

The benefits of 20mph evidence



Right place,
right pace

Slower speeds are a key part of our goal to create Healthy Streets.

Reducing vehicle speeds where people live benefits everyone. Those walking, cycling or just spending time in their local communities find that streets feel safer, calmer and more welcoming. People in motor vehicles benefit from fewer collisions and more reliable journey times. Evidence from 20mph schemes around the UK, including Wales, London, Oxfordshire, Cornwall and Scotland demonstrate these benefits in improving road safety, supporting active travel and creating more liveable places.

Reduced Traffic Speeds

20mph limits have been shown to reduce average vehicle speeds by up to 3.8mph, helping to create safer streets for all road users.



In Wales 18 months after 20mph limits introduced vehicle speeds fell by an average of 3.8mph.

Safer Streets

20mph limits are linked to fewer serious casualties. In London, they were associated with a 34% reduction in people killed or seriously injured, while Wales recorded around 100 fewer serious casualties.



A pedestrian hit at 30mph is over five times more likely to be killed than at 20mph.

Encourage Walking & Cycling

Lower speed limits can help create streets where people feel safer walking, wheeling and cycling. Evidence from Wales found increased levels of walking and cycling following the introduction of 20mph limits, including a greater increase in children travelling actively to school in 20mph areas than in comparable 30mph areas.



Bristol saw an increase of between 10-26% in people walking.

No Adverse Impact on Air Pollution

20mph limits can support cleaner air by encouraging smoother driving and more active travel. While air quality impacts vary by location, studies have found no overall negative effect on emissions and potential benefits for healthier communities.



20mph zones do not appear to worsen air quality and they dramatically reduce road danger.

Reduced Noise, Quieter Streets

Research shows that lower vehicle speeds can reduce traffic noise by 2 to 4 decibels, helping to create quieter, more pleasant neighbourhoods for people living, walking and cycling nearby.



Study of 40 cities in Europe found that 20mph speed limits reduced noise levels by an average of 2.5 decibels.

Journey Times

Impact on car journey times is minimal with no significant changes to bus journey times.



The evidence from Wales shows journey times have increased by 2 minutes or less, while journey time reliability has improved.

Congestion/Traffic flow

Research indicates that slower speeds encourage a smoother driving style with less stopping and starting which helps traffic to flow.



Steer Davies Gleave report found that there is a reduction in traffic volumes of 5.2 % for 20mph.

Children are Safer

Reduced traffic speeds increases safety for everyone, especially children.



Introduction of 20mph zones in London was associated with 41.9% reduction in road casualties, and a greater percentage reduction in younger children.

Quality of Life and Community Spaces

Most people support 20mph limits where they live. In Hertfordshire a YouGov survey support found 58% support where people live.



Research from Bristol showed that sense of belonging and social interactions increased after 20mph limit introduction. Pilkington, P. et al., 2018.



*This infographic uses statistics from research into 20mph limits and 20mph zones by TfL, DfT, independent academics, city councils and transport consultancies