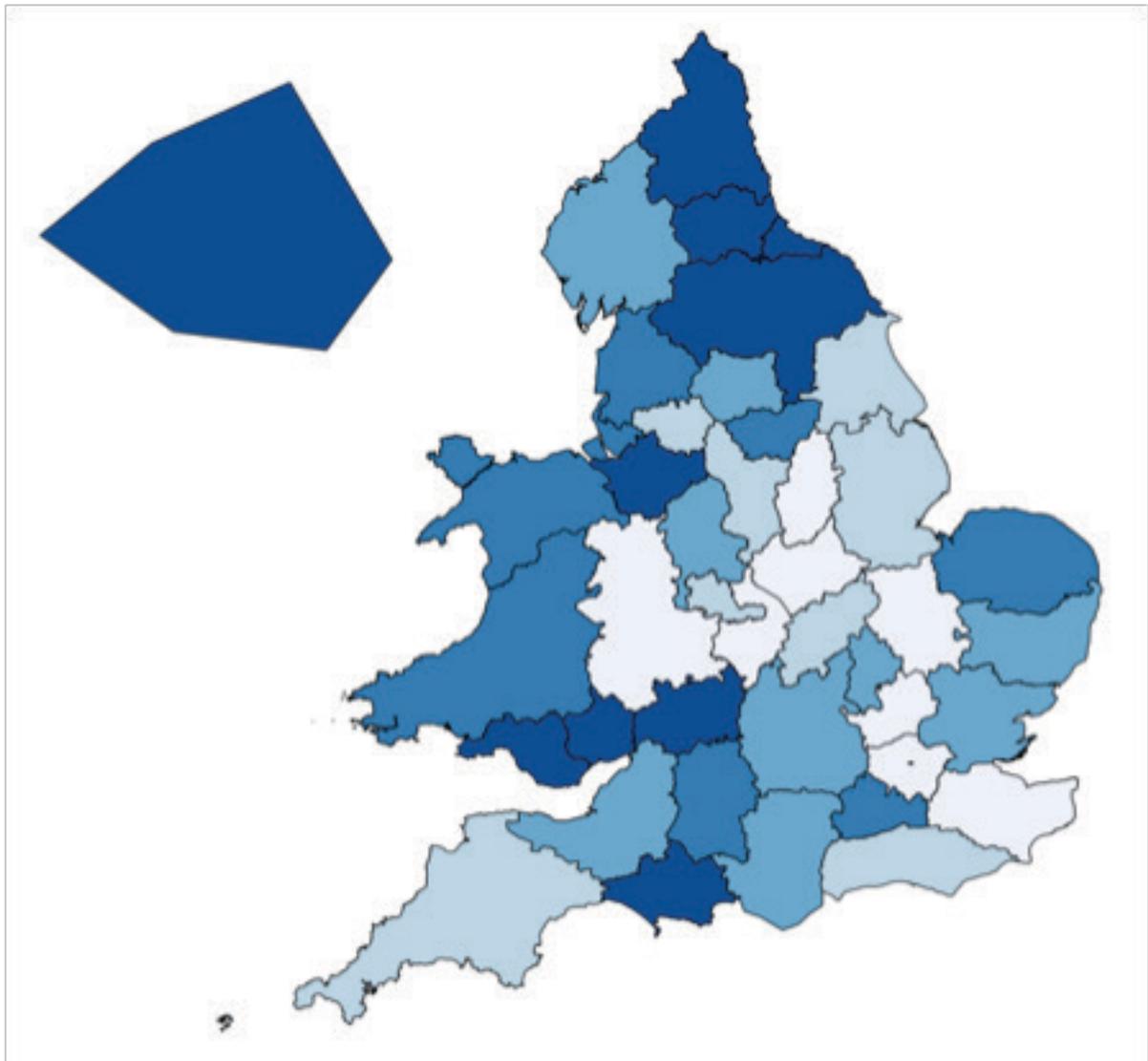


The Drug Driving Map of Britain

We have created a drug driving map of Britain highlighting the area's most blighted by drug driving. The map shows the areas which have the most convictions per 100,000 for drug driving since the implementation of the new laws.

2015 drug driving convictions by county per 100,000

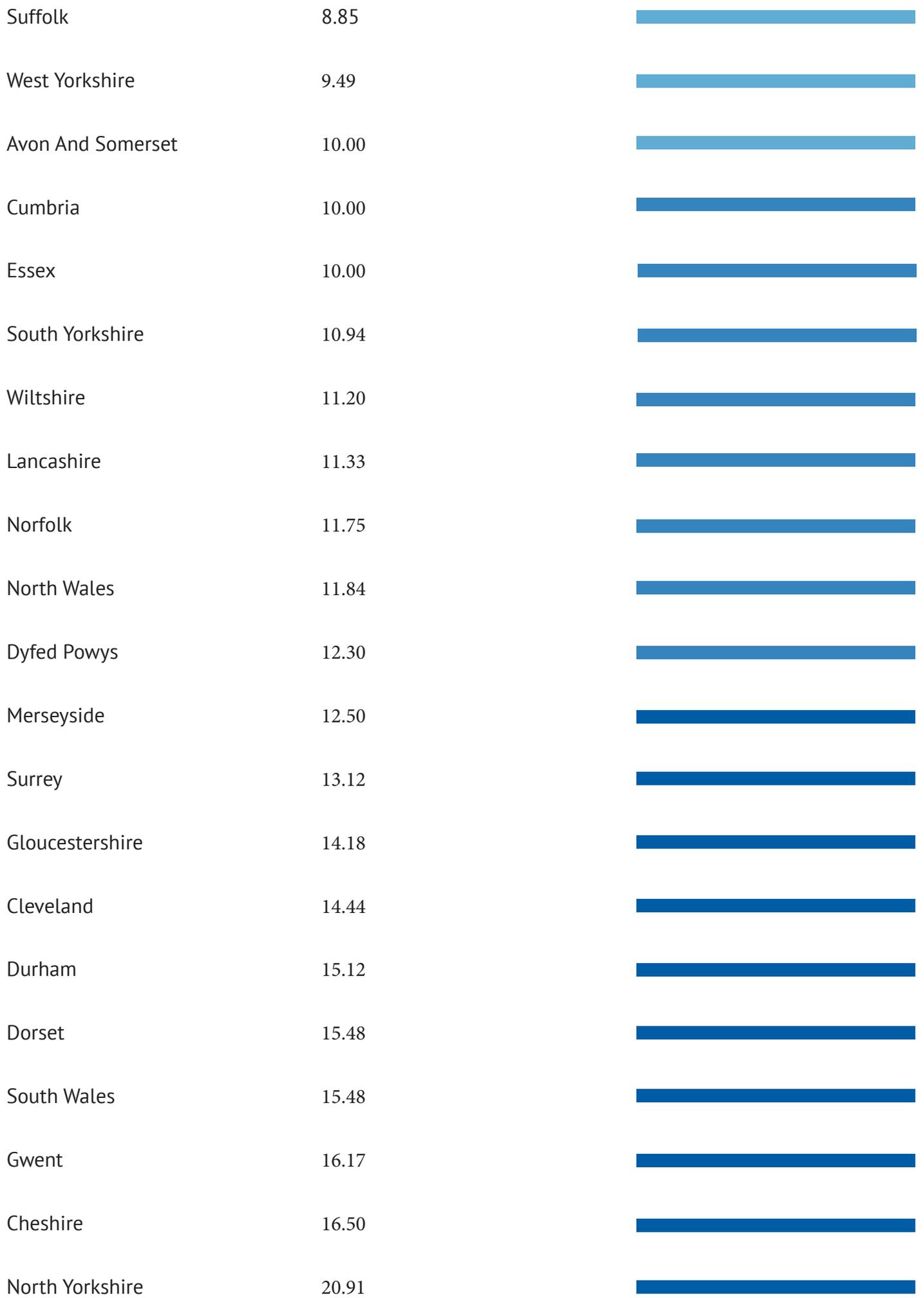


Data and method

This motoring conviction data set is publicly available from the Ministry of Justice. The shape files are available from the data.police.uk site and the choropleth maps were rendered with QGIS. The data is also available in a data pack from Keith Michaels, please contact us for more information.

The boundaries above are the UK's police districts and all figures are represented on a per 100,000 basis using population estimates provided by the police for their jurisdictions. Areas with the most convictions are in dark blue and those with the least are in white.

Name	Convictions per 100,000	Colour
Cambridgeshire	1.22	
Hertfordshire	1.82	
Metropolitan	3.11	
Warwickshire	3.81	
West Mercia	4.20	
Nottinghamshire	4.83	
Kent	4.85	
Leicestershire	5.56	
Northamptonshire	5.63	
West Midlands	6.07	
Humberside	6.14	
Greater Manchester	6.40	
Lincolnshire	6.67	
Derbyshire	7.00	
Sussex	7.50	
Devon And Cornwall	7.88	
Hampshire	8.42	
Northumbria	8.45	
Staffordshire	8.47	
Bedfordshire	8.58	
Thames Valley	8.71	



There are countless variables that may influence an area's conviction rates of drug driving, far more than can be covered here. However, these may fit into one of three categories: structural, procedural and personal. Structural influences are societal pressures that may increase the prevalence of illegal drug use. Procedural is the effectiveness of the police and judicial system to ensure drug driving convictions. The third is personal, which is where personal circumstance may contribute to a person driving under the influence of drugs or being acquitted thereof. The differences in conviction rates between counties are as a consequence of the complex interplay of these factors and conclusions as to the ultimate causes of drug driving are not possible without further investigation.

Factors that are likely to influence an area's drug driving rate are: volume of car ownership (it follows that no cars means no drug drivers); frequency of drug use (more drug use, more opportunities to drive under the influence of drugs); the efficacy of the police and legal system (if drug drivers aren't arrested or are released without charge they avoid conviction) lack of alternative transport methods (people taking prescription medication or using illegal drugs are more likely to end up driving); socioeconomics (high youth unemployment is a route to drug abuse, stemming from feelings of helplessness. Children from broken homes are at greater risk of mental health problems and using illegal drugs), mental health (many of the prescription drugs on this list are for treating anxiety) and gender.

For the purposes of this investigation the two convictions researched are: Being in charge of a vehicle whilst unfit to drive through drugs and driving or attempting to drive a vehicle whilst unfit to drive through drugs. Off the back of this, the map reveals some interesting insights.

Findings

Unsurprisingly London had the highest volume of convicted drivers followed by Greater Manchester but, when adjusted per 100,000, these two locations feature in the lower reaches of the figures. This may be due to better alternative transport for would be drug drivers.

Dorset and Gloucestershire have the highest conviction rates in the South West. For largely rural communities they appear to be visible outliers. A map at local scale of drink and driving incidents was made by Road Safety Gloucestershire and reveals incidents clustered around Cheltenham and Gloucester.

The bulk of UK police forces undertook considerable drug driving campaigns. Dorset caught a number of drug drivers during a summer drug driving campaign. The counties with the highest year on year increase after the drug driving law changes included Surrey, Thames Valley, Bedfordshire and Northamptonshire.

For all of Cheltenham, Gloucester and the Cotswolds reputation as a well heeled location it seems there is a darker side to Gloucestershire. Affluent inhabitants are a popular market for drug dealers. With a number of high profile arrests following a police crackdown it remains to be seen whether attacking the supply of drugs would cause a decline in drug driving convictions.

Whilst there is a weak correlation between an area's average household income and instances of drug driving conviction, there is a substantially stronger correlation between 19-37 year old Male unemployment and instances of drug driving.

South Wales and Gwent are hotspots on the map with Cardiff, Newport and Swansea being affected by drug driving. The influence of deindustrialisation and structural unemployment among young men may play a role in these areas problems due to increased frequency of risk taking behaviours.