NI Road Safety Strategy to 2020 – Annual Statistical Report: Statement of User Needs

Contents

INTRODUCTION

The Northern Ireland Road Safety Strategy to 2020 (NIRSS) sets out a vision to improve road safety in Northern Ireland over the ten year period from 2011 – 2020. Its framework concentrates on four high-level outcomes (targets) and then a further 19 key performance indicators (KPIs) that are used to track the progress of the underlying road safety performance behind the casualty figures. The NIRSS Statistical Report monitors the progress of the targets and KPIs set out in the NIRSS.

ASRB already had a keen understanding of the data needs of their internal policy customers, given their close working relationship on various road safety research projects including the development of the Statistical Report. In contrast, much less was known about the extent to which the report met the needs of external users or with regard to their wider road safety data needs. While many would have had the opportunity to provide feedback on road safety statistics and research through membership of the Road Safety Forum, or via the Road Safety Readership Survey[1], there had been no direct dialogue between ASRB and external users.

In order to address this gap in knowledge, in May and June 2016, ASRB conducted a number of face-to-face consultations with external users of road safety data. A wide range of users were met with to reflect the different user types: a road safety advertiser; groups representing young people; a group representing older people; road safety charities; and an insurance company. This report summarises the main requirements to emerge from these meetings and how we hope to address these in the future. It begins by briefly highlighting the current uses of the data, followed by an examination of the specific data needs that are not met by the statistical report. There were several key themes regarding gaps in knowledge that emerged from the meetings which are discussed separately. A table is then provided listing the main needs identified, how they will be addressed and likely timescales. Note that given the prime purpose of the report is to monitor the NIRSS, it may not always be the most appropriate vehicle to meet a highlighted need. Furthermore, in some instances, a specific piece of analysis was requested by a single user which would not necessarily have a broader appeal to others or is already available on request from other data owners such as PSNI. In such cases, the user has been directed to the most appropriate source.

Identified needs will be prioritised in line with available resources and this will be kept under review. This statement of user needs will be published online so that users can see our plans and progress. Timescales for implementation will be reviewed on an annual basis.

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[1] https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/road-safety-customer-satisfaction-survey-report

CURRENT USES

In each meeting with the users, it was first determined how the available data are currently being used. Consultation meetings were held only with external customers; however, as stated previously, internal customers, and their uses of the data, are already firmly established.

Internal users

A Strategy Delivery Board reports to the DfI Minister; it has the lead responsibility for monitoring and reporting on progress towards delivery of the Strategy and as such is the main internal user. The Northern Ireland Road Safety Strategy to 2020 Annual Statistical Report provides the main source of information for the Delivery Board to assess progress being made against the Strategy and whether its various action measures are delivering the desired road safety benefits. Data from all targets and indicators are therefore highly relevant and used extensively for this purpose. Aside from this primary use, the report is also used by internal policy colleagues to:

- inform senior management and Ministerial briefing;
- answer queries; and
- help evaluate other Departmental strategies and initiatives (such as Graduated Driver Licensing and Drink/Drug Driving legislation).

External users

Each of the external users consulted have varying degrees of use for the data within the NIRSS Statistical Report. Some, such as the advertising company, could be classed as sophisticated users, creating their own analysis directly from available data sources. In these cases, a substantial proportion of the targets and indicators are of use as they seek to determine which road user groups are at particular risk, and hence can target their campaigns accordingly. In other cases, only a small subset of the targets and indicators are relevant to the user and in summary form (for example, only those that concerned children and young people are of use to the groups representing younger people). Generally such groups would be involved in lobbying Government to effect road safety improvements for the road users which they represent. Both types of user (sophisticated and limited user) stated that they do not generally make much use of the Excel tables or User Guidance available; instead the tables, text and charts included in the main body of the report are regarded as being of most use. The User Guidance would typically only be consulted if a user felt they had a specific issue or query surrounding a particular indicator.

In some cases, the user was not overly aware of the NIRSS Statistical Report, despite being members of the Road Safety Forum, and being on the circulation list for notification when the report is published. However, the meetings were still useful in alerting these customers to the data that is currently available. This suggests a need for better marketing of the report. Indeed, the meetings with all users were useful for this purpose: where users were not fully aware of the range of data available aside from the NIRSS Statistical Report, they were

informed of the additional products and sources available, e.g. NI Road Safety Monitor, Problem Profile, Seat Belt Survey, etc.

KEY THEMES

Once their current use of road safety data had been established, users were asked whether they had any specific road safety data needs that were not met by the statistical report. Below provides a summary of the key themes that arose in these conversations. A fuller list of user requirements can be found at the end of this report.

1. Context

A number of users indicated that an explanation behind trends or spikes in KSI or indicator data would be useful. This echoed one of the required improvements that the UK Statistics Authority highlighted was necessary in order to fully comply with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, and to enable designation as National Statistics: "Improve the presentation and commentary to aid user interpretation providing contextual information and pointers to where richer data may be found".[2]

It is therefore planned to include a section at the beginning of our 2016 NIRSS Statistical Report presenting key contextual trends in a user friendly way (such as incorporating infographics). Examples would include: miles travelled by mode of travel; the number of driving test applications and licences held; fixed penalty notices for speeding; convictions for drink-driving; and advertising spend. It will be important to avoid straying into speculation or attributing indicator changes to specific policy initiatives or actions. Instead, the types of factors that could be influencing trends will be highlighted leaving readers to draw their own conclusions as to their relative impact versus that of the various Strategy actions.

2. Geography

A number of users indicated that a geographical breakdown of Killed and Seriously Injured (KSI) data would be beneficial. Specific geographies mentioned included postcode and county. In addition, there were specific needs for data at different geographies alongside other variables, including age; date of collision; and cause of collision.   Specific mention was made of the searchable map of road traffic collisions that is available on the RSA website[3].

Subsequent discussions with statistical colleagues in PSNI has alerted us to the availability of a searchable KSI map on the Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information System (NINIS) website. Users will be alerted to this source and a summary map and link to the detailed interactive map will be included in the main Statistical Report. It should also be possible to include a greater range of indicators broken down by geography in future reports.

[2] https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Assessment-Report-323-Northern-Ireland-Road-Safety-Strategy-to-2020-Annual-Statistical-Report.pdf
[3] http://www.rsa.ie/en/RSA/Road-Safety/Our-Research/Collision-Statistics/Ireland-Road-Collisions/

In the interim, a wide range of geographical analyses of KSI data are available from PSNI (the data owners) on request and users will be alerted to this source.

3. Mobile phones

The third most frequently requested information need was with regards to KSI collisions caused by mobile phone use. There is growing opinion that using a hand-held or hands-free mobile phone while driving is a significant distraction, however data for the number of KSI collisions that have been caused by mobile phone use is difficult to source.

Collision causation is input by PSNI officers investigating the collision - if the principle cause identified is, for example, inattention or attention diverted; wrong course/position; driving too close; excessive speed; drink-driving, then mobile phone usage may be under-reported. In these instances mobile phone may be recorded as a secondary cause; however, it is worth highlighting that by the time police attend the scene, the phone may be removed or secured elsewhere. It is only in the case of a fatality that police powers to examine a phone are held to be reasonable and proportionate to the potential intrusion that a mobile phone examination would entail. So, whilst theoretically it would be possible for ASRB to produce analysis on collisions where mobile phone usage has been identified as a cause; in practice any output would not be considered robust. Any analysis produced for mobile-phone usage would have to carry the appropriate caveats and its utility would be low; as such, ASRB are reluctant to devote any resource to the issue at present unless there is a change in the way the causation fields are populated.

There are some data available on mobile phone usage whilst driving from the Road Safety Monitor and Seat Belt Survey, although both of these surveys were last carried out in 2014 and there are no current plans for them to run in the near future. Users that requested data on mobile phones have been directed to the most recent reports available.

4. Miscellaneous

The remaining data needs identified from the user consultations can be grouped into 'Other', having only been requested by a single user. In some cases the requests were very specific to the user in question and it is unlikely that ASRB could devote resource to such niche analysis. In other cases, however, ASRB can see a wider benefit and will consider making the analysis available on their website as resources permit.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

ASRB are committed to continuous improvement and the comments given as part of these consultations provide valuable feedback for assessing the value of our RSS Statistical Report and for future planning. Each of the gaps in data identified will be considered; however, as stated previously, it is unlikely that all requests can be met within current resources. The list of user requirements (Table 1, page 8) summarises the various user requests, including those mentioned in the Key Themes above. The table sets out: the type

of data/analysis requested; whether or not it can be accommodated; how best to address it; and an anticipated timeframe. The list will be reviewed at the beginning of each business year - it is a living document and will be updated annually with details of progress made against each request and with work that is planned for the upcoming year.

It is essential that users are given the opportunity to continue to provide feedback on our publication and services on an ongoing basis and to make us aware of any further data needs as they arise. All of the users consulted were content with their current channels of engagement with the Department with respect to their information needs (principally via the Road Safety Forum) and did not express any great desire to participate in a dedicated Road Safety Statistics User Group. However, some did feel that the existing Transport Statistics Users Group could serve this purpose and indicated that they may wish to attend this. The role and remit of this Group is currently under review following departmental reorganisation and extending membership to interested external road safety information users will be considered as part of this. In addition, a feedback facility relating to both the RSS Statistical Report and wider road safety information needs will be included on the ASRB website.

TABLE 1: LIST OF USER REQUIREMENTS

User Requirement	ASRB Response & Actions	Timescales
More detailed explanation behind trends or spikes in data.	*See Key Theme 1.* Inclusion of a key road safety trends section in the Statistical Report in a user-friendly infographic format. Reference to relevant influencing trends will be made in the commentary relating to individual indicators although it would not be possible to determine which are most important without undertaking further detailed research.	Include in 2016 Report
More geographic analysis and provision of a searchable Road Traffic Collision (RTC) map on website.	*See Key Theme 2.* 1) Summary RTC map to be included in Statistical Report and link to new interactive maps on NINIS website (http://www.ninis2.nisra.gov.uk/InteractiveMaps/Travel%20and%20Transport/Roads/rtfatalities/atlas.html and http://www.ninis2.nisra.gov.uk/InteractiveMaps/Travel%20and%20Transport/Roads/rtc2014/atlas.html). 2) Identify key indicator tables which could be split out at sub-NI level with a view to including such breakdowns in future Statistical Reports.	1) Include in 2016 report 2) Commence during 2016/17 – first supplementary analyses to be included in 2017 Report
Develop data around mobile phone usage and KSIs.	*See Key Theme 3.* 1) Usage data is already available in Road Safety Monitor and Seat Belt Survey publications available on ASRB website. Include link to these in Statistical Report. 2) KSI collision data by causation is currently available from PSNI. However, because of difficulties in accurately identifying mobile phone usage as a causation factor, particularly with regard to non-fatal collisions, ASRB do not intend to pursue at present.	1)Include in 2016 Report 2) N/A

Develop and provide access to casualty risk exposure data (e.g., robust travel distances/times by age and travel mode, licensing data, etc)	1) ASRB already has plans in place to address the lack of robust exposure data across a greater range of road user categories and ages. This will involve pooling Travel Survey for NI (TSNI) samples across years to create larger and hence statistically more robust sample sizes. 2) ASRB will investigate providing direct user access to an anonymised DVA licensing dataset or pre-defined detailed tables if individual records are not feasible.	1) Commence in 2016/17 2) 2016/17
More detail on indicator methodologies (such as Novice Drivers).	ASRB are developing a standalone indicators booklet which will consolidate all available information on each of the indicators to a common format – will include detail on sources, definitions, methodologies, uncertainty, etc	Publish in parallel with 2016 Statistical Report.
List of upcoming ASRB publications or planned research work.	Details of all OS publications are already available via the UK Publication Hub (https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics). However, ASRB agree that it would be useful to additionally include a timetable of upcoming publications on its website.	Commence in 2016/17
Collision analysis based on driver address rather than collision location.	This is already available directly from PSNI (driver postcode and SOA available from 2008 onwards on PSNI database).	N/A
Provide access to internal Road Safety 'Problem Profiles'	ASRB intend to make the Problem Profiles series available on its website although some will require further editing to put in a format suitable for external use. Release will therefore be on a phased basis beginning with those that already meet the required format.	Commence in 2016/17
Analysis of collisions/casualties occurring while driving to/from work.	These data are not currently available, however, as of April 2016, the variable is available on PSNI Case Report Forms (CRF) and the information is now being collected. PSNI are aware of our interest and the variable will be included in the 2017 Information Sharing Agreement to allow future analysis.	Keep under review

KSI casualty comparison with GB/ROI.	Given the harmonised definitions across the UK and ROI for fatal and serious injury collisions, comparisons are possible and are already available in PSNI statistical reports. ASRB will begin including relevant comparisons in the Statistical Report	Include in 2016 Report
Provide more analysis on older drivers (60+) – both quantitative and qualitative.	1) One of the indicators in the Statistical Report focuses on older drivers aged 70+. However, extensive KSI age breakdowns and cross-tabulations with other relevant variables including causation are available directly from PSNI on request. Consideration will be given to including supplementary age/gender breakdown tables, where relevant, focussing on young, adult and older road users in future RSS Statistical Reports. 2) Several NI surveys such as Road Safety Monitor, Seatbelt Survey, Continuous Household Survey and NI Longitudinal Survey (NILS) contain relevant age related information including with respect to road safety attitudes and behaviours. Include link to these in Statistical Report.	1) First supplementary age/gender analyses to be considered for inclusion in 2017 Report 2) Include in 2016 Report
Information gap with respect to road users aged 16 and under.	Detailed KSI age breakdowns are available from PSNI on request. The YPBAS survey series includes a road safety module which may also go some way to meeting this need with respect to attitudes/behaviours. Include link in Statistical Report.	Include in 2016 Report
Analysis on the number of drivers saved because they have been wearing their seatbelt.	Internal estimates already available using data from GB and seatbelt wearing rates from NI Seatbelt Survey. Will consider including these in future Seatbelt Survey reports if/when it is next carried out.	Keep under review.
KSI collisions by road type (motorway, urban, rural)	This is already available directly from PSNI	N/A
KSI collisions by type of driver (delivery, taxi etc.)	Driver occupation is not currently collected on PSNI collision reporting form and no short-term plans to include it.	N/A

Produce a timelier, indicative report.	Resources would not permit the production of an additional higher level but timelier report. However, many of the individual indicator data items, including KSI data, are available to users directly from source – see new indicators booklet https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/road-safety-strategy-2020-indicator-guidance-booklet for details.	N/A
Access to the raw data file of KSI collisions.	1) DfI do not own the KSI data which belongs to PSNI. It may be possible for users to obtain an anonymised dataset on request subject to signing a data sharing agreement with PSNI. 2) All of the indicators included in the RSS Statistical Report are to be made available in an Open Data and machine readable format	1) N/A 2) Include in 2016 Report
Better marketing of NI RSS Report	ASRB intend to develop an infographics summary in order to highlight the Statistical Report and the information it contains.	Publish in parallel with 2016 Statistical Report.
Review membership and role of Transport Statistics Users Group (TSUG)	The role of TSUG is already scheduled for review following recent departmental reorganisation. This will examine membership including ensuring greater external road safety user representation.	Commence in 2016/17