

18 August 2015

## **Child pedestrians in Scotland are still two-and-a-half times more likely than adults to be injured in road traffic accidents**

Child pedestrians are two-and-a-half times more likely than adults to be injured in road traffic accidents, new figures from the Glasgow Centre for Population Health (GCPH) reveal.

Although accident rates are falling, more child and adult pedestrians are injured in road traffic accidents in deprived areas compared with more affluent areas. Over the last decade, in deprived areas, three times as many child pedestrians were injured than in less deprived areas. Similarly, in deprived areas there were 2.5 times as many adult pedestrians injured than in less deprived areas.

For cyclists, there has been a rise in adult cyclist casualties in the last decade and casualty rates are consistently higher in the more affluent neighbourhoods, which is likely to relate to a greater number of cyclists commuting from these areas.

The report outlines a number of key findings:

### **Pedestrian casualty trends in Scotland**

- Pedestrian casualties among adults and children have continued to reduce in the last decade, but significantly higher casualty rates are reported in more deprived areas. For example, adult pedestrian casualty rates in 2009/2013 were two-and-a-half times higher in the most deprived quintile compared with the least deprived, and three times higher for children.
- Rates of adult and child pedestrian casualties are highest in large urban areas.
- The child pedestrian casualty rate is over two-and-a-half times higher than the equivalent adult rate.

## **Cyclist casualty trends in Scotland**

- Adult cyclist casualties increased from the mid-2000s onwards, both in terms of casualty numbers and as a population-based casualty rate: adult cyclist hospital admission rates increased by 34% between 2003/2007 and 2009/2013; and police reported adult cyclist casualty rates increased by 25% over the same period.
- The rise in adult cyclist casualties is observed across all deprivation categories, but casualty rates are consistently higher in the more affluent quintiles.
- It is principally in large urban areas that this rise has occurred and adult cyclist casualties have risen in all of Scotland's largest cities.

## **Travel trends in Scotland**

- Over the last 50 years car commuting has risen steadily, accounting for 69% of all journeys to work by 2011.
- Commuting on foot and by bus has more than halved in the period 1966-2011, dropping to an 11% share for each mode in 2011.
- Cycling to work remains low but has risen slightly, accounting for 1.6% of journeys to work in 2011.

Bruce Whyte, a Public Health Programme Manager at the GCPH and one of the authors of the study, commented: "It is clearly concerning that, despite a drop in pedestrian casualties over the last decade, the rate of child pedestrians injured on our roads is still high – two-and-a-half times that found for adult pedestrians. It is also worrying that pedestrian casualties remain significantly higher in more deprived communities."

"The rise in adult cyclist casualties is also worrying. It is likely that this increase is associated with an increase in cycling prevalence, but we should neither expect, nor accept, that cyclist casualties rise as cycling prevalence increases."

Commenting on the wider relevance of this study, he noted: "Safety and perception of risk on our roads are key issues that we need to address if we are to encourage more people to walk and cycle in our communities. We need multiple concurrent approaches to create a safer and more conducive environment for active travel: investment in safe, well-designed and integrated infrastructure; area speed restrictions; better road maintenance; road user training; behaviour change campaigns; and neighbourhood design which enables safe walking, cycling and play."

Fiona Crawford, Consultant in Public Health at GCPH, commented that: "We have lots of policies highlighting the importance of active travel but the challenge is to invest in the pedestrian/cycling infrastructure sufficiently to encourage more people to walk and cycle. We know that increases in everyday walking and cycling will not only benefit physical and mental health, but will contribute to improved air quality and reduced carbon emissions."

Reflecting on practice elsewhere, Fiona Crawford also stated "There are important lessons to be learnt from European cities such as Gothenburg and Amsterdam that have achieved impressive increases in active travel through sustained investment, political commitment and a vision for the future."

**Notes:**

1. The Glasgow Centre for Population Health (GCPH) is a research and development organisation, set up in 2004 to add value to health improvement in Scotland. The GCPH generates insights and evidence, creates new solutions and provides leadership for action to improve health and tackle inequality. The GCPH is a partnership between NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, Glasgow City Council and the University of Glasgow, supported by the Scottish Government. [www.gcph.co.uk](http://www.gcph.co.uk)
2. This new report provides a uniquely detailed analysis of current trends in cyclist and pedestrian road casualties in Scotland from a public health perspective, using a range of administrative and survey data. It also explores the context behind these casualty trends: levels of walking and cycling in Scotland; the policy context around active travel; and the sorts of approaches that are required to reduce traffic casualties and encourage greater levels of walking and cycling.
3. The study used road traffic injury data collected through police reports and from hospital admission data to gain a better understanding of trends in pedestrian and cyclist road casualties in Scotland.
4. Casualty trends by age, gender, deprivation, rurality, injury type and severity of injury were analysed. In addition, to provide a context for understanding road casualty trends, trends in different modes of personal travel were explored.
5. Casualty rates are expressed as casualty numbers per 100,000 population, allowing different sized population groups i.e. child and adult, to be compared.
6. Supplementary infographics are provided below illustrating pedestrian and cyclist casualty trends, and commuter travel choices.
7. The report 'Trends in pedestrian and cyclist road casualties in Scotland' will be available via the GCPH website from Tuesday 18th August.

**Issued by:** NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde on behalf of the Glasgow Centre for Population Health

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# PEDESTRIAN & CYCLIST CASUALTIES

A report from the Glasgow Centre for Population Health looks at road casualties in Scotland and active travel trends.



Child pedestrians are **2.5 times** more likely than adults to be injured in road traffic accidents.

More child and adult pedestrians are injured in road traffic accidents in deprived areas compared with more affluent areas.



**3 times** as many child pedestrians in deprived areas were injured than in less deprived areas.



Over a recent 6-year period, adult cyclist casualties admitted to hospital increased by **34%**

and police-recorded adult cyclist casualties increased by **25%**



## WHAT CAN BE DONE TO REDUCE CASUALTIES AND ENCOURAGE ACTIVE TRAVEL?

20mph area speed restrictions

Investment in safe, well-designed and integrated infrastructure

Behaviour change campaigns

Better road maintenance

Safety training for all road users

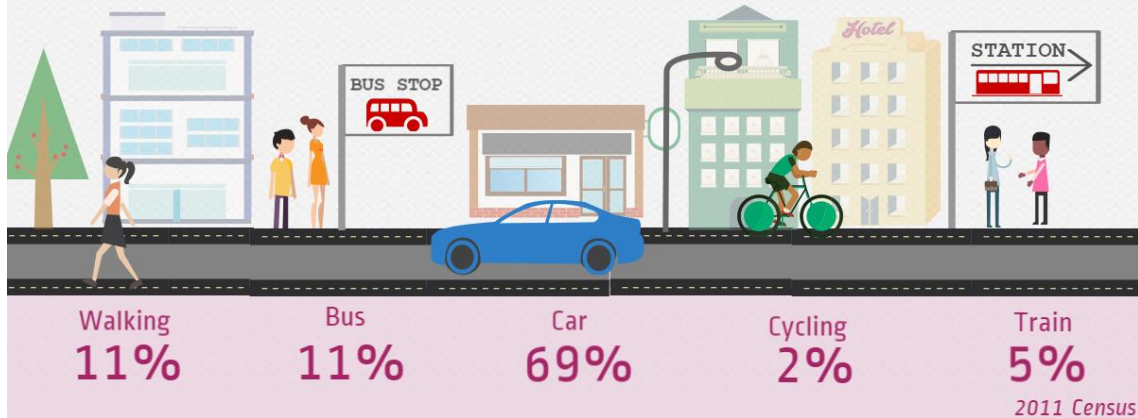
Find out more in the full report 'Trends in pedestrian and cyclist road casualties in Scotland' - available at [www.gcph.co.uk](http://www.gcph.co.uk)

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# COMMUTING AND ACTIVE TRAVEL

A new report from the Glasgow Centre for Population Health explores commuting and active travel trends in Scotland.

## HOW DO PEOPLE GET TO WORK?



## TRENDS IN ACTIVE TRAVEL

GETTING TO WORK

The number of people commuting on foot has fallen in successive censuses over the last 45 years



in 2011 only **11%** of adults walked to work.



There's been a slight recent increase in cycling to work between 2001 & 2011 but fewer than **2%** of commuters travel by bicycle.

Overall, levels of all walking journeys appear to have risen over the last decade to **23%** in 2013.



And together walking and cycling account for almost a quarter of all journeys.



GETTING AROUND

Find out more in the full report 'Trends in pedestrian and cyclist road casualties in Scotland' - available at [www.gcph.co.uk](http://www.gcph.co.uk)