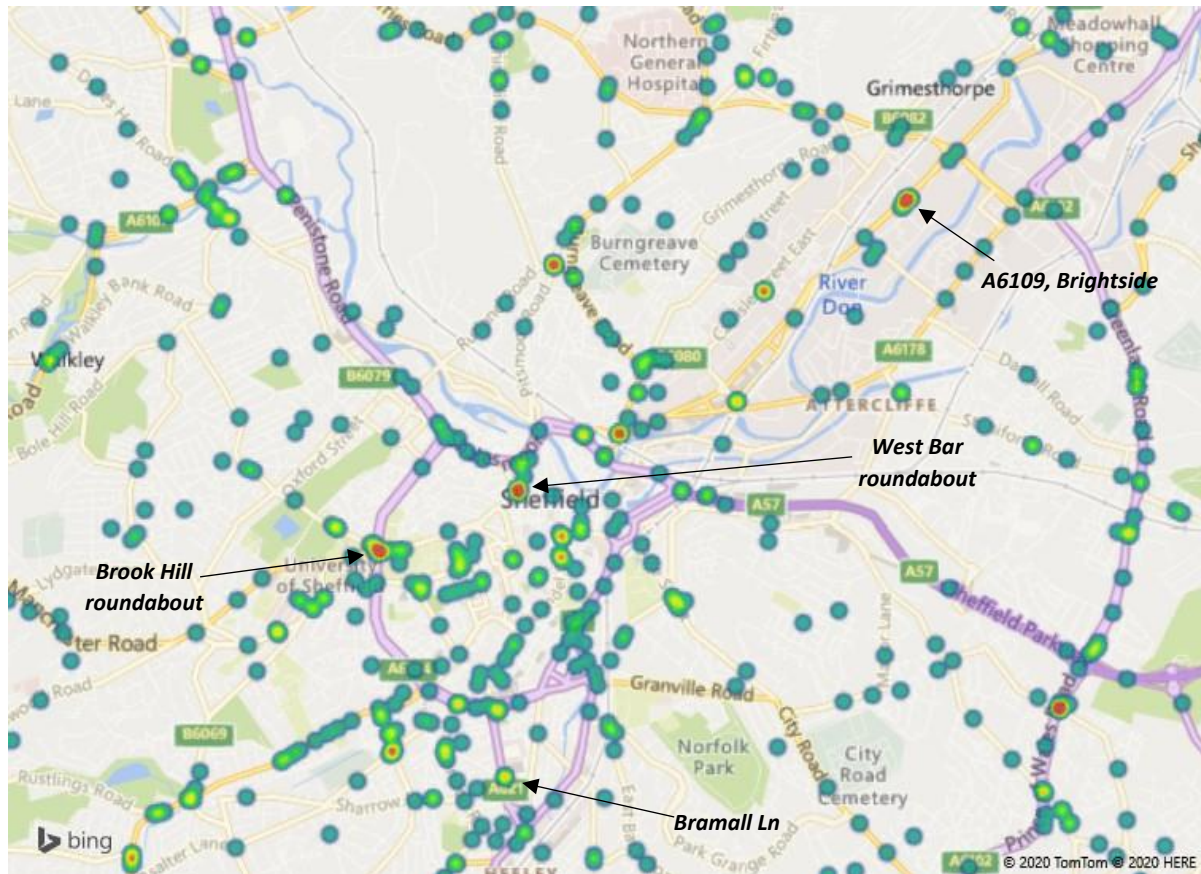


Sheffield's most dangerous accident hotspots: revealed

Data has revealed exactly which roads and junctions in Sheffield are more common for accidents.

Hotspots include the 'University' Brook Hill roundabout, a section of the A6109 in Brightside, and the West Bar roundabout near Sheffield Crown Court.

The data, supplied by the Department for Transport, looks at every road traffic accident reported to police during 2018 that resulted in personal injury or death.



Road traffic accidents in and around Sheffield represented by a heat map. Places with a relatively higher number of crashes are indicated by red. Areas of interest in this article are indicated with arrows.



Brook Hill roundabout (9 accidents in 2018)



A6109, Brightside (9 accidents)



West Bar roundabout (7 accidents)

Nigel Robson, Road Safety Manager for Sheffield City Council, said that the Brook Hill roundabout crops up as a hotspot every year but is not an immediate priority for engineering improvements.

He said: “I think [accidents here] are due to sheer weight of traffic. But we couldn’t afford the costs of engineering works.

“Plans have been drawn up and are ready to go, but an investment of tens of millions is outside our budget and would take years to pay off.”

One area that has been identified and improved recently is the 5-way junction between Woodhead Road and Bramall Lane, near Sheffield United’s stadium. The junction was confusing and has proved particularly hazardous for cyclists, with 3 accidents occurring there in 2018. Nigel said that the engineering improvements suggested were feasible and within budget.

“The problem was a turning manoeuvre in and out of Woodhead Road. The scheme has shut Woodhead Road to cars, preventing them turning onto Bramall Lane. Taking that turn out should solve the problem.”

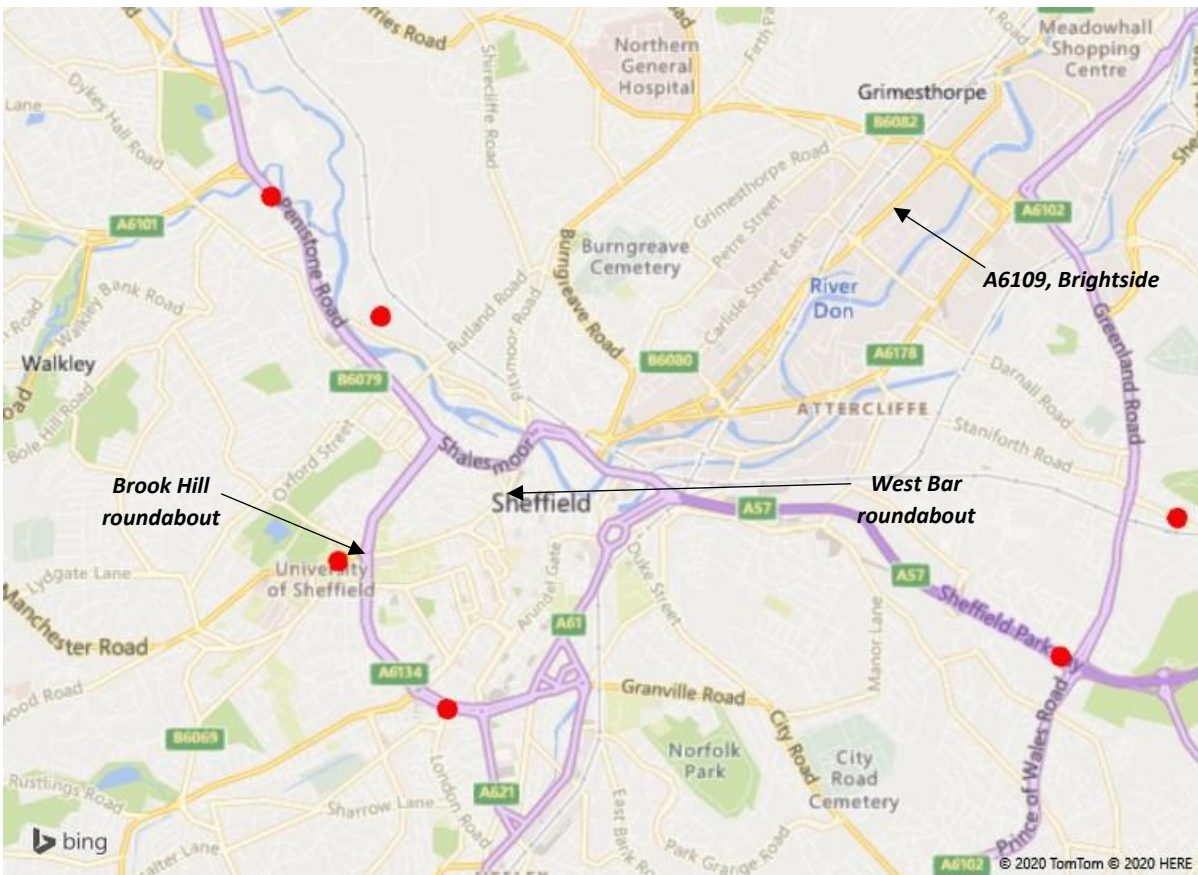


Woodhead Road – Bramall Lane junction; photo taken prior to recent engineering works

The aim of road safety work is to limit the number of fatalities and serious injuries in road accidents. This work is done in terms of the three E's – engineering, enforcement, and education.

The number of fatal road accidents near Sheffield city centre in 2018 was six – yet none of these were at notorious accident hotspots.

So if targeting accident blackspots with engineering works won't necessarily reduce the number of fatalities, what will?



Locations of fatal road accidents in and around Sheffield – indicated by red dots. Accident hotspots indicated with arrows.

Joanne Wehrle, manager of the South Yorkshire Safer Roads Partnership, believes that road safety education can be a cost-effective solution to reducing fatalities when compared with costly engineering works.

The Safer Roads Partnership makes visits across the county, delivering road safety messages and tailored programmes for all ages.

Joanne said: “For each school year group, we add on a message and make it relevant to what children will be doing at that age.

“We also use the Lifewise Centre in Rotherham – which has simulations of roadsides, courtrooms and prison cells - to further educate communities about road safety issues such as dangerous driving.”

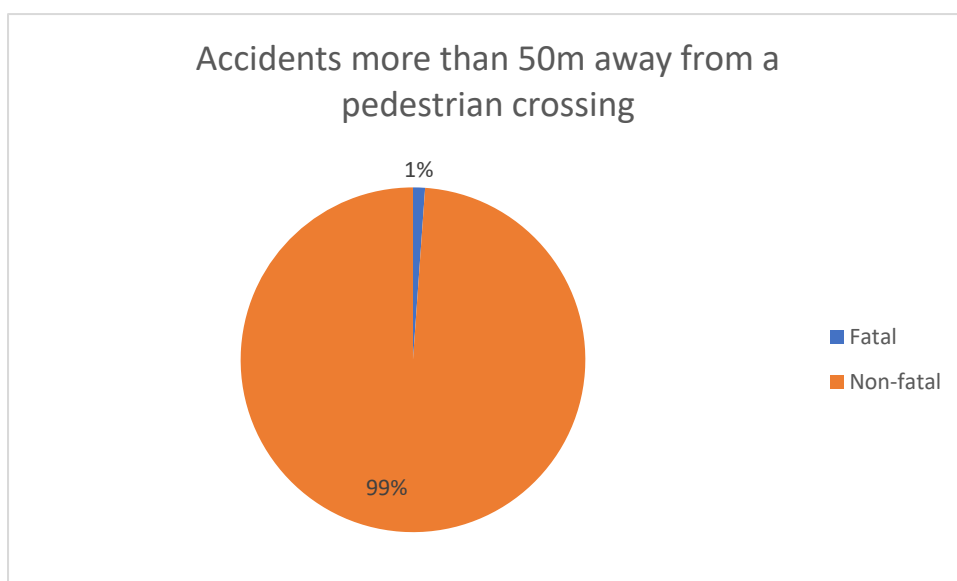
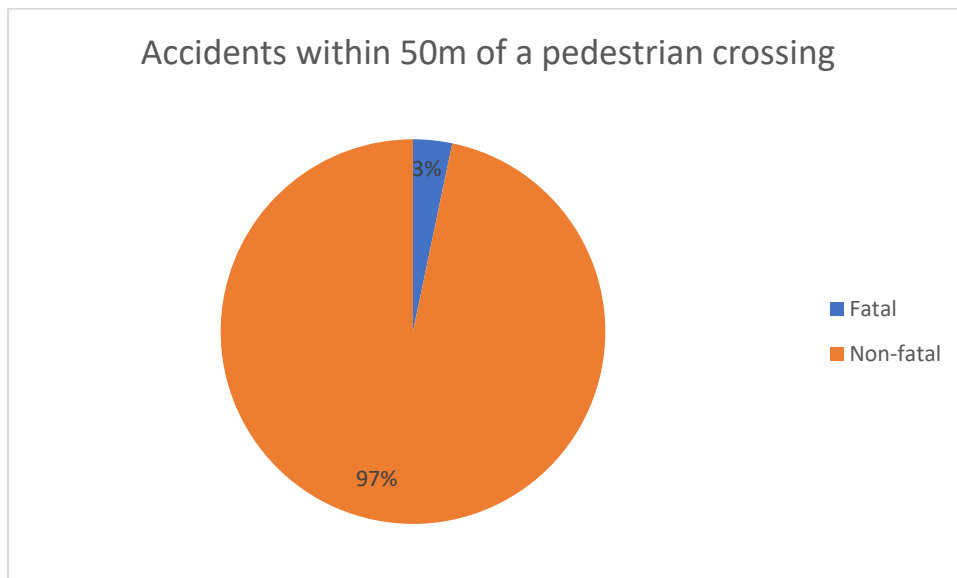
The partnership uses details of past accidents to target their messages at schools and communities where they believe it will have the biggest effect. But getting the message of road safety across can be hit and miss.

Joanne said: “We can catch the attention of our captive audience. But the people who I really need to get on board are hardest to reach. Children not in education, people operating on a criminal basis and not using the roads properly, audiences that simply aren’t coming to us.”

Brent Sharp, the Monitoring and Evaluation Manager for SRP, says that road safety needs to focus more on pedestrians and cyclists.

“High volumes of people and traffic, which happens at the Brook Hill roundabout, aren’t a good mix. Keeping people away from cars is the best way to avoid collisions.”

The Department for Transport’s data confirms this – fatalities are rare, but accidents close to pedestrian crossings are more likely to be fatal.



The issue is that pedestrianisation and cycling are seen as the future, with the government recently announcing a £2billion investment package in this regard.

Joanne said: “Reducing short car journeys in the city in favour of cycle and walk trips will help deliver against a number of important agendas: reducing congestion whilst improving air quality, public health, social inclusion and accessibility.”

But for cycling to prosper whilst cars remain on the roads, education remains the priority.

Brent added: “The nominal amount that’s been proposed is way short of what’s needed in order to get a safe cycling infrastructure built.

“Until we get to a point where everybody expects there to be cyclists every time they drive, cyclists will continue to be involved in accidents.”