



## UK Progress on UN Sustainable Development Goal 3 and the Reducing Road Casualties Target Debate on 19 March 2020

On 19 March 2020, the House of Lords is due to debate a motion moved by Lord Robertson of Port Ellen (Labour) that “this House takes note of the United Kingdom’s progress towards United Nations sustainable development goal 3 and, in particular, target 3.6 of halving global road deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents by 2020”.

In September 2015, the United Nations General Assembly adopted 17 goals relating to people and the environment. These were termed the [sustainable development goals](#). Goal 3 is to “ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages”. This goal has 13 targets concerning to reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health; infectious and non-communicable diseases; mental health; environmental risks; and health systems and funding. Target 3.6 is to halve global road deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents by 2020. This is one decade earlier than deadlines specified for other targets.

Since 1998 there has been a [downward trend](#) in road traffic casualties of all types in Great Britain. There was a reduction in fatalities between 2006 and 2010, however the number of fatalities has remained stable since 2010. Car occupants account for the greatest number of both casualties and fatalities. However, pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists have significantly higher casualty rates per mile travelled than those travelling in cars or buses. Within Europe, Great Britain had the third lowest number of road deaths per million inhabitants in 2018, behind Norway and Switzerland.

In July 2019, the Government published a [policy paper](#) setting out the actions it intends to take between 2019 and 2021 to improve road safety. This document highlighted that “there has been little change in the number of reported fatalities on British roads since 2010”. It argued that new initiatives were needed to reduce the number of deaths on the roads.

Globally, [road traffic crashes](#) are the eighth leading cause of death for people of all ages. It is the leading cause of death for children and young adults aged 5–29 years. Between 2000 and 2016, the number of road traffic deaths globally increased, reaching 1.35 million in 2016. Participants at the Third Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety in February 2020 called for a new target to replace SDG target 3.6: to reduce road traffic deaths by at least 50 percent from 2020 to 2030.

Emily Haves | 12 March 2020

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## I. Sustainable development goal 3: Healthy lives and well-being

In September 2015, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.<sup>1</sup> The agenda included 17 goals relating to people and the environment, termed the sustainable development goals (SDGs).

SDG 3 is to “ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages”. This goal has 13 targets relating to reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health; infectious and non-communicable diseases; mental health; environmental risks; and health systems and funding.<sup>2</sup> The deadline for most of the targets is 2030, however target 3.6, relating to road casualties, is for completion by 2020.

The first five targets relate to health indicators:

- **Target 3.1** By 2030, reduce the global **maternal mortality ratio** to fewer than 70 per 100,000 live births.
- **Target 3.2** By 2030, end preventable **deaths of newborns and children under five** years of age, with all countries aiming to reduce neonatal mortality to at least as low as 12 per 1,000 live births and under-five mortality to at least as low as 25 per 1,000 live births.
- **Target 3.3** By 2030, end the epidemics of **AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases** and combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases, and other communicable diseases.
- **Target 3.4** By 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from **non-communicable diseases** through prevention and treatment; and promote mental health and well-being.
- **Target 3.5** Strengthen the prevention and treatment of **substance abuse**, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol.

Targets 3.6–3.9 concern environmental threats to health and access to health care:

- **Target 3.6** By 2020, halve the number of global deaths and injuries from **road traffic accidents**.
- **Target 3.7** By 2030, ensure universal access to **sexual and reproductive health-care services**, including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes.
- **Target 3.8** Achieve **universal health coverage**, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality, and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all.
- **Target 3.9** By 2030, substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from **hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution** and contamination.

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations, ‘[Sustainable Development Goals](#)’, accessed 4 March 2020.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*

Targets 3.A–3.D deal with global systems for supporting provision of health care and medicines:

- **Target 3.A** Strengthen the implementation of the **World Health Organisation Framework Convention on Tobacco Control** in all countries, as appropriate.
- **Target 3.B** Support the research and development of **vaccines and medicines** for the communicable and non-communicable diseases that primarily affect developing countries. Provide access to affordable essential medicines and vaccines, in accordance with the Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health, which affirms the right of developing countries to use to the full the provisions in the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights regarding flexibilities to protect public health. In particular, provide **access to medicines for all**.
- **Target 3.C** Substantially **increase health financing** and the recruitment, development, training and retention of the **health workforce in developing countries**, especially in least developed countries and small island developing states.
- **Target 3.D** Strengthen the capacity of all countries, in particular developing countries, for early warning, risk reduction and management of **national and global health risks**.

### 1.1 Progress towards SDG 3

As health is a devolved matter, where statistics are collected separately for the devolved nations this briefing will focus on progress towards meeting SDG 3 in England. Measures for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are provided in the Government’s assessment of its progress towards meeting the sustainable development goals:

- HM Government, [Voluntary National Review of Progress Towards the Sustainable Development Goals](#), 26 June 2019, pp 54–8

#### **Targets 3.1 and 3.2: Maternal and child mortality**

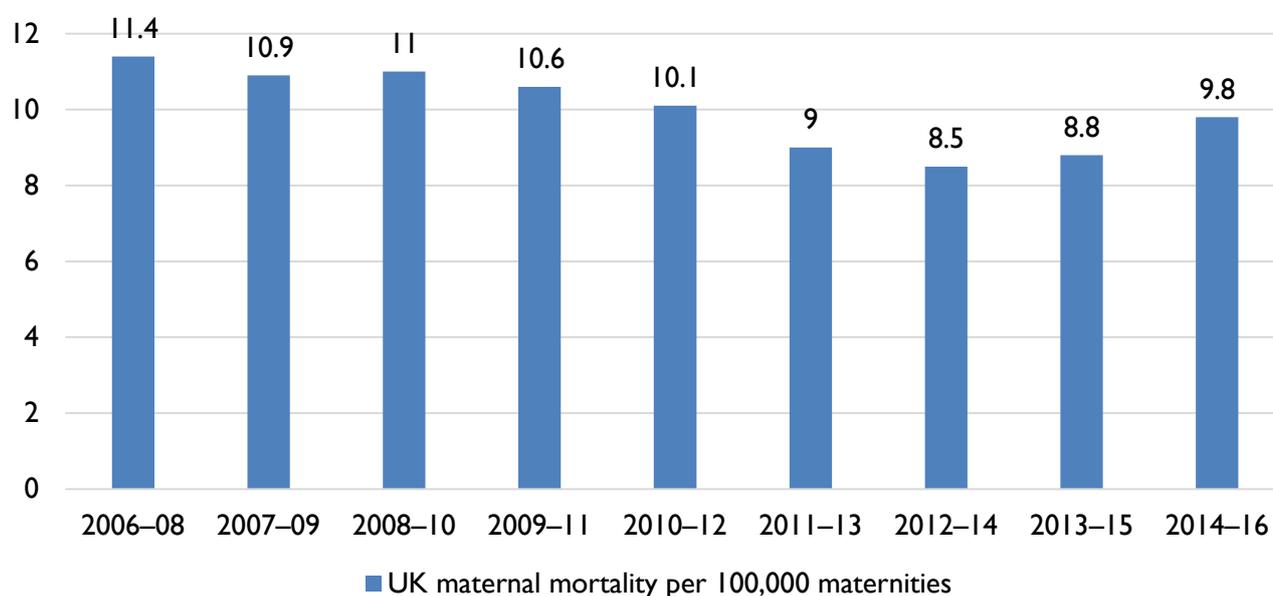
In both neonatal and infant mortality, the UK has made slower progress at reducing rates than many other European countries.<sup>3</sup> The rate of stillbirths, and neonatal and maternal mortality, fell in England between 2010 and 2017. The number of stillbirths fell by 18.8%; neonatal mortality by 5.8%; and maternal mortality by 8%.<sup>4</sup> However, maternal mortality rose slightly between 2012/14 and 2014/16. In addition, the number of deaths of children in England under age five per 1,000 live births “rose slightly”, from 4.2 in 2015 to 4.4 in 2016. This followed a steady decline from 2005 to 2015. In both neonatal and infant mortality, the UK has made slower progress at reducing rates than many other European countries.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Office for National Statistics, ‘[UK drops in European child mortality rankings](#)’, 13 October 2017.

<sup>4</sup> HM Government, [Voluntary National Review of Progress Towards the Sustainable Development Goals](#), 26 June 2019, p 50.

<sup>5</sup> Office for National Statistics, ‘[UK drops in European child mortality rankings](#)’, 13 October 2017.

**Chart 1: UK maternal mortality per 100,000 maternities<sup>6</sup>**



Ethnic background is correlated with higher maternal mortality; mothers in England who identified as black had a higher mortality rate compared to other ethnicities.<sup>7</sup> Ethnic background and income level also affected levels of stillbirths, and neonatal and infant mortality. Women from the poorest backgrounds and mothers from black, Asian and minority ethnic groups are at higher risk of their baby dying in the womb or soon after birth.

### **Targets 3.3 and 3.8: Communicable diseases**

Diagnoses of HIV in England have fallen in recent years. There were 4,044 diagnoses of HIV in England in 2018, a reduction from 5,812 in 2010.<sup>8</sup> There was a rapid decline in HIV diagnoses in the UK overall between 2014 and 2018, from 6,278 in 2014 to 4,453 in 2018.<sup>9</sup>

Most child vaccination rates for immunisations against vaccine-preventable diseases across the UK currently do not meet the World Health Organisation's recommended 95% target.<sup>10</sup> In England in 2018/19, 92.1% of children had had three doses of the 6-in-1 vaccine, which includes protection against diphtheria, polio, and hepatitis B.<sup>11</sup> In addition, 90.3% of children had had their first dose of the measles, mumps and rubella vaccine, and 92% had received two doses of the meningitis B vaccine.<sup>12</sup> Take-up of all routine childhood vaccinations in England declined between 2017/18 and 2018/19, by between 0.2 and 1 percentage points.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>6</sup> HM Government, [Voluntary National Review of Progress Towards the Sustainable Development Goals](#), 26 June 2019, p 50.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> Public Health England, [Country and PHE Region HIV Data Tables](#), 1 October 2019.

<sup>9</sup> Public Health England, [HIV in the United Kingdom: Towards Zero HIV Transmissions by 2030](#), December 2019, p 8.

<sup>10</sup> Public Health England, [Childhood Vaccination Coverage Statistics: England, 2018–19](#), 26 September 2019, p 27.

<sup>11</sup> *ibid.*, p 9.

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*, pp 15 and 25.

<sup>13</sup> NHS Digital, [Childhood vaccination coverage statistics—England 2018–19](#), 26 September 2019.

### **Targets 3.4, 3.5 and 3.8: Healthy minds, bodies, and lifestyles**

Non-communicable diseases are the biggest cause of death in the UK. The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that non-communicable diseases accounted for 89 percent of all deaths in the UK in 2016.<sup>14</sup> Cancers and cardiovascular disease accounted for the largest proportions of these deaths. Five-year cancer survival rates are worse in the UK than in high-income countries in the EU.<sup>15</sup> However, survival after heart attack or stroke is better in the UK than the EU average.<sup>16</sup>

Behavioural risk factors, including tobacco smoking, poor diet, alcohol consumption and low physical activity accounted for 34% of all deaths in the UK in 2017, compared to 39% for the EU.<sup>17</sup> Around 16% of all deaths in 2017 can be attributed to tobacco smoking alone. Dietary risks (including high sugar and salt consumption) are estimated to account for about 15% of all deaths, alcohol consumption for 3% and low physical exercise account for 2%.

The number of adults who are either overweight or obese has increased over recent decades. Prevalence has risen from 52.9% in 1993 to 64.3% in 2017.<sup>18</sup> In 2015/16, 22.1% of reception children were overweight or obese. In 2017/18 this increased to 22.4%.<sup>19</sup> Obesity among children is more prevalent in more deprived areas.

A survey carried out in England in 2014 found that one in six people over the age of 16 reported having symptoms of a common mental disorder in the week before being surveyed.<sup>20</sup> A 2017 survey found that 12.8 percent of people between ages 5 and 19 had at least one mental disorder.<sup>21</sup> In 2017, the suicide rate in England was 9.2 per 100,000 people, down from 10.1 in 2015.<sup>22</sup>

### **Targets 3.6 and 3.9: Healthy and safe environment**

Air pollution has adverse health effects, including increased mortality from stroke and heart disease.<sup>23</sup> In 2017, 5.1 percent of adult deaths in England were attributed to particulate air pollution.<sup>24</sup> Concentrations of fine particulate matter have decreased over the long term, but were broadly stable between 2015 and 2018.<sup>25</sup> In January 2019, the Government published a clean air strategy, which set out its plans to reduce air pollution.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>14</sup> World Health Organisation, [United Kingdom](#), 2016.

<sup>15</sup> European Commission, [State of Health in the EU: United Kingdom Country Health Profile 2019](#), August 2019, p 14.

<sup>16</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> *ibid.*, p 7.

<sup>18</sup> House of Commons Library, [Obesity Statistics](#), 6 August 2019, p 5.

<sup>19</sup> HM Government, [Voluntary National Review of Progress Towards the Sustainable Development Goals](#), 26 June 2019, p 52.

<sup>20</sup> House of Commons Library, [Mental Health Statistics for England: Prevalence, Services and Funding](#), 23 January 2020, p 4.

<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*, p 11.

<sup>22</sup> HM Government, [Voluntary National Review of Progress Towards the Sustainable Development Goals](#), 26 June 2019, p 54.

<sup>23</sup> World Health Organisation, [‘Air pollution and health: Summary’](#), accessed 12 March 2020.

<sup>24</sup> HM Government, [Voluntary National Review of Progress Towards the Sustainable Development Goals](#), 26 June 2019, p 51.

<sup>25</sup> Department for Food, Environment and Rural Affairs, [Air Quality Statistics in the UK 1987 to 2018](#), April 2019, p 1.

<sup>26</sup> Department for Food, Environment and Rural Affairs, [Clean Air Strategy](#), 14 January 2019.

There were 1,793 reported road deaths in Great Britain in 2017.<sup>27</sup> This is similar to the number of deaths reported annually since 2012. There were 170,993 road traffic casualties of all types, a decrease of 8 percent compared to 2015. Road traffic casualties and UK efforts to improve road safety are discussed in more detail in section 2 below.

### **Target 3.7: Access to sexual and reproductive healthcare services**

Sexual and reproductive health services are widely available in England free of charge.<sup>28</sup> There were 1.85 million interactions between people and contacts with dedicated sexual and reproductive health services in England in 2017/18. Women in England can also access abortions free of charge.

### **UK's international work**

The UK supports work to improve health in developing countries. This includes tackling diseases such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and the neglected tropical diseases; ensuring global health security through supporting countries to prevent, identify and manage disease outbreaks and to minimise the risk of anti-microbial resistance; and strengthening health systems to ensure that everyone has access to quality essential health services, without risk of financial hardship.<sup>29</sup>

For more information on the UK's international health work, please see:

- HM Government, [Voluntary National Review of Progress Towards the Sustainable Development Goals](#), 26 June 2019, pp 59–60
- Department for International Development, [Annual Report and Accounts 2018–19](#), 11 July 2019, HC 2390 of session 2017–19, pp 47–9
- Independent Commission for Aid Impact, [Assessing DFID's Results in Improving Maternal Health](#), October 2018

## **2. Road safety: UK**

### **2.1 Numbers of casualties**

Road casualty statistics are collected for Great Britain and Northern Ireland separately. This briefing presents those for Great Britain. For statistics relating to Northern Ireland, please see:

- Police Service of Northern Ireland, ['Police recorded injury road traffic collisions and casualties Northern Ireland'](#), 24 May 2019

<sup>27</sup> HM Government, [Voluntary National Review of Progress Towards the Sustainable Development Goals](#), 26 June 2019, p 51.

<sup>28</sup> Nuffield Trust, ['Vaccination coverage for children and mothers'](#), 26 February 2020.

<sup>29</sup> HM Government, [Voluntary National Review of Progress Towards the Sustainable Development Goals](#), 26 June 2019, p 59.

In Department for Transport statistics, a road traffic casualty is defined as a person killed or injured in a reported accident on a public road.<sup>30</sup> Casualties are sub-divided into people killed, seriously injured, and slightly injured.

### **Total casualties**

In 2018, the number of reported casualties of all severities in road traffic accidents was 6 percent lower than in 2017 and was the lowest level on record, at 160,597 casualties.<sup>31</sup> However, the Department for Transport said that the statistics should be interpreted with caution for two reasons:

- It has long been known that non-fatal (and particularly slight) casualties are underreported to the police and therefore this figure is likely to be an underestimate of the total.
- The introduction of online self-reporting by the Metropolitan Police Service at the end of 2016 and a few other forces in 2018 is likely to have led to an increase in the number of non-fatal (and particularly slight) casualties reported in these forces and therefore impact the total for Great Britain.<sup>32</sup>

Since 1998 there has been a downward trend in the total number of casualties.<sup>33</sup>

Casualty rates per billion vehicle miles travelled decreased by 34 percent in the 10 years to 2018.<sup>34</sup>

### **Fatalities**

In 2018, 1,784 people were killed in reported road traffic accidents in Great Britain.<sup>35</sup> This was a similar number to that recorded annually since 2012. This followed a substantial reduction in fatalities between 2006 and 2010.

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<sup>30</sup> Department for Transport, [Reported Road Casualties in Great Britain: 2018 Annual Report](#), 26 September 2019, p 3.

<sup>31</sup> *ibid*, p 6.

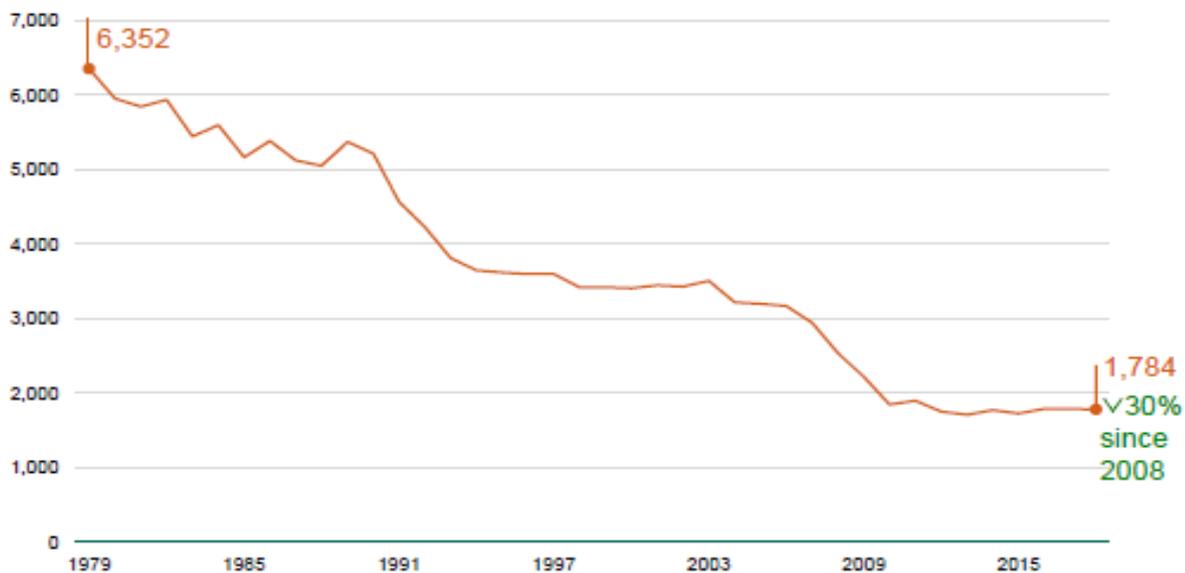
<sup>32</sup> *ibid*.

<sup>33</sup> *ibid*.

<sup>34</sup> *ibid*, p 8.

<sup>35</sup> *ibid*, p 3.

**Chart 2: Fatalities from road traffic accidents in Great Britain, 1979–2018<sup>36</sup>**



### **Serious injuries**

In 2018, there were 25,511 seriously injured casualties in reported road traffic accidents.<sup>37</sup> The Department for Transport highlights that this figure is as reported to the police and is not comparable to earlier years. This is because of changes in severity reporting from 2016, which may have led to injuries which may previously have been classed as slight being classed as serious.

### **Slight injuries**

In 2018, there were 133,302 slightly injured casualties in reported road traffic accidents.<sup>38</sup> The change in reporting that took place in 2016 is likely to have also affected the numbers of injuries classed as slight, therefore these figures can also not be compared with previous years.

### **Casualties by group**

Car occupants account for the greatest number of both casualties and fatalities.<sup>39</sup> However, pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists have significantly higher casualty rates per mile travelled than those travelling in cars or buses.

Both car occupant and pedestrian casualties decreased by 6% between 2017 and 2018.<sup>40</sup> Cyclist casualties decreased by 4% in the same time, and motorcyclist casualties by 7% percent. Fatalities in all

<sup>36</sup> Department for Transport, [Reported Road Casualties in Great Britain: 2018 Annual Report](#), 26 September 2019, p 3.

<sup>37</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> *ibid.*, p 5.

<sup>39</sup> *ibid.*, p 9.

<sup>40</sup> *ibid.*, p 11–12.

road user groups have been broadly stable since 2010.<sup>41</sup>

Child fatalities have fluctuated between 48 and 69 deaths per year over 2010 to 2018 with no clear trend. Casualties of people aged under 15 decreased by 9 percent between 2017 and 2018.<sup>42</sup> Child fatalities are primarily pedestrian and car passenger, because walking and car travel are the forms of transport most used by children.

There was a downward trend in the number of casualties among young people (aged 17 to 24). The number of casualties among young people decreased 13 percent between 2017 and 2018, and the number of fatalities remained the same.<sup>43</sup> The number of young people in Great Britain has been falling since 2011, with the number of people in this age group decreasing by 1 percent in 2018 compared with 2017. Therefore, the downward trend in casualties for this age group may partly be explained by the reduction in the number of people in this age group.

The number of casualties of any type for people aged 60 and over was stable between 2017 and 2018. However, the number of fatalities and serious injuries in this age group rose in the same period.<sup>44</sup> The increase in fatalities was mainly seen in car drivers and drivers of more powerful motorcycles. The population in this age group increased by 2 percent between 2017 and 2018, which may partly explain the increase in fatalities and killed or seriously injured casualties seen for this age group.

### ***International comparison***

Within Europe, Great Britain had the third lowest number of road deaths per million inhabitants in 2018, behind Norway and Switzerland.<sup>45</sup>

## **2.2 Factors affecting road casualty numbers**

The Department for Transport has outlined a range of factors that influence road casualty numbers:<sup>46</sup>

- the **distance people travel** (which is partly affected by economic externalities);
- the **mix of transport modes** used;
- **behaviour** of drivers, riders, and pedestrians;
- the **mix of groups of people using the road** (for example changes in the number of newly qualified or older drivers); and
- **external effects such as the weather**, which can influence behaviour (for example encouraging or discouraging travel) or change the risk on roads (by making the road surface more slippery).

<sup>41</sup> Department for Transport, [Reported Road Casualties in Great Britain: 2018 Annual Report](#), 26 September 2019, pp 11–14.

<sup>42</sup> *ibid*, p 15.

<sup>43</sup> *ibid*, p 16.

<sup>44</sup> *ibid*, p 17.

<sup>45</sup> *ibid*, p 19.

<sup>46</sup> *ibid*, p 20.

There is a correlation between declines in economic growth and improvements in road safety.<sup>47</sup> An International Transport Forum of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development report examined this relationship and found three main mechanisms through which economic downturns lead to better road safety:

- **Economic downturns** are associated with **less growth in traffic** or a decline in traffic volumes.
- **Economic downturns** are associated with a **disproportionate reduction in the exposure of high-risk groups in traffic**; in particular unemployment tends to be higher among young people than people in other age groups.
- **Reductions in disposable income may be associated with more cautious road user behaviour**, such as less drinking and driving, lower speed to save fuel and fewer holiday trips.<sup>48</sup>

For the past five years the proportion of car occupant fatalities not wearing a seat belt (where the seat belt use was known and recorded by the police) has been over 20 percent.<sup>49</sup> In 2017 the proportion rose to 27 percent.<sup>50</sup>

### 2.3 Government policy

On 19 July 2019, the Government published a policy paper setting out the actions it intends to take between 2019 and 2021 to improve road safety.<sup>51</sup> This document highlighted that “there has been little change in the number of reported fatalities on British roads since 2010”. It argued that new initiatives were needed to reduce the number of deaths on the roads.

In the paper, the Government outlined numerous interventions to improve road safety. Those aimed at people included:<sup>52</sup>

- producing **educational resources** to teach road safety;
- **encouraging walking and cycling to school**, to reduce the number of cars near schools;
- funding a **child seat safety training programme** for retailers;
- **researching interventions** to help drivers improve their driving;
- encouraging learner drivers to have more **practice driving in dangerous situations** (for example on rural roads);
- investigating the efficacy and appropriateness of **introducing restrictions** on independent driving after passing the driving test;
- **communication campaigns** aimed at high-risk groups, such as young males;
- introducing a **roads policing project team** with the Home Office and National Police

<sup>47</sup> International Transport Forum, [Why Does Road Safety Improve When Economic Times Are Hard?](#), 6 October 2015.

<sup>48</sup> *ibid*, p 10.

<sup>49</sup> Department for Transport, [Reported Road Casualties in Great Britain: 2018 Annual Report](#), 26 September 2019, p 23.

<sup>50</sup> Department for Transport, [The Road Safety Statement 2019: A Lifetime of Road Safety](#), July 2019, p 27

<sup>51</sup> *ibid*, p 6.

<sup>52</sup> Department for Transport, [The Road Safety Statement 2019: A Lifetime of Road Safety](#), July 2019.

Chiefs Council to improve working practices in organisations responsible for enforcement of road safety measures;

- investigating the feasibility of **alcohol ignition interlocks**, which connect in-car breathalysers with a vehicle's ignition;
- considering a **high-risk offender scheme** for drug-driving offenders;
- considering **imposing penalty points** for drivers or passengers not wearing seatbelts;
- creating **new cycling offences**, to bring penalties for harm in line with those caused by cars;
- expanding the range of **advice provided to older people** at mobility centres;
- **considering introducing mandatory eyesight tests at age 70** and at three-year intervals thereafter; and
- funding for initiatives to **improve information and education for older drivers**.

The Government also said it was working to improve visibility for heavy good vehicle (HGV) drivers, that it would consult on changes to legislation concerning HGV sideguards, and that it was preparing a report on trailer safety. The Government published the report at the same time as the policy paper.<sup>53</sup>

To improve safety for motorcyclists, the Government said it would promote the enhanced rider scheme for motorcyclists, reform how motorcyclists are trained, research issues posed by delivery riders using powered two-wheel vehicles, and launch a communications campaign aimed at leisure motorcyclists.

The Government also said it would take action to improve safety on rural roads, which have higher casualty rates than other types of roads. This includes funding for a scheme to improve the 50 most dangerous rural roads in the country, setting up a rural roads panel to investigate why rural roads are more dangerous than other types of road, and launching a new sign to warn drivers of small mammals on the roads.

## 2.4 Smart motorways review

A 'smart motorway' is a section of motorway that uses traffic management methods to increase capacity and reduce congestion in busy areas.<sup>54</sup> Smart motorways use technology to: change the speed limit to smooth traffic flow; activate warning signs to alert drivers to traffic jams and hazards; and close lanes, for example, to allow emergency vehicles access. They have been criticised because they do not have a hard shoulder and drivers who break down can be trapped in the speeding traffic.<sup>55</sup>

A freedom of information request by BBC Panorama to Highways England revealed that 38 people had died on smart motorways in the last five years.<sup>56</sup> The figures also revealed that on one section of the M25 motorway, the number of near-misses had increased significantly since the hard shoulder was removed in April 2014 from 72 in 2014 to 1,485 in 2019.

<sup>53</sup> Department for Transport, [Trailer Safety](#), 18 July 2019.

<sup>54</sup> Highways England, '[Smart motorways](#)', accessed 9 March 2020.

<sup>55</sup> Benn Quinn, '[AA sounds safety warning over smart motorways](#)', *Guardian*, 8 April 2019; and House of Commons Transport Committee, [All Lane Running](#), 30 June 2016, HC 63 of session 2016–17.

<sup>56</sup> BBC News, '[38 killed on smart motorways in last five years](#)', 26 January 2020.

On 12 March 2020, the Department for Transport published analysis which found that smart motorways are safer than conventional motorways in some ways, and more dangerous in others. The Department for Transport said:

Data shows that the risks that are lower on smart motorways compared with conventional motorways include tailgating, rapid changes of vehicle speeds, vehicles drifting off the carriageway and vehicles being driven too fast.

However, some risks are higher than on conventional motorways, for example the risk of a collision between a moving and stationary vehicle.<sup>57</sup>

The Government announced changes to smart motorways based on this analysis. These changes include:<sup>58</sup>

- abolishing motorways where the hard shoulder can be used by regular traffic at peak times;
- substantially speeding up the deployment of a radar-based system which spots stationary vehicles so that it is installed across the entire smart motorway network within 36 months;
- ensuring that the distance between places to stop in an emergency is reduced to three-quarters of a mile where feasible, and the maximum spacing is one mile.

### 3. Road safety: global

#### 3.1 Progress towards meeting SDG target 3.6

Road traffic crashes are the eighth leading cause of death globally for people of all ages, and the leading cause of death for children and young adults aged 5–29 years.<sup>59</sup> An estimated 1.35 million people are killed on the roads each year and approximately 50 million people are injured. Road traffic deaths and injuries cost countries 3% of their GDP on average. In addition, 90% of road traffic deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries, although these countries have only 54% of the world's vehicles.<sup>60</sup>

Between 2000 and 2016 (the latest year for which global statistics are available), the number of road traffic deaths increased.<sup>61</sup> However, the rate of death relative to the size of the world's population stabilised between 2000 and 2016, at approximately 18 deaths per 100,000 people. Between 2011 and 2016 the death rate declined relative to the number of motor vehicles.

<sup>57</sup> Department for Transport, '[Action plan announced to boost smart motorway safety](#)', 12 March 2020.

<sup>58</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> World Health Organisation, '[3rd Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety](#)', accessed 9 March 2020.

<sup>60</sup> United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, '[Road Safety: Considerations in Support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#)', 3 January 2018, p 7.

<sup>61</sup> World Health Organisation, '[Global Status Report on Road Safety 2018](#)', December 2018, p 4.

In December 2018, the World Health Organisation (WHO) published a report assessing progress made in improving road safety globally. It concluded that:

[...] progress has been achieved in important areas such as legislation, vehicle standards and improving access to post-crash care. This progress has not, however, occurred at a pace fast enough to compensate for the rising population and rapid motorisation of transport taking place in many parts of the world. At this rate, the sustainable development goals (SDG) target 3.6 to halve road traffic deaths by 2020 will not be met.<sup>62</sup>

### 3.2 International initiatives

A number of multilateral institutions are delivering initiatives to help developing countries improve road safety. The UK Government supports some of these.

#### ***UN Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011–2020***

In March 2010, the UN General Assembly adopted a text proclaiming a ‘decade of action for road safety’, from 2011 to 2020. The goal of the decade is to stabilise and then reduce the forecast level of road traffic fatalities around the world “by increasing road safety activities at the national, regional and global levels”.<sup>63</sup> In 2011, the UN Road Safety Collaboration, a body set up by the World Health Organisation, published the *Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety*.<sup>64</sup> In this document, the UN Road Safety Collaboration encouraged governments to implement road safety policies in five areas: road safety management; safer roads and mobility; safer vehicles; safer road users; and post-crash responses.<sup>65</sup>

#### ***Stockholm Declaration***

In February 2020, the UK took part in the Third Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety, hosted by the Government of Sweden in collaboration with the WHO.<sup>66</sup> At the conference the participants agreed the Stockholm declaration. This document called for a new target to replace SDG target 3.6, which expires in 2020. It states:

[We] call upon member states to contribute to reducing road traffic deaths by at least 50 percent from 2020 to 2030 in line with the United Nations High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development’s pledge to continue action on the road safety-related SDG targets, including 3.6, after 2020, and to set targets to reduce fatalities and serious injuries, in line with this commitment, for all groups of road users and especially vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists and users of public transport.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>62</sup> World Health Organisation, [Global Status Report on Road Safety 2018](#), December 2018, p xi.

<sup>63</sup> United Nations, [‘General Assembly adopts text proclaiming decade of action for road safety \(2011–2020\), aimed at reducing road traffic-related death, injuries’](#), 2 March 2010.

<sup>64</sup> United Nations Road Safety Collaboration, [Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011–2020](#), 2011.

<sup>65</sup> *ibid*, p 11.

<sup>66</sup> House of Lords, [‘Written Question: Global High-level Conference on Road Safety’](#), 4 February 2020, HL714.

<sup>67</sup> Third Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety, [Stockholm Declaration](#), February 2020.

## **Global Road Safety Facility**

The Global Road Safety Facility (GRSF) is a global multi-donor fund hosted by the World Bank. Its mission is to help governments improve road safety and develop road safety management capacity in low- and middle-income countries.<sup>68</sup> The Department for International Development (DFID) and the Department for Health and Social Care, through the National Institute for Health Research, are providing the GRSF with funding to undertake research into road safety.<sup>69</sup> The UK has committed £9.8 million to the GRSF to be spent between 2013 and 2021.<sup>70</sup> In 2019, this funding supported various research projects, including:<sup>71</sup>

- road assessment studies in Liberia and Mozambique, resulting in the development of software to assess road safety risk using an automated image analysis technology;
- capacity assessments to identify technical, financial, and other resource gaps that may inhibit the introduction of road safety measures;
- impact evaluations to build evidence on which road safety interventions are most effective;
- pilot projects to enhance the capacity of Tanzania and Malawi to provide emergency medical services for post-crash care; and
- the African Road Safety Observatory, an initiative to foster cooperation to generate robust road safety data and to influence road safety policies in African Union member countries.

From 2019 to 2021, UK funding will support a new research programme on road safety.<sup>72</sup> The aim of the programme is to address new road safety topics such as: identification of innovative use of big data for road safety; exploring and demonstrating techniques of safety analytics using alternative sources of data; and the use of police and health data to refine methods of road deaths and disability estimation. The programme will also include the development of software to assess the effectiveness of road safety interventions.

## **UNCTAD Report**

In January 2018, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) published a report on international road safety.<sup>73</sup> It recommended measures to improve road safety, including:

- countries should consider acceding to and fully implementing the latest relevant versions of the UN legal instruments on road safety;<sup>74</sup>

<sup>68</sup> World Bank, '[Global Road Safety Facility](#)', accessed 9 March 2020.

<sup>69</sup> Global Road Safety Facility, '[Annual Report 2019](#)', 2019, p 2.

<sup>70</sup> Department for International Development, '[Development Tracker: Global Road Safety Facility](#)', 25 February 2020.

<sup>71</sup> Global Road Safety Facility, '[Annual Report 2019](#)', 2019, pp 13–17.

<sup>72</sup> Global Road Safety Facility, '[Annual Report 2019](#)', 2019, p 17.

<sup>73</sup> United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, '[Road Safety: Considerations in Support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#)', 3 January 2018, pp 7–9.

<sup>74</sup> For more information on UN legal instruments on road safety, see: United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, '[Introduction to United Nations Road Safety Conventions](#)', accessed 9 March 2020.

- developing countries should strengthen their national road safety legislation, establish regional instruments and regulations, as appropriate, and work towards achieving greater consistency between those and the relevant international instruments;
- collaboration among multiple stakeholders should be strengthened, including through regional and sub-regional organisations and institutions;
- infrastructure investment plans should continue to become a part of national sustainable development strategies, and these should include road infrastructure safety elements and considerations;
- governments of developing countries, as well as their development partners, should integrate and mainstream road safety elements in relation to their infrastructure planning and projects;
- governments and other stakeholders should make cycling and walking safe and reduce the risks of motorised two-wheelers, as well as prioritize safety when adopting new technologies such as autonomous passenger cars or automated traffic control systems.

UNCTAD also argued that there is a need for more and improved collection of data on road safety issues, to improve risk assessments, identify training needs and monitor the success of interventions.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, [Road Safety: Considerations in Support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#), 3 January 2018, p 9.