

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) - Examples

Listed below are a set of 20mph FAQs which could be used to aid briefings with Members and, could be passed on to Local Authority contact centres to inform their communications with external parties.

- **Why do you want to introduce a 20mph speed limit on restricted roads* across Wales?**

** A 'restricted road' is defined in Section 82 (1) (a) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 as a road with a system of street lighting furnished by means of lamps placed not more than 200 yards (183m) apart. On rare occasions it can also be restricted without street lighting (Section 82 (2) (b))*

Introducing a 20mph speed limit on restricted roads in Wales aligns with the goals of the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#) and will therefore:

- reduce the risk and severity of injuries as a result of collisions between vehicles and vulnerable road users
- encourage more people to cycle and walk
- make Wales more attractive for our communities
- bring physical and mental health benefits
- reduce noise

The ['Welsh 20mph Task Force Group Final Report'](#) published in July 2020 sets out the full case for change.

- **Will this affect all roads that are currently 30mph?**

The change in legislation will only affect 'restricted roads'. They are typically located in residential and built-up areas of high pedestrian activity in Wales. We are working closely with Local and Highway Authorities to identify potential roads which should remain at 30mph.

- **How are roads which should remain at 30mph being identified?**

Transport for Wales have developed a set of draft maps to illustrate where exception roads (30mph) may be appropriate on the classified road network. We recognise that there may be some unclassified roads which Highway Authorities may wish to retain a 30mph speed limit. For consistency we recommend that exceptions are not allowed for roads:

1. Within 100m walk of any educational setting (e.g. primary, secondary, further education and higher education)
2. Within 100m walk of any community centre
3. Within 100m walk of any hospital
4. Where the number of residential and/or retail premises fronting a road exceeds a defined density (20 properties per km equivalent)

We are now working closely with Highway Authorities to review these maps and finalise the list of proposed roads which should remain at 30mph, on a county-by-county basis. These will be subject to the statutory Traffic Regulation Order or TRO process to retain the 30mph limit, should the legislation in the Senedd pass.

- **When are you planning to introduce the 20mph Default Speed Limits?**

The first phase of introducing a 20mph speed limit is currently taking place in eight settlement areas across Wales. These started in June 2021. St. Dogmaels in Pembrokeshire, St. Brides Major in the Vale of Glamorgan and Llanelli North in Carmarthenshire are already live. The remaining first phase settlements will be live in by the end of March 2022. An up-to-date list of live sites can be obtained from Transport for Wales.

The current ambition is to lay the statutory instrument to change the default speed limit to 20mph before the Senedd in June 2022. Should it pass, the legislation will come into force in the summer/early autumn of 2023. The default speed limit on all restricted roads in Wales will then change to 20mph.

- **How are you making people aware of the changes?**

We are carrying out local information campaigns in the first phase settlement areas and working with communities, schools, the Police and GoSafe to highlight the changes and the potential benefits. If the legislation is passed, there will be a National communication and marketing campaign to raise awareness in advance of the full rollout across Wales in 2023.

- **Will the Police enforce the proposed 20mph speed limit?**

Non-compliance with speed limits remains a criminal offence and we have been working closely with the Police and GoSafe to develop an Enforcement Strategy which we believe makes our roads safe for all users. We are trialling enforcement in the first phase settlements ahead of the proposed National Rollout.

- **Could reducing the speed limit cause congestion?**

We do not believe that a 20mph speed limit will increase the number of vehicles driving on the road, so there is no reason why congestion should increase. Potentially, traffic will flow more smoothly with less stopping and starting.

- **How will a lower speed limit promote walking and cycling?**

Lower speeds mean that people feel more comfortable to walk and cycle and it is safer for children to walk to school. Older people or people should also feel more able to travel independently and safely. There is a very large body of evidence¹ from across

¹ [Children's Independent Mobility: an international comparison and recommendations for action : WestminsterResearch](#)

the world and the UK that high vehicle speeds and traffic are the main reason why people do not walk or cycle to places, or do not allow their children to walk or cycle to school.

- **Could the new 20mph limit lead to more pollution?**

There is little evidence to suggest that reducing vehicle speeds to 20mph makes any difference to pollution. It is not as straightforward as more time driving equals more pollution. According to [AA for example](#), driving styles, acceleration, braking, vehicle condition, the distance travelled and engine temperature all play a part in the levels of pollutants being produced. With more trips being made on foot or cycle and less by car there will be an improvement in air quality.²

- **Will a reduced speed limit actually improve safety?**

The World Health Organisation states that the most effective way to improve pedestrian safety is to reduce the speed of vehicles. 50% of casualties on our roads in 2018, occurred on 30mph roads. The [Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents \(RoSPA\)](#) states that 45% of pedestrians get killed when struck by a car going at 30mph or less but only 5% do when going at 20mph or less.

- **What data is being collected as part of the first phase of the 20mph rollout?**

Collecting traffic speed data will be an integral part of the evaluation process. Monitors are going to be put in place in some of the settlement areas during the first phase to measure and capture information on air quality, as well as how drivers and pedestrians interact with each other when speeds are lower.

School pupils and parents will also be surveyed to determine if the 20mph has made any difference to their travel habits, when going to and from school, and their social activities.

The data collected will provide useful research which will be of benefit to other Local and Highway Authorities and possibly influence decision-making at a UK level.

The National Travel Attitudes Survey (NTAS) found that 66% of adults over the age of 18 agreed that "it is too dangerous for me to cycle on the roads". The figure was even higher for women, at 71% ([walking-and-cycling-statistics-2019 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#));

[Why do people choose not to cycle? | Share The Road](#)

[Campaign launched to make 30 km/h streets the norm for cities worldwide \(who.int\)](#)

[Full article: What aspects of traffic intensity most influence cycling mode choice? A study of commuting in Surrey, UK \(tandfonline.com\)](#)

² See for example: [Skyrad – Transport Innovation Research](#)

- **Isn't 20mph around schools enough?**

No. This doesn't encourage children to walk or cycle to school because it only gives them added protection in the vicinity of the school, where they already have greater safety from what's called the 'critical mass effect' or often referred to as 'safety in numbers'. 80% of child casualties are on non-school trips³ so by introducing a default 20mph speed limit, children are safer from the moment they leave their homes. In addition, a local, area-wide 20mph limit will help everyone to get out and about more easily within their communities.

- **There are already problems achieving compliance with 30mph. How do you expect to achieve compliance with 20mph?**

We do not expect change to happen overnight. The new default speed limit will need some time to bed in. The Communication and Marketing Campaign by the Welsh Government will be targeted at capturing the 'hearts and minds' of people and lead to behaviour change. This will help Wales reach its decarbonisation targets by 2050.

The Programme will be supported by the Police and GoSafe through enforcement, where appropriate. We do not propose introducing speed humps etc as was the case in the past unless we have to, and that will be because other measures have not managed to reduce speeds down to where they should be.

Any reduction in speed should be seen as a positive outcome and the scheme should not be judged if there isn't full compliance with 20mph within the first months (or even years). Not all motorists comply with speed limits now whether that's 30mph, 40mph or even 70mph on dual carriageways and motorways.

- **Why can't the 20mph limit be set up as timed limits (illuminated speed limit signs showing 20) during school hours only?**

The change in the default speed limit is a more fundamental change designed to encourage everyone to choose active travel and public transport whenever possible. It is about making communities safer and better places to live. Using illuminated time limited speed limits around schools would not encourage children to walk or cycle to school because it only gives them added protection in the vicinity of the school, where they already have greater safety from what's called the 'critical mass effect' or often referred to as 'safety in numbers'. 80% of child casualties are on non-school trips. By introducing a default 20mph speed limit, children are safer from the moment they leave their homes. In addition, a local, area-wide 20mph limit will help everyone to get out and about more easily within their communities.

- **If the 20mph speed limit is being introduced to increase safety, why is there no scheme to resolve the parking issues outside all schools? E.g. Cars parked on and blocking pavements causing issues for pedestrians.**

Most parking issues can be dealt with by the local authority, so you should raise your concerns with them. WG are looking into giving local authorities further powers to

³ [The Facts About Road Accidents and Children \(theaa.com\)](https://theaa.com)

prevent obstruction of the footway (pavement parking), which is currently a criminal offence and should be reported to the police on the non-emergency number 101.

- **Will the 20mph roll out include rural villages?**

It depends. The change in legislation will affect 'restricted roads'. They are typically located in residential and built-up areas of high pedestrian activity in Wales. We are working closely with Local and Highway Authorities to identify potential roads which should remain at 30mph. The Welsh Government is also currently updating Guidance on Setting Local Speed Limits, which could affect speed limits in villages in the future

- **Will the roll out involve money being spent on speed humps? (Concern about speed humps damaging cars / not helping to bring the speed down).**

No. There is no additional traffic calming (includes speed bumps) proposed to be implemented as part of the change to speed limits in these areas. There is no proposal to roll out any speed humps as part of the 20-mph national default speed limit. However, in certain instances a highway authority may consider using traffic calming measures as a last resort.

- **Reducing speeds to 20mph damages my car gear box**

This is incorrect. Most modern cars are perfectly capable of being driven at speeds of 20mph without incurring any damage to any of the engine or drivetrain components. Default 20mph or 30km/h limits have been used in communities since the early 1990s and there have been no reported problems with gearbox issues. Of course, using too low a gear at any speed may well increase wear on gearboxes, but as long as an appropriate gear is selected then drivers can be assured that no harm will come to their vehicle gearboxes. Driving smoothly is always good for emissions and fuel consumption and it is anticipated that driving at a steady 20mph rather than repeated acceleration up to 30mph will help prolong engine and gearbox life, as well as being good for the environment.