

Bristol Health Partners 20mph evidence briefing

July 2018

20mph safer speeds in Bristol

In late June Mayor Marvin Rees started a [review](#) of 20mph in Bristol which ends on 31 August 2018. The review is led by Cllr Mhairi Threlfall (Cabinet Member for Transport) and seeks the views of the public led by ward councillors. This briefing sets out key evidence to inform Councillors' discussions of safer speeds in Bristol, especially in light of the publication of the independent evaluation of 20mph for the council conducted by UWE (the [UWE BRITE Report](#)) published in February 2018.

Key points from the evidence

- 20mph speeds in Bristol reduce the number and severity of collisions
- They **save 4 lives** and **prevent 170 injuries** each year, and encourage more people to try 'active travel' – walking and cycling – which is good for people's wider health
- The UWE report states that annual rates of fatal, serious, and slight injuries following the introduction of the 20mph speed limits are lower than the respective pre-20mph limit rate, thus showing a reduction in the number of injuries. **The estimated total number of injuries avoided across the city each year is 4.53 fatal, 11.3 serious, and 159.3 slight injuries**
- The **estimated annual saving** following the decrease in casualties is **£15,256,309** (based on Department for Transport formula for calculating the cost of road traffic casualties)
- City-wide safer speeds also help tackle health and social inequalities and save the NHS money
- 20mph safer speeds link with Bristol City Council's [Resilience Strategy](#) (December 2016), and with the Director of Public Health's [Annual Report](#) (2016)
- Significantly changing Bristol's safer speeds system would cost more and would inevitably result in more deaths and serious injuries
- A small group of vociferous people with a cars-first mentality always shout loud to make their voices heard against 20mph while the silent majority are poor at advocating their support for 20mph.

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Detail from the UWE report

The decrease in casualties has also benefitted some vulnerable groups. It is estimated that, compared to 30mph:

- two child lives will be saved every three years
- 3 older adult lives will be saved every two years
- and 3 pedestrian deaths will be avoided every year.
- More than 4 child serious injuries will be avoided in just over three years
- 2 pedestrian severe injuries will be avoided every year.

“This study has found statistically significant reductions in average traffic speeds of 2.7mph across the city of Bristol, following the introduction of 20mph speed limits. This is a larger reduction than seen in previous evaluations in other cities.”

“The study employed a more sophisticated analysis than previous studies of 20mph limits, including using individual speed data from over 36 million vehicle observations and controlling for other factors that might affect changes in traffic speeds.”

“The introduction of 20mph speed limits in Bristol offers a model for other towns and cities across the UK, who are seeking to reduce traffic speeds, cut road traffic casualties, and promote community health and well-being through road danger reduction.”

Local people want 20mph - most people in Bristol say they want to live in a street with 20mph safer speeds. Repeated local and national surveys show that support is around 70 – 74% for lower, safer speeds where people live, work and shop.

Key organisations supporting 20mph safer speeds

- The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA; published a [Road Safety Factsheet on 20mph](#) in October 2016)
- The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH; published a major study on child health in January 2017, [The State of Child Health](#), which includes a call to reduce road speed limits in built-up areas to 20mph)
- The NHS in Bristol (local trusts, the clinical commissioning group, and doctors and consultants)
- Bristol Disability Equality Forum
- Local U3A
- Bristol Health Partners SHINE Health Integration Team

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- Bristol's Health and Wellbeing Board
- Sustrans
- Road safety charity Brake and other members of the GO20 coalition, including Children England, Alzheimer's Society, British Cycling, Campaign for Better Transport, CPRE, Living Streets, Guide Dogs
- Sir Michael Marmot and [Professor Danny Dorling](#) are also both high-profile supporters of 20mph speeds in urban areas

Benefits for children

- After the age of one, injury is the most frequent cause of death for children; over 75% of deaths due to injury in the age bracket of 10-18-year-olds are related to traffic incidents. This is why children's doctors support 20mph speed limits where people live. (Source: Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, *State of Child Health* report, January 2017 – see [State of Child Health | RCPCH](#))
- Children under 15 have difficulties seeing that vehicles are approaching at over 20mph and often misjudge distance and speed

January 2017 child health report

The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health issued a landmark new report, [The State of Child Health](#), in January 2017. It recommends 20mph speeds to reduce the number of child deaths:

- **Over 4,000 infants, children and young people across the UK died in 2014.** After the first year of life, adolescence is the period when children are most likely to die. **Many of these adolescent deaths are potentially avoidable and occur due to external factors such as road traffic collisions**
- It calls on all local authorities to introduce 20mph speed limits in built-up areas to create safer environments for children to walk, cycle and play

The report says that social inequalities are associated with nearly all the leading causes of deaths in young people aged 15 to 19 years, especially injuries. Injury deaths in young people are linked with living in poor housing conditions, increased housing density and availability of off-street parking, **proximity to high volumes of traffic, increased exposure to hazardous and illegal driving** as well as parental mental health, employment, education, relationship status and income.

Social deprivation is linked to an increased risk for all types of road crashes and fatalities in children under the age of 15 years, including pedestrians and cyclists.

What's the difference between 20mph limits and 20mph zones?

- **20mph *limits*** are areas where the speed limit has been reduced to 20mph but there are no physical measures to reduce vehicle speeds within the areas. Drivers are alerted to the speed limit with 20mph speed limit repeater signs. RoSPA supports and encourages the wider use of 20mph limits. Bristol has 20mph limits
- **20mph *zones*** use traffic calming measures to reduce the adverse impact of motor vehicles on built up areas. Traffic calming slows vehicles down to speeds below the limit, and in this way the zone becomes 'self-enforcing'. Speed humps, chicanes, road narrowing, planting and other measures can be introduced to both physically and visually reinforce the nature of the road. These are much more expensive to introduce. South Gloucestershire has 20mph zones

There was cross-party support for 20mph speed limits in 2012. The Full Council support for 20mph city-wide happened **before** the previous Mayor was elected. The £2.3m implementation cost came from central Government grants. *Zones* are more expensive to implement and there is some indication that they may lead to higher vehicle emissions. Signs-only 20mph *limits* have been found to reduce mean speeds, with greater reductions possible through further awareness measures, enforcement, and traffic calming.

Crashes, collisions, or accidents?

- Road crashes are not random *accidents*; they are devastating and *preventable* events, not chance mishaps. Calling them accidents undermines work to make roads safer, and can cause insult to families whose lives have been torn apart by needless casualties. They are *collisions*