

# Public Health Professionals Call for 20mph limits

A 20's Plenty for Us Briefing May 2014 [www.20splentyforum.org.uk/BriefingSheets/PH\\_Profs\\_Call\\_for\\_20.pdf](http://www.20splentyforum.org.uk/BriefingSheets/PH_Profs_Call_for_20.pdf)

20's Plenty



Where People Live

**Public Health leaders are increasingly identifying wide-area 20mph limits as key for liveability & health equality. Speed reduction tackles risk, inactivity, obesity, isolation & is child, disability, elderly & dementia friendly.**

The Royal College of Paediatrics & Child Health & National Children's Bureau advocate Total 20 in built up areas<sup>1</sup>. Their *Why Children Die* research, led by **Dr Ingrid Wolfe** found around 2,000 additional children per year – 5 a day – die in the UK compared to Sweden. Over three quarters of injury deaths in 10-18 year olds are due to traffic incidents. Reducing the national speed limit in built up areas to 20mph is a key recommendation for child protection to cut the source of daily road risk. More than 80% of child road casualties occur on 30mph limited streets.

As well as these direct safety gains, 20 mph limits promote health & wellbeing in many other ways:

- By encouraging a shift to walking & which reduces obesity & heart disease
- Lower emissions promote healthier lungs
- Increased mobility for children & the disabled, elderly or dementia sufferers delivers gains in health & self esteem
- Better inclusion & access to society for non-car owners & greater equality for the poor
- Up to 50% reduction in noise from road traffic
- Less congestion from 'school run' & other trips as people choose to move from car-based journey to more active ones by walking & cycling.
- Increased social cohesion & less loneliness as people talk to each other far more on less traffic dominated streets.

Birmingham's Director of Public Health **Dr Adrian Phillips** said "*We talk a lot about obesity & the need for people to be more physically active but we have to take action to make that easier. It's vital that people feel safe on the roads. Creating safer, more attractive walking & cycling routes through reducing the speed limit to 20 mph will significantly increase numbers of walkers & cyclists & contribute towards a mode shift away from cars to active travel. Removing barriers to walking & cycling will reduce health inequalities & provide a foundation for the citywide promotion of active travel through smarter choices initiatives.*"<sup>2</sup>

20mph limits is the top evidenced based policy to raise regular exercise levels according to a Public Health England & LGA report. In "*Obesity & the environment: increasing physical activity & active travel*"<sup>3</sup> **Dr Nick Cavill & Professor Harry Rutter** recommend 20mph as the best way to improve exercise by raising walking & cycling levels.

**Prof Danny Dorling**, from Oxford University is author of a 20mph chapter in the British Academy's health inequality collection<sup>4</sup> He said "*I was asked to provide the evidence base for a single workable policy to reduce inequalities in public health. Reducing car speeds does this in a way that is far more directly obvious than any other single health policy. The effects range from reduction in casualties, right through to the encouragement of more healthy walking & cycling when people are less afraid of fast cars in their neighbourhoods. The cost is minimal & the benefits are enormous.*"

All Take Action on Active Travel<sup>5</sup> report partners including the **Association of Directors of Public Health, Faculty of Public Health & UK Public Health Association** want 10% of transport budgets allocated to active travel & 20mph speed limits in towns & villages. "*Make 20mph or lower speed limits the norm for residential streets & those used by shoppers, tourists & others, close to schools or public buildings, or important for walking & cycling or children's play. In urban areas only the busiest strategic traffic routes should now qualify for higher speed limits.*"

And in **Liverpool City Council, Manchester City Council, Calderdale Council & Lancashire Council** the community benefits are seen as so important that Public Health teams have supported implementations of wide-area 20mph limits with direct funding. **Healthy roads have slower speeds. Write to your Local Health Cabinet Councillor & Public Health lead today to work towards 20mph with transport colleagues.**

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.rcpch.ac.uk/system/files/protected/page/WhyChildrenDieFINAL.pdf> 1 May 2014

<sup>2</sup> <http://birminghamnewsroom.com/2014/04/health-boss-welcomes-20mph-limit/> 30 April 2014

<sup>3</sup> PHE <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/obesity-and-the-environment-briefing-increasing-physical-activity-and-active-travel> Nov 2013

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.britac.ac.uk/policy/Health\\_Inequalities.cfm](http://www.britac.ac.uk/policy/Health_Inequalities.cfm) "If you could do one thing..." guide for Local Authorities 16 Jan 2014

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.fph.org.uk/uploads/Take\\_action\\_on\\_active\\_travel.pdf](http://www.fph.org.uk/uploads/Take_action_on_active_travel.pdf) Sustrans 2008

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

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