Speeding offence detection and disposal in England and Wales, 2018-19

A Report for the RAC Foundation by Dr Adam Snow and Doreen Lam

This report provides an annual update on statistics on speeding offences detected by police forces in England and Wales. It is based on analysis of Home Office data.[1]

As in previous versions of the report there is a great deal of variation between constabularies. In 2018-19, some 2,386,780 speeding offences were detected in England and Wales, a 4.1% (94,246) increase on the previous 12 months. Over the last five years the number of those caught speeding has increased by 15.5%.

Looking at the figures for individual police forces perhaps the biggest change has been seen in Avon and Somerset which no longer leads the way in the number of fixed penalty notices (FPNs) issued. The top five are now: West Yorkshire Police, Avon and Somerset, the Metropolitan Police (including City of London), Thames Valley and Greater Manchester.

As highlighted in previous reports the differences between forces are likely be down to a multitude of factors:

"The constabulary-level variations in detection rates is significant but difficult to understand from the bald numbers. However, reasons for the differences are likely to include: road network length, road type, traffic volume and makeup, local priorities dictated by police and crime commissioners, financial and human resources, and the availability of detection technology."

As Table 2 shows, the annual number of FPNs issued and awareness courses attended increased again by a small percentage, echoing increases in previous years.

In 2018, there were 1,782 fatalities on Great Britain's roads, a total that has barely changed since 2012.[2] According to the Department for Transport:

"The evidence points towards Britain being in a period when the fatality numbers are stable and most of the changes relate to random variation."

In 2018, "exceeding the speed limit" was recorded as a contributory factor in 13% of fatal crashes where at least one factor was identified. "Travelling too fast for the conditions" was a contributory factor in 9% of fatal crashes. More than one contributory factor might be recorded per incident.

---

[1] https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-powers-and-procedures-england-and-wales-year-ending-31-march-2019

[2] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/820562/Reported_road_casualties_-_Main_Results_2018.pdf

Table 1: Total number of speeding offences detected by police forces in England and Wales in 2018-19 and how they were detected.

Police Force Area	Total number of speeding offences detected 2017-18	Total number of speeding offences detected 2018-19	% year-on-year change 2018-19	Proportion of speeding offences detected by camera 2018-2019	Total number of all motoring offences 2018-19	Proportion of speeding offences relative to all motoring offences 2018-19
Avon and Somerset	199,336	159,210	-20%	100%	173,420	92%
Bedfordshire	74,297	76,573	3%	100%	80,685	95%
Cambridgeshire	45,763	34,672	-24%	98%	40,795	85%
Cheshire	58,408	52,770	-10%	96%	61,626	86%
City of London/Metropolitan Police[3]	139,318	157,494	13%	91%	274,744	57%
Cleveland	11,308	11,937	6%	97%	13,592	88%
Cumbria	45,702	40,104	-12%	99%	42,331	95%
Derbyshire	10,480	12,256	17%	98%	14,736	83%
Devon and Cornwall	42,888	47,272	10%	98%	52,152	91%
Dorset	23,027	22,716	-1%	94%	26,391	86%
Durham	8,802	19,395	120%	95%	20,764	93%
Essex	95,967	91,849	-4%	94%	124,923	74%
Gloucestershire	21,727	24,121	11%	99%	25,729	94%
Greater Manchester	101,421	106,839	5%	99%	122,411	87%
Hampshire	79,126	73,036	-8%	96%	81,149	90%
Hertfordshire	51,158	52,794	3%	98%	61,763	85%
Humberside	57,930	53,679	-7%	96%	63,004	85%
Kent	18,878	20,366	8%	95%	30,024	68%
Lancashire	61,242	74,286	21%	99%	85,293	87%
Leicestershire	37,340	41,909	12%	99%	50,826	82%
Lincolnshire	47,020	45,712	-3%	98%	48,611	94%

---

[3] The Home Office releases data from the 43 police force areas. As in the previous version of this report the analysis in this document amalgamates the figures for the City of London Police and the Metropolitan Police. The City of London police force is primarily a specialist organisation dealing with financial crime and policing the square mile.

Police Force Area	Total number of speeding offences detected 2017-18	Total number of speeding offences detected 2018-19	% year-on-year change 2018-19	Proportion of speeding offences detected by camera 2018-2019	Total number of all motoring offences 2018-19	Proportion of speeding offences relative to all motoring offences 2018-19
Merseyside	60,681	53,112	-12%	86%	75,962	70%
Norfolk and Suffolk[4]	92,750	98,729	6%	96%	114,957	86%
North Wales	20,462	19,493	-5%	90%	24,610	79%
North Yorkshire	29,922	41,934	40%	99%	47,421	88%
Northamptonshire	47,860	49,448	3%	100%	56,800	87%
Northumbria	66,327	67,857	2%	99%	75,961	89%
Nottinghamshire	27,155	24,566	-10%	99%	30,845	80%
Wales (except North Wales)[5]	43,425	35,005	-19%	96%	49,934	70%
South Yorkshire	47,811	55,461	16%	99%	63,162	88%
Staffordshire	41,392	48,583	17%	98%	54,771	89%
Surrey	74,163	89,079	20%	100%	98,427	91%
Sussex	56,828	54,139	-5%	98%	62,202	87%
Thames Valley	131,400	145,447	11%	98%	158,854	92%
Warwickshire	43,409	52,774	22%	99%	58,612	90%
West Mercia	66,858	92,335	38%	99%	98,161	94%
West Midlands	34,966	57,154	63%	93%	67,457	85%
West Yorkshire	174,796	181,867	4%	99%	201,548	90%
Wiltshire	1,191	807	-32%	0%	3,008	27%
Total England and Wales	2,292,534	2,386,780	4%	97%	2,837,661	84%

---

[4] Suffolk and Norfolk central ticket offices merged in July 2015. All FPNs are now issued by Norfolk therefore, all notices for Suffolk and Norfolk are reported under Norfolk.

[5] The number of speeding offences detected by camera in the Dyfed-Powys and Gwent police force areas are not separated out in the PentiP database and instead are all reported under the South Wales Police force. We have combined Dyfed-Powys and Gwent and South Wales constabularies under the name Wales (except North Wales).

Table 2: How speeding offences were disposed of by police force area in 2018-19. Figures for 2017-18 in brackets[6].

Police force	Total Number of speeding offences detected	Total number of speeding offences dealt with by FPN	Proportion of speeding offences dealt with by FPN	Total number of speeding offences dealt with by speed awareness course	Proportion of speeding offences dealt with by speed awareness courses	Total number of speeding offences cancelled	Proportion of speeding offences cancelled	Number of speeding offences ending in court action	Proportion of speeding offences taken to court
	2018-19 (2017-18)								
Avon and Somerset	159,210 (199,336)	52,784 (64,267)	33% (32%)	69,135 (89,863)	43% (45%)	19,917 (29,728)	13% (15%)	17,346 (15,478)	11% (8%)
Bedfordshire	76,573 (74,297)	19,553 (19,826)	26% (27%)	34,744 (30,938)	45% (42%)	16,076 (17,487)	21% (24%)	5,348 (6,046)	7% (8%)
Cambridgeshire	34,672 (45,763)	10,164 (13,289)	29% (29%)	14,218 (18,754)	41% (41%)	5,823 (8,937)	17% (20%)	4,218 (4,782)	12% (10%)
Cheshire	52,770 (58,408)	14,276 (16,369)	27% (28%)	28,679 (28,668)	54% (49%)	3,057 (3,845)	6% (7%)	6,758 (9,526)	13% (16%)
City of London/Metropolitan Police	157,494 (139,318)	31,012 (31,922)	20% (23%)	47,230 (47,926)	30% (34%)	52,677 (35,781)	33% (26%)	25,840 (23,685)	16% (17%)

---

[6] Figures for 2017-18 may differ from those in the RAC Foundation's previous report because of corrections/amendments to the official data.

Police force	Total Number of speeding offences detected	Total number of speeding offences dealt with by FPN	Proportion of speeding offences dealt with by FPN	Total number of speeding offences dealt with by speed awareness course	Proportion of speeding offences dealt with by speed awareness courses	Total number of speeding offences cancelled	Proportion of speeding offences cancelled	Number of speeding offences ending in court action	Proportion of speeding offences taken to court
					2018-19 (2017-18)				
Cleveland	11,937 (11,308)	3,263 (3,203)	27% (28%)	7,202 (6,765)	60% (60%)	411 (369)	3% (3%)	1,061 (971)	9% (9%)
Cumbria	40,104 (45,702)	12,529 (14,577)	31% (32%)	21,407 (23,995)	53% (53%)	3,012 (3,162)	8% (7%)	3,148 (3,968)	8% (9%)
Derbyshire	12,256 (10,480)	10,647 (8,882)	87% (85%)	106 (151)	1% (1%)	1,478 (1,384)	12% (13%)	21 (61)	0% (1%)
Devon and Cornwall	47,272 (42,888)	19,567 (18,587)	41% (43%)	24,770 (21,976)	52% (51%)	533 (0,678)	1% (2%)	2,401 (1,647)	5% (4%)
Dorset	22,716 (23,027)	18,803 (19,250)	83% (84%)	403 (376)	2% (2%)	2,030 (2,556)	9% (11%)	1,144 (842)	5% (4%)
Durham	19,395 (8,802)	5,807 (2,590)	30% (29%)	10,240 (5,387)	53% (61%)	1,518 (352)	8% (4%)	1,830 (473)	9% (5%)
Essex	91,849 (95,967)	33,330 (34,332)	36% (36%)	48,329 (52,332)	53% (55%)	3,299 (5,753)	4% (6%)	6,891 (3,550)	8% (4%)

Police force	Total Number of speeding offences detected	Total number of speeding offences dealt with by FPN	Proportion of speeding offences dealt with by FPN	Total number of speeding offences dealt with by speed awareness course	Proportion of speeding offences dealt with by speed awareness courses	Total number of speeding offences cancelled	Proportion of speeding offences cancelled	Number of speeding offences ending in court action	Proportion of speeding offences taken to court
	2018-19 (2017-18)								
Gloucestershire	24,121 (21,727)	8,668 (7,009)	36% (32%)	13,070 (10,174)	54% (47%)	837 (2,825)	3% (13%)	1,546 (1,719)	6% (8%)
Greater Manchester	106,839 (101,421)	26,449 (24,057)	25% (24%)	44,878 (40,023)	42% (39%)	19,146 (27,066)	18% (27%)	16,158 (10,273)	15% (10%)
Hampshire	73,036 (79,126)	22,000 (23,946)	30% (30%)	42,448 (43,128)	58% (55%)	4,292 (6,827)	6% (9%)	4,295 (5,224)	6% (7%)
Hertfordshire	52,794 (51,158)	13,649 (13,305)	26% (26%)	23,939 (21,424)	45% (42%)	10,525 (11,181)	20% (22%)	4,426 (5,248)	8% (10%)
Humberside	53,679 (57,930)	18,396 (19,078)	34% (33%)	28,200 (31,744)	53% (55%)	2,661 (2,263)	5% (4%)	4,421 (4,845)	8% (8%)
Kent	20,366 (18,878)	15,795 (14,419)	78% (76%)	234 (310)	1% (2%)	1,791 (1,763)	9% (9%)	2,228 (2,128)	11% (11%)
Lancashire	74,286 (61,242)	20,930 (17,505)	28% (29%)	34,446 (29,019)	46% (47%)	6,643 (4,332)	9% (7%)	12,144 (10,385)	16% (17%)
Leicestershire	41,909 (37,340)	12,143 (10,343)	29% (28%)	20,547 (18,004)	49% (48%)	5,285 (4,691)	13% (13%)	3,916 (4,301)	9% (12%)

Police force	Total Number of speeding offences detected	Total number of speeding offences dealt with by FPN	Proportion of speeding offences dealt with by FPN	Total number of speeding offences dealt with by speed awareness course	Proportion of speeding offences dealt with by speed awareness courses	Total number of speeding offences cancelled	Proportion of speeding offences cancelled	Number of speeding offences ending in court action	Proportion of speeding offences taken to court
				2018-19 (2017-18)					
Lincolnshire	45,712 (47,020)	14,198 (14,543)	31% (31%)	19,622 (20,279)	43% (43%)	4,147 (4,539)	9% (10%)	7,736 (7,658)	17% (16%)
Merseyside	53,112 (60,681)	15,764 (17,871)	30% (29%)	24,257 (26,247)	46% (43%)	5,226 (7,800)	10% (13%)	7,862 (8,763)	15% (14%)
Norfolk and Suffolk	98,729 (92,750)	29,793 (28,638)	30% (31%)	51,598 (48,060)	52% (52%)	10,088 (11,928)	10% (13%)	7,250 (4,124)	7% (4%)
North Wales	19,493 (20,462)	16,104 (16,905)	83% (83%)	296 (370)	2% (2%)	276 (265)	1% (1%)	2,815 (2,922)	14% (14%)
North Yorkshire	41,934 (29,922)	36,017 (24,986)	86% (84%)	57 (66)	0% (0%)	1,351 (1,285)	3% (4%)	4,508 (3,584)	11% (12%)
Northamptonshire	49,448 (47,860)	15,210 (14,171)	31% (30%)	27,934 (24,217)	56% (51%)	3,588 (7,187)	7% (15%)	2,709 (2,281)	5% (5%)
Northumbria	67,857 (66,327)	20,150 (19,903)	30% (30%)	36,958 (36,114)	54% (54%)	5,771 (5,482)	9% (8%)	4,358 (4,815)	6% (7%)
Nottinghamshire	24,566 (27,155)	22,576 (24,874)	92% (92%)	59 (109)	0% (0%)	371 (570)	2% (2%)	1,556 (1,602)	6% (6%)

Police force	Total Number of speeding offences detected	Total number of speeding offences dealt with by FPN	Proportion of speeding offences dealt with by FPN	Total number of speeding offences dealt with by speed awareness course	Proportion of speeding offences dealt with by speed awareness courses	Total number of speeding offences cancelled	Proportion of speeding offences cancelled	Number of speeding offences ending in court action	Proportion of speeding offences taken to court
				2018-19 (2017-18)					
Wales (except North Wales)	35,005 (43,425)	24,510 (32,880)	70% (76%)	124 (55)	0% (0%)	1,822 (4,092)	5% (9%)	8,548 (6,395)	24% (15%)
South Yorkshire	55,461 (47,811)	19,103 (17,314)	34% (36%)	31,851 (26,079)	57% (55%)	1,618 (1,585)	3% (3%)	2,889 (2,833)	5% (6%)
Staffordshire	48,583 (41,392)	15,307 (13,199)	32% (32%)	24,353 (20,196)	50% (49%)	2,688 (3,456)	6% (8%)	6,135 (4,498)	13% (11%)
Surrey	89,079 (74,163)	29,936 (23,415)	34% (32%)	37,640 (34,841)	42% (47%)	2,863 (2,814)	3% (4%)	16,398 (13,092)	18% (18%)
Sussex	54,139 (56,828)	15,278 (16,196)	28% (29%)	26,632 (27,054)	49% (48%)	5,159 (5,495)	10% (10%)	7,068 (8,083)	13% (14%)
Thames Valley	145,447 (131,400)	52,975 (47,177)	36% (36%)	80,377 (72,573)	55% (55%)	8,323 (7,166)	6% (5%)	3,560 (3,944)	2% (3%)

Police force	Total Number of speeding offences detected	Total number of speeding offences dealt with by FPN	Proportion of speeding offences dealt with by FPN	Total number of speeding offences dealt with by speed awareness course	Proportion of speeding offences dealt with by speed awareness courses	Total number of speeding offences cancelled	Proportion of speeding offences cancelled	Number of speeding offences ending in court action	Proportion of speeding offences taken to court
	2018-19 (2017-18)								
Warwickshire	52,774 (43,409)	15,410 (12,052)	29% (28%)	23,803 (21,186)	45% (49%)	11,242 (7,867)	21% (18%)	2,259 (2,237)	4% (5%)
West Mercia	92,335 (66,858)	31,543 (22,894)	34% (34%)	44,417 (34,937)	48% (52%)	9,470 (4,454)	10% (7%)	6,859 (4,571)	7% (7%)
West Midlands	57,154 (34,966)	16,506 (8,256)	29% (24%)	22,991 (14,353)	40% (41%)	12,044 (4,868)	21% (14%)	5,584 (7,488)	10% (21%)
West Yorkshire	181,867 (174,796)	46,516 (45,392)	26% (26%)	73,784 (79,090)	41% (45%)	34,305 (26,846)	19% (15%)	27,258 (23,468)	15% (13%)
Wiltshire	807 (1,191)	610 (1,064)	76% (89%)	119 (0)	15% (0%)	8 (25)	1% (2%)	56 (58)	7% (5%)
Total England & Wales	2,386,780 (2,292,534)	807,271 (778,486)	34% (34%)	1,041,097 (1,006,783)	44% (44%)	281,371 (278,704)	12% (12%)	250,548 (227,568)	10% (10%)

Table 3: Speeding offence detections by police force areas 2011-12 to 2018-19.

Police Force Area	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	% Change 2011-12 - 2018-19
Avon and Somerset	38,654	95,105	88,428	111,502	120,037	184,654	199,336	159,210	312%
Bedfordshire	14,060	15,156	35,019	50,401	47,546	68,262	74,297	76,573	445%
Cambridgeshire	34,827	36,577	26,014	50,582	44,703	38,486	45,763	34,672	0%
Cheshire	40,446	38,418	35,319	49,762	49,843	54,787	58,408	52,770	30%
City of London/Metropolitan Police	74,567	86,693	91,259	95,996	79,432	88,044	139,318	157,494	111%
Cleveland	20,980	17,028	11,983	7,889	10,796	13,486	11,308	11,937	-43%
Cumbria	37,674	38,772	37,556	38,462	38,377	45,734	45,702	40,104	6%
Derbyshire	7,525	10,015	9,158	18,034	11,984	10,202	10,480	12,256	63%
Devon and Cornwall	14,085	15,132	13,199	17,177	25,210	41,994	42,888	47,272	236%
Dorset	33,440	27,265	27,484	24,630	26,227	24,980	23,027	22,716	-32%
Durham	8,076	8,143	7,586	7,044	6,846	7,430	8,802	19,395	140%
Essex	25,980	28,823	45,706	73,170	79,049	98,545	95,967	91,849	254%
Gloucestershire	10,847	12,495	15,001	20,934	18,090	24,988	21,727	24,121	122%
Greater Manchester	114,278	118,471	82,740	91,064	127,367	120,094	101,421	106,839	-7%
Hampshire	68,901	88,183	84,857	80,907	88,658	81,213	79,126	73,036	6%
Hertfordshire	49,090	49,330	47,715	58,826	78,131	66,912	51,158	52,794	8%

Police Force Area	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	% Change 2011-12 - 2018-19
Humberside	43,814	48,291	56,811	53,058	53,732	54,948	57,930	53,679	23%
Kent	24,080	24,758	28,818	26,885	21,660	18,347	18,878	20,366	-15%
Lancashire	55,862	52,860	55,617	65,109	69,547	64,680	61,242	74,286	33%
Leicestershire	44,488	33,759	34,189	47,043	38,696	40,445	37,340	41,909	-6%
Lincolnshire	18,277	22,182	48,003	51,310	48,280	54,190	47,020	45,712	150%
Merseyside	48,235	46,467	50,379	50,503	59,611	66,828	60,681	53,112	10%
Norfolk and Suffolk	91,555	78,168	87,765	90,157	75,741	88,500	92,750	98,729	8%
North Wales	11,683	14,234	14,356	18,866	17,416	19,891	20,462	19,493	67%
North Yorkshire	21,151	20,411	41,896	45,517	30,370	30,459	29,922	41,934	98%
Northamptonshire	25,780	21,440	22,004	42,023	59,628	51,664	47,860	49,448	92%
Northumbria	59,737	73,936	94,093	67,476	62,838	57,074	66,327	67,857	14%
Nottinghamshire	23,406	24,195	27,082	34,545	35,626	26,101	27,155	24,566	5%
Wales (except North Wales)	35,757	47,621	38,843	49,913	45,268	38,808	43,425	35,005	-2%
South Yorkshire	55,961	45,523	52,243	41,951	46,093	41,090	47,811	55,461	-1%
Staffordshire	15,472	19,923	50,517	51,861	41,373	29,396	41,392	48,583	214%
Surrey	49,904	51,086	54,310	51,745	72,218	47,732	74,163	89,079	79%
Sussex	80,422	68,030	56,974	58,975	63,651	68,541	56,828	54,139	-33%
Thames Valley	137,206	152,328	153,430	139,674	145,639	138,275	131,400	145,447	6%
Warwickshire	33,731	35,765	43,488	41,353	48,821	47,185	43,409	52,774	56%
West Mercia	84,038	83,577	78,580	98,560	86,992	81,989	66,858	92,335	10%
West Midlands	78,087	74,707	56,587	52,580	44,395	53,097	34,966	57,154	-27%
West Yorkshire	102,694	108,314	78,267	88,855	130,174	123,217	174,796	181,867	77%
Wiltshire	5,447	3,819	4,782	2,108	1,287	989	1,191	807	-85%
Total England and Wales	1,740,217	1,837,000	1,888,058	2,066,447	2,151,352	2,213,257	2,292,534	2,386,780	37%