

**NORTH EAST**  
**Regional Road Safety Resource**  
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## **Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Durham County Council's Child Road Safety Training Schemes**

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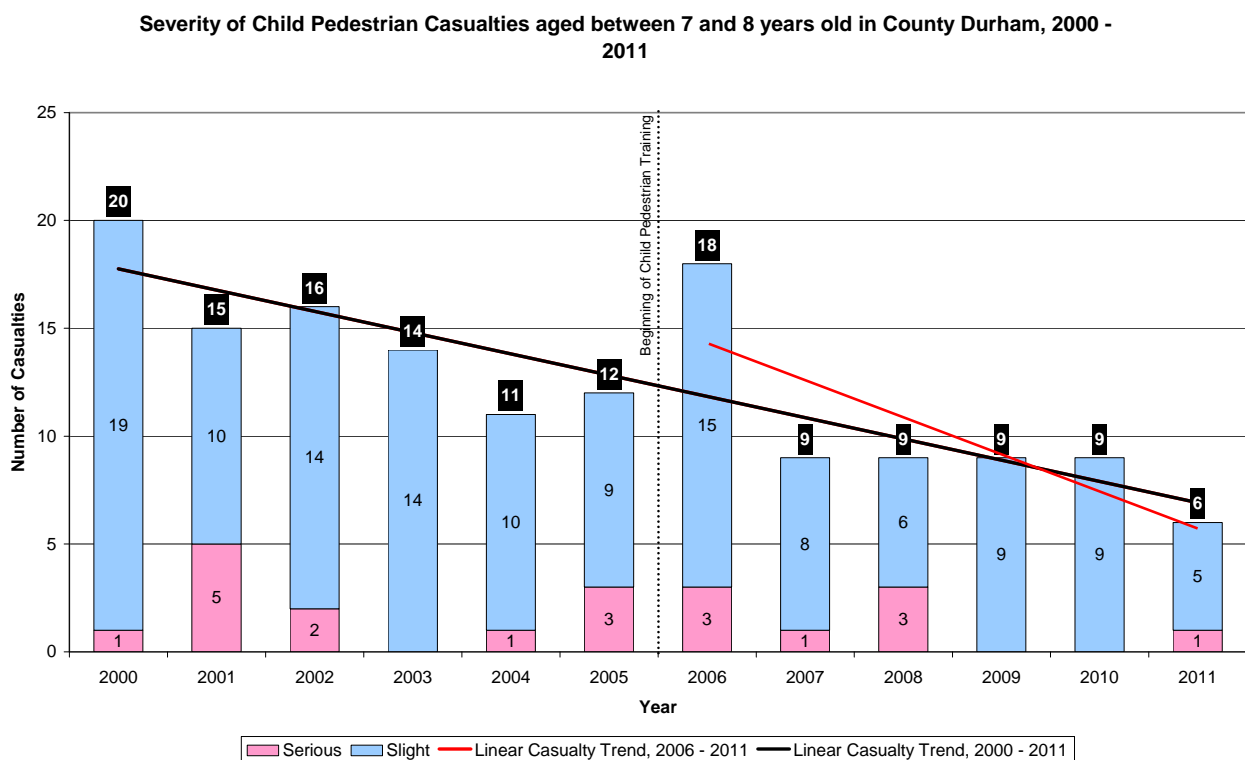


## Child Pedestrian Training

Durham County Council has run a child pedestrian training scheme in its current format since 2006, which is directed at all children aged seven and eight in the county.

In 2005 (the year before the current child pedestrian training began) there were 12 child pedestrians injured who were aged seven or eight, while in 2011 this number reduced to six. At the same time at a regional level, there were 64 child pedestrians injured in 2005, which fell to 50 in 2011. This shows us that whilst the North East as a whole saw a 22% reduction in child pedestrian casualties (who were aged between seven and eight), County Durham had a fall of 50%. It should be noted that given the small numbers involved in both of these figures that there may be some element of chance in the reduction, however, Figure 1 shows us that apart from 2006, County Durham has seen consistently low figures for child pedestrian casualties from this age group. In addition to the overall figures, the trend between 2006 and 2011 has seen child pedestrian casualties reducing at a faster rate than they were doing up to 2006, which could be argued to demonstrate the effectiveness of the child pedestrian training for this age group.

**Figure 1: Severity of Child Pedestrian Casualties by Year**



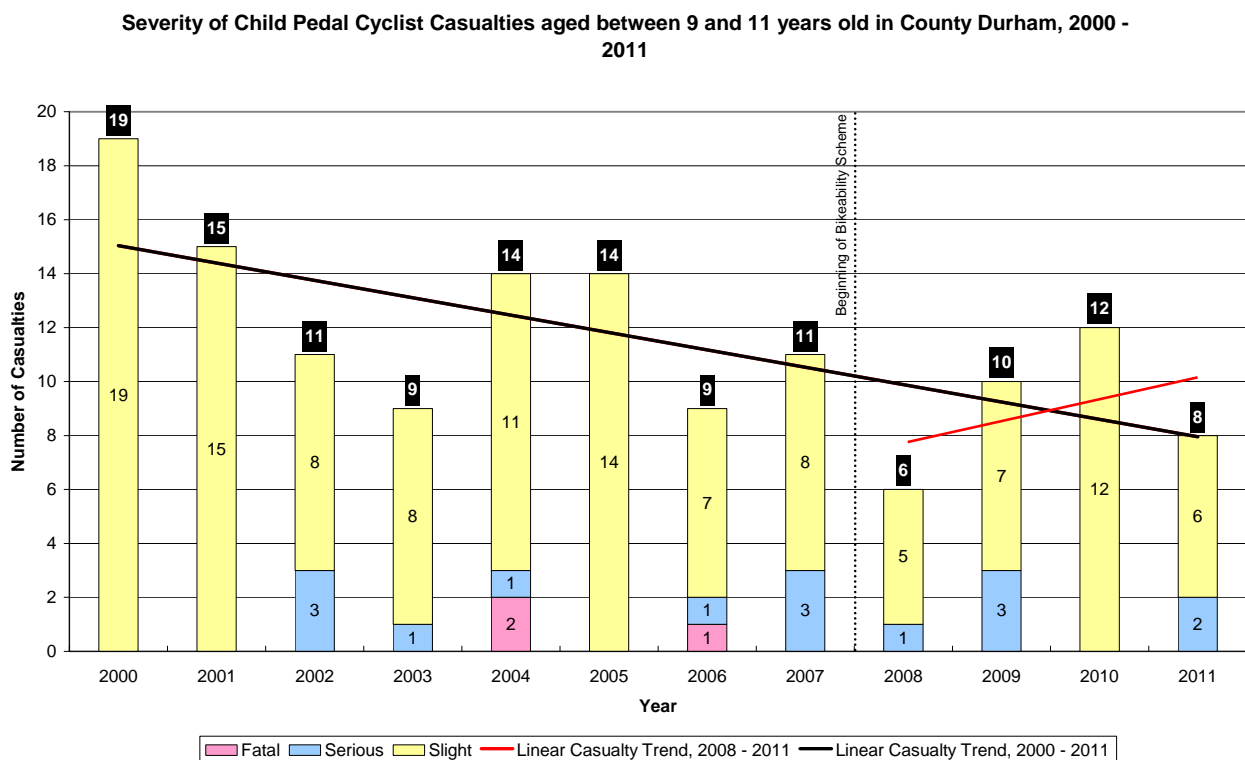
A further comparison that can be made is to look at the change in casualty numbers of child pedestrians aged between 7 and 13 in 2011 to the levels in 2005. The reason for looking specifically at this age group is that these children will have all had the current format of child pedestrian training in the years between 2006 and 2011, so we should see some impact on the child pedestrian casualty numbers for this age group. The Stats 19 data shows us that there has been a 22% reduction in the number of child pedestrians injured in 2005 to 2011, and again, some of this reduction could be seen to be due to the introduction of the child pedestrian training in 2006. However, one note of caution when using this figure in particular is that across the North East there was a 34% reduction in child pedestrian casualties over the same period.

## Bikeability

Durham County Council has run the 'Bikeability' child pedal cyclist training scheme for 9 to 11 year olds from 2008 to present for all children from that age group in the county.

In 2007, the year before the Bikeability scheme began, there were 11 child pedal cyclists aged between 9 and 11 injured on Durham's roads, while in the first year of the Bikeability scheme these casualties almost halved, reducing to six, their lowest number of the period. Over the past few years (and especially in 2012, which is not covered by these figures) there has been a general increase in cycling across the country. In Durham, figures given to the North East Regional Road Safety Resource by the Road and Freight Statistics team at the Department for Transport show that the number of miles covers by cyclists increased every year from 2007 to 2010, although there was a reduction in 2011. This information should be taken into consideration when looking at the information in Figure 2 as there is an upward trend in child pedal cyclist casualties for the most years of the Bikeability scheme.<sup>1</sup>

**Figure 2: Severity of Child Pedal Cyclist Casualties by Year**



If we use the pedal cycle miles travelled to weight the child pedal cycle casualty numbers, we can see that in 2008 there were 0.7 child pedal cyclist casualties per 1,000 pedal cycle miles travelled, whereas in 2007 there were 1.2 casualties per 1,000 miles. However, from this low point in 2008, both casualties and casualties per pedal cycle miles increased, but again it should be noted that small numbers like these can result in yearly fluctuations.

<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately these figures are only available for all ages of cyclists so we do not know for sure what the change in child cycling numbers has been over the period. This will again need to be taken into consideration when using these figures.

As with child pedestrians, we can look at the change in casualty numbers of child pedal cyclists aged between 9 and 14 in 2011 to the levels in 2007 to give us an indication of how effectively Bikeability training received between the ages of 9 and 11 has been retained into later life. The Stats 19 data shows us that there has been a 38% reduction in the number of child pedal cyclists injured in 2007 to 2011, which can be seen to be partly due to the Bikeability training that these child pedal cyclists have received and retained. Finally, scaling this up to look at the North East as a whole, there was only a 14% reduction in casualties for this age group, showing that County Durham saw greater reductions in child pedal cyclist casualties over the same period than the region.

Overall, due to the very small numbers involved in child pedestrian and pedal cyclist casualties in County Durham, it is difficult to provide a full and irrefutable evaluation on how effective child pedestrian and pedal cyclist training has been in reducing casualties. However, looking at the general trends in these casualties, we can see that there has been a reduction in both child pedestrian and pedal cyclist casualties for the age groups given the training. Furthermore, there is also a reduction in casualties from the control group the year before the training began in 2006 and 2008 to 2011. What this suggests is that whilst there has been a general downward trend in overall casualty numbers across this period, this should not be seen to be the only factor in the reduction of child pedestrian and pedal cyclist casualties in County Durham. It is clear when comparing Durham's casualties to those of the North East as a whole that there are different trends apparent in the county to the region, which can probably be partly attributed to the programme of child road safety training put in place by Durham County Council.