned a contributory factor than young female car drivers. They were also more frequently given the factors '*Exceeding speed limit*' and '*Travelling too fast for conditions*'. 23 per cent of both male and female young car drivers were given the factor '*Failed to look properly*'.

Chart 9: Contributory factors in accidents involving car drivers aged 17 to 24



Alcohol: 4 per cent of young drivers had *impaired by alcohol* given as a contributory factor, compared with 2 per cent of older drivers.

Young male drivers accounted for 80 per cent of the times it was assigned to a young car driver. Young car drivers had more drink drive accidents per 100 thousand licence holders and per 100 million miles travelled than any other age group².

What are the accident circumstances?

Vehicle/driver characteristics: Most young car drivers in accidents were most often recorded as '*going ahead*' (59 per cent). The next most frequent vehicle manoeuvre associated with accidents was '*turning right*', recorded in 11 per cent of young driver accidents. Young drivers were more commonly '*not at a junction*' when they were involved in an accident (42 per cent of accidents), whilst 23 per cent of young car drivers involved in an accident were using a roundabout.

In 2011 the average age of a car in an accident driven by a young person was 7.8 years old, compared with cars driven by older people that are on average 6.7 years old. The average age of a car in Great Britain in 2011 was 7.5 years old³.

Hit and run: 3 per cent of young drivers in accidents were involved in a hit and run accident. This is largely made up of male young drivers (689 compared with 175 young female drivers). Hit and run accidents make up 3 per cent of the accidents young male drivers are involved in, and 1 per cent of the accidents young female drivers are involved in.

² Based on 2010 Coroners Data

³ Source: Vehicle Licensing Statistics Table VEH0207

Notes

Coverage: Drivers of cars includes taxis, estate cars, three and four wheel cars and minibuses. Drivers are persons in control of vehicles. Other occupants of vehicles are passengers.

Further information

This factsheet presents summary information relating to accidents involving young drivers in road accidents in Great Britain. The following are sources of further information:

- **Reported Road Casualties Great Britain: Annual Reports:** This contains information on all road accidents in Great Britain, including more detailed figures and tables that break down accidents by age of drivers and type of vehicle. The publication can be accessed online at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reported-road-casualties-great-britain-annual-report-2011>
- **National Travel Survey:** The Department's National Travel Survey collects information about driving activities, and provides data on trends that can be used to calculate young driver casualty rates. More details can be found in the NTS annual report: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport/series/national-travel-survey-statistics>
- **Research studies:** The Department for Transport has commissioned a number of research studies into different aspects of young drivers. Details can be found on the Department's road safety webpage at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/road-safety-research-and-statistical-reports>
The Transport Research Laboratory also publishes research on a wide range of road safety topics: http://www.trl.co.uk/library/reports_publications/

Any enquiries relating to the figures in this factsheet or requests for further information on accidents involving young car drivers in Great Britain can be addressed to the Road Safety Statistics branch at the Department for Transport:

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