

# P-06-1295 Hold a public poll on the reduction of the default speed limit before it comes in to force

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 10 October 2022  
Petitions Committee | 10 Hydref 2022

Reference: SR22/3596-10

Petition Number: P-06-1295

**Petition title:** Hold a public poll on the reduction of the default speed limit BEFORE it comes in to force

**Text of petition:**

I think that the Welsh Government must hold a public poll on this change as it will affect everyone! There is no proven evidence that it will save lives or reduce pollution. There is evidence to support it increasing the amount of emissions being put into the air as cars are not designed to be driven at this speed! Motorists are always being targeted and it's about time pedestrians are hit with some accountability! People in Wales are living in a democracy, hold a public poll on this proposal.

They have already surveyed a large group on this and the majority voted against it!

Their only evidence is theory and hearsay. They have absolutely no proof to support their claims that 20mph will save lives. What it will do is force cars to stop start more and ultimately build up emissions in a concentrated area. I



can only imagine they based this false evidence on their motorway report on reducing to 50mph - IT DOES NOT WORK!!!!

The Welsh Government should be doing more to educate pedestrians to cross only at designated crossings and put up barriers along the edge pavements to prevent them from walking out into the road anywhere they want!

Us motorists are getting more and more frustrated at being easy prey. As for cyclists, with this rule in place they will be riding faster than cars. I have seen this already in the trial areas.

Give us a say on this immediately!

## 1. Background

In 2019 the Welsh Government set up a task and finish group to consider whether 20mph should become the default speed limit in residential areas. The Welsh Government accepted the group's recommendations, including that the default speed limit on restricted roads (those in residential areas with a system of street lighting placed no more than 200 yards apart) should be reduced from 30mph to 20mph.

Following public consultation and a pilot scheme across 8 communities, the Welsh Government laid the Restricted Roads (20 mph Speed Limit) (Wales) Order 2022 in June. The draft Order was passed by the Senedd in July and is due to come into force in September 2023.

While the default limit on restricted roads will become 20mph, highway authorities (local authorities for local roads and the Welsh Ministers for trunk roads/motorways) can use Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) to change the limit where appropriate.

Senedd Research has published an article that explores the introduction of 20mph limits in Wales in more detail.

## Impact of 20mph limits

Evidence on the impact of 20mph limits on issues like casualty rates, air quality and greenhouse gas emissions has often been described as mixed.

In 2018 the Welsh Government published [a study on the state of the evidence for 20mph limits](#) on road safety, active travel and air pollution. Also in 2018 the UK Government Department for Transport [published research on the effectiveness of these limits](#). The UK Government Research found that:

...there is insufficient evidence to conclude that there has been a significant change in collisions and casualties following the introduction of 20mph limits in residential areas...

[Recent research](#) from road safety charity [IAM RoadSmart](#) found support in the UK for reducing the speed limit on all urban roads from 30mph to 20mph has increased in recent years. However its Director of Policy and Research [suggests a blanket introduction of a 20mph limit isn't necessarily the best route](#), stating that:

Each situation needs to be decided on a case-by-case basis, with local considerations and consultation playing an important role.

The distinction between a 20mph limit and zone is also important when considering available evidence. [Research from Queen's University](#) found that while there was clear evidence 20mph zones with traffic calming measures reduced the frequency and severity of collisions and casualties, there was a lack of evidence on the effectiveness of 20mph limits enforced only by signage.

The Welsh Government's task and finish group found 'overwhelming evidence' over more than two decades that lower speeds result in fewer and less severe collisions. The risk of being killed, it says, is almost five times higher in a collision between a car and pedestrian at 31mph (50km/h) compared to the same type of collision at 18.6mph (30km/h).

[Its report](#) summarised that:

Enabling a much wider take up of 20mph limits is expected to achieve significant road safety benefits, particularly in deprived neighbourhoods. In the longer term, reductions in the perception of road danger is expected to lead to more walking and cycling which will improve public health and replace some short car journeys...More walking and cycling is also likely to lead to greater social cohesion which brings further societal

and health benefits. Lower speeds will lead to reductions in traffic noise, while impacts on air quality will be neutral at worst and journey time increases will be slight...

The Welsh Government has published [a list of FAQs](#) relating to the introduction of 20mph limits which includes information on pollution and road safety. It has also [developed a framework](#) to measure the effects of the reduced limit in the pilot scheme areas.

## 2. Welsh Government action

The petitioner calls on the Welsh Government to hold a public poll before the 20mph default limit comes into force. In November 2020 the Welsh Government undertook [a national survey](#) which found strong support for the plans (81%), especially among parents.

[Formal consultation](#) was also undertaken in 2021. Just over 6000 responses were received, although on this occasion only 47% of respondents were in favour of reducing the speed limit while 53% were against.

In his letter to the Chair dated 6 September, the Deputy Minister for Climate Change details the survey and consultation exercise outlined above. He also refers to evidence taken into account by the Welsh Government in relation to road casualties and pollution.

## 3. Welsh Parliament action

In July 2020 the Senedd [debated the introduction of default 20mph speed limits](#) with 45 of 53 Members [voting in favour of the motion](#).

As outlined, the Welsh Government laid the [Restricted Roads \(20 mph Speed Limit\) \(Wales\) Order 2022](#) in June 2022. The draft Order was [passed by the Senedd](#) in July 2022 and is due to come into force in September 2023.

In April you [considered a petition](#) calling on the Welsh Government to stop the introduction of the 20mph limit. At that time you agreed to close the petition due to the ability of local authorities to change the limit on roads where 20mph would not be appropriate.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.