

Personal injury claims in Scotland: a statistical review 2026

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Abstract

This report brings the most recent official statistics on personal injury claims, road casualties and workplace injuries in Scotland into a single reference. It draws on Scottish Government civil justice statistics, Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service releases, Transport Scotland road casualty data, Health and Safety Executive figures for Scotland, Compensation Recovery Unit data and National Records of Scotland population estimates. In 2022-23, the latest year with a full published breakdown, 8,474 personal injury actions were initiated in the Scottish civil courts, 64% of them arising from road traffic accidents. Police recorded 5,535 road casualties in 2025, including 134 deaths, and an estimated 40,000 workers a year sustain a non-fatal injury at work. The report adds derived measures, including court actions per 100,000 population and the ratio of court actions to recorded injuries, and sets out the limitations of each source.

Key findings

- **8,474** personal injury actions were initiated in the Scottish civil courts in 2022-23, up 12% on the year before [1].
- That is about **156 actions per 100,000 people**, or roughly 23 new actions every day (own calculation).
- **64%** of personal injury actions arose from road traffic accidents and 16% from accidents at work [1].
- **49%** of actions were raised in the national Sheriff Personal Injury Court, whose caseload has grown 40% since its first full year [1] [3].
- Police recorded **5,535** road casualties in 2025, including 134 deaths and 1,906 serious injuries (provisional) [8].
- Motorcyclists made up 10.5% of road casualties in 2025 but **25.4% of road deaths** (own calculation from [8]).
- An estimated **40,000** workers a year are injured at work in Scotland, and 26 workers were killed in 2024/25 [11].
- Scotland's worker fatal injury rate of 0.93 per 100,000 was **3 times the rate for England** in 2024/25 [12].
- There were roughly **96 road traffic court actions for every 100 police-recorded road casualties** (own calculation).

How many personal injury claims reach court in Scotland each year?

8,474 personal injury actions were initiated in the Scottish civil courts in 2022-23, the latest year with a full published breakdown [1]. That was 12% more than in 2021-22 and equal to about 23 new actions every day.

Apart from the pandemic year 2020-21, between 7,600 and 9,500 personal injury actions were initiated in each of the ten years to 2022-23 [1]. Personal injury accounted for 14% of all civil court cases in 2022-23, behind debt (50%) and family actions (18%) [1]. The 2022-23 total was 13% below the 9,766 actions recorded in 2009-10 [2].

Table 1. Personal injury actions initiated in Scottish civil courts, selected years

Financial year	Actions initiated	Source
2009-10	9,766	[2]
2010-11	9,099	[2]
2011-12	7,810	[2]
2012-13	8,693	[2]
2013-14	8,287	[2]
2014-15	9,210	[2]
2015-16	8,766	[2]
2016-17	8,378	[2]
2017-18	9,443	[2]
2018-19	9,146	[2]
2019-20	8,576	[3]
2022-23	8,474	[1]

Includes the Court of Session, sheriff courts and the Sheriff Personal Injury Court. The pandemic years 2020-21 and 2021-22 are not shown.

These figures count court actions only. A claim settled with an insurer before proceedings are raised never appears in court statistics, so the totals understate the number of claims made.

The Scottish Crime and Justice Survey 2021-22 found that 1% of adults had experienced a personal injury problem in the previous three years, and 2% a medical negligence issue [1].

What is the most recent position?

The Scottish Government has paused its civil justice bulletin, so 2022-23 remains the latest year with a full published breakdown [5]. The Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service (SCTS) now publishes a civil workbook, and reports that personal injury made up 9% of civil business in 2024/25 and 10.0% in 2025/26 to date [6] [7].

The SCTS percentages are calculated on a wider base that includes commissary (deceased estates) business, so they are not comparable with the 14% share in the Scottish Government series.

What types of accident lead to the most personal injury actions?

Road traffic accidents account for almost two thirds of personal injury actions in Scotland: 64% in 2022-23 [1]. Accidents at work are the second largest category, with 1,391 actions (16%).

Table 2. Personal injury actions initiated by case type, 2022-23

Case type	Actions	Share of total
Road traffic accident	about 5,400	64%
Accident at work	1,391	16.4%
Asbestos	427	5.0%
Clinical negligence	234	2.8%
Other	about 1,000	about 12%
Total	8,474	100%

Source: [1]. The road traffic count is derived from the published 64% share; the other row is the remainder. Shares for work, asbestos and clinical negligence are own calculations from published counts.

Accident at work actions fell by 166 in 2022-23 and were 25% lower than the 1,844 recorded in 2009-10 [1] [2]. Asbestos actions fell by 143 to 427, and clinical negligence actions fell 32%, from 343 to 234 [1].

Which courts hear personal injury cases in Scotland?

Almost half (49%) of personal injury actions in 2022-23 were raised in the national Sheriff Personal Injury Court in Edinburgh [1]. A further 23% were sheriff court ordinary cause actions, 22% were sheriff court summary cause actions and 6% were raised in the Court of Session.

Table 3. Where personal injury actions were raised

Court and procedure	2021-22	2022-23
Sheriff Personal Injury Court	44%	49%
Sheriff court, ordinary cause	26%	23%
Sheriff court, summary cause	18%	22%
Court of Session	12%	6%

Source: [1].

The Sheriff Personal Injury Court opened on 22 September 2015 with jurisdiction over the whole of Scotland. Actions valued up to £100,000 can be raised either in a local sheriff court or in the national court [4]. It received 4,129 new actions in 2022-23, 24% more than the year before and 40% more than in 2016-17, its first full year [1] [3].

Table 4. Actions initiated in the Sheriff Personal Injury Court

Financial year	Actions initiated	Source
2015-16 (from 22 September 2015)	1,143	[3]
2016-17	2,956	[3]
2017-18	3,282	[3]
2018-19	3,591	[3]
2019-20	3,220	[3]
2022-23	4,129	[1]

The specialist court is used most for workplace and disease claims: 88% of accident at work actions and 74% of asbestos actions were raised there in 2022-23 [1]. SCTS reports that 84% of the court's hearings took place virtually in 2025/26 to date, and that 26% of initiations in the year to date were submitted online after the Civil

Online portal was extended to the court in September 2025 [6].

How many people are injured on Scotland's roads each year?

Police recorded 5,535 road casualties in Scotland in 2025, including 134 deaths and 1,906 serious injuries, according to provisional figures [8]. That is about 15 casualties a day and 3% fewer than in 2024.

Table 5. Reported road casualties in Scotland by severity

Severity	2024	2025 (provisional)	Change
Killed	160	134	-16%
Seriously injured	1,978	1,906	-4%
Slightly injured	3,594	3,495	-3%
All casualties	5,732	5,535	-3%

Sources: [8] [9].

Measured against population, the 2025 total equals 99.8 casualties per 100,000 people, or about one person in every 1,000 (own calculation using [14]). Scotland's road death rate was a provisional 29 per million population in 2024 [9]; on the provisional 2025 figures it falls to about 24 per million (own calculation).

These statistics cover only collisions in which someone was injured and which were reported to the police. Damage-only collisions and unreported injuries are not included [8].

Which road users are most at risk?

Car users suffered the most casualties in 2025 (3,092), followed by pedestrians (867) and motorcyclists (581) [8]. Motorcyclists were 10.5% of all casualties but 25.4% of those killed.

Table 6. Road casualties and deaths by road user type, 2025 (provisional)

Road user	Casualties	Share of casualties	Deaths	Share of deaths
Car users	3,092	55.9%	59	44.0%
Pedestrians	867	15.7%	27	20.1%
Motorcyclists	581	10.5%	34	25.4%

Source: [8]. Shares are own calculations. Other road user groups are not shown, so columns do not sum to 100%.

Motorcycle casualties rose 24% in 2025 while car user casualties fell 9%. Pedestrian deaths fell from 42 to 27 and car user deaths from 73 to 59, but cyclist deaths rose from 3 to 7 [8].

Is Scotland on track to meet its 2030 road safety targets?

Not yet. By 2025 the number of people seriously injured was 30% below the baseline, against a 2030 target of a 50% reduction, and the number of children seriously injured was 33% lower against a target of 60% [8].

How many people are injured at work in Scotland each year?

An estimated 40,000 workers in Scotland sustain a non-fatal injury at work each year, based on the Labour Force Survey average for 2022/23 to 2024/25 [11]. Employers reported 5,686 non-fatal injuries to employees under RIDDOR in 2024/25, and 26 workers were killed.

Table 7. Workplace health and safety in Scotland: headline figures

Measure	Figure	Period and basis
Fatal injuries to workers	26	2024/25, RIDDOR
Non-fatal injuries to workers (self-reported)	40,000	2022/23 to 2024/25 average, Labour Force Survey
Non-fatal injuries to employees (employer-reported)	5,686	2024/25, RIDDOR
Workers with work-related ill health	122,000	2022/23 to 2024/25 average, Labour Force Survey
Working days lost to work-related ill health	3.3 million	2022/23 to 2024/25 average, Labour Force Survey
Annual cost of workplace injury and new ill health	£1.6 billion	2023/24, HSE Costs to Britain model

Source: [11].

The gap between the two injury counts is wide: there are about 7 self-reported injuries for every injury reported by an employer (own calculation). The measures differ in scope. RIDDOR covers only specified injuries and those causing more than seven days' absence, and applies to employees, while the survey estimate covers all workers and all injuries.

How does Scotland compare with the rest of Great Britain?

Scotland had the highest worker fatal injury rate in Great Britain in 2024/25, at 0.93 deaths per 100,000 workers, compared with 0.69 in Wales and 0.31 across England [12]. That is 3 times the English rate.

HSE cautions that regional differences are strongly affected by the mix of jobs in each area, and that Scotland has proportionally fewer workers in low-risk occupations than England [12]. Scotland's rate of work-related ill health, at 4,510 cases per 100,000 workers, was significantly lower than the Great Britain rate of 5,210 [12].

How do Scottish court actions compare with claims across Great Britain?

Across England, Scotland and Wales, 435,565 personal injury claims were registered with the Compensation Recovery Unit in 2025 to 2026 [13]. Motor claims made up 69% of them, compared with the 64% of Scottish court actions that arise from road traffic accidents.

Table 8. Claims registered with the Compensation Recovery Unit, Great Britain, 2025 to 2026

Liability type	Claims registered	Share of total
Motor	300,867	69%
Public	60,399	14%
Employer	46,791	11%
Clinical negligence	14,562	3%
Other and not known	12,946	3%
Total	435,565	100%

Source: [13]. Shares are own calculations.

The Compensation Recovery Unit recorded 475,878 settlements in the same year and recovered £173.0 million in benefits and lump sum payments [13]. Its published data are not broken down by nation, and they count

every claim notified by a compensator, whether or not court proceedings follow. They are therefore a different measure from the Scottish court series and the two should not be added together.

What do the combined figures show?

Combining the sources produces measures that none of them publishes on its own. The table below sets out each derived figure with the calculation behind it, so that it can be checked and reproduced.

Table 9. Derived measures (own calculations)

Measure	Result	Calculation	Inputs
Personal injury court actions per 100,000 population, 2022-23	156	$8,474 / 5.447 \text{ million} \times 100,000$	[1] [15]
Personal injury court actions per day, 2022-23	23.2	$8,474 / 365$	[1]
Road traffic court actions per 100 police-recorded road casualties	about 96	$\text{about } 5,400 \text{ actions (2022-23)} / 5,643 \text{ casualties (2022)} \times 100$	[1] [10]
Accident at work court actions per 100 self-reported workplace injuries	3.5	$1,391 / 40,000 \times 100$	[1] [11]
Self-reported workplace injuries per employer-reported injury	7.0	$40,000 / 5,686$	[11]
Scottish worker fatal injury rate relative to England, 2024/25	3.0 times	$0.93 / 0.31$	[12]
Road casualties per 100,000 population, 2025	99.8	$5,535 / 5.5455 \text{ million} \times 100,000$	[8] [14]
People killed or seriously injured on roads per day, 2025	5.6	$(134 + 1,906) / 365$	[8]
Road deaths per million population, 2025	24.2	$134 / 5.5455 \text{ million} \times 1,000,000$	[8] [14]
Motorcyclist share of road deaths relative to share of casualties, 2025	2.4 times	$25.4\% / 10.5\%$	[8]
Growth in Sheriff Personal Injury Court actions, 2016-17 to 2022-23	+40%	$(4,129 - 2,956) / 2,956$	[1] [3]
Change in accident at work court actions, 2009-10 to 2022-23	-25%	$(1,391 - 1,844) / 1,844$	[1] [2]

Two of these results stand out. First, someone was killed or seriously injured on Scotland's roads about once every 4.3 hours in 2025. Second, the number of road traffic court actions is close to the number of road casualties recorded by the police. The two series do not count the same people, and not every claim reaches court, so the comparison indicates that police records capture only part of the road injuries that lead to compensation claims.

Workplace injuries show the opposite pattern. There were only about 3.5 accident at work court actions for every 100 self-reported workplace injuries, which shows that a small minority of workplace injuries result in court proceedings.

How does the Scottish system differ from England and Wales?

Personal injury law in Scotland is separate from the law of England and Wales, with its own courts, procedures and legislation. Three differences matter most when comparing statistics across the border.

- **Time limit.** A personal injury action must generally be raised within three years under the Prescription and Limitation (Scotland) Act 1973 [16].
- **A national specialist court.** The Courts Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 raised the exclusive competence of the sheriff court to £100,000 and led to the creation of the all-Scotland Sheriff Personal Injury Court [17] [4].
- **No whiplash tariff.** The fixed tariff for whiplash injuries introduced by Part 1 of the Civil Liability Act 2018 applies in England and Wales only, so it does not affect claims arising from road traffic accidents in Scotland [18].

Methodology and limitations

This is a secondary analysis of published official statistics. No survey or modelling was carried out. Every figure is taken from the numbered source shown beside it, and every figure described as an own calculation can be reproduced from the inputs listed in Table 9.

- **Court statistics** count actions initiated, not claims made or people injured. Initiations and disposals do not necessarily refer to the same cases.
- **Latest court year.** The full Scottish Government breakdown ends at 2022-23 because the 2023-24 bulletin was paused [5].
- **Road casualty figures for 2025** are provisional and will be superseded by Reported Road Casualties Scotland 2025.
- **Workplace estimates** from the Labour Force Survey are three-year averages based on self-reports and are subject to sampling error.
- **Different periods.** Some derived measures combine a financial year with a calendar year or a three-year average. These are indicative ratios, not precise rates.
- **Rounding.** The road traffic action count is derived from a share published to the nearest whole per cent, so it is shown as an approximation.

The report will be reviewed at least once a year and whenever one of the underlying sources is updated.

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