

20 Questions About 20's Plenty Answered ([April 2019](#))-

20mph Questions	Category	Reality
1. Does 20mph work?	Benefit of 20mph	Yes. Lower speeds reduce casualties and lower limits reduce speeds. NICE ¹ and WHO recommend 20mph where people and motor vehicles mix ² . The Global Network of Road Safety Legislators notes “[where motor] traffic mixes with vulnerable road users...the speed limit should be...under [20mph]” ³
2. Is 20mph popular?	Benefit of 20mph	Yes. Surveys consistently show >70% of residents support 20mph ⁴ ; popularity increases after their introduction ⁵ .
3. Do you need several road casualties to justify 20mph?	Common myth	No. Rationing 20mph to places with high casualties contravenes DfT guidance and WHO / NICE recommendations that 20mph is a safe speed where people and vehicles mix. Highway Authorities cannot create arbitrary reasons to justify higher speed limits which ignore other factors, such as the needs of vulnerable road users.
4. Do the police need to support a new limit?	Common myth	Police are consulted as a stakeholders, just like local communities. It is the Highway Authority’s obligation to set the appropriate speed limit. Once the scheme design is agreed, the police should consider appropriate enforcement measures, if any. Vertical physical calming should be used as a last resort as they impede emergency services. ⁶
5. Have casualties risen anywhere a 20mph limit has been implemented?	Common myth	No. Some people mistakenly quote a Bath & NE Somerset Scrutiny committee report from May-17 ⁷ . The report lacked rigour as it compared unlike places and used small data sets. Evidence in Bath shows that casualties reduced after implementing 20mph by 23% ⁸
6. Does the Atkins report on 20mph show a lack of casualty reductions?	Common myth	The Atkins report is unconvincing ⁹ . Case study samples were small (<20 casualties pa) compared with larger comparator areas ¹⁰ . Atkins did not consider other evidence where casualties HAVE reduced on 20mph roads and underplayed the significant benefits in Brighton where faster roads were included.

¹ <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng70>

² <https://bit.ly/2GwS4l3>

³ www.4roadsafety.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/4roadsafety-Manifesto.pdf

⁴ <https://bit.ly/2UykFeG>

⁵ YouGov surveys <https://www.roadsafetyobservatory.com/Evidence/Details/11651>

⁶ DfT guidance on setting local speed limits January 2013 <https://bit.ly/2OXh2fK>

⁷ <https://bit.ly/2VihTik>

⁸ <https://bit.ly/2O2DSGo>

⁹ <https://bit.ly/2UykFeG>

¹⁰ http://www.20splenty.org/dft_20mph_evaluation

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7. Do drivers obey limits without enforcement?	Common myth	For persistent offenders, enforcement is welcome. However, the evidence is that reducing a speed limit does bring speeds down ¹¹ . In Bristol, compliance with 30mph limits also increased when 20mph was implemented ¹² . DfT compliance figures show that the majority drive slower when the speed limit is 20mph ¹³ .
8. Won't police decline to enforce?	Common myth	The National Police Chiefs Council says police will enforce 20mph as much as any other speed limit ¹⁴ and some forces are pro-active –West Midlands ¹⁵ , Avon & Somerset ¹⁶ . The introduction of speed limiters on new cars by 2022 will reduce the need for police enforcement compliance issue.
9. Do drivers ignore a 20mph limit without traffic calming?	Common myth	Most comply without additional measures. The 'population paradox' shows how small speed reductions over wide areas bring more benefits than big interventions in specific places. For residual compliance issues, inexpensive traffic calming – signs, lines, staggered parking bays, planters etc – are often sufficient.
10. Can you have 20mph on an A or B road?	Technical question	Yes. Many Local Authorities already have 20mph on A roads. In order to EXCLUDE a major street, the Highway Authority has considered the needs of vulnerable road users and shown that journeys on foot will be insignificant ¹⁷ .
11. Can you have 20mph on roads with a mean speed >24mph?	Technical question	Yes, particularly where the mean speed across a number of roads is under 24mph or where including a faster road into a "Limit" scheme would make a logical area ¹⁸ . If a "Zone" with physical calming cannot be afforded, leaving the speed limit at 30mph is not acceptable unless it can be shown to be as safe.
12. What's the pollution impact of 20mph limits?	Benefit of 20mph	Overall pollution reduces, particularly from diesel ¹⁹ . Less accelerating / braking reduces brake and tyre particulates. NICE recommends 20mph without speed humps for better air quality ²⁰ , lower noise levels, vibration and road wear.
13. Is 20mph expensive?	Benefit of 20mph	Not really – about £3 - £5 per head and it's good value for money. Costs depend on the scheme size, the amount of driver education and the extent of physical calming. Signed 20mph schemes typically pay back in under a year in fewer casualties and more active travel. Doing nothing costs more.

¹¹ DfT Freeflow speed statistics <https://bit.ly/2XLhfYh>

¹² Bornioli, Pilkington et al <http://eprints.uwe.ac.uk/37939/>

¹³ DfT Freeflow speed statistics <https://bit.ly/2XLhfYh>

¹⁴ NPCC guidance <https://bit.ly/2IUSfcl>

¹⁵ <https://bit.ly/2L1Wlm5>

¹⁶ <https://bit.ly/2GGCd4L>

¹⁷ DfT guidance on setting local speed limits January 2013 <https://bit.ly/2OXh2fk>

¹⁸ DfT guidance on setting local speed limits January 2013 <https://bit.ly/2OXh2fk>

¹⁹ Report by Imperial College for City of London April 2013 <https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/business/environmental-health/environmental-protection/air-quality/Documents/speed-restriction-air-quality-report-2013-for-web.pdf>

²⁰ <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng70>

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14. What's the effect on business of 20mph?	Benefit of 20mph	Positive. Businesses thrive where it is safe to walk and cycle and more money is available to the local economy. It's also for businesses' own staff.
15. Are speed reductions in areas without physical calming significant?	Technical question	1 – 2 mph is a typical reduction, which is significant ²¹ , but averages mislead. Roads with speeds around 20mph are unlikely to change. Faster roads show speed reductions between 4mph (Bristol) ²² and 7mph (Portsmouth) ²³ .
16. What about overall trip times / bus timetables?	Common myth	There is often no significant difference on cross town trip times. Many bus companies have found no difference in their timetables.
17. Do pedestrians take less care in a 20mph limit?	Common myth	No. There is no evidence for this, whilst there is substantial evidence from Bristol, Edinburgh, Calderdale, Brighton and other places that 20mph reduces casualties. A 1mph reduction in speed on an urban road reduces casualties by 6%,
18. Can the 85 th centile speed be used to assess a 20mph scheme?	Technical question	No. DfT guidance says that mean speeds should be used ²⁴ , but note that focussing on average speeds is often misleading.
19. Do you need road humps if speeds are above 24mph?	Technical question	No. Many Highway Authorities, such as Brighton ²⁵ Bristol ²⁶ and Portsmouth ²⁷ , set 20mph on faster roads, often without physical traffic calming as it's where most casualties occur and where reducing limits bring the greatest speed reductions. Using the "need for self-enforcement" to prevent a 20mph scheme doesn't comply with DfT guidance to have lower speed limits on roads where there could be significant pedestrian or cycle movements.
20. Is 20mph just used to generate income?	Common myth	No. There are many reasons for introducing 20mph, but financial incentives for LAs or the Police are not the reason, since fines go to the Treasury. In any case, although Fixed Penalty Notices are sometimes given, it is more common to have warning letters or for drivers to attend a speed awareness course. Introducing speed limiters on new cars from 2022 will reduce the compliance issue anyway

²¹ DfT guidance on setting local speed limits January 2013 <https://bit.ly/2OXh2fK>

²² BRITE study, Pilkington, Bornioli et al <http://eprints.uwe.ac.uk/34851/> and <http://eprints.uwe.ac.uk/37939/>

²³ WS Atkins interim evaluation <http://www.wirralpedestrians.org.uk/files/20mphzoneresearch.pdf>

²⁴ DfT guidance on setting local speed limits January 2013 <https://bit.ly/2OXh2fK>

²⁵ WS Atkins: effectiveness of 20mph speed limits <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/20-mph-speed-limits-on-roads>

²⁶ BRITE study, Pilkington, Bornioli et al <http://eprints.uwe.ac.uk/34851/> and <http://eprints.uwe.ac.uk/37939/>

²⁷ WS Atkins interim evaluation <http://www.wirralpedestrians.org.uk/files/20mphzoneresearch.pdf>