

Halton 2008 Traffic Collisions Review

2008 again saw fewer traffic collisions in Halton and generally further reductions in casualties. Disappointingly, fatality and serious casualty numbers increased after the extraordinarily low numbers of 2006 and 2007, but only to levels in keeping with the trend of gradual reductions which have been achieved in recent years. Over just one year:

Serious injuries & deaths (KSI) rose from 44 to 59

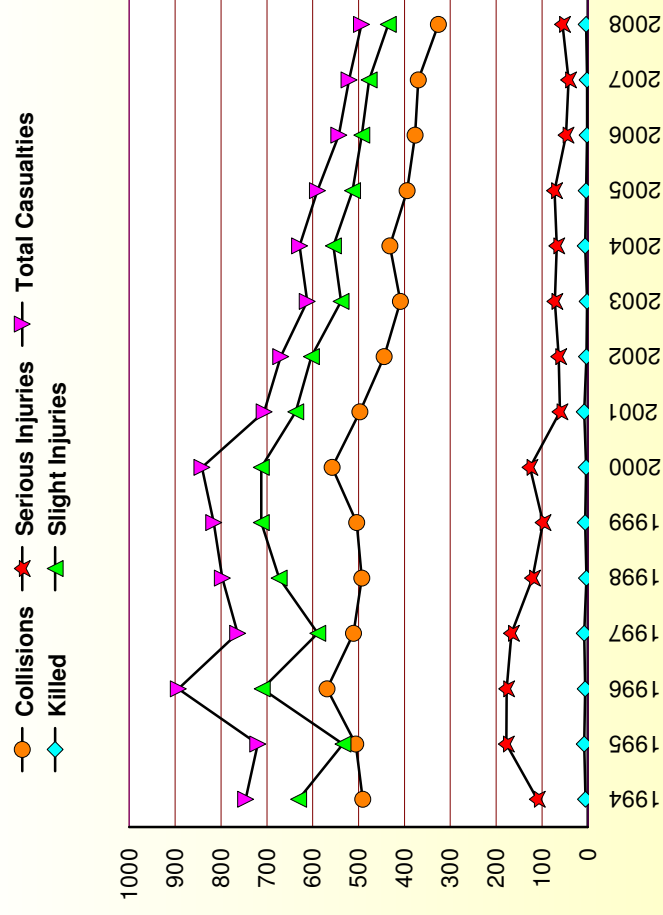
Child serious injuries (CKSI) stayed the same at 11

Slight casualty numbers (SLI) fell from 477 to 435

Halton is still comfortably on course to meet the Government's casualty reduction targets in 2010.

Year	Collisions	Deaths	Seriously Injured	Slight Injuries	Total Casualties
1994	491	5	110	631	746
1995	506	8	178	534	720
1996	569	6	177	710	893
1997	511	8	167	589	764
1998	493	3	121	673	797
1999	504	6	98	712	816
2000	558	4	126	712	842
2001	497	8	61	637	706
2002	444	3	64	603	670
2003	409	2	72	538	612
2004	432	6	68	555	629
2005	394	4	73	513	590
2006	377	2	48	493	543
2007	370	2	42	477	521
2008	326	4	55	435	494

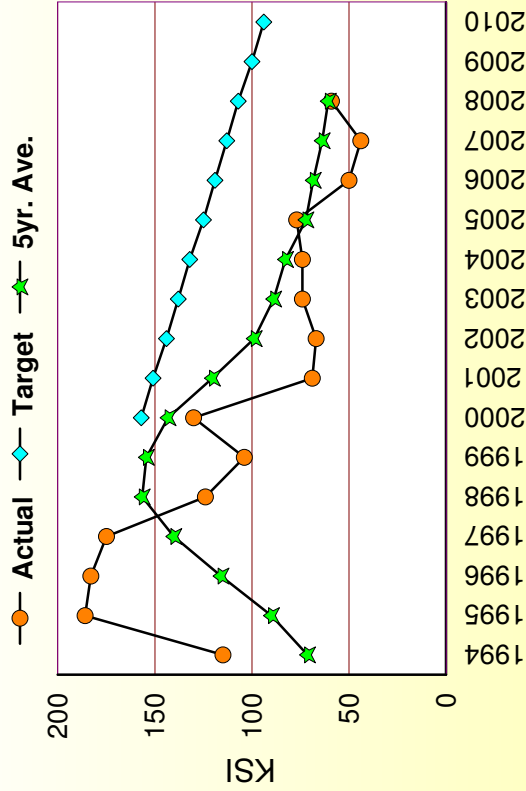
Collision & Casualty Trends



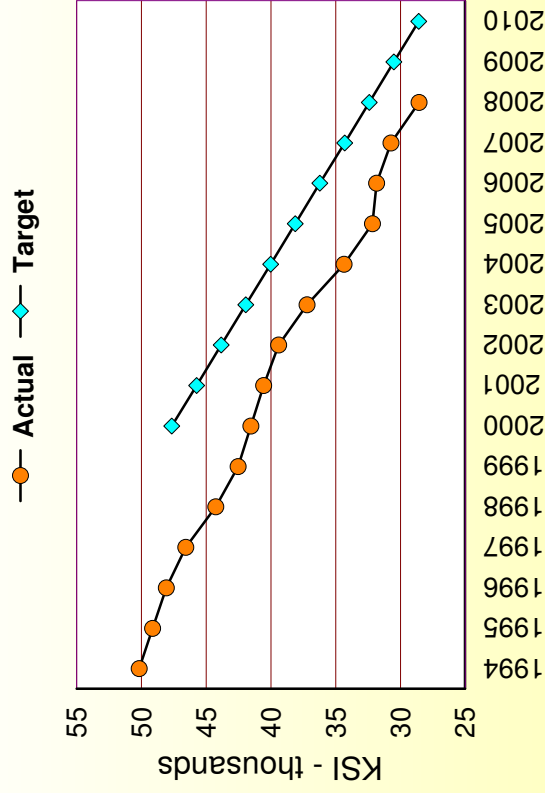
Killed/Seriously Injured All Ages (KSI) (National indicator)

	94-98 average	2007	2008	% change over base for	% change 2007-2008
Halton	157	44	59	-62% down	34% up
National	47,656	30,720	28,572	-36% down	-7% down

Halton KSI Trends & Targets



National KSI Trends & Targets

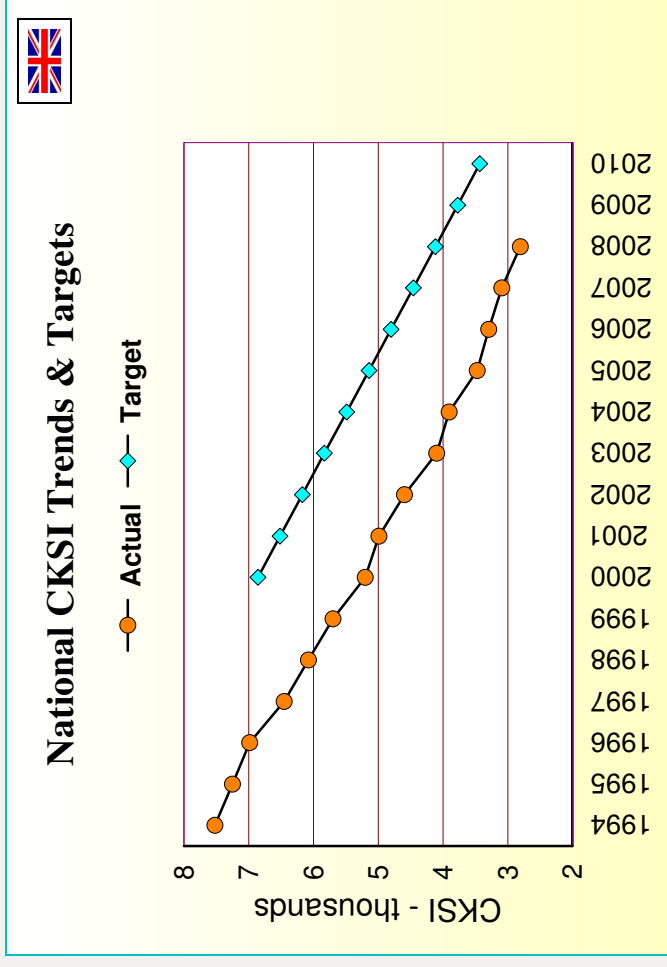
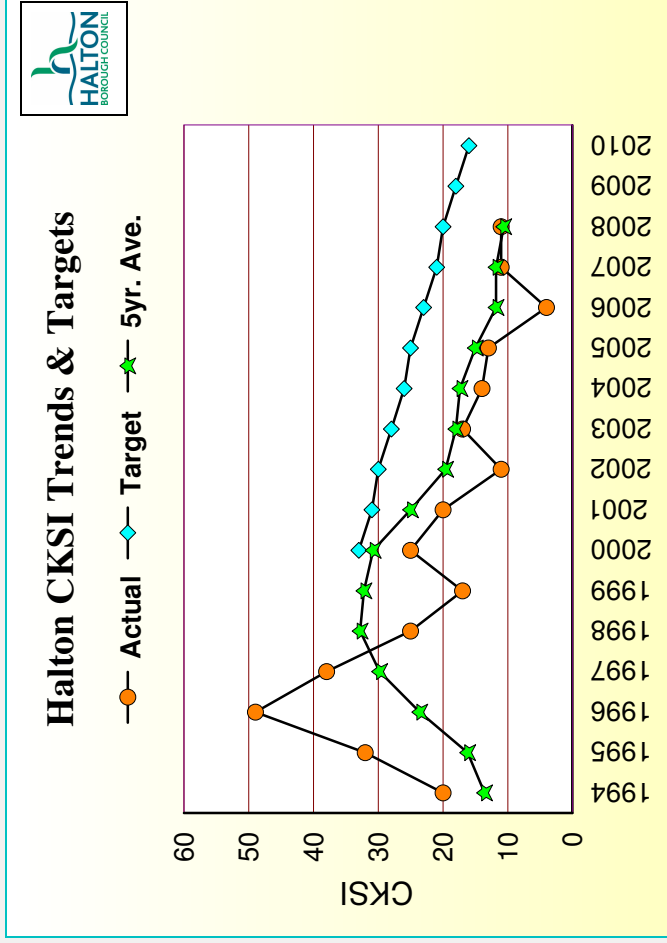


The unprecedented reduction in KSI casualties from 2005 to 2006 and 2007 should be seen as a statistical 'blip', which although very welcome was unlikely to be maintained, and so it has turned out. 2008 saw KSI numbers return to anticipated levels. The five year rolling average gives a more stable view of progress in this category, with the year to year numeric volatility smoothed out.

There is still every reason to expect Halton to meet the national 40% reduction in KSI casualties target quite comfortably in 2010.

Children Killed/Seriously Injured (CKSI) (National indicator)

	94-98 average	2007	2008	% change over base for 2008	% change 2007-2008
Halton	33	11	11	-67% down	0%
National	6,860	3,090	2,807	-59% down	-9% down



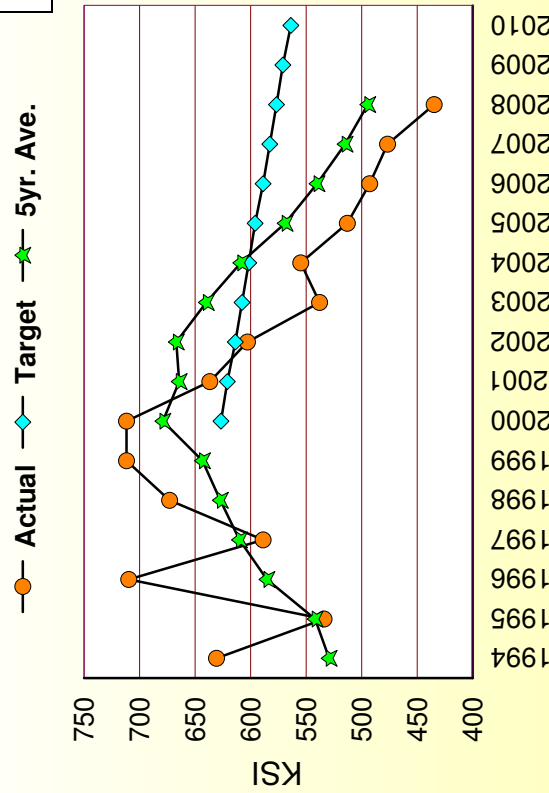
Years of road safety education, training and publicity, engineering and school travel plan work has produced a massive decline in child KSI numbers but it is evident that the progress is stalling with this indicator tending to flat-line. Achieving consistent reductions in future years is going to be extremely difficult, though national 2010 reductions should still be achieved.

Statistical volatility is a concern when dealing with such small numbers.

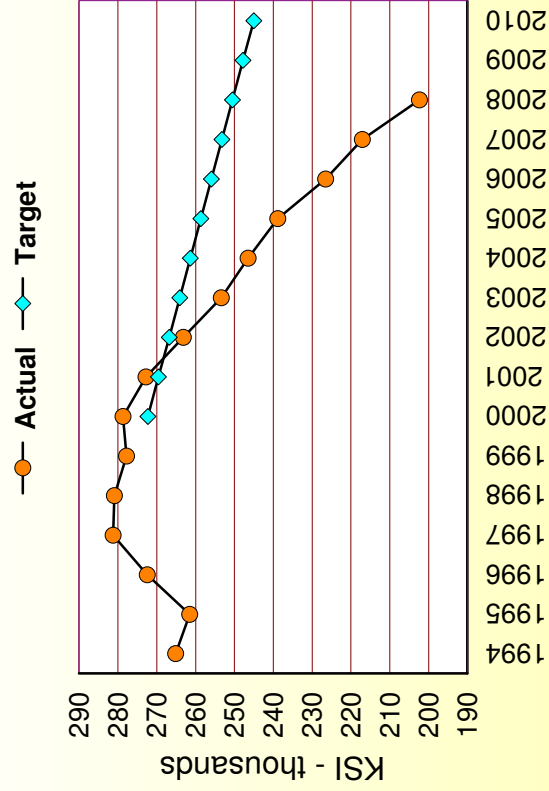
Slight Injuries, All Ages (SLD) (National indicator)

	94-98 average	2007	2008	% change over base for 2008	% change 2007-2008
Halton	627	477	435	-31% down	-9%
National	272,272	217,060	202,333	-26% down	-7% down

Halton Slight Injuries Trends & Targets



National Slight Injuries Trends & Targets



All figures for slight casualties are expressed as a pure number that have or may occur, not as a rate per distance travelled which is the basis of Government reduction targets. The total for 2008 represents another large reduction in the number of SLI casualties in Halton and continues the downwards trend since 2000.

Overall, Halton is in a very favourable position to achieve a 10% reduction in slight casualties by 2010 over the 1994-1998 average even without factoring in the growth in traffic volumes and distances travelled.

Mixed Messages From the 2008 Road Casualty Figures.

The year to year fluctuations in victim numbers across the various casualty categories have always been a problem in Halton, producing excessive swings in the individual year totals. It is for this reason that Halton shows a five year rolling average to produce more stable results in analysing trends.

Although it is gratifying to see reductions in the numbers of road traffic accidents and casualties overall, there are some reasons for concern in the 2008 road casualty figures.

KSI numbers rose sharply, but only from unsustainably low numbers from the two previous years. However, CKSI numbers appear to be stabilising at around 11 per year, despite a range of initiatives aimed at gaining a reduction in this number which is twice the national average.

The impact of traffic accident injuries on individuals and their families must not be forgotten and it is important that no effort is spared in continuing to secure further reductions in the road casualties recorded in Halton. Casualty savings are to continue being sought through a wide range of initiatives including traditional engineering work, the use of safety cameras and road safety education, training and publicity.

Although there is every expectation that Halton will meet its national targets in 2010, there appears to be no 'easy fixes' that will secure large scale reductions in casualty numbers to meet the extremely challenging - possibly unattainable - targets that the Government appears keen on setting. (See next page)

However, we will continue to work with our partner organisations including Cheshire Safer Roads Partnership, which through an initiatives fund is able to sponsor innovative road safety education, training and publicity projects to build on existing work in this area. The Partnership focusses on engagement with key high risk groups to change road safety attitudes and behaviour and thereby reduce the casualties incurred. It is complementary to work undertaken at a local level by Halton officers.

As a high proportion of the Borough's schools now have Travel Plans in place, it is possible to place greater emphasis on implementing the measures recommended in the adopted Plans, some of which are aimed at reducing the risk of child involvement in road accidents. In addition, a child casualty audit is to be undertaken to allow better targeting of road safety education, training and publicity initiatives, with special reference to the effects of deprivation.

These initiatives will be continued and developed as will the shift of emphasis of recent times towards carrying out a larger number of smaller local safety schemes to ensure that further progress is made in reducing road casualties in Halton.

After 2010 - Government Targets Through To 2020

(As detailed in "A Safer Way" - Consultation on Making Britain's Roads the Safest in the World)

The Government, through the DfT., has recently consulted on a series of road casualty reduction targets that it is proposing to set for the year 2020, based on the 2004-2008 baseline average. The targets are to reduce:

Road deaths by at least 33%

Road serious injuries by at least 33%

Road deaths and serious injuries to children and young people (aged 0–17) by at least 50%

The rate of KSI per km. travelled by pedestrians and cyclists by 50%

This Council has lodged a series of responses to the Government's proposals, some of which follow:

'It is remiss that given the availability of data on past performance on casualty reduction that you have chosen to implement a 'one size fits all' approach to target setting. These targets fail to recognize the substantial reductions already achieved in some areas (authorities) and the inability of other areas to achieve the 2010 targets. This places unrealistic expectations on the 'high' performing authorities (such as Halton), whilst the lower performing authorities are 'let off the hook'.

Furthermore, no mention is made of increased levels of funding being made available to address the enhanced targets. This will present particular difficulties for smaller authorities that are facing huge cutbacks in public sector spending.'

The DfT have indicated that there is a belief that high casualty reductions in the future can be achieved through addressing the high casualty rate on rural, national speed limit roads. In relation to this, Halton responded

'It also needs to be acknowledged that small urban authorities that have a low proportion of the high casualty rural roads will find it more difficult to achieve the enhanced targets.'

And in relation to a target based on KSI casualties per kilometre travelled by pedestrians and cyclists;

'The reasons for introducing casualty rates into the performance indicators are well understood, but no mention is made of how the base data on distance travelled for each mode will be provided. If left to local authorities, this will place an unreasonable burden on smaller authorities to collect this data.'

The full set of consultation questions and the responses given are available as report background papers.