Changes to DfT’s drink drive statistics from 2013 onwards

Statistics planned for August 2014

In August 2014, the Department will publish final estimates of drink drive accidents and casualties for 2012. However, the 2013 provisional estimates that would usually be published alongside have been delayed whilst we explore some problems in the methodology used.

Background

For many years, The Department has published 2 estimates of drink drive accidents and casualties for each year:

i. **Provisional** estimates, six months after the year ends

ii. **Final** estimates, 18 months after year end

Both estimates are usually released in late July / early August. e.g. in July 2013, the Department published provisional estimates for 2012 and final estimates for 2011.

The estimates are based partially on information from Coroners and Procurators Fiscal about the blood alcohol level of road fatalities. The data are collected throughout the year. The provisional figures are based on a partial sample of returns - whatever has been collected by July – and are revised a year later when a more complete sample has been gathered.

Changes for 2013 onwards

Looking at the last few years, we’ve identified systematic problems with the provisional statistics:

i. They’re based on an increasingly small sample of data, which means they’re subject to increasing uncertainty

ii. There’s a strong tendency for downward revisions when the figures are finalized, suggesting the provisional sample is systematically biased higher than the final.

We intend to do some exploratory analysis to understand this problem better and come up with an alternative methodology, but as this will take a few months, we are delaying the provisional statistics, pending the outcome of this work.

Gathering user feedback

In the next few months, we’ll draw up some options for improving the methodology of the provisional statistics and gather feedback from users. The analysis and request for feedback will be published on this page but if you’d like to be contacted directly, please email roadacc.stats@dft.gsi.gov.uk and we'll add you to our list of interested users.

Regardless of the outcome of this review, the **final** estimates for 2013 will still be published in Summer 2015 as usual.

Road Safety Statistics Team, Department for Transport, June 2014