Road Safety Wales
Diogelwch Ffyrdd Cymru
Low Down

North Wales Police Highlight E-scooter Law

North Wales Police is urging people to know the law surrounding electric scooters or e-scooters before purchasing or using one.

E-scooters have increased in popularity over recent years, but there can be a lot of confusion around where they can be used. They are currently only legal to ride on private land with the landowner's permission, or as part of a Government trial.

The UK Government is currently taking part in 'Future Transport Zone' trials for e-scooter hire, with a view to making them legal to use on a road. At present, there are no trials in Wales.

Police officers are reminding people that riding an e-scooter in public when it is not part of an authorised trial is against the law, and can result in penalty points, a fine and seizure of the vehicle.

E-scooters are classified as Personal Light Electric Vehicles (PLEVs), so they are treated as a motor vehicle and subject to the same legal requirements such as MOT, licensing, tax and insurance. As e-scooters do not have number plates, signal ability and don't always have a visible rear light, they can't be used legally on the roads.

Sergeant Liam Ho of the Roads Policing Unit is urging local residents to familiarise themselves with the legislation. He said, "We understand that buying an e-scooter can be tempting, especially as you can buy them from many popular retailers.

"However, the current law is that you can buy one but you can't ride it on a public road, cycle lane or pavement. E-scooters can only be used on private land with the permission of the landowner.

"Often, riders are not wearing a safety helmet and some e-scooters can reach speeds of up to 60mph – so it's not hard to imagine what the result could be in the event of a collision."

Sergeant Ho added, "We will continue to engage with the public to make them aware of the law regarding e-scooters and I would encourage parents and carers to ensure their children are following the guidelines correctly.

"If you own an e-scooter do not ride these machines in public places. Comply with the law for your own safety and the safety of others."

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Welsh Government Sets Bold Targets in New Transport Vision

'Llwybr Newydd - New Path' commits to reducing transport emissions as part of efforts to tackle the climate emergency. Currently transport makes up 17 per cent of Wales' carbon emissions.

The strategy comes as more than £210 million is being invested across Wales in 2021/22.

More than £115 million is being allocated to local authorities to spend on transport projects that will support the commitments in Llwybr Newydd.

In addition, £70 million is being made available to Blaenau Gwent County Council to secure the additional service between Newport and Ebbw Vale and contribute to the longer term ambition of 4 trains per hour. The funding will enable infrastructure improvements, to be taken forward alongside Network Rail and Transport for Wales.

Another investment will see £25 million to support the Wrexham Gateway project, creating better connected bus and rail transport and redevelopment of the area around Wrexham General.

During 2021/22 £75 million will be spent on active travel, an increase from £5m at the start of this Welsh Government term.

Ken Skates, Minister for Economy, Transport and North Wales, said, "Llwybr Newydd is a landmark moment and will help to fundamentally re-shape transport in Wales. It will encourage new and greener infrastructure and change the way we make decisions about investment in transport right across the country.

"The climate emergency is very real and it means we must take urgent action to reduce the carbon footprint of the transport system in Wales. That's why we have set bold new targets for more sustainable transport forms like walking, cycling and public transport. This will help reduce reliance on the car by making the sustainable alternatives more appealing.

"Doing this means investing in high quality public transport alternatives and that's why we are providing more than £210 million in transport schemes that will contribute to ambitions in our new plan.

"We've made a good start, with major investment in things like Metro, but we know we need to go further and faster and Llwybr Newydd sets us on the path to a transport system genuinely fit for future generations."

Lee Waters, Deputy Economy and Transport Minister, added, "A greener transport network will only be achieved if we can provide people with convenient alternatives to the car. Investing in trains, buses and cycle routes will not only help people get around but will make it easier to take choices that protect our planet and contribute to social justice.

"We are delivering this strategy in a pandemic but that isn't going to stop us being bold. In fact it only makes it more important – high quality public transport will be critical to a fairer, greener and more equal recovery after Covid.

"The rise in remote working highlights the major changes underway in our economy. Local journeys are particularly well-suited to cycling and walking and we're building a transport network that meets the needs of the future, not the needs of the past."

As part of the £115 million investment being announced in local authority funding, nearly £47 million is being spent on active travel schemes, helping develop routes that support walking and cycling.

A further £6.4 million is being committed through the Safe Routes in Communities fund, with a particular focus on school routes. Another £20 million will be confirmed through the Active Travel Fund later in the financial year, taking the total dedicated active travel spend to £75 million – up from £5 million at the start of this Senedd term.

Changes To The Speed Limit On The M4

The permanent 50mph limit with average speed enforcement between junctions 24 and 28 on the M4 is now live.

The measure forms part of the Welsh Government's approach to tackling congestion in the area as recommended by Lord Burns' report published following the work carried out by the South East Wales Traffic Commission.

The cameras will be operational and the mandatory 50mph speed limit will be monitored closely by GoSafe during the bedding-in period. It will allow for full systems and enforcement checks to take place and give motorists time to get used to the new speed limit. Notices of prosecution will then begin to be issued in the Summer.

The change is intended to:

- **Help manage congestion issues along this stretch of the M4**
- **Improve journey times and provide smoother traffic flows**
- **Reduce the risk of accidents**
- **Improve air quality by reducing emission levels**

Ken Skates, Minister for Economy, Transport and North Wales, commented, "This work shows this Government's commitment to tackling congestion in the region. We are doing this in the context of the climate emergency and our clear objective of reducing emissions from the transport sector.

"The South East Wales Transport Commission produced a number of recommendations to tackle congestion which we were happy to endorse. Transport for Wales' Development Unit is now tasked with supporting us to take forward Lord Burns' wider recommendations forward and we will continue to work with partners to improve journeys in the area."

GoSafe Partnership Manager Teresa Ciano said, "GoSafe is committed to supporting our highways authority partners to ensure that the speed limits on our roads are adhered to. There are many benefits to a reduced speed limit on this section of road and vehicles utilising the road should see road safety and journey improvements. We will review the traffic after the changes and are prepared to enforce the speed limit if necessary."

Road Safety Education in Rhondda Cynon Taf

The road safety team at Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council has recently been busy getting back to working with schools.

In the absence of being able to go outside for Kerbcraft and Child Pedestrian Training, the team has been piloting alternative methods of delivering road safety education.

An interactive film has been created which has been very well received by children and teachers alike. You can view the film here.

Matt Penny, Road Safety Officer recently attended Penywaun Primary School in the Cynon valley. Matt said, "The children were keen to show me what they had remembered from the training sessions by each making a small poster for me.

"Some of these posters, mainly orientated around the green cross code, will be placed around the infant section of the school to remind others of the importance of crossing the road safely."

20mph Speed Limit To Become A Reality On Welsh Roads

Plans for a default 20mph speed limit on Welsh roads have moved a step closer as eight pilot areas to trial the change have been confirmed.

Lee Waters, Deputy Minister for Economy and Transport, said the move will reduce accidents and save lives.

The pilot areas will have a phased start from this summer until the end of the year. They come ahead of the planned national rollout for April 2023, and will help develop enforcement arrangements and overcome unforeseen issues before the full rollout.

The areas chosen are intended to be representative sample of different locations found across Wales, including villages, towns and cities. They will focus on community engagement, meaning that as well as developing enforcement arrangements they will communicate the value of the new speed limit, making the case for reduced speed leading to more cohesive and safe communities.

Welsh Government is introducing the new speed limit to improve safety and help make Welsh streets a more welcoming place for cyclists and pedestrians.

Initial findings from a national public attitude survey have found support for the plans. 92% of those who wanted a change to the speed limit on their street suggested a speed limit of 20mph or lower, while 77% said they wanted to see this speed limit applied throughout the area in which they live.

Lee Waters, Deputy Minister for Economy and Transport, said, "Making 20mph the default speed limit in residential areas is a bold step that will save lives.

"We have made progress on reducing deaths and serious injuries on our roads over the 21 years of devolution, but despite our considerable efforts the highest proportion of all casualties, 50%, occurred on 30mph roads during 2018. This cannot be tolerated, so a reduction to 20mph on our residential and other busy pedestrian urban roads has to be the way forward.

"Decreasing speeds reduces accidents and saves lives, and alongside this the quality of life will improve, making room on our streets for safer active travel. This helps reduce our environmental impact and has a positive outcome for our physical and mental wellbeing."

Eight pilot areas will trial 20mph on restricted roads – roads that currently have a 30mph restriction and have street lighting. These settlements are:

- **Abergavenny, Monmouthshire**
- **Central North Cardiff**
- **Severnside, Monmouthshire**
- **Buckley, Flintshire**
- **Cilfriw Village, Neath and Port Talbot**
- **St Dogmaels, Pembrokeshire**
- **St Brides Major, Vale of Glamorgan**
- **Llanelli North, Carmarthenshire**

Brake Before the Bend

Wales by Bike is highlighting how country roads can give the exhilaration some motorcyclists crave, even when commuting to work during lockdown, but pointing out that these roads often have sharp or blind bends that can hide countless potential hazards.

Bushes, trees and buildings can block the rider's view and obscure oncoming hazards, and there is also the potential of being faced with animals in the road when entering or exiting a bend.

Consider this: you may have used the same route a thousand times, you know how sharp the next corner is, you even know the location of a pothole that you've noticed getting bigger over the past few weeks. But, unfortunately you'll never ever know 100% what's around the next corner until you get there.

A broken down vehicle, a piece of debris, pedestrians in the carriageway, a horse rider...anything. Bearing this in mind, it is important to always ride at a speed which will allow you to stop in the distance you can see to be clear.

Speed limits are an absolute maximum - on many occasions it can be inappropriate to ride at that speed. We all know that roads are not the place to be catching the apex or getting your knee down as close to the tarmac as possible. If you'd like to do this sort of thing please consider attending a track day, when restrictions allow, to get professional tuition in a safe and controlled environment.

As bikes are most stable when the weight is distributed evenly and travelling in a straight line, always be aware of what you're expecting your bike to do in a bend – going in too fast and just expecting the tyres to grip is a recipe for disaster. Throw in rain or icy conditions and some wet drains or manhole covers, and the outcome may be disastrous.

Please remember to 'brake before the bend, not on it'. This one simple step could help you prepare for what's around the next corner, and hopefully get you home safely.