

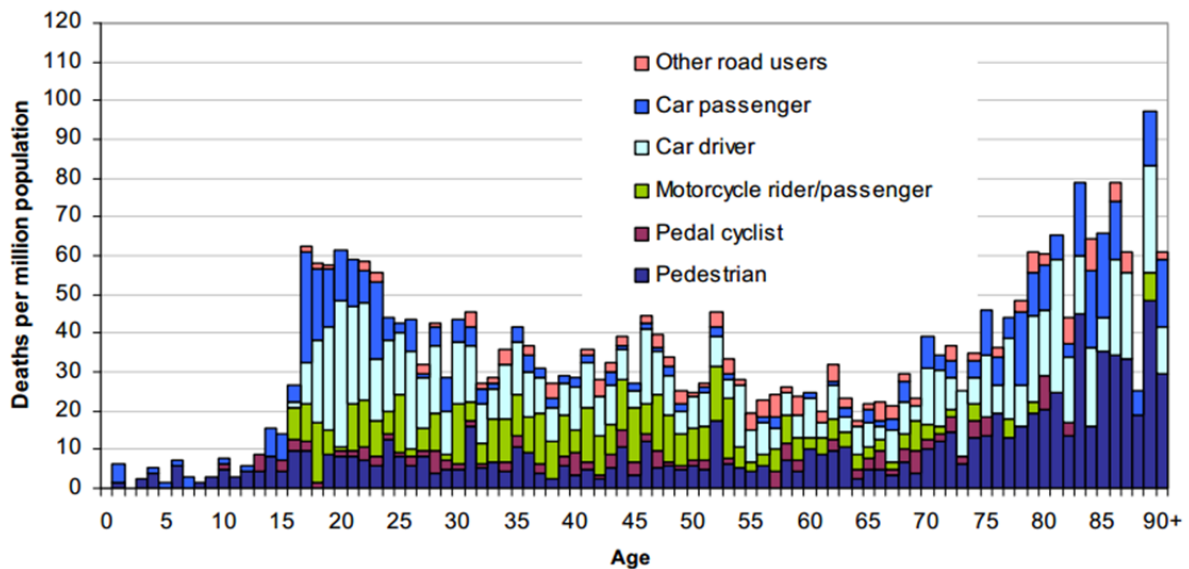
Update : Safer mobility for an ageing population

Following the release of *Reported Road Casualties 2011* and the 6 month anniversary of the publication of the PACTS report *It's My Choice*¹, this paper will give a brief update on statistics and policy concerning the ageing population.

Risk

Older people continue to be overrepresented in road casualty statistics, as illustrated by the graph.

Fatalities per million population by road user type and age: GB, 2011²



Older people represent 14% of all pedestrian casualties, but 38% of all pedestrian fatalities.³

The above statement taken from the PACTS report uses 2010 data. Using 2011 data, older people (aged 60 +) represent **15% of all pedestrian casualties, but 41% of all pedestrian fatalities.**⁴ This is an illustration of frailty: Older people are more vulnerable and may suffer a more serious injury than a younger person in a similar crash. The Department for Transport (DfT) reports that older people are between two and five times more likely to be killed or suffer a serious injury as a result of any road accident than a younger person.⁵

Not only do older people continue to be overrepresented, but this overrepresentation is growing. If we do not want to see the slope on the right hand side of the above graph become steeper in future years, we need to take action to help support older road users.

¹ <http://www.pacts.org.uk/news.php?id=620>

² <http://assets.dft.gov.uk/statistics/releases/road-accidents-and-safety-annual-report-2011/rrcgb2011-01.pdf>
Chart 2.

³ PACTS, 2012. *It's My Choice: Safer Mobility for an Ageing Population*

⁴ Department for Transport (DfT), 2012. *Reported Road Casualties Great Britain: 2011 Annual Report.*

⁵ Holland, C.A., Handley, S. & Feetham, C., 2003. *Older drivers, illness and medication.*
road Safety research report No. 39. DfT, London.

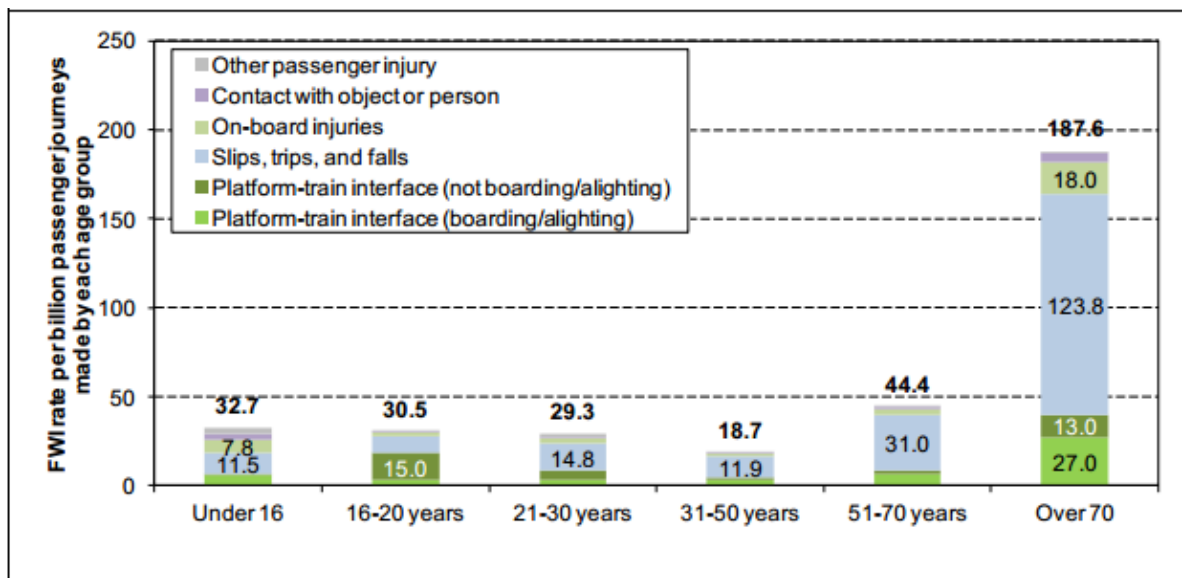
Proportion of killed or seriously injured casualties aged over 60 as a percentage of all ages killed or seriously injured casualties, GB⁶

Year	Car drivers	Car passengers
2005 – 2009 average	15.7%	15.3%
2010	19.4%	19.4%
2011	20.8%	20.9%

The above table illustrates that older car drivers and passengers killed or seriously injured also represent a growing proportion of the number of people of all ages killed or seriously injured. The 2011 figures show **growth of a third compared with the 2005 – 2009 average**.

In other areas of transport, casualties appear to be reducing. The graph below, of which the previous year’s version appeared in the PACTS report, depicts a reduction in train passenger harm for the older age groups. Slips, trips and falls are still the main danger for older people on the railways.

Train passenger harm by age group 2002/03 to 2011/12⁷



As explored in the PACTS report, it is thought that the comparably large number of older passengers harmed could in part be due to reporting issues: it is thought that older, leisure passengers are more likely to report a slip or fall than a rushed commuter.

⁶ Department for Transport (DfT), 2012. Reported Road Casualties in Great Britain: annual report 2011. DfT, London. *Reported killed or seriously injured casualties by gender, road user type and age, GB, 2005 – 2009 average, 2004 - 2011*

⁷ Rail Safety and Standards Board (RSSB), 2012. Annual Safety Performance Report 2011/12. RSSB, London. Chart 75

Policy

The three main recommendations made as a result of the report were the following:

1. The ageing population is a long term issue and policy makers should be planning now. In these plans the ageing population should be seen as an asset, not a problem.

‘We aim to make people dream of moving to Manchester when they retire, and we are confident we can make this a great place to grow older.’⁸

2. Keeping older people safely mobile is important for their quality of life and for the community, as well as for casualty levels.

‘The ITN understands that older people want to do much more than go to the doctor or the market. For example, members use the service to attend senior college, to get their hair done, to shop at the mall, and to go out on dates.’⁹

3. Supporting safe mobility will involve developing new measures, such as offering a national, tailored education course to older drivers, and finding innovative new ways of providing flexible, demand-responsive transport in areas where public transport is not viable. Additionally, some very basic measures should be prioritised, such as the maintenance of pavements.

‘Despite the technological evolution of transport, the best selling means of travel in the 21st century remains shoes.’¹⁰

Specifically on older drivers, PACTS recommended:

1. The government should develop a course accreditation system or standard course for older drivers which could be available throughout the country. As a first step, the Department for Transport should create an index of the range of education and retraining courses aimed at older drivers currently offered around the country.

2. An information pack should be developed raising awareness and giving advice on the issues facing older drivers such as renewing the driving licence, self-regulation, and vehicle adaptation. To this end, more research is required into the effectiveness of self-regulation, and how to advise helpful self-regulation.

There are movements towards the second of these, in the private and third sector. However, for the first, PACTS believes that central government needs to take responsibility, as the Secretary of State for Transport (acting through the DVLA) has a responsibility to ensure that all licence holders are fit to drive.¹¹

⁸ Manchester: A Great Place to Grow Older 2010-2020. Manchester’s Strategy for Ageing.

⁹ <http://www.itnamerica.org/>

¹⁰ http://www.aeneas-project.eu/docs/AENEAS_StudyTourCatalogue.pdf Page 9.

¹¹ Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA), 2011. At a glance guide to the current medical standards of fitness to drive. DVLA, Swansea

In the *Strategic Framework for Road Safety* published in May 2011 it was stated that

4.22 We would like to work with the voluntary sector representing the elderly and the training industry to develop further training scheme for older drivers.¹²

However, there are no signs that this is advancing, and indeed there seems to be some confusion as to the intentions of the Department for Transport. This Parliamentary Question was answered on the 9th November 2012.

Driving: Older People

Jim Fitzpatrick: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport which local authorities have developed educational interventions to help older drivers assess their appropriateness to continue driving and to help them consider alternatives to the use of the car; what assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of such interventions; and if he will undertake a national audit to make such interventions available nationally. [127441]

Stephen Hammond: The Department does not hold this information.

However, the *Strategic Framework for Road Safety*, published on 11 May 2011, says that

“we would like to work with the voluntary sector representing the elderly and the training industry to develop further training schemes for older drivers.”

We do not have any plans to undertake a national audit to make educational interventions available nationally; it is for local authorities to decide whether or not they undertake such interventions with older drivers.

Though Mr Hammond begins by quoting the *Strategic Framework* stating the Department’s intentions to develop further training schemes, he then states that the government has no plan to encourage a national training scheme. Clarification on this point would be useful. We would hope that the government would proceed with their plans laid out in the *Strategic Framework*, and develop a national course supporting older drivers, in collaboration with local authorities and charities representing the elderly, and based on evidence and academic research.

Support for older drivers is part of the range of interventions which could help keep our ageing population safe and mobile. More priority needs to be given to this issue at all levels if we do not want to see a situation where older people represent a growing proportion of casualties. This could discourage older people from getting out and about, and impact negatively on their quality of life as well as their contribution to society.

¹² <http://assets.dft.gov.uk/publications/strategic-framework-for-road-safety/strategicframework.pdf>