

## NEWS RELEASE

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**\*\*\*National leadership needed on Safer Streets Bill:**

Twenty-five active travel, health, child advocacy, poverty and environment organisations write to First Minister

Twenty-five organisations [1] have today (Tuesday 26 March) jointly written to First Minister Nicola Sturgeon to call for the Scottish Government to support a nationwide move to lower the default speed limit on restricted roads from 30 to 20mph. [2] The groups, who cover a range of active travel, health, child advocacy, poverty and environmental interests, are calling for the First Minister to “seize the opportunity” to support the ‘Safer Streets Bill’ currently being scrutinised in the Scottish Parliament. [3]

Lower speed limits, and particularly 20mph in urban areas, would save lives. The groups make a call for government to provide the national leadership it did in banning smoking in public places and in reducing the alcohol limit for drinking and driving. National leadership on this issue would ensure an approach that is more equitable, more cost effective, and offers the greatest scope to reduce casualties.

Adrian Davis, Professor of Transport and Health at Edinburgh Napier University, said:

“There is strong evidence that 20mph limits have had a positive impact on public health where they have been introduced. There is consistent and convincing published research that shows 20mph speed limits reduce collisions, injuries, and motor traffic speed, all important public health concerns in Scotland.”

Professor Steve Turner, Officer for Scotland, Royal College for Paediatrics and Child Health, has previously outlined the organisation’s support for 20mph

“I urge local authorities in Scotland to introduce 20mph speed limits in built up areas in order to create safe and healthier environments for children to walk, cycle and play in”.

ENDS

### CONTACTS:

Claire Daly (Policy & Communications Manager, Sustrans Scotland) on 0131 346 3010.

Colin Howden (Director, Transform Scotland) on 07956 394121.

Representatives of the groups will be available for interview.

**\*\*NOTES TO EDITORS:**

[1] List of supporters

Aberdeen Cycle Forum  
Bike for Good  
British Lung Foundation (Scotland)  
Chest, Heart & Stroke Scotland  
Children in Scotland  
Cycling Dumfries  
Cycling Scotland  
Cycling UK in Scotland  
Edinburgh Napier University Transport Research Institute  
Faculty of Public Health  
Friends of the Earth Scotland  
Glasgow Centre for Population and Health  
Go Bike! Strathclyde Cycle Campaign  
Highland Cycle Campaign  
Living Streets Scotland  
Paths for All  
Pedal on Parliament  
Play Scotland  
Poverty Alliance  
Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health  
Spokes, the Lothian Cycle Campaign  
Scottish Cycling  
Sustrans Scotland  
Transform Scotland  
Women's Cycling Forum

And:

Lee Craigie, the Active Nation Commissioner  
Professor Danny Dorling, Oxford School of Geography and the Environment

[2] Text of letter

An open letter to First Minister of Scotland, Nicola Sturgeon

The Restricted Roads (20mph) Bill (Safer Streets Bill)

Dear First Minister,

We are writing to you directly to reiterate our support for the Safer Streets Bill. The undersigned organisations working in active travel, health, child advocacy, poverty and environment fully support a nationwide move to lower the default speed limit on restricted roads from 30 to 20mph, and believe that the bill is the best way for

Scotland to achieve this. We hope that the Scottish Government will seize the opportunity and support this bill.

Lower speed limits, and particularly 20mph in urban areas, save lives. They are proven to reduce the number, and severity, of injuries on the road. We understand reservations about a 'blanket' approach to implementation, but there are significant benefits to a national approach led by the Scottish Government:

1. It is more equitable. When schemes are introduced piecemeal, there is a danger that the areas with the loudest voices - and where implementation is easiest - get prioritised. Road traffic casualties disproportionately occur in the poorest areas and we believe that leaving 20mph schemes up to local decision making risks widening these inequalities. That does not fit with Scotland's strong commitment to fairness.

2. It is more cost effective. Leaving it up to local authorities to devise, implement and individually promote each 20mph scheme will inevitably cost a great deal more than if the national government does so centrally. Evidence given to the Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee suggests that the Safer Streets Bill will be substantially cheaper for local authorities to implement than the present system.

3. It offers the greatest scope to reduce casualties. The recent Atkins report for the UK Department for Transport found that it was the scheme with 'blanket' provision - in Brighton - that saw the most significant casualty reductions. Current guidelines to only implement 20mph speed limits on roads where speeds are already quite low are too timid. Changing the national speed limit ensures the inclusion of more roads where traffic speeds are higher and will lead to the greatest average reduction in speeds.

A Scotland-wide reduction in speed limits will save lives every year, not only through reduced casualties but as more people choose active forms of travel and the air quality in our communities improves. We cannot wait for individual local authorities to implement this in a few limited areas, as and when they have the resources. We cannot wait for more studies.

We need Scotland to lead, as it did banning smoking in public places and reducing the alcohol limit for drinking and driving. The Safer Streets Bill offers the best chance of safer, fairer roads. The time to act is now.

Gavin Clark, Aberdeen Cycle Forum  
Gregory Kinsman Chauvet, Bike for Good  
Joseph Carter, British Lung Foundation (Scotland)  
Katharine Byrne, Chest, Heart & Stroke Scotland  
Jackie Brock, Children in Scotland  
Keith Irving, Cycling Scotland  
Paul Tuohy, Cycling UK  
Professor Adrian L Davis, Transport Research Institute, Edinburgh Napier University  
Dr Emily Stevenson, Faculty of Public Health  
Richard Dixon, Friends of the Earth Scotland  
Bruce Whyte, Glasgow Centre for Population and Health  
Iona Shepherd, Go Bike! The Strathclyde Cycle Campaign

John Davidson, Highland Cycle Campaign  
Stuart Hay, Living Streets Scotland  
Ian Findlay, Paths for All  
Sally Hinchcliffe, Pedal on Parliament and Cycling Dumfries  
Marguerite Hunter Blair, Play Scotland  
Peter Kelly, Poverty Alliance  
Professor Steve Turner, Royal College of Paediatric and Child Health  
Craig Burns, Scottish Cycling  
Dave du Feu, Spokes the Lothian Cycle Campaign  
John Lauder, Sustrans Scotland  
Colin Howden, Transform Scotland  
Suzanne Forup, Women's Cycling Forum

And:

Lee Craigie, Active Nation Commissioner  
Professor Danny Dorling, Oxford School of Geography and the Environment

[3] Restricted Roads (20 mph Speed Limit) (Scotland) Bill, also referred to as the 'Safer Streets Bill'

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/109191.aspx>

END OF NEWS RELEASE