

Older People Deserve 20mph Limits

A 20's Plenty for Us Briefing March 2014 www.20splentyforus.org.uk/briefingsheets/older_people_deserve_20mph.pdf

Does your Local Authority value older people? Vulnerability due to slow to heal injuries, delayed reactions, slower movements, instability and eye problems mean that older people gain a lot from 20mph limits.



Crashes are *very much* more serious with age. 60+ year olds hit at 30mph face a 47% fatality risk compared to 7% for others and it is 10 times more likely cause their death than 20mph¹. Trials prove that skeletal and physiological resilience decline with age, reducing ability to withstand traumatic events². A fall, broken hip and operation means extended, painful rehabilitation with intensive support. Any impairment makes avoiding hazards harder. Older people need, on average 20% longer to cross a road³ and are at risk of falls if unstable. When using a walking aid (e.g. stick, shopping trolley, wheelchair or mobility scooter) negotiating kerbs takes even longer. Plus, the visual skill to accurately judge traffic speed declines with age. In 20mph limits everyone has more time to avoid a crash. There are 20% fewer injuries.

With so much to gain, older people are well placed to campaign for safer speeds - not just for themselves but for younger generations too. Look outside. How fast is the traffic by local shops? Perhaps 30mph (or more) seems normal? We've grown up with it. Yet the UK's 30mph limit is 60% higher than the 30km/ph (18.6mph) common in Northern Europe. 12.6m Britons live in Authorities choosing 20mph instead. Wide area, signed 20mph limits (without humps) are key to safety and raising exercise. They reduce traffic noise and lead to slower, smoother driving styles helping pollution to fall.

Can you cross roads easily or does fast traffic feel intimidating? Speed becomes greed when it stops people from using local streets. The old, disabled and children are most at risk. If you drive perhaps you've thought forward to when it will no longer be sensible? When sight or other faculties deteriorate? We must create streets where everyone can stay mobile including the fastest growing demographic, the elderly. Walking is the glue of any transport system - keeping people connected, not lonely. Dementia friendly places need slower speeds. Prof Danny Dorling chose 20mph as his key policy on health inequality for the [British Academy](http://www.britishecademy.org.uk/)⁴ as poorer households gain.

Children today have record low activity levels and frighteningly high weights with one in four of London's 12 year olds obese. Older people's health is affected by insufficient exercise too; which increases dependency on hard pressed welfare services. Slower speeds encourage walking and cycling.

Grandparents can fight for their family's interests when busy parents cannot. Give a lasting legacy simply by asking Local Councillors for 20mph signs. The Women's Institute in Middleton-cum-Fordley, Suffolk did and won. 20's Plenty for Us supports 225+ branches. Contact us today. We're free to join. Every generation, but especially older people deserve quality streets! At £3 per head 20mph limits are worth it.

¹ <http://assets.dft.gov.uk/publications/pgr-roadsafety-research-rsrr-theme5-researchreport16-pdf/rswp116.pdf> figure 2.4 pg 13

² Aging of bone tissue: mechanical properties. Burstein AH, Reilly DT, Martens M J Bone Joint Surg Am. 1976 Jan; 58(1):82-6.

³ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walking>

⁴ Prof Danny Dorling in "If you could do one thing..." Nine local actions to reduce health inequalities https://www.britac.ac.uk/policy/Health_Inequalities.cfm

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

Web www.20splentyforus.org.uk Twitter @20splentyforus

Rod King MBE
Founder & Campaign Director
rod.k@20splentyforus.org.uk
07973 639781

Anna Semlyen
Campaign Manager
anna.s@20splentyforus.org.uk
07572 120439

Jeremy Leach
London Campaign Co-ordinator
jeremy.l@20splentyforus.org.uk
07415 243015