

Selling the Positive 20 mph Limit Message

A 20's Plenty for Us Briefing– Sept 2011

20's Plenty



Where People Live

20s Plenty for Us wants local political support and popular (especially driver) buy in to wide 20 mph limits. Highlighting benefits to drivers as residents, parents and citizens is key to successful implementation and compliance.

71% of adults support 20 mph limits with signage (not humps) according to the British Social Attitudes Survey for the Department of Transportⁱ Only 15% are against. Yet the media narrative can portray a different story. Sometimes the vocal minority appear more prominent than the silent majority who support slower speeds.

Social marketing is the skill of adapting commercial marketing to the social realm. It's complementary to campaigning. But, simple awareness campaigns don't necessarily lead to behaviour change. In designing solutions to people's problems, the influencer is effective if they listen to their audience by identifying their motives and redesign messages to meet their needs. Marketing works when we relate to the people we want to influence, recognising "what's in it for them".

Selling 20 mph limits can involve a range of messages for different groups – market segmentation. Eg, women tend to support 20 mph - perhaps because they drive a third less, have fewer speed incidents and do more child escort trips. So, asking women to sign 20 mph petitions about increased child safety will give a high success rate. Men may be more persuaded by reduced fuel consumption, or that driving at 20 mph reduces stress and doesn't increase journey times significantly. Parents and the elderly are usually most supportive of 20 mph. Getting written commitment is a key social marketing approach as it increases the likelihood of behaviour change.

A low in self confidence thought of "I want 20 mph limits but I'm probably on my own so I'll keep quiet" can bring a spiral of silence. Instead, activists need to invite people to get on the "bandwagon". Showing that 20 mph is mainstream thinking nudges us toward a popular policy that is socially progressive, equitable and inevitable. Positivity is key.

People want 20 mph limits and they work - in Portsmouth there were 22% fewer casualties. Portsmouth implemented 20 mph limits on 94% of roads in 2008 and "over 40% of respondents stated that since the introduction of the scheme, there has been a safer environment for walking and cycling; and as a result, around a third of respondents felt that there had been an increase in pedestrian and cyclist activities in the local areas"ⁱⁱ.

Moves toward 20 mph limits in the UK are powerful, growing and evidenced by the tide of recent places announcing it such as York and Liverpool. The authorities of over 6 million people agree 20's Plenty where People Live and are implementing this quality of life policy.

Help make yours next. Write a positive letter to councillors and media. State that you support 20 mph limits and that you will only vote for those who offer real road safety.

20's Plenty for Us welcomes comment and feedback. Please contact us. www.20splentyforus.org.uk

ⁱ 2010 British Social Attitudes Survey – Attitudes to transport <http://www.20splentyforus.org.uk/UsefulReports/BSocialAttitudes2010.pdf>

ⁱⁱ <http://www2.dft.gov.uk/pgr/roadsafety/speedmanagement/20mphPortsmouth/>

20's Plenty for Us campaigns for 20 mph speed limits without road calming as the default in towns and residential areas

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