

# Drivers' opinions of 20mph speed limits



## Objectives

To study UK motorists' attitudes towards 20mph limits and road safety. This survey was first carried out in 2014 and this report covers a repeat of the survey in April 2021 and includes any statistically valid differences from the results of the 2014 survey.

The objectives were to study UK motorists' driving safety attitudes and behaviour in terms of:

- Attitudes towards current 30mph limits being replaced by a 20mph limit
- Priority areas for a 20mph limit
- Perceptions of the main advantages of a 20mph limit replacing the current 30mph limit
- Priority measures to control a 20mph speed limit
- Perceived difficulty in keeping to a 20mph limit when driving their vehicle
- Attitudes towards the road outside their home having a 20mph limit
- Relative importance of enforcement of 20mph limits to other traffic police priorities
- Attitudes towards drivers caught speeding up to 30mph in a 20mph zone being offered a tailored driver education course rather than a fine

## Methodology

1. An online questionnaire was completed by drivers from the CINT access panel of UK residents.
2. 1,004 interviews were completed.
3. The final achieved sample was weighted by region and age group to be representative of UK drivers (excluding Northern Ireland) using data from the Department for Transport National Travel Survey.
4. The sample profile can be found below:

Gender and age group	
Male	50%
Female	50%
Aged 17-24	5%
Aged 25-34	13%
Aged 35-39	16%
Aged 40-49	17%
Aged 50-59	17%
Aged 60-69	15%
Aged 70-80	13%
Aged 80+	4%

Region	
North East	5%
North West	12%
Yorkshire & Humber	8%
East Midlands	7%
West Midlands	9%
East of England	10%
London	12%
South East	14%
South West	8%
Wales	5%
Scotland / Northern Ireland	9%

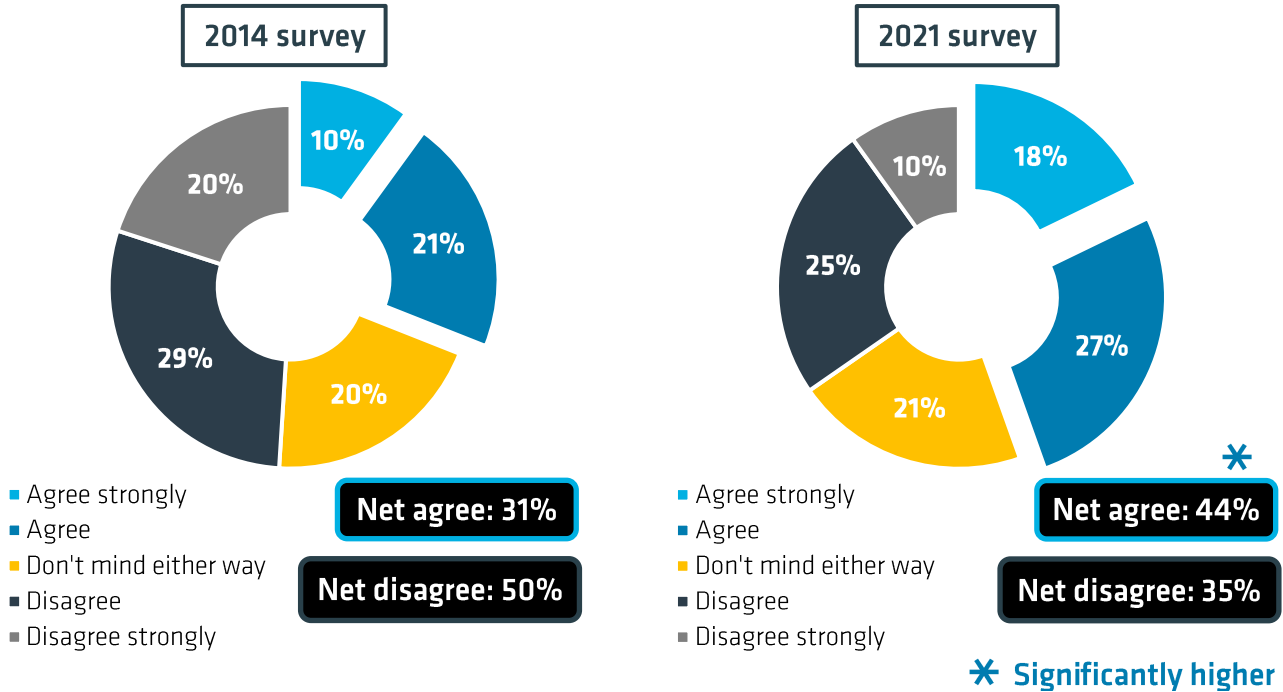
- For each question where applicable, comparison charts are included to compare data collected in 2014 to this year's survey. Statistically significant differences from the results of the 2014 survey have been highlighted with the following: **✳ Significantly higher**
- Following each chart, summarised data tables show an analysis of the data by demographic and key classification questions. Population groups' distributions are colour coded to indicate which are statistically above or below those from the total sample at the 95% confidence level.

## Executive Summary

- Just over four in ten drivers (44%) agree all current 30mph limits should be replaced with a 20mph limit. This is a significant increase to 2014 levels at 31%. Support for replacing all current 30mph limits with a 20mph limit is highest amongst female drivers (49%) and 35-49 year old drivers (53%).
- The dominant reasons put forward by drivers in support of replacing 30mph limits with a 20mph limit are to make the roads safer (49%) and reducing accidents / saving lives (24%). The dominant reasons put forward by drivers who disagreed they should be replaced are that 20mph is too slow and particular areas / roads should be considered for replacement rather than a blanket approach.
- Consistent with 2014, the vast majority of drivers believe schools should be a priority for 20mph limits. Areas with heavy pedestrian flows, accident hotspots and hospitals are also considered secondary and tertiary priority areas for consideration.
- Consistent with 2014, safety for pedestrians is seen as the dominant advantage of a 20mph limit replacing the current 30mph limit (82%). Around a quarter indicated better neighbourhoods, less pollution and less traffic noise are also main advantages.
- Speed limit signs are the highest ranked method of controlling a 20mph speed limit with 37% ranking it first priority. Road humps, chicanes or road narrowings is a close second at 29%, followed by speed cameras at 20%.
- Just over four in ten drivers (43%) indicated they find it difficult keeping to a 20mph limit when driving their vehicle; consistent with 2014 levels (42%).
- Just over half of drivers (54%) would like the road outside their home to have a 20mph limit; significantly higher than 2014 levels (44%).
- Just under two thirds of drivers (64%) believe drivers caught speeding up to 30mph in a 20mph zone should be offered a tailored driver education course rather than a fine; broadly consistent with 2014 levels (66%).
- Drivers' perception of the relative importance of enforcement of 20mph limits compared to other traffic police priorities has increased from 2014. 71% rank enforcement as a high or medium priority this year compared to 62% in 2014.

## Perceptions on whether all current 30mph limits should be replaced by a 20mph limit

Q5. 20mph limits are now common across the UK and many councils and campaigners want to see 20mph as the standard urban speed to replace the 30mph limit. To what extent do you agree or disagree that all current 30mph limits should be replaced with a 20mph limit?



- 44% of drivers agree all current 30mph limits should be replaced with a 20mph limit. 35% disagree and 21% indicated they do not mind either way.
- Agreement levels have significantly increased from 2014 levels, from 31% to 44%. The proportion disagreeing has reduced from 50% to 35%.

## Q5. To what extent do you agree or disagree that all current 30mph limits should be replaced with a 20mph limit?

Percentages show the proportion stating they agree or disagree all current 30mph limits should be replaced with a 20mph limit while colour coding shows those population groups with a significantly higher or lower agreement or disagreement.

	Total	Gender		Age group				Annual mileage		
		Male	Female	17-34	35-49	50-69	70+	Up to 5,000	5,000 - 10,000	Over 10,000
Number of responses	1,004	500	504	182	329	323	170	510	389	105
Net agree	44%	40%	49%	49%	53%	38%	35%	43%	47%	46%
Net disagree	35%	40%	30%	31%	32%	41%	35%	33%	37%	34%

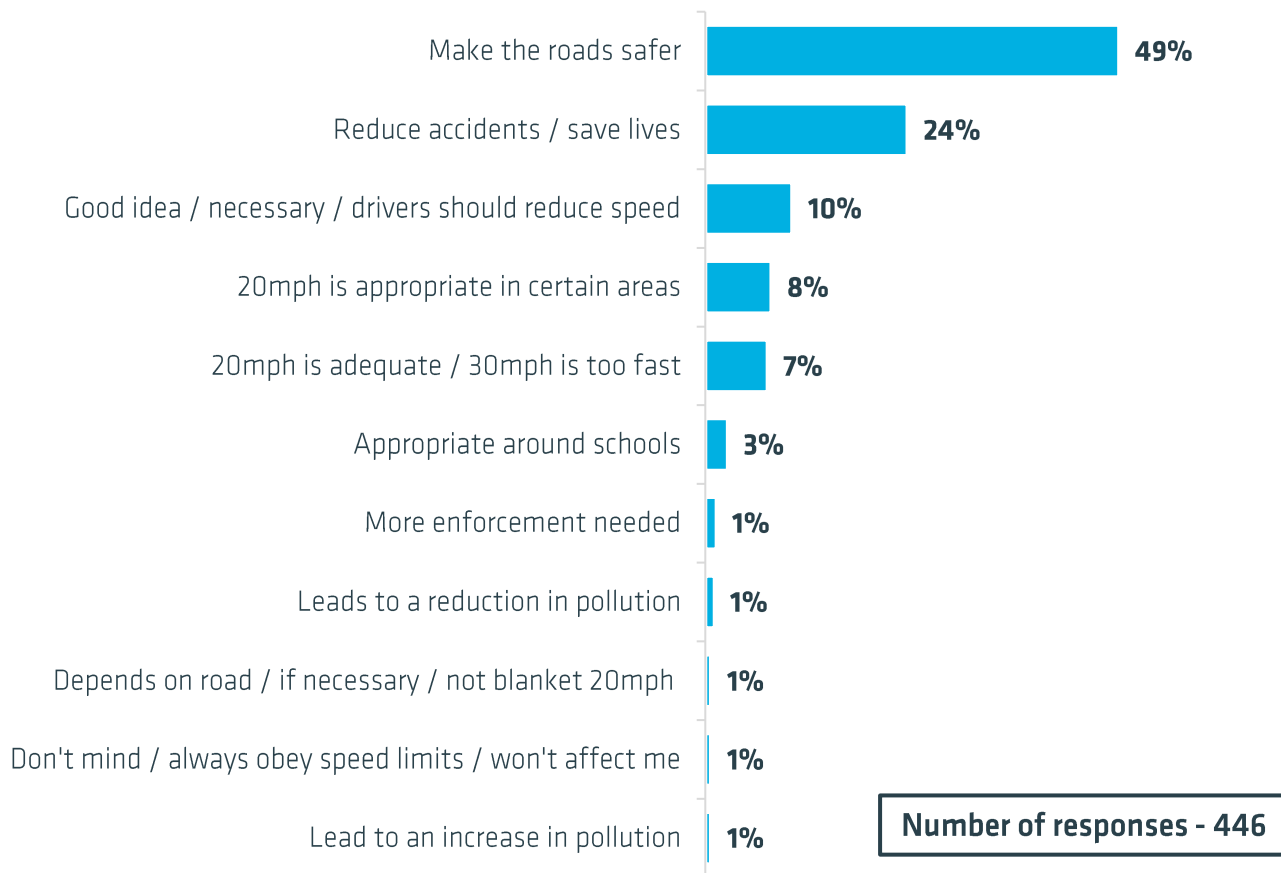
Statistically higher than average

Statistically lower than average

- A higher proportion of female drivers agree all current 30mph limits should be replaced with a 20mph limit.
- A lower proportion of 50+ year old drivers agree, conversely a higher proportion of 35-49 year olds agree.

## Reasons for agreeing all current 30mph limits being replaced by a 20mph limit

Q5b. Why did you say you agree all current 30mph limits should be replaced with a 20mph limit?

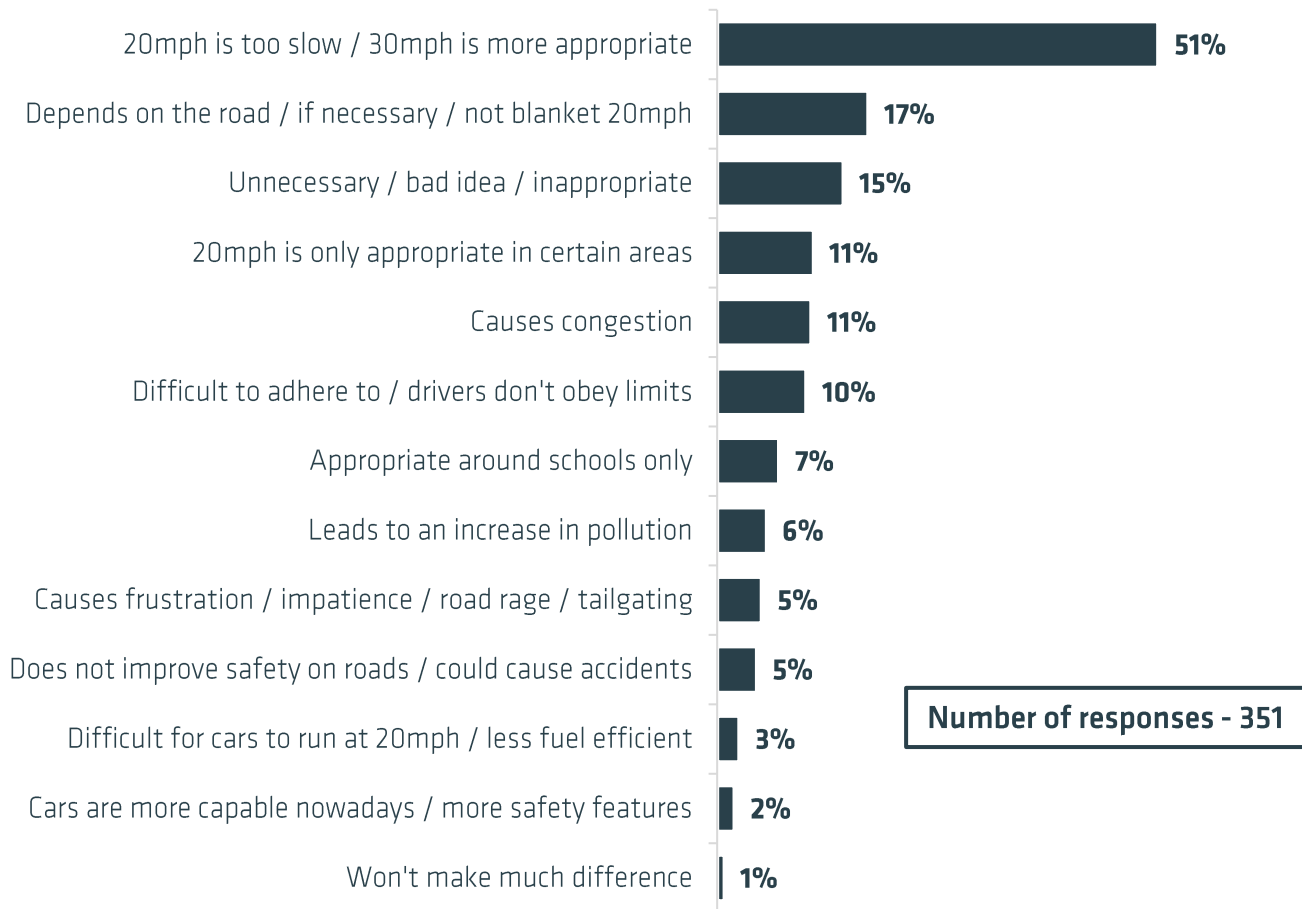


- Drivers were asked to describe, in their own words, the reasons why they agreed all current 30mph limits should be replaced with a 20mph limit. For the purpose of this report, drivers' comments have been grouped into themes to display the proportion of drivers commenting on each theme.
- The dominant reason given by drivers is to make the roads safer at 49%, followed by reducing accidents / saving lives at 24%.



## Reasons for disagreeing all current 30mph limits being replaced by a 20mph limit

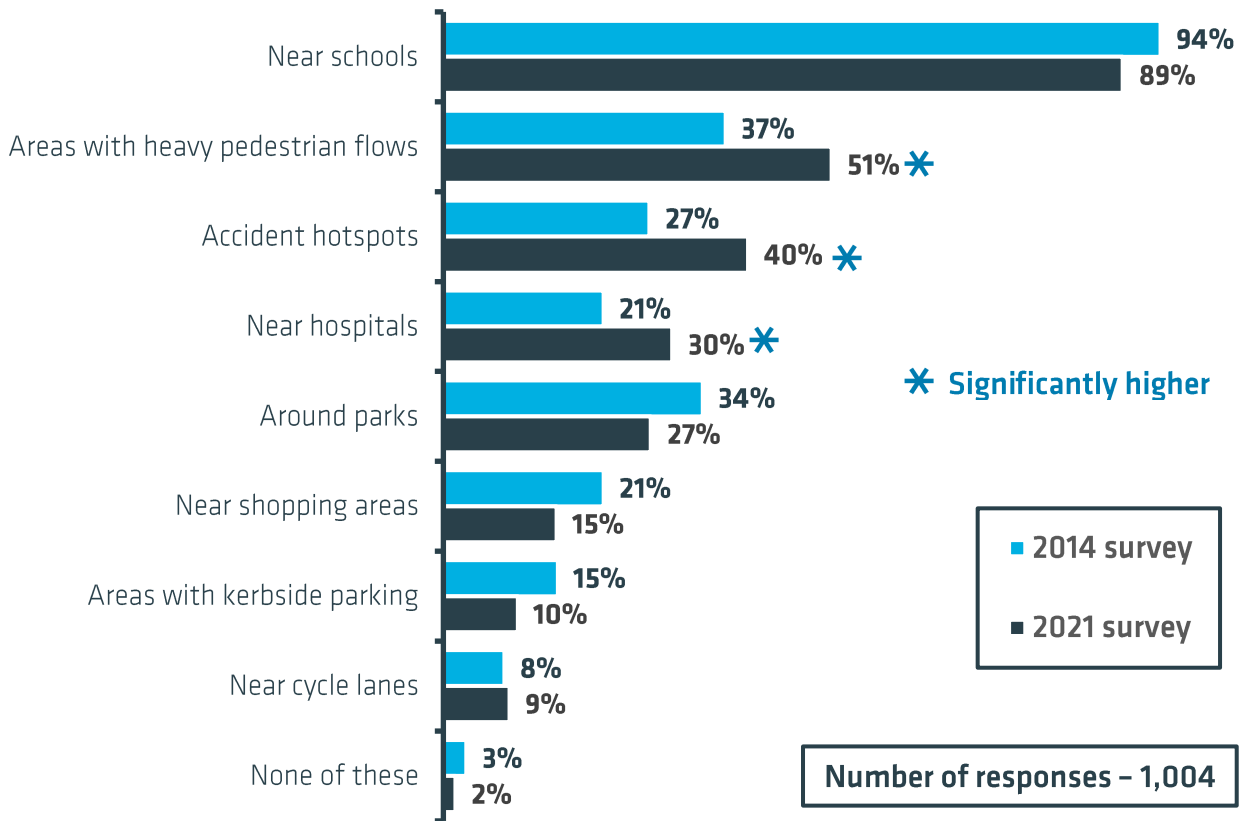
Q5b. Why did you say you disagree all current 30mph limits should be replaced with a 20mph limit?



- Drivers were asked to describe, in their own words, the reasons, why they disagreed all current 30mph limits should be replaced with a 20mph limit. For the purpose of this report, drivers' comments have been grouped into themes to display the proportion of drivers commenting on each theme.
- The dominant reason given by drivers who disagree is that 20mph limits are too slow and 30mph limits are more appropriate at 51%. 11% of drivers who disagree indicated that 20mph limits would cause congestion; 10% of drivers who disagree indicated 20mph limits are difficult to adhere to / drivers won't obey them.
- Other reasons given largely centre around 20mph limits not being appropriate or necessary across all current 30mph limits – 17% of drivers who disagree indicated it depends on the road in question; 11% of drivers who disagree indicated 20mph limits are only appropriate in certain areas.

## Priority areas for a 20mph limit

Q6. Which of the following areas should be a priority for a 20mph limit?



- The vast majority of drivers (89%) believe near schools should be a priority for a 20mph limit; consistent with 2014 results.
- Areas with heavy pedestrian flows, accident hotspots and near hospitals rank second, third and fourth priority at 51%, 40% and 30% respectively.
- A significantly higher proportion of drivers ranked areas with heavy pedestrian flows, accident hotspots and near hospitals as a priority compared to the 2014 survey.

## Q6. Which of the following areas should be a priority for a 20mph limit?

Percentages show the proportion selecting each priority area while colour coding shows those population groups with a significantly higher or lower proportion selecting a response.

	Total	Gender		Age group				Annual mileage		
		Male	Female	17-34	35-49	50-69	70+	Up to 5,000	5,000 – 10,000	Over 10,000
Number of responses	1,004	500	504	182	329	323	170	510	389	105
Near schools	89%	88%	90%	87%	88%	91%	88%	90%	88%	85%
Areas with heavy pedestrian flows	51%	50%	51%	50%	48%	54%	51%	53%	48%	51%
Accident hotspots	40%	37%	43%	37%	42%	37%	44%	40%	42%	33%
Near hospitals	30%	33%	27%	31%	27%	29%	35%	31%	29%	29%
Around parks	27%	23%	32%	34%	36%	24%	11%	25%	2%	30%
Near shopping areas	15%	14%	16%	15%	14%	16%	14%	15%	14%	15%
Areas with kerbside parking	10%	9%	11%	3%	6%	12%	20%	11%	8%	10%
Near cycle lanes	9%	8%	9%	13%	11%	6%	6%	8%	10%	9%

Statistically higher than average

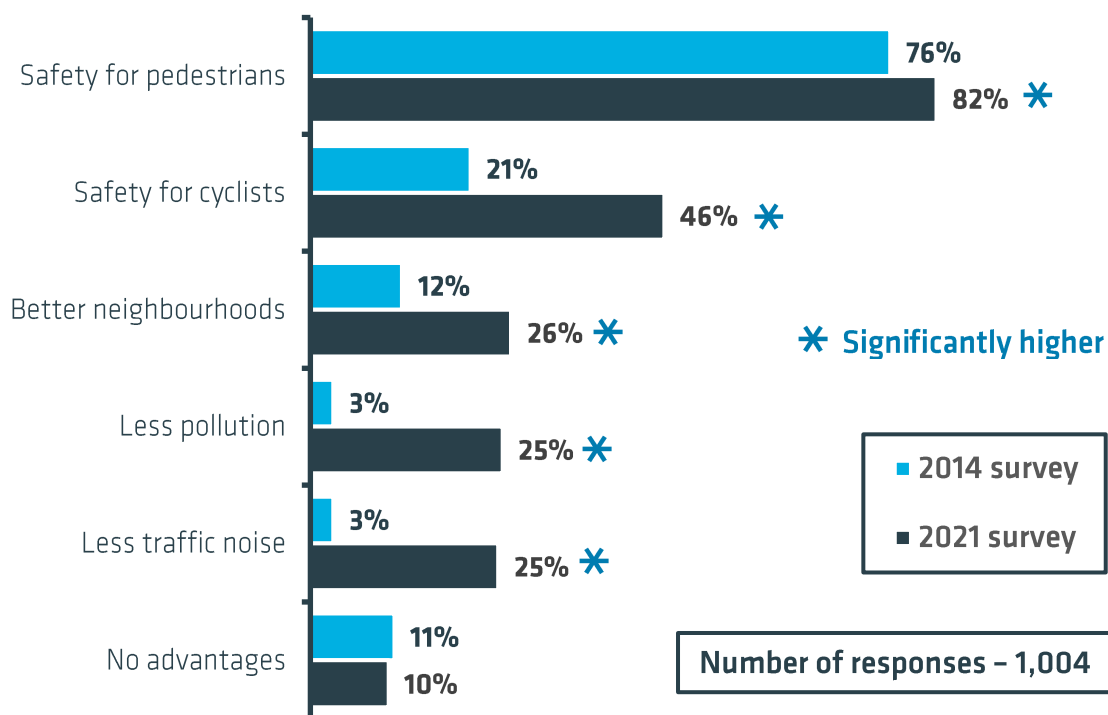
Statistically lower than average

- Near schools, areas with heavy pedestrian flows and accident hotspots are ranked as the highest priorities across all population groups.
- A higher proportion of male drivers rank near hospitals as a priority compared to female drivers. A higher proportion of female drivers rank around parks as a priority compared to male drivers.
- A higher proportion of 17-49 year old drivers rank around parks as a priority compared to 70+ year old drivers. A higher proportion of 50+ year old drivers rank areas with kerbside parking as a priority compared to 17-49 year old drivers.



## Main advantages of a 20mph limit replacing the current 30mph limit

Q7. What would you say are the main advantages of a 20mph limit replacing the current 30mph limit?



- Safety for pedestrians is seen as the dominant advantage of a 20mph limit replacing the current 30mph limit at 82%. Just under half (48%) indicated safety for cyclists is also one of the main advantages.
- Around a quarter indicated better neighbourhoods (26%), less pollution (25%) and less traffic noise (25%) are consider main advantages.
- A significantly higher proportion of drivers selected all advantages compared to 2014, notably in terms of the secondary and tertiary benefits of safety for cyclists, better neighbourhoods, less pollution and less traffic noise.
- Methodological note - Please note there is a slight difference in the way this question was asked of drivers in the 2014 and 2021 surveys. In 2014, this question was asked unprompted, i.e. drivers were not shown a list of response codes to select from. In 2021, a prompted list was shown to drivers to select from. Please consider this when reviewing results.
- Whilst this methodological difference is likely to lead to an increase in more than one advantage being selected, the response pattern from the remainder of the survey alludes to better neighbourhoods, pollution, traffic noise being more front of mind than in 2014.

## Q7. What would you say are the main advantages of a 20mph limit replacing the current 30mph limit?

Percentages show the proportion selecting each priority area while colour coding shows those population groups with a significantly higher or lower proportion selecting a response.

	Total	Gender		Age group				Annual mileage		
		Male	Female	17-34	35-49	50-69	70+	Up to 5,000	5,000 – 10,000	Over 10,000
<b>Number of responses</b>	<b>1,004</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>504</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>329</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>510</b>	<b>389</b>	<b>105</b>
<b>Safety for pedestrians</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>81%</b>
<b>Safety for cyclists</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>52%</b>
<b>Better neighbourhoods</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>29%</b>
<b>Less pollution</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>Less traffic noise</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>No advantages</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>10%</b>

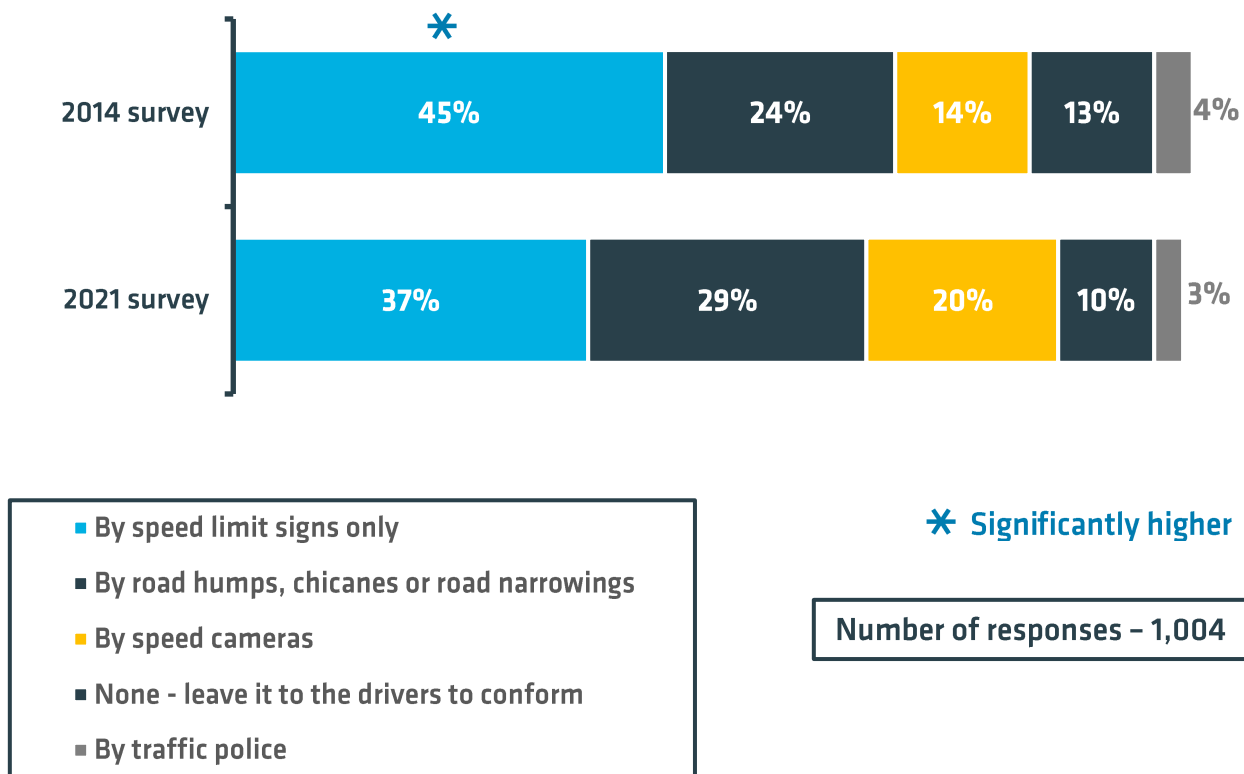
Statistically higher than average

Statistically lower than average

- Safety for pedestrians is ranked as the main advantage of a 20mph limit replacing the current 30mph limit across all population groups. It is, however, highest amongst female drivers at 86%.
- A higher proportion of male drivers selected no advantages compared to female drivers.

## Priority measures to control a 20mph speed limit

Q8. There are various ways of controlling a 20mph speed limit. Which of the following would you prefer?



- Drivers were asked to rank the above areas in terms of their 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> priority. The chart above refers to the proportion of drivers who ranked each area as their first priority.
- Consistent with 2014 findings, speed limit signs rank highest in terms of drivers' first priority at 37%. However, this has reduced from 2014 levels at 45%.
- A higher proportion of drivers ranked road humps, chicanes or road narrowings and speed cameras compared to 2014 at 29% and 20% respectively (although this is not a significant increase).

Q8. There are various ways of controlling a 20mph speed limit. Which of the following would you prefer?

Percentages show the proportion who ranked each area as their first priority while colour coding shows those population groups with a significantly higher or lower proportion ranking the area as their first priority.

	Total	Gender		Age group				Annual mileage		
		Male	Female	17-34	35-49	50-69	70+	Up to 5,000	5,000 – 10,000	Over 10,000
Number of responses	1,004	500	504	182	329	323	170	510	389	105
By speed limit signs only	37%	37%	38%	40%	36%	38%	35%	38%	37%	37%
By road humps, chicanes or road narrowings	29%	25%	34%	34%	38%	22%	21%	27%	31%	34%
By speed cameras	20%	21%	18%	16%	17%	23%	22%	19%	20%	21%
None – leave it to the drivers to conform	10%	14%	7%	7%	6%	13%	19%	12%	10%	6%
By traffic police	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	4%	3%	2%

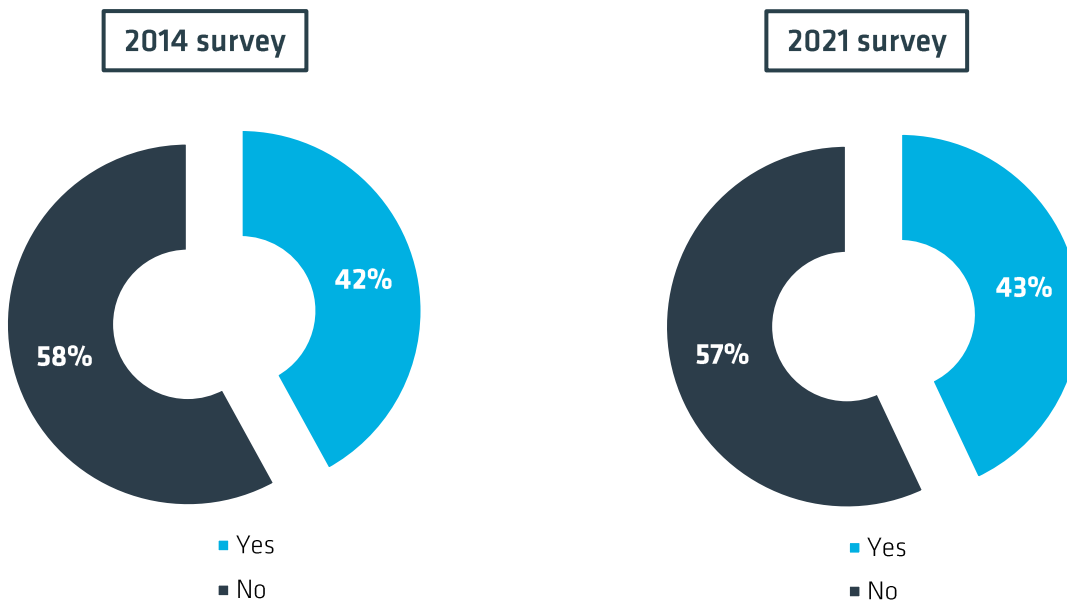
  

Statistically higher than average	Statistically lower than average
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- Speed limit signs is ranked as the preferred method of controlling a 20mph speed limit across all population groups, with the exception of 35-49 year old drivers. Road humps, chicanes or road narrowings ranks a close second amongst female drivers.
- A higher proportion of female drivers indicated they prefer road humps, chicanes or road narrowings compared to male drivers. A higher proportion of male drivers indicated it should be left to the drivers to conform compared to female drivers.
- A higher proportion of 17-49 year old drivers indicated they prefer road humps, chicanes or road narrowings compared to 50+ year old drivers. A higher proportion of 50+ year old drivers indicated it should be left to the drivers to conform.

## Perceived difficulty in keeping to 20mph limit when driving vehicle

Q9. Do you find it difficult to keep to a 20mph limit when driving your vehicle?



- 43% of drivers indicated they find it difficult to keep to a 20mph limit when driving their vehicle.
- Perceptions are broadly consistent with 2014 levels.

### Q9. Do you find it difficult to keep to a 20mph limit when driving your vehicle?

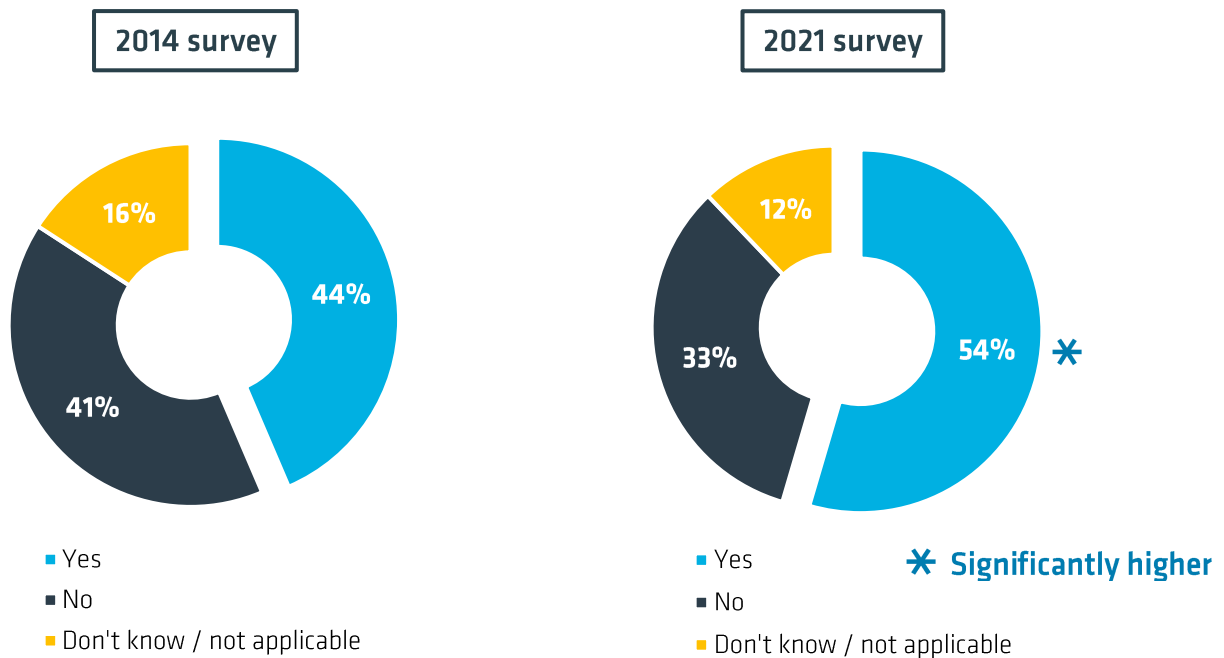
Percentages show the proportion stating they do or don't find it difficult to keep to a 20mph limit when driving their vehicle while colour coding shows those population groups with a significantly higher or lower agreement or disagreement.

	Total	Gender		Age group				Annual mileage		
		Male	Female	17-34	35-49	50-69	70+	Up to 5,000	5,000 – 10,000	Over 10,000
<b>Number of responses</b>	<b>1,004</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>504</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>329</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>510</b>	<b>389</b>	<b>105</b>
<b>Yes</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>49%</b>
<b>No</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>51%</b>

- There are no significant differences in opinion observed by population groups.

## Proportion who would like to the road outside home to have a 20mph limit

Q10. Would you like the road outside your home to have a 20mph limit?



- 54% of drivers indicated they would like the road outside their home to have a 20mph limit.
- Consistent with response to changing 30mph limits to 20mph limits, agreement levels have significantly increased from 2014 levels, from 44% to 54%.

### Q10. Would you like the road outside your home to have a 20mph limit?

Percentages show the proportion stating they would or would not like the road outside their home to have a 20mph limit while colour coding shows those population groups with a significantly higher or lower agreement or disagreement.

	Total	Gender		Age group				Annual mileage		
		Male	Female	17-34	35-49	50-69	70+	Up to 5,000	5,000 - 10,000	Over 10,000
<b>Number of responses</b>	<b>1,004</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>504</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>329</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>510</b>	<b>389</b>	<b>105</b>
<b>Yes</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>59%</b>
<b>No</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>32%</b>

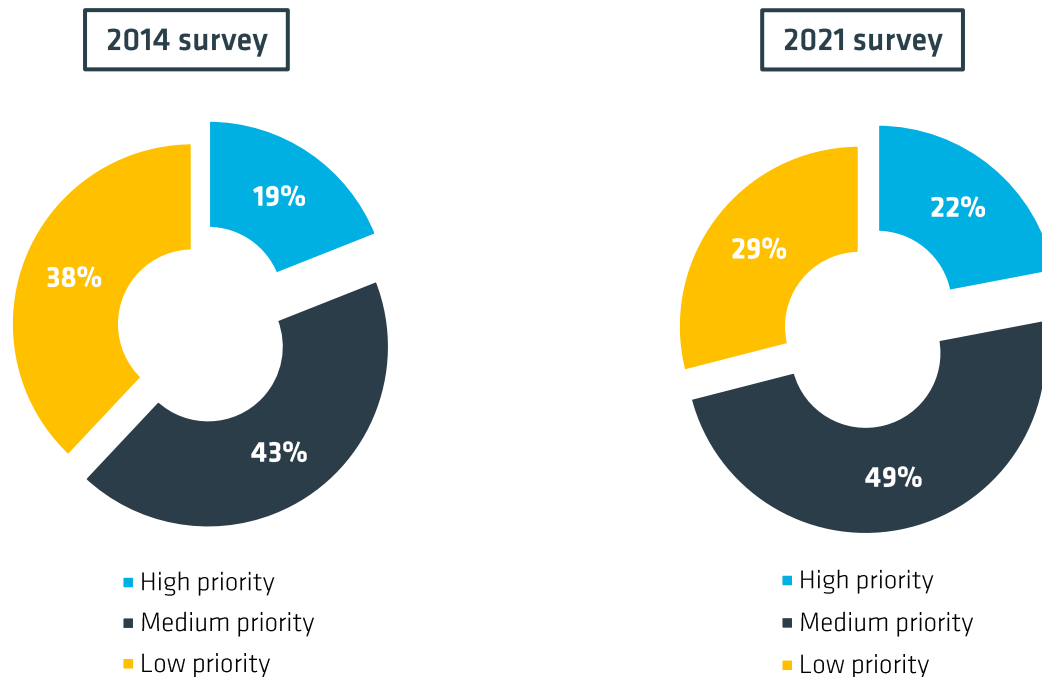
Statistically higher than average      Statistically lower than average

- A higher proportion of female drivers agree they would like the road outside their home to have a 20mph limit.
- A higher proportion of 35-49 year old drivers agree they would like the road outside their home to have a 20mph limit.



## Relative importance of enforcement of 20mph limits to other traffic police priorities

Q11. In comparison to other traffic police priorities how important would you rate the enforcement of 20mph limits? Would you say it should be a...?



- Just over in five (22%) ranked the enforcement of 20mph limits as a high priority compared to other traffic police priorities; marginally higher than 2014 levels.
- Whilst not significant, there is an increase in ranking enforcement as a medium priority. Combined with the proportion ranking enforcement as a high priority, we can ascertain an increase in importance compared to 2014.

Q11. In comparison to other traffic police priorities how important would you rate the enforcement of 20mph limits? Would you say it should be a...?

Percentages show the proportion stating the level of priority they would give enforcement of 20mph limits while colour coding shows those population groups with a significantly higher or lower ranking percentage.

	Total	Gender		Age group				Annual mileage		
		Male	Female	17-34	35-49	50-69	70+	Up to 5,000	5,000 - 10,000	Over 10,000
<b>Number of responses</b>	1,004	500	504	182	329	323	170	510	389	105
<b>High priority</b>	22	21%	21%	16%	29%	20%	17%	19%	24%	26%
<b>Medium priority</b>	49	45%	53%	58%	49%	43%	51%	51%	46%	49%
<b>Low priority</b>	29	34%	25%	26%	22%	37%	32%	29%	30%	26%

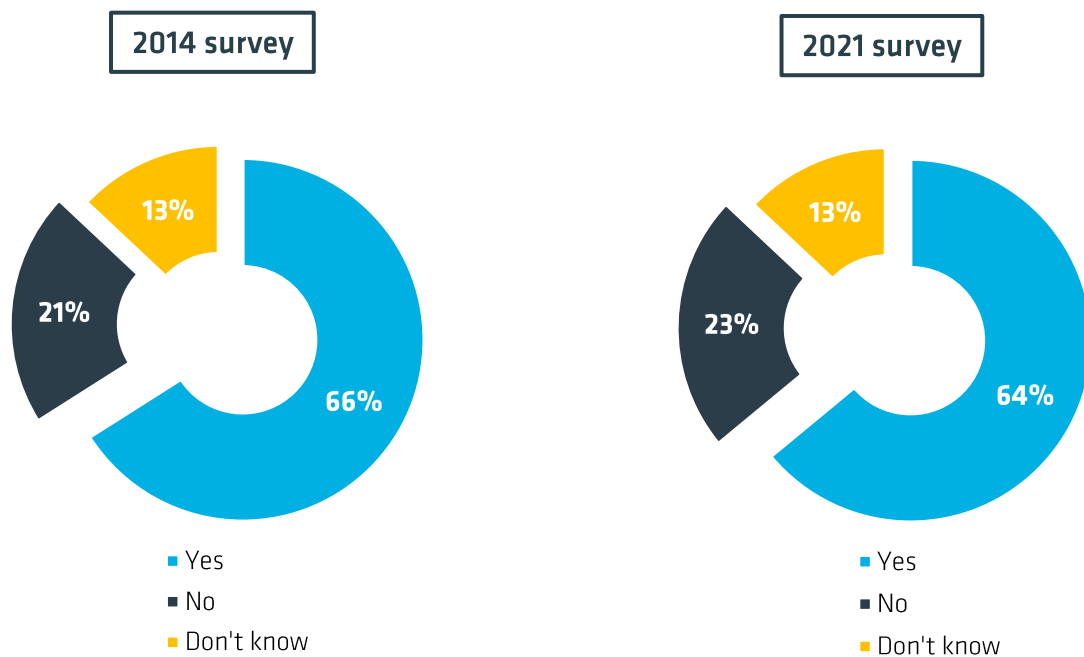
Statistically higher than average

Statistically lower than average

- Combining the proportion indicating it is a high or medium priority implies that female drivers place a higher importance on enforcement than male drivers.
- A higher proportion 35-49 year old drivers rank enforcement as a priority compared to other age groups, notably 50-69 year old drivers.

## Attitudes towards drivers caught speeding up to 30mph in a 20mph zone being offered a tailored driver education course rather than a fine

Q12. Should drivers caught speeding up to 30mph in a 20mph zone be offered a tailored driver education course rather than a fine?



- 64% of drivers indicated drivers caught speeding up to 30mph in a 20mph zone should be offered a tailored driver education course rather than a fine.
- Perceptions are broadly consistent with 2014 levels.

Q12. Should drivers caught speeding up to 30mph in a 20mph zone be offered a tailored driver education course rather than a fine?

Percentages show the proportion stating they would or would not like drivers caught speeding up to 30mph in a 20mph zone to be offered a tailor driver education course while colour coding shows those population groups with a significantly higher or lower agreement or disagreement.

	Total	Gender		Age group				Annual mileage		
		Male	Female	17-34	35-49	50-69	70+	Up to 5,000	5,000 – 10,000	Over 10,000
<b>Number of responses</b>	<b>1,004</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>504</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>329</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>510</b>	<b>389</b>	<b>105</b>
<b>Yes</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>60%</b>
<b>No</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>29%</b>
<b>Don't know</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>11%</b>

Statistically higher than average

Statistically lower than average

- A higher proportion 70+ year old drivers indicated they were unsure whether drivers should be offered a tailored driver education course rather than a fine.

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