

20mph Limits Prevent and Reduce Disability

A 20's Plenty for Us Briefing, Sept 2011

Implementing 20 mph limits without traffic calming prevents road injury and disability. It helps the less able to get about. 20 mph limits increase accessibility and opportunities for the most vulnerable to lead fairer, healthier, more sociable lives. Equality and inclusivity improve, raising quality of life for everyone including carers and those with dependent family.



Britain is aging, with a rising proportion of disabled. By retirement, half of us will have a disability. UK disability free life expectancy averages at around 64 years, with a 17 year gap between the most and least affluentⁱ. Britain is also an unfair society. Only the US and Portugal have greater income inequality in the Westⁱⁱ, a factor related to higher health and social problems.

20 mph limits cut the number and severity of road fatalities and injuries. Some collisions are avoided or impact speed is less, reducing the harm done by a crash. Portsmouth had 22% fewer casualties after the first two years of 94% of roads limited to 20 mphⁱⁱⁱ. NHS, widow and disability benefit savings are made.

Worthing SCOPE's Chief Executive Officer Pauline Fox said *"Traffic moving at a slower pace will always be a safer option for pedestrians, especially those with mobility difficulties."*

Slower speeds improve access, especially for those with restricted mobility, vision, hearing or mental health. The ability to get around safely and affordably increases opportunities for work and friendship. With low accessibility, people can become lonely. Social isolation has been linked to poor mental and physical health and mortality. Residents of heavy traffic areas know fewer neighbours than in light traffic streets^{iv}. With few, slow car movements people enjoy the street scene. They chat. It is quieter and not so dangerous or polluted. Inclusivity and social cohesion increase when traffic slows down.

Health promoting activities like walking, cycling and being outdoors are encouraged as speeds reduce. This builds a positive spiral of increased activity bringing reduced illness from diseases associated with obesity, heart disease and stress. Health inequalities in life expectancy are reduced by 20 mph limits according to Prof Danny Dorling as poorer people (especially boys) are more often road victims than the rich^v.

Disabled people and their carers are less likely to be car owners due to lower incomes. Their choice is between staying still, to walk, cycle, mobility scooter or be a passenger. Most are vulnerable road users for part of a journey. Walkers or cyclists often find 30 mph roads frightening, even if they have full faculties. Already, local authorities with a total of nearly 7 million people have chosen 20 mph as their default limit. Ask your local Councillors to prevent disability and protect the vulnerable through 20 mph road speeds without humps.

ⁱ The Marmot Review- Fair Society, Healthy Lives 2009. Strategic Review of Inequalities in England.

ⁱⁱ Wilkinson R and Pickett K (2009) *The Spirit Level: Why more equal societies almost always do better*. Penguin Books London

ⁱⁱⁱ Interim Evaluation of 20mph Speed Limits in Portsmouth. Atkins <http://www2.dft.gov.uk/pgr/roadsafety/speedmanagement/20mphPortsmouth/>

^{iv} Donald Appleyard *Liveable Streets* 1981

^v Prof Danny Dorling PACTS Westminster Lecture 2011 http://www.shef.ac.uk/geography/staff/dorling_danny/lectures.html

20's Plenty for Us campaigns for 20mph speed limits without physical calming as the default in urban and residential areas

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