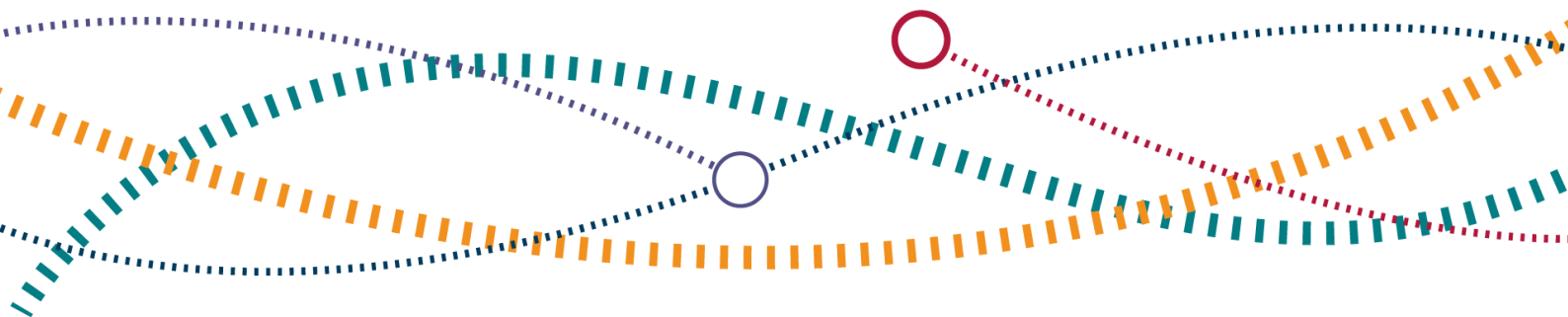




Annual Assessment of Highways England End of Road Period 1, 2015-2020

Performance update: November 2020



Introduction

1. The Office of Rail and Road independently monitors Highways England's management of the strategic road network – the main A-roads and motorways in England. We hold the company to account for delivering improvements for road users, including improving safety.
2. This is an update to our annual assessment of the company's performance published in July 2020¹ following the release of new safety data by the Department for Transport (DfT).
3. We also provide a short update on investment delivery performance which we were not in a position to conclude on in our annual assessment. Unfortunately we are not able to conclude on this area at this time and will do so in our next annual assessment in July 2021.

Safety

The latest adjusted road casualty statistics published by the Department for Transport show that 2,189 people were killed or seriously injured on the strategic road network in 2019.

4. In Road Period 1 (RP1), Highways England's key performance indicator for safety was to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured (KSIs) on the strategic road network by 40% by 2020, compared to a baseline of the 2005-09 average.
5. Although Road Period 2 (RP2) has now begun, we will continue to report on Highways England's performance against its safety target for RP1, which ends December 2020. The final outcome against this target will be known in mid-2021, when the 2020 road casualty statistics are published.
6. On 30 September 2020, DfT published its road casualty statistics for 2019.
7. The latest adjusted figures show that 2,189 people were killed or seriously injured on the strategic road network in 2019². This is 106 (4.6%) fewer than in 2018, and

¹ <https://www.orr.gov.uk/monitoring-regulation/road-monitoring/performance-efficiency/highways-monitor-annual-assessment>

² Figures for serious injuries reported here are adjusted in response to changes to the severity reporting systems used by a large number of police forces and may not match previous reported totals. Unadjusted figures show that 1,948 people were killed or seriously injured on the strategic road network in 2019, but this is not comparable with previous years. Further details are provided in DfT's annual road casualty report: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/reported-road-casualties-great-britain-annual-report-2019>

represents a 34.1% reduction from the baseline. In comparison, deaths and serious injuries on all roads in Great Britain fell by 3.3% since 2018, and by 29.2% compared to the same 2005-09 baseline period.

8. In 2019 there were 210 deaths on the strategic road network, which is 40 (16%) fewer than in 2018. This is the lowest recorded figure for the strategic road network (211 deaths were reported in 2014). However, the longer term trend for fatalities since 2010 remains broadly flat, which is in line with all roads in Great Britain.

Figure 1. In 2019, KSIs were 34% below the baseline, but above the straight line trajectory required to achieve the target in 2020.

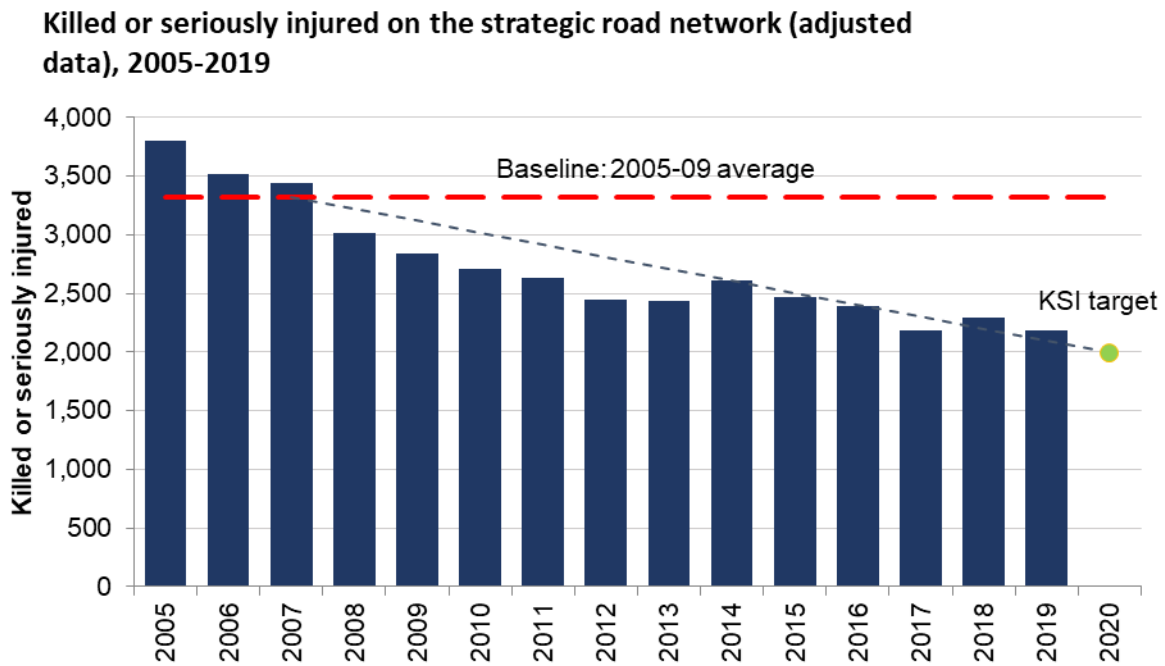


Figure 2: Casualties on the strategic road network, adjusted data: 2019, 2018 and 2005-09 (baseline).

	2019	2018	2005-09 baseline	Percentage change from	
				2018	baseline
Killed	210	250	357	-16%	-41.2%
Seriously injured	1,979	2,044	2,965	-3.2%	-33.3%
Killed or seriously injured	2,189	2,294	3,323	-4.6%	-34.1%

9. If the current rate of improvement were to be sustained, Highways England would not achieve a 40% reduction in killed or seriously injured by 2020. The 2019 data puts Highways England 4.4% above the straight line trajectory required to achieve its target, although this is within the 5% annual tolerance that the company agreed with DfT at the start of RP1³.
10. We expect that a significant reduction in road traffic casualties will be recorded in 2020 as a result of lower levels of traffic due to coronavirus (COVID-19). This means that there is an increased likelihood that Highways England will meet its safety key performance indicator for the first road period.
11. However, any significant reduction in casualties in 2020 is likely to be temporary. Therefore, as per the key message in our RP1 assessment, Highways England must continue to work hard to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on its roads. The company should focus on its target to deliver further reductions in RP2, and on its longer term goal of zero casualties by 2040.
12. As set out in our assessment of RP1, we believe that Highways England demonstrates a strong commitment to improving safety on the strategic road network. The company delivered an extensive programme of actions aimed at improving safety in RP1, and we will continue to scrutinise, and report on, the actions it takes to improve safety in RP2 and beyond.

Investment delivery

13. When we published our assessment in July 2020 we reported that two major improvement schemes (M2 Junction 5 Improvements and A303 Sparkford to Ilchester), which were originally due to start work in RP1, had been deferred to RP2.
14. Both schemes are still waiting to complete the necessary statutory processes and therefore a decision on Highways England's performance has yet to be taken.

³ Detailed in the operational metrics manual: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/highways-england-operational-metrics-manual>



© Office of Rail & Road 2020

This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. To view this licence, visit nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3.

Where we have identified any third-party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

This publication is available at orr.gov.uk

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at orr.gov.uk/contact-us