



APPCG Cycling & Walking Justice inquiry: Tackling Speeding

May 2023

Key points

- Speeding is the most common motoring offence, the most harmful and the most tolerated.
- The consequences of speeding are not limited to people being killed or seriously injured. The intimidation it causes deters many from walking, wheeling and cycling local journeys.
- Speed enforcement is increasing in many police services and compliance with speed limits can be greatly increased with the use of Intelligent Speed Assistance (ISA).
- Focus for enforcement should be on lower speed roads, in particular those with 20mph limits, and on tougher sanctions for extreme and repeat speeders.

Background

No other motoring offence causes as much harm as speeding, nor is so widespread. Speed limit offences dominate traffic law enforcement. They account for 77% of all motoring offences reported. Too often speed campaigns focus on the risk of causing a death and seriously injured, which are rare events. Speeding regularly scares people and deters them from walking and cycling more.

Set by the [National Police Chief Council](#), speed enforcement guidelines are 10% plus 2-3 mph, and are advisory, not mandatory. The current version is based on that published in 2000 with a 2013 update with FPNs starting at 24mph instead of 25mph on 20mph roads.

Action Vision Zero knows that tackling speeding is key if more people are to be able to walk and cycle, instead of driving. We have published briefings and blogs on tackling speeding, as well as conducted research on its enforcement (including FOIs re speed enforcement by speed limit).

Designing in compliance

Intelligent Speed adaptation (ISA) is already coming. It is fitted in one-third of London buses and TfL has conducted research on retrofitting its fleet. See [AVZ's blog](#) on the use of ISA in London and New York City. Local authorities are also beginning to act, see Haringey's recent [Road Danger Reduction Progress Report](#).

Roads. Compliance can also be built in through road design. In 2019, TfL published [Achieving lower speeds: a toolkit](#), with guidance on installing calming measures and other ways of improving compliance.

Tolerance. Sweden has had speed compliance set as a national road safety target for many years. As noted above, England and Wales still has a recommended tolerance of at least 10% plus 2 mph.

Detection

Trend. Speed enforcement has been on the increase in England and Wales. It rose to 2,265,598 in 2022 with over 90% sanctioned out of court. But half of police services reported a decrease in recent years (2019-2021).

Cameras. Speed enforcement is almost exclusively done by cameras. The Home Office reported that 93% of speed offences in 2021 were detected by safety cameras. Four police services had 98% of

offences detected by camera (Avon and Somerset, Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire, and Warwickshire) with 97% in another four (Leicestershire, Northumbria, Surrey and West Mercia). Wiltshire was an outlier with only 1% detected by camera. The next lowest was 81% in the MPS.

20mph. London has seen huge increase in levels of 20mph enforcement as an integral part of its Vision Zero strategy. In 2022, there were 233,000 20mph speed limit offences begun, out of a total of 643,000 ([TfL, 2023](#)). 20mph limits are also enforced in Avon and Somerset but rarely elsewhere.

Community support. There is strong community support as shown by the Community Speedwatch programmes in most, if not all, police areas, and the very widespread 20s Plenty for Us local campaigns. Public attitudes [surveys show consistent 70% agreement](#) with 20mph as the correct limit for residential streets.

Sanctions

Outcomes. According to the Home Office, in 2021, as a sanction for speeding offences:

- The most common outcome is a Speed Awareness Course (53%).
- Another 37% of offenders paid the FPN of £100. This was last increased in 2013. It was previously £60, a sum set in 2007.
- Some 9% of speed limit offences were referred to court for a prosecution. These include those drivers pleading not guilty or where the case cannot be sanctioned out of court, i.e. foreign drivers and those pleading not guilty.

Repeat offenders. Speeding drivers (excluding young drivers) can be caught speeding four times before face being banned due to “totting up”. Cycling UK has highlighted the problem of drivers avoiding such bans by claiming exceptional hardship.

Extreme speeders. Drivers caught significantly exceeding the speed limit must be prosecuted at court. Extreme speeders are believed to account for the vast majority of those prosecuted at court (222,000 in 2022). Yet the most common punishment remains a fine (average fine £215).

Bans. In 2022, only 1.7% of those sentenced for speeding in England and Wales were banned. And the bans given tended to be short, with over 90% lasting under six months. Only seven offenders had to take the extended driving retest ([Moj, 2023](#)).

Action Vision Zero calls

Compliance

1. **ISA.** All government and local authority vehicles and contractor vehicles should require “mandatory ISA” to be fitted. This includes retrofitting vehicles.
2. **Tolerance.** National speed enforcement guidelines should be updated with tolerance levels removed. Speed limits should be maximums with drivers educated to stay below them.

Detection

3. **20mph enforcement.** Police should prioritise enforcement on roads used by walkers and cyclists. They should also publish their speed limit offences by speed limit. The public should be able to see which roads had how much enforcement, with camera locations already shown.
4. **Apps.** Greater use should be made of such apps like [SpeedcamAnywhere](#) as these should be help alert bus companies and other businesses to their vehicles speeding.

Sanctions

1. **Tougher penalties.** Penalties should increase for repeat offenders with extreme speeders banned. And the FPN for speeding should be increased, as requested by PCCs in 2020.

Note: This briefing was written by Jeremy Leach and Amy Aeron-Thomas, from Action Vision Zero. It highlights the concerns and calls in our Roads Policing campaign, with speeding recognised as the key offence to be tackled in order to reduce road danger.