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**Mark Pont, Assessment Programme Lead**

Prof Roger Halliday  
Chief Statistician and Data Officer  
Scottish Government  
(by email)

3 March 2020

Dear Roger

**STATISTICS ON REPORTED ROAD CASUALTIES IN SCOTLAND**

As you are aware, we recently conducted a review of the [Reported Road Casualties](#) statistics produced by Transport Scotland against the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#). The statistics have been considered as part of a wider review of the devolved nations' road safety statistics, following our [compliance check of Road Accidents and Safety statistics for Great Britain](#) produced by the Department for Transport. This review comes at a time when some police forces in the UK, including Police Scotland, have adopted a new system ([CRASH](#)) for reporting road traffic collisions, an important step in improving both the timeliness and quality of the statistics. Our review considered the trustworthiness, quality and value of these statistics and their ability to confidently inform stakeholders, including the general public, about the safety of roads in their local neighbourhood or area.

I am pleased to inform you that these statistics should continue to be designated as National Statistics. We found several positive examples in the way that these statistics are produced and presented by Transport Scotland:

- Regular communication with users of the statistics through the Liaison Group on Road Accident Statistics – this has played an important role in implementing the new CRASH recording system and engaging with users during the rollout phase. Transport Scotland has worked closely with Police Scotland and the Department for Transport to ensure a smooth transition to the new system.
- Carrying out and [publishing](#) the results of a user survey in 2019 to gain an understanding of areas for improvement for all Transport Scotland statistics, reiterating the team's efforts to engage with all its potential users. As a result of the user feedback, we are encouraged that the team is working on interactive visualisations and a statistical summary document to accompany the main publication. We look forward to seeing to what extent this improves accessibility to the statistics for a wider range of users, including new and non-expert users.
- The team has considered and clearly explained the limitations of the statistics to users. Specifically, this includes issues of under-reporting of road traffic collisions and contributory factors leading to road traffic collisions, both of which need to be considered when using the statistics.
- The way the statistics are presented, and the accompanying commentary, is clear and informative. The context provided to explain trends in the data, such as changes to road safety laws, aids interpretation and provides users with greater insights.

We have identified some areas where we consider that improvements could further enhance the public value of the statistics:

- Informing users of the upcoming changes to the reporting of road traffic collisions following the move to CRASH throughout Scotland. Whilst key stakeholders are aware of the move to a new reporting system, we recommend that the team publish an explanatory note before the release of the next statistical publication (due in June 2020) in order to provide all users with the necessary information. The team should consider how it can best make use of its website and social media to publicise this information to ensure that it reaches as many users as possible.
- Considering the implementation of a formal data sharing agreement between Police Scotland and Transport Scotland. Whilst to date, data submissions have been consistent and Transport Scotland has a strong working relationship with Police Scotland, establishing a more structured and long-standing data agreement, specifying details including the data content and provision schedule, could help to minimise the risk of data quality issues. We encourage the team to look to the Authority's [Quality Assessment of Administrative Data \(QAAD\) toolkit](#) to support the continued improvement of quality management, including developing a formal data sharing agreement, and help the team to review the level of risk associated with the data quality of the new CRASH collection series.
- Analysing the overall number of road traffic collisions from the new CRASH system, alongside the results from the Scottish Household Survey and health records to better understand the overall rate of under-reporting. This analysis was previously carried out in 2010 and repeating it would give users an understanding of how under-reporting has changed over the past decade. The team could look to [Department for Infrastructure](#) and [Department for Transport](#) for recently published examples of similar analysis.

Our Travel, Transport and Tourism team will continue to engage with you and your team in the coming months to follow up on areas that have been highlighted for improvement. We would like to thank the team for their engagement and cooperation throughout the review process.

I am copying this letter to Andrew Paterson, the responsible statistician, and John Galilee, Head of Transport Scotland Analytical Services at the Scottish Government.

Yours sincerely



Mark Pont

Assessment Programme Lead