

Injury Trends 1999/2000 – 2005/2006 – Impact and Consequences?

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1. Advising the Local Government Panel (LGP) of the trends in injury rates over the last few years and seeking an exchange of views on the impact and possible consequences of the figures.



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2. That LGP members provide a view on the latest injury figures, the trends over that last few years and consider how those trends should influence priorities.

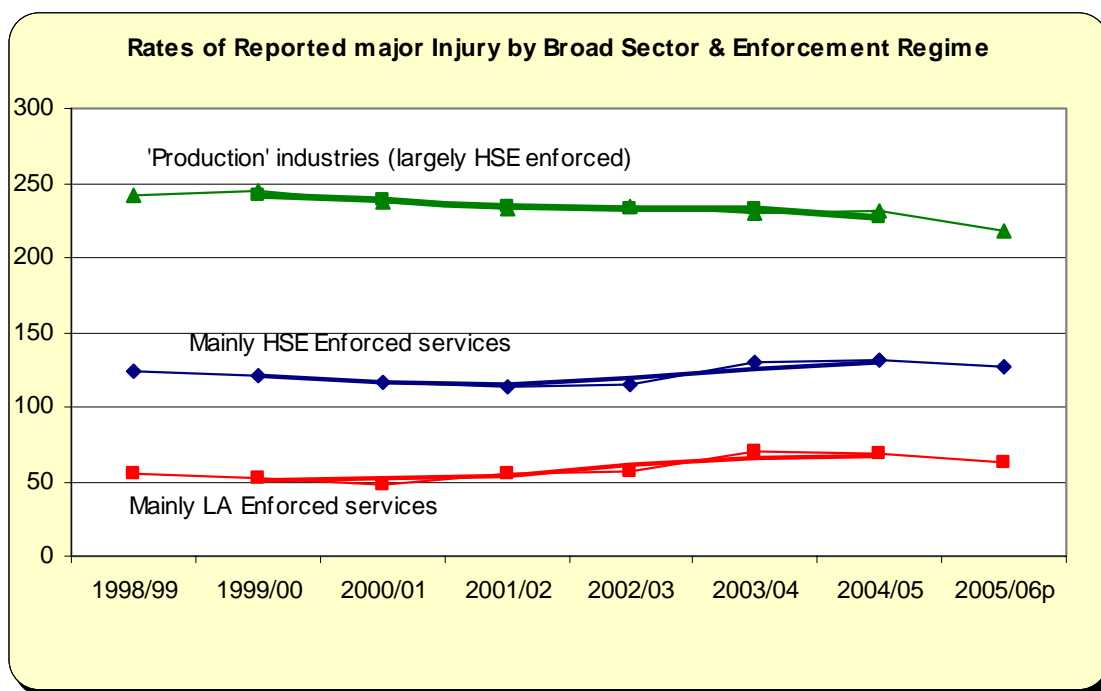


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3. The statistics for 2005/06 were published on 2 November (see <http://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/index.htm>). This year's statistics are good, especially towards the overall achievement of targets in relation to ill-health and days lost. The ill-health incidence rate has reduced by between 17% and 33% since 2001/02 and the working days lost incidence rate has fallen between 15% and 35% over the same period. However the picture in relation to injuries is mixed.
4. In the last two years fatal and major injuries have reduced sufficient to suggest we are on target to meet PSA (3% over three years to 2008), but they are not on track to meet the RHS target of 10% by 2010. In some industries, notably construction, injury numbers and rates have reduced significantly, and injuries arising from falls from height are also on target. The results for production¹ and service industries in the most recent statistics are also more encouraging, with both showing a reduction since 2004/05.
5. However, within the detail and encouraging trends of the last year, there remain some areas of concern. The rate of fatal and major injuries reported under RIDDOR fell by 6.8% in 2005/06, compared to 2004/05. However, the rate shows no clear trend since 1999/2000. There have been reductions in the rates for the last two years of published data, but it is too soon to say if this translates into a longer-term trend.
6. Most HSE enforced major industry sectors saw falls in the rates of fatal and major injuries reported, except for public services. Although the rate dropped in waste and recycling, the worrying upward trend observed in the last five years continues, and the rate for recycling alone rose by 10% in 2005/06. The fatal and major injury rate in waste and recycling now exceeds 900 per 100,000 employees, and, although the industry is relatively small, the exponential growth as a result of a greater emphasis on recycling could mean that, left unchecked, this trend would negate improvements achieved in any other area.

¹ Production includes Construction, Agriculture, Utilities, Extraction and Manufacturing

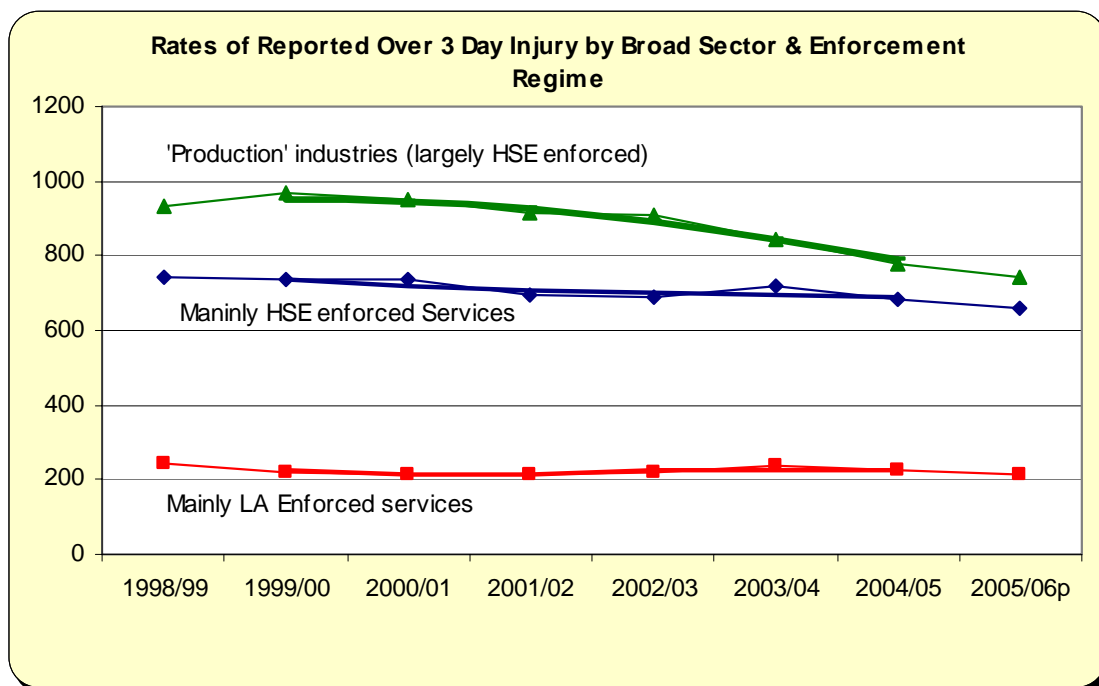
7. LA enforced major industries displayed a mixed picture, with hotels and catering, business and finance, and retail and wholesale distribution showing significant (>15%) increases in major injury rates over 3 year averages.
8. Injuries resulting from slips and trips are also worryingly resistant to change across all industries. Fatal & major injuries from slips and trips remained flat between 2004/05 and 2005/06. Since 2001/02 there has been an increase of 6.5%. There have been improvements in hotel and catering and industrial cleaning, but these are offset by increasing numbers elsewhere, notably public administration and education.
9. In addition, the underlying upward trend for all services, when averaged over 3 years since the RHS baseline (1999/2000), continues.
10. If broad general blocks in relation to Production (mainly HSE enforced), HSE Enforced Services and LA Enforced Services are examined since 1999/2000 then the following picture for major injuries emerges:



From this graph the following percentage changes in the rates of major injury have been calculated:

Majors changes:					
	Annual 1999/2000 to 2005/06p		3-year average 1999/2000 to 2004/05		
Production	-11.3%		-6.1%		
HSE Services	4.5%		7.6%		
LA Services	20.5%		30.0%		

11. If a similar analysis is undertaken for over 3 day injuries then the following picture emerges:



From this graph the following percentage changes in the rates of over 3 day injury have been calculated:

	Over-3-day changes				
	Annual 1999/2000 to 2005/06p	3-year average 1999/2000 to 2004/05			
Production	-23.4%	-17.0%			
HSE Services	-11.2%	-6.6%			
LA Services	-11.4%	0.3%			

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12. Clearly these findings need to be considered in the light of the continuing changes that have occurred in the LA and HSE enforced industries over the past few years, especially:

- the demographic changes in employment and the growth in numbers working (HSE enforced services employ ca 8.3m; LA ca 13.0m; Production ca 4.6m),
- the technical changes occurring,
- the increase in new businesses, and
- the contracting out of higher risk work by conventional production industries to the service sectors.

13. In addition, the absolute rates of injury in both Production and HSE enforced services remain significantly above the rate in LA enforced services – i.e. the HSE enforced sectors remain higher risk.

14. Notwithstanding these factors, the overall 3 year average trend in the rate of major injury in LA enforced services remains significantly above the trends in both HSE enforced areas and no one factor appears to fully explain the reasons for this difference.
15. The apparent contradictory trends for major and over 3 day injuries (upward for major and down for o3d) also suggest changes to the overall pattern of injuries across industry. Previous work to examine the (so called) accident triangles has suggested various reasons for changes like these – not least changes to rates of reporting or awareness amongst duty holders, and more emphasis on managing absences (resulting in minor injuries with less than three day absences). Injuries Reduction Programme has sponsored further research in this area.

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16. LGP members are invited to consider the overall picture presented by these statistics and offer a view as to whether or how the overall approach to reducing injuries in the LA enforced sector should change.

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