

# 20mph limits: Best Public Health & Equalities Policy Option says Social Science Expert Prof Danny Dorling

A 20's Plenty for Us Press Release Jan 2014

[www.20splentyforus.org.uk/Press\\_Releases/20mph\\_Reduces\\_Health\\_Inequalities\\_DD\\_PR.pdf](http://www.20splentyforus.org.uk/Press_Releases/20mph_Reduces_Health_Inequalities_DD_PR.pdf)

20's Plenty



Where People Live

The British Academy have a published policy advice collection in which Prof Danny Dorling clearly lays out the evidence for wide 20mph limits as his top policy to tackle health inequalities. *“If you could do one thing...” Nine local actions to reduce health inequalities.* is a guide for Local Authorities by leading Social Science academics.

The British Academy is the UK's national institution for the humanities and social sciences. In its opinion pieces collection experts have drawn on evidence to identify one policy that local authorities should introduce to raise health and reduce inequalities. It was released on 16<sup>th</sup> January [http://www.britac.ac.uk/policy/Health\\_Inequalities.cfm](http://www.britac.ac.uk/policy/Health_Inequalities.cfm)

Professor Danny Dorling is Halford Mackinder Professor of the School of Geography and the Environment at the University of Oxford. He is a widely published and highly respected expert with a special interest in differential life expectancy between socio-economic groups. Prof Dorling said

*“I was asked to provide the evidence base for a single workable policy to reduce inequalities in health and improve public health in general. There is now a mountain of evidence to show that reducing car speeds with 20mph limits does this in a way that is far more directly obvious than any other single health policy. The health effects range from reduction in fatalities and serious casualties of road traffic crashes at speed, right through to the encouragement of more healthy walking and cycling when people are less afraid of fast cars driving through their neighbourhoods. The cost is minimal and the benefits are enormous.”*

Dorling's report highlights that, for 5 – 25 year olds, road casualty is the most likely cause of death, injuries are more likely to affect poorer people and there are enormous benefits from 20mph limits in promoting active lifestyles.

Welcoming Dorling's work, Rod King MBE, Founder of 20's Plenty for Us, the National 20mph limits campaign said

*“It seems that not a month goes by without an endorsement of 20mph limits from a respected organisation. There is a realisation across the country that the streets form the majority of our public realm. We have populated these public spaces with so many vehicles that the 80 year old national speed limit of 30mph is no longer fit for purpose for our built-up areas. This report from Professor Dorling adds even greater weight to our campaign for a change in national policy towards 20mph being the default limit with higher speeds only allowed where considered and balanced decisions can be made that fully take into account the needs of all road users.”*

The Public health benefits of wide area 20mph limits are increasingly recognised, particularly for active travel to raise fitness levels and lower obesity. Early deaths from inactivity hugely outnumber road fatalities by at least 12 to one. Mr King will run a workshop on 20mph limits at a Public Health England/NICE/LGA conference on 28<sup>th</sup> January. See <https://www.phe-events.org.uk/hpa/frontend/reg/thome.csp?pageID=113157&eventID=271&eventID=271>

The [‘Time for 20’](http://tinyurl.com/BookTime420) conference on 18<sup>th</sup> February 2014 in Camden recognises that the UK is transitioning to a national limit of 20mph for roads in built up areas. Almost 13m people live in authorities with this policy. 20's Plenty for Us is calling on the DfT to allow signing exceptions to 20mph. Updating signage rules would halve implementation costs. **Public Health professionals, Local Authority representatives, Transport Officers, Police and others can book into Time for 20 via <http://tinyurl.com/BookTime420>**

20's Plenty For Us campaigns for a 20mph default speed limit in residential streets without physical calming.

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