20mph Speed Limits

DfT commissioned research into the effectiveness of 20mph limits has been published. It includes evidence from 700kms of new 20mph limits in 12 case study areas and data from comparable locations where 20mph limits have not been introduced for control purposes.

The research covered:

- **Feedback from over 5,400 questionnaires with a range of road users to identify perceptions about 20mph limits and changes in personal driving/riding behaviour**
- **Analysis of speed outcomes based on over 18 million vehicle kilometres of journey speed data from in-car GPS devices, and spot speed data from over 400 locations**
- **Analysis from almost 4,000 collisions to examine early safety outcomes in 20mph limit areas**
- **Evidence on mode use impact based on self-reported behaviour change**

The research concludes that:

- **20mph limits are supported by the majority of residents and drivers**
- **There has been a small reduction in average speed - less than 1mph**
- **Vehicles travelling at higher speeds before the introduction of the 20mph limit have reduced their speed more than those already travelling at lower speeds**
- **There is not enough evidence to conclude that that there has been a significant change in collisions and casualties following the introduction of 20mph limits**
- **Based on the findings of this study, DfT guidance remains broadly valid. This states that where there is expected to be a positive effect on road safety and a general favourable reception from local residents, traffic authorities should consider implementing area-wide 20mph limits on:**
  - **Major streets where there are, or could be significant numbers of journeys on foot, and/or where cycle movements are an important consideration, and this outweighs the disadvantage of longer journey times for motorised traffic**
  - **Residential streets where the streets are being used by people on foot and on bicycles, there is community support, and the characteristics of the street are suitable; and on the assumption that the limits are generally self-enforcing and that there should be no expectation on the police to provide additional enforcement beyond their routine activity, unless this has been explicitly agreed.**

Headline report.

Full Technical Report.

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Highway Code Updated

Amendments to the Highway Code will help keep cyclists and pedestrians safer on the roads. The new version will highlight how to avoid the dangers of close passing, and will encourage people to adopt the 'Dutch reach', a method of opening a car door with the hand furthest from the handle, forcing drivers to look over their shoulder for passing traffic.

Transport Minister, Jesse Norman said, "Britain has some of the safest roads in the world, but we need them to be safer still for all – and particularly for cyclists, pedestrians and other vulnerable road users.

Cycling and walking are increasingly being understood as crucial parts of an integrated approach to issues of health, obesity, air quality and town and city planning. But this will only happen if people feel safe on the roads."

The Department for Transport has also published an updated National Standard for Cycling Training Manual, with the latest best practice on safe cycling.

Road Safety Award For Operation SNAP

Since 1987 the Prince Michael International Road Safety Awards have given recognition to those who have improved road safety internationally. On the 11th December, the Wales Road Casualty Reduction Partnership (GoSafe) attended the prestigious gala presentation at The Savoy, London, to be presented with an award by HRH Prince Michael of Kent for their innovative Operation SNAP initiative.

Operation SNAP was devised in response to requests from the public for police to deal with traffic offences detected by media such as dashcam, helmet cameras or personal video. It was the first project of this kind in the UK, utilising processes and resources established by GoSafe.

The aim of the project is to deter drivers from making poor or dangerous decisions behind the wheel, working on the basis that if drivers perceive they could be prosecuted for driving poorly they would not undertake that behaviour; reducing the likelihood of a collision.

Prior to Operation SNAP the average offence would take 15 hours to process; it now takes an average of 15 minutes. With approximately 170 offences reported per month in Wales, this represents a monthly saving of 2,465 officer hours.

Teresa Ciano, Partnership Manager for GoSafe said, "It's been an honour to work on such an exciting project, and it's one we couldn't have delivered without a true partnership collaboration. We've delivered a robust and secure method of receiving footage the public want to send us across Wales and are so happy to see it rolled out elsewhere. It really is a multi-agency effort, and one everyone involved has worked hard to deliver. Together, we want to make all our roads safer."

The future looks bright for Operation SNAP, with more and more members of the public using the system to report all manner of road offences. Welsh forces are now looking to utilise the system to receive footage of other offences; ensuring the technology available is used to its best potential in reducing crime and keeping our roads and communities safe.

20th Anniversary Of NCAP Testing in Europe

Since 1998, mandatory new passenger car crash tests have dramatically improved road safety across the European Union. In the last 20 years, front and side impact standards have cut vehicle occupant deaths in Europe by half and saved tens of thousands of lives.

To mark the twentieth anniversary and to demonstrate the enormous improvement in vehicle occupant safety, Global NCAP has carried out a car-to-car crash test of one of Europe's best-selling models, the Ford Fiesta – a 1998 model and a current model, both travelling at 40 mph.

In the test, the bodyshell of the 1998 Fiesta collapses risking fatal and serious injuries to the driver and passengers. In contrast the modern Fiesta withstands the impact very well with minimum risk of life threatening injury.

David Ward, Global NCAP's Secretary General, said, "Over the next twenty years car safety will be transformed again by advanced technologies for driver assistance and greater vehicle autonomy. We will move from saving lives during a crash to avoiding the crash entirely."

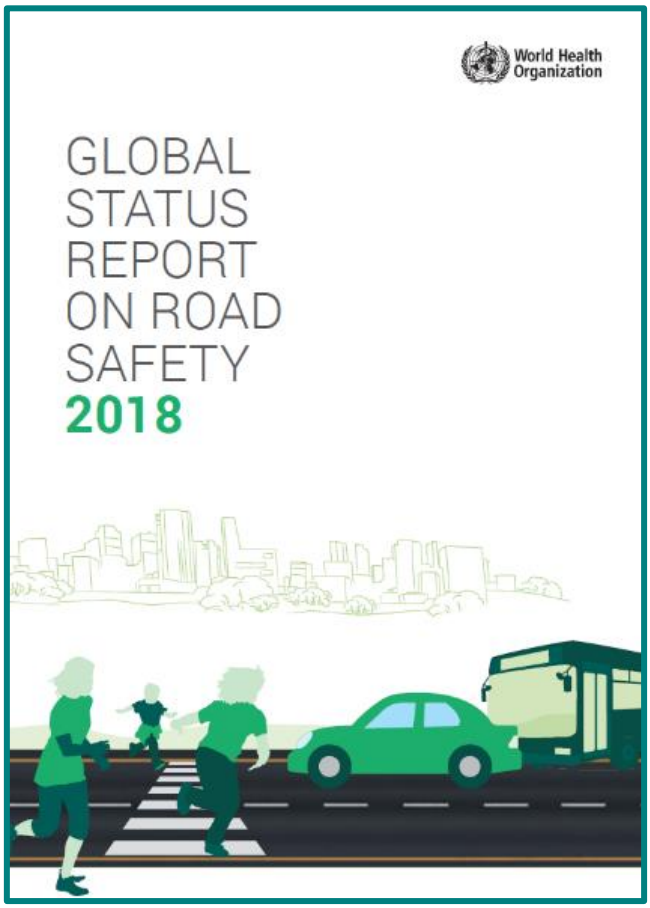
View the crash test video here.

WHO Report Highlights Insufficient Progress On Road Deaths

The World Health Organization (WHO) has published its 2018 Global Status Report On Road Safety. The report highlights that road traffic injuries are now the leading killer of children and young people aged 5-29 years.
Road traffic deaths continue to rise, with an annual 1.35 million fatalities. Despite the ambitious target set by the Agenda for Sustainable Development of halving the global number of deaths and injuries from road traffic crashes by 2020, WHO has identified that:

- **More than half of all road traffic deaths are among vulnerable road users: pedestrians, cyclists, and motorcyclists.**
- **73% of all road traffic deaths occur among young males under the age of 25 years who are almost 3 times as likely to be killed in a road traffic crash as young females.**
- **Road traffic crashes cost most countries 3% of their gross domestic product.**
- **93% of the world's fatalities on the roads occur in low and middle-income countries, although these countries have approximately 60% of the world's vehicles.**

The report concludes that the price paid for mobility is too high and that drastic action is needed to put life saving measures in place.
Read the full report here.



Safety Improvements On The EVO Triangle

Safety on the road network referred to as the 'EVO Triangle' will be improved thanks to £500,000 Welsh Government investment, Transport Secretary Ken Skates has announced.

The funding, which will be for the for the first phase of a safety scheme, will see average speed cameras installed on the A543 in Denbighshire and Conwy, the section of the 'EVO Triangle' with the highest collision record. It will also allow the design and pre-installation works for the second and final phase of the full scheme to progress.

Incidents of dangerous driving involving excessive speed have taken place on the route and this plan of action, which is jointly led by Denbighshire County Council and Conwy County Borough Council, aims to tackle such occurrences.

Average speed cameras provide the most extensive and continuous enforcement which will make the route less attractive to those intending to exceed the speed limit.

The Welsh Government has previously provided £40,000 to the local authorities to undertake a feasibility study for the route and a road safety practitioners group was established to consider issues at the location.

Transport Secretary Ken Skates said, "I instructed Denbighshire and Conwy councils to work closely together to develop an improved solution to reduce instances of dangerous speeding as a priority. The proposal will address issues in the area referred to as the EVO Triangle and I am pleased it is being supported by a £500,000 Road Safety Grant from the Welsh Government.

"Safety on our roads will always be the first consideration when investing in our road network and installing average speed cameras at this location will discourage excessive speeds and improve conditions for local residents, businesses, and those who drive with care and attention.

"We want everyone to use our roads in a safe and responsible way and today's announcement will help tackle issues which present risks to the travelling public on this route."

Hazard Perception In Adverse Conditions Tested

The DVSA has announced changes to the hazard perception test to help improve road safety. In Great Britain in 2017, 16,406 accidents happened in rain, sleet, snow or fog and of those, 205 were fatal.

New CGI clips have been added into the driving theory test to simulate adverse weather conditions including, snow, wind, fog and rain. There will also be clips showing the type of low-level lighting experienced at dusk and dawn.

Jesse Norman, Transport Minister, said, "These new hazard perception clips offer more realistic driving conditions to test a learner driver's ability, preparing them for overcoming the real-life challenges they will face on the road – something that should benefit all road users."

Example clips can be viewed here.