

# 20mph survey

Drivers' opinions of  
20mph speed limits



## About the IAM

The IAM (Institute of Advanced Motorists) is the UK's largest independent road safety charity, dedicated to improving standards and safety in driving, motorcycling and cycling. Best known for the advanced test the IAM has more than 100,000 members and is supported by a local volunteer network of 200 groups in the UK and Ireland. We provide driver risk management solutions to businesses through our commercial arm, IAM Drive & Survive, and driver retraining through IAM Driver Retraining Academy.

The IAM's policy and research division offers advice and expertise on road safety, and publishes original research on road safety issues.

## About the survey

The IAM commissioned Lake Market Research in March 2014 to survey 1001 drivers for their opinions on 20mph speed limits and road safety. The survey covers a representative sample by gender, age and UK region.



# 20mph survey



**1** 20mph limits are now common across the UK and many councils and campaigners want to see 20mph as the urban speed limit 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?

**Agree strongly** (10 per cent)

**Agree** (21 per cent)

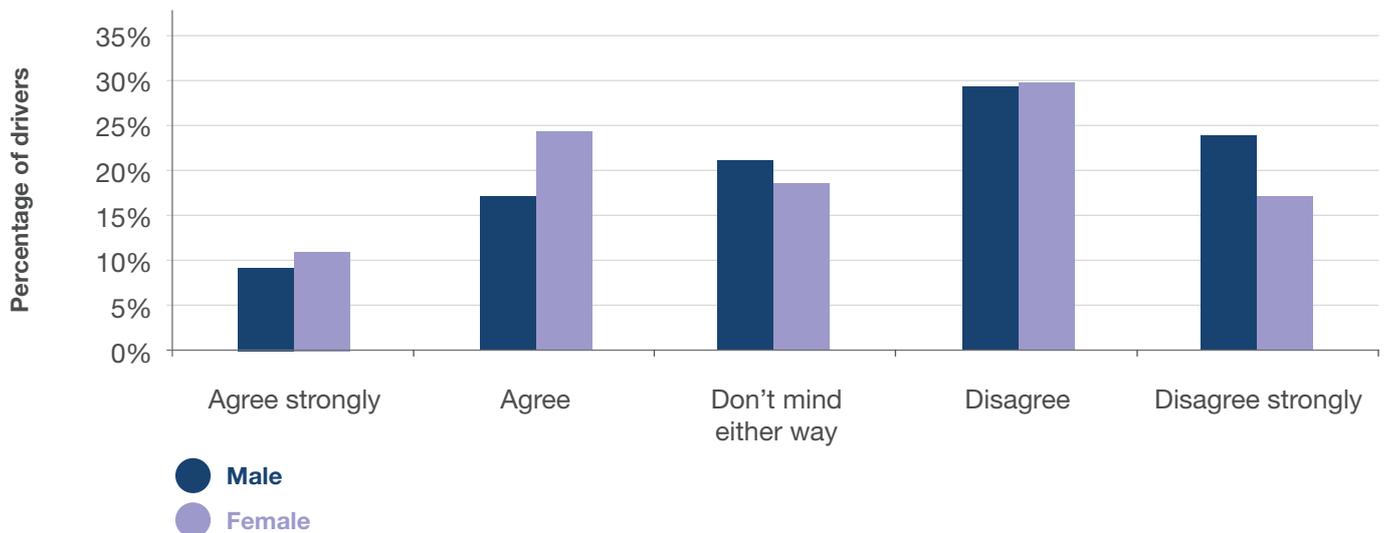
**Don't mind either way** (20 per cent)

**Disagree** (29 per cent)

**Disagree strongly** (20 per cent) (Overall)

## Gender:

To what extent do you agree or disagree that all 30mph limits should be replaced with 20mph limits?

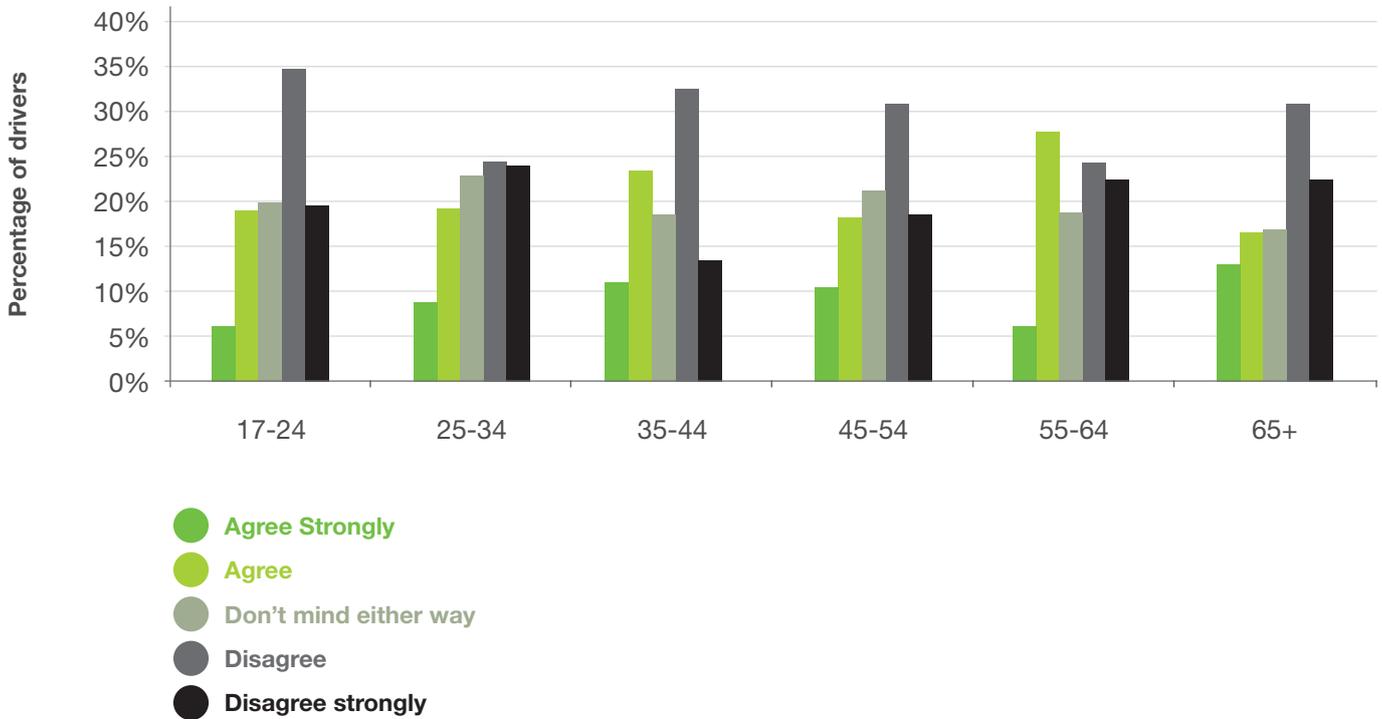


## Key points:

- Both males and females are broadly against replacing all 30mph limits with 20mph limits
- A majority of males (53 per cent) disagree or disagree strongly that 30mph limits should be replaced with 20mph limits
- Just under half of females (47 per cent) also disagree or disagree strongly
- Just over a quarter of males (26 per cent) and 35 per cent of females agree or agree strongly that 30 mph limits should be replaced with 20mph limits
- Around a fifth of both males and females are neutral – 21 per cent and 18 per cent respectively

## Age:

To what extent do you agree or disagree that all 30mph limits should be replaced with 20mph limits?

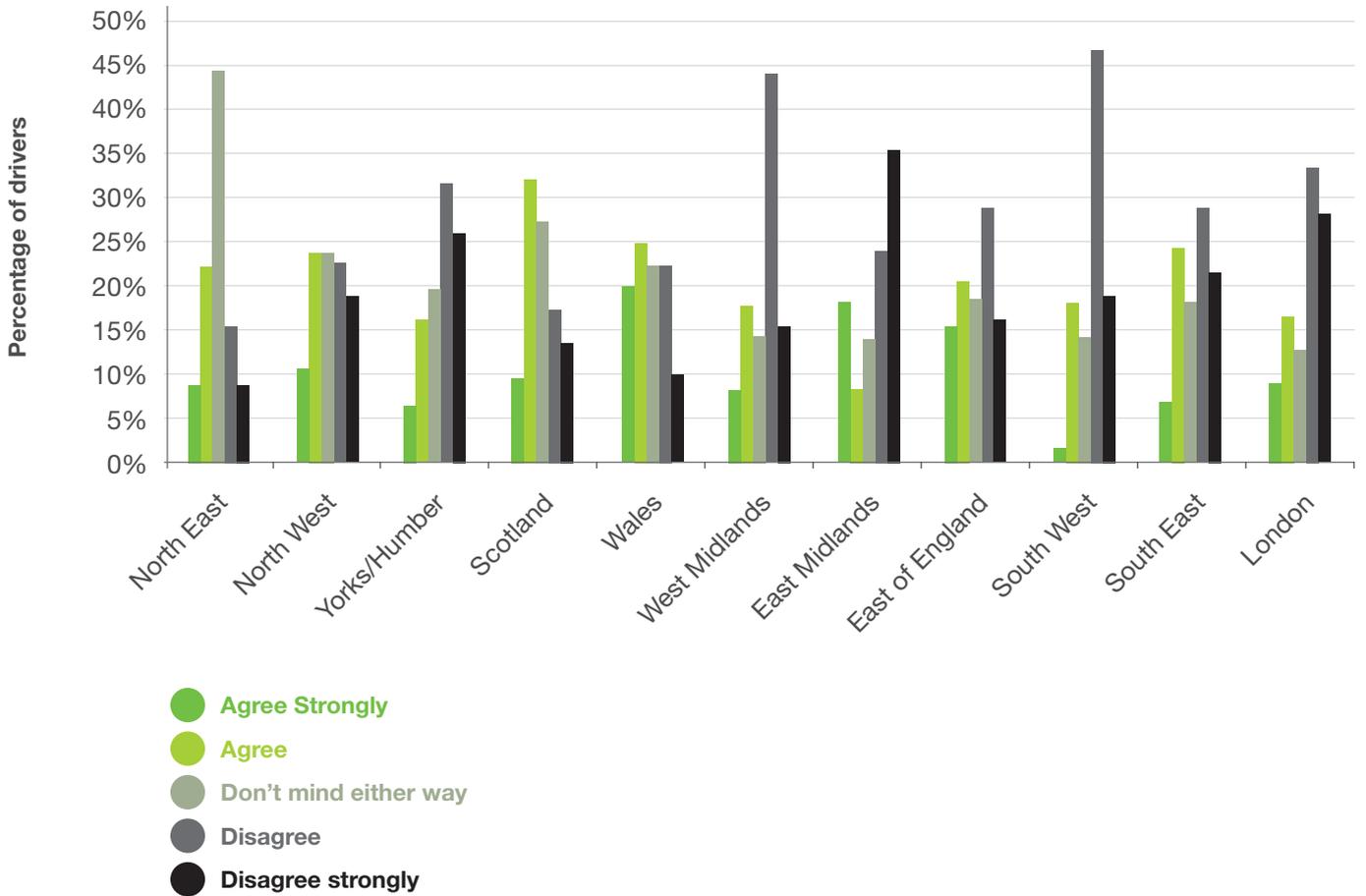


### Key points:

- The youngest drivers are most likely to be against 20mph limits – 55 per cent of 17-24 year olds disagree or disagree strongly
- Drivers aged 25-34 have a broader spread of opinion, but are more likely to disagree than agree (48 per cent)
- Drivers aged 55-64 are most likely to be in favour – 34 per cent agree or agree strongly, compared to just a quarter of 17-24 year olds

**Region:**

To what extent do you agree or disagree that all 30mph limits should be replaced with 20mph limits?



**Key points:**

- Scotland and Wales are the only areas of Great Britain that are more likely to be in favour of 20mph limits than against – 42 per cent and 45 per cent respectively
- Drivers in the North East are slightly more in favour of 20mph limits than against, 31 per cent compared to 25 per cent, but a significant number (44 per cent) are indifferent – the most of any region
- Drivers in the South West are most against a 20mph speed limit – exactly two thirds disagree or disagree strongly

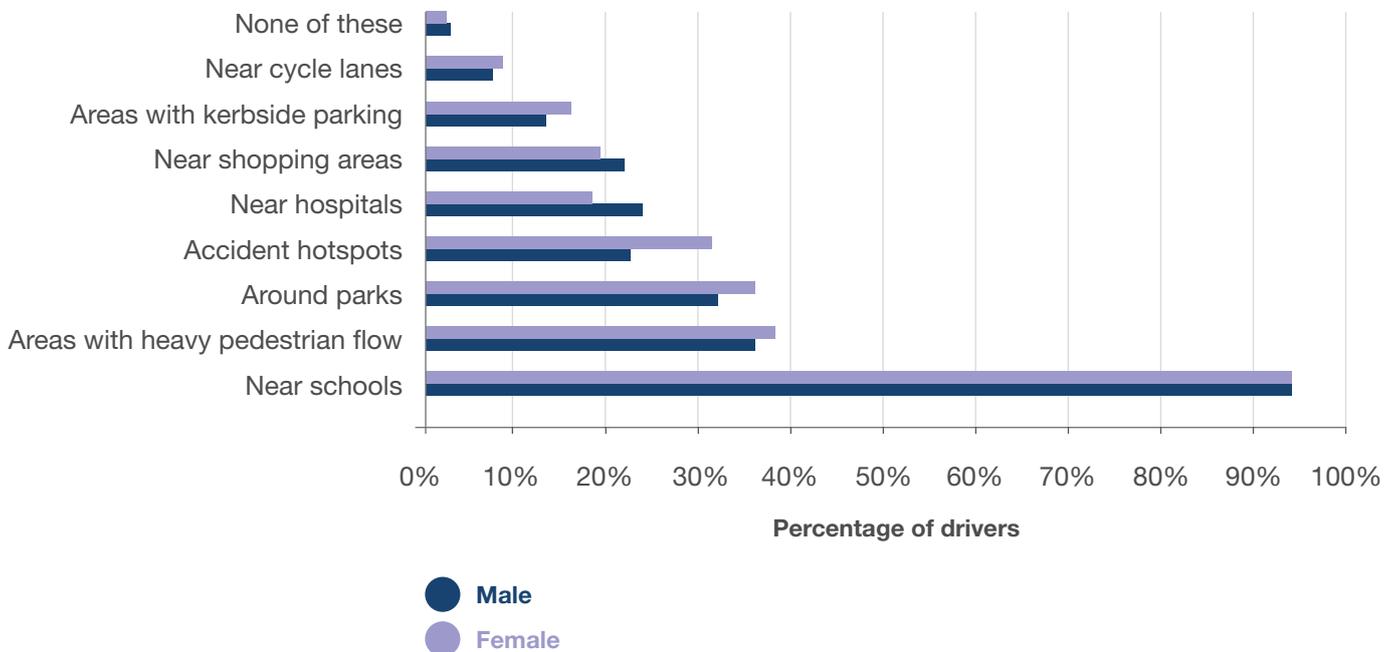
2 Which of the following areas should be a priority for a 20mph limit? – select three

- Near schools (94 per cent)
- Areas with heavy pedestrian flows (37 per cent)
- Around parks (34 per cent)
- Accident hotspots (27 per cent)
- Near hospitals (21 per cent)

- Near shopping areas (21 per cent)
- Areas with kerbside parking (15 per cent)
- Near cycle lanes (eight per cent)
- None of these (three per cent) (Overall)

**Gender:**

**Which of the following areas should be a priority for a 20mph limit? (select three)**

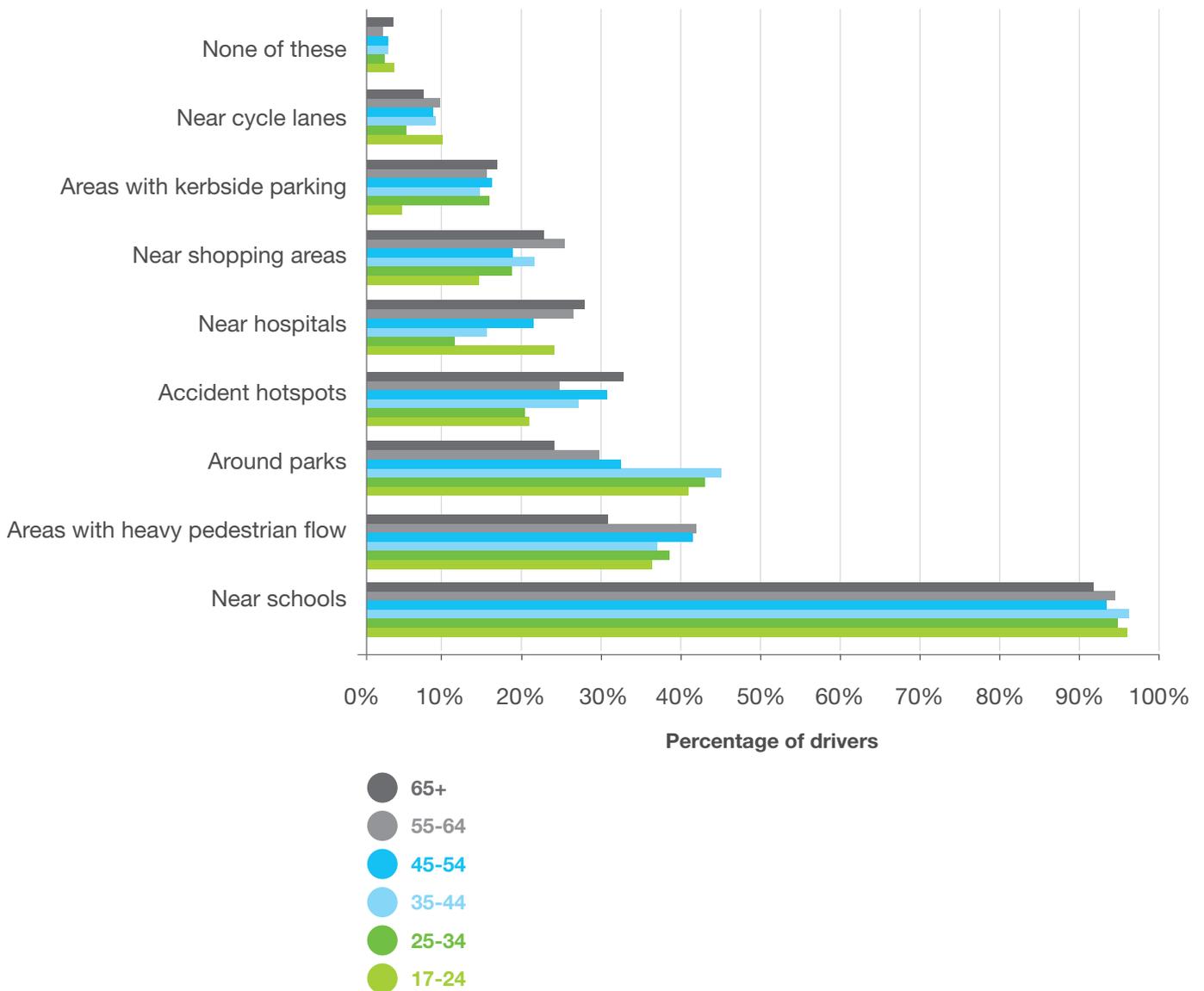


**Key points:**

- Both males and females unequivocally agree that the most appropriate area for a 20mph limit is ‘near schools’ (94 per cent each) – more than double the second priority, ‘areas with heavy pedestrian flows’
- ‘Accident hotspots’ and ‘near hospitals’ is the only notable difference of opinion – female drivers are clear that ‘accident hotspots’ should take precedence over hospitals (32 per cent compared to 19 per cent) – male drivers are split, with 23 per cent selecting ‘accident hotspots’ as a priority and 24 per cent ‘near hospitals’

## Age:

Which of the following areas should be a priority for a 20mph limit?  
(select three)

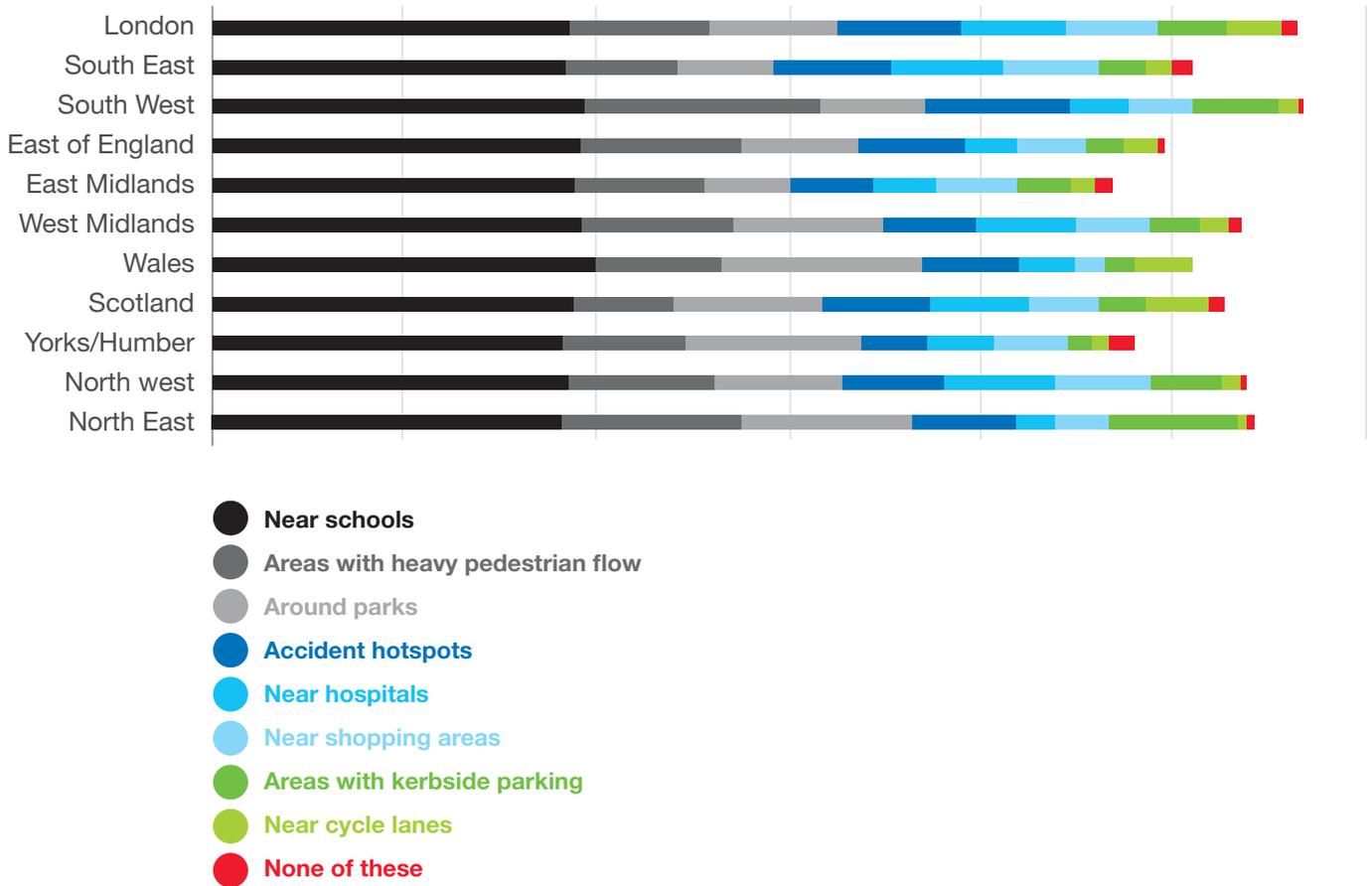


### Key points:

- Drivers of all ages agree that a 20mph limit should be prioritised in an area near a school – over 90 per cent across all age groups
- Younger drivers are generally more in favour of a 20mph limit ‘around parks’ than in ‘accident hotspots’ – older drivers are more split (the rate of drivers aged 17-24 who selected ‘around parks’ over ‘accident hotspots’ is 22 per cent greater – this figure is nine per cent fewer for drivers over 65)

**Region:**

**Which of the following areas should be a priority for a 20mph limit?  
(select three)**



**Key points:**

- 100 per cent of drivers in Wales selected ‘near schools’ as a priority (the only region to do so) – all other regions were above 90 per cent
- The South West is the only region where more than half of drivers selected ‘areas with heavy pedestrian flows’ as a priority (61 per cent)

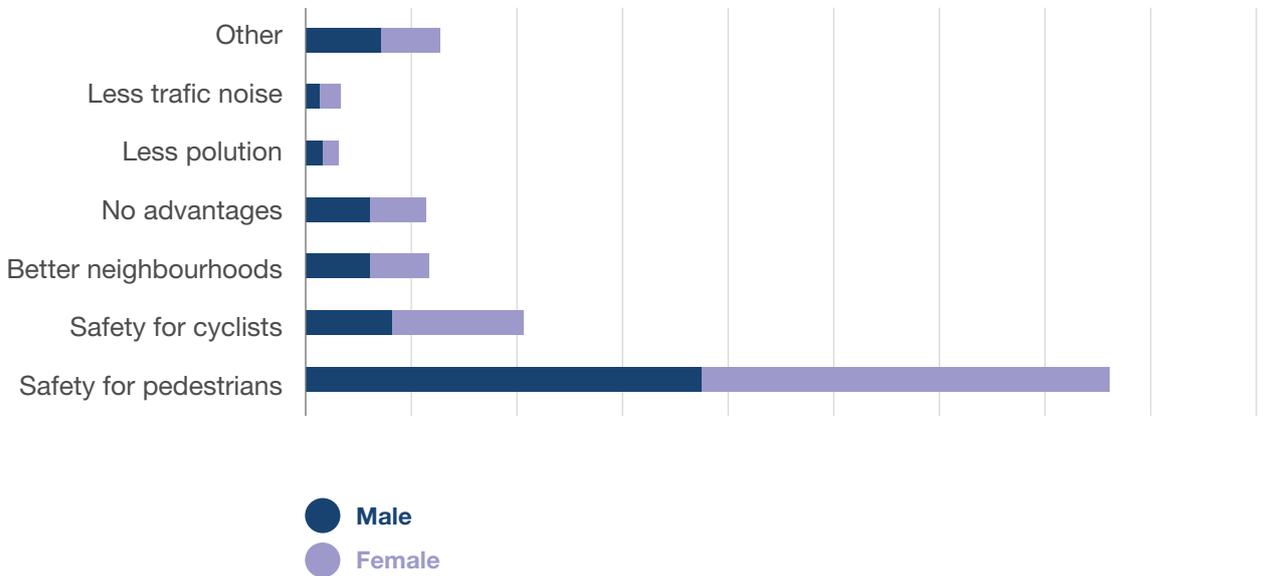
**3** What would you say are the main advantages of a 20mph limit to replace the current 30mph?

**Safety for pedestrians** (76 per cent)  
**Safety for cyclists** (21 per cent)  
**Better neighbourhoods** (12 per cent)  
**No advantages** (11 per cent)  
**Less pollution** (three per cent)

**Less traffic noise** (three per cent)  
**Other** (13 per cent) (Overall)

**Gender:**

What would you say are the main advantages of a 20mph limit to replace the current 30mph?

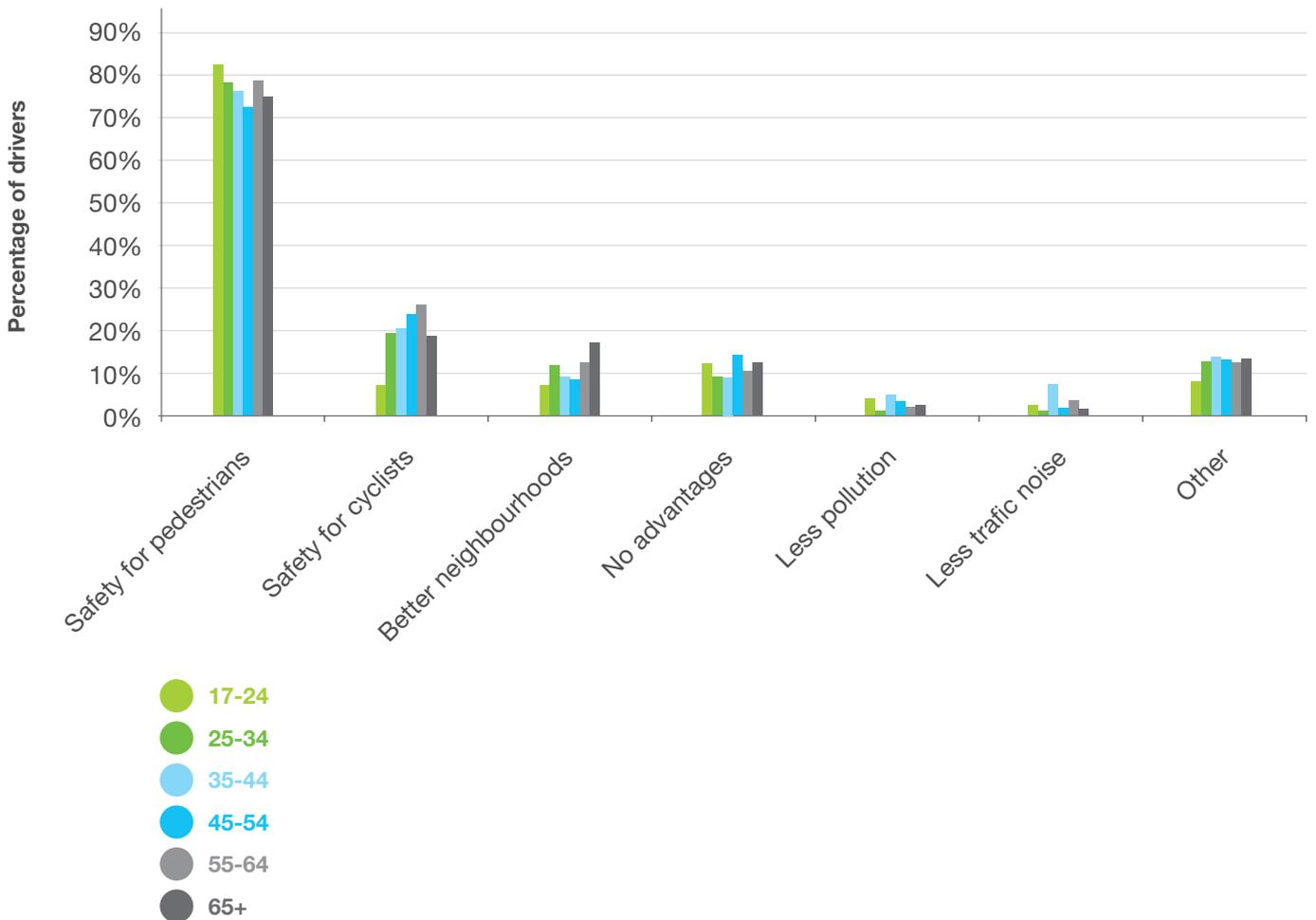


**Key points:**

- ‘Safety for pedestrians’ is the biggest advantage of a 20mph limit – three out of four male and female drivers believe it is one of the main advantages
- Drivers are split on the remaining advantages – the second most common advantage, ‘safety for cyclists’, is agreed by only one in six male drivers and one in five female drivers
- More than one in ten male and female drivers, 12 per cent and 11 per cent respectively, believe there are no advantages to a 20mph limit

## Age:

What would you say are the main advantages of a 20mph limit to replace the current 30mph?

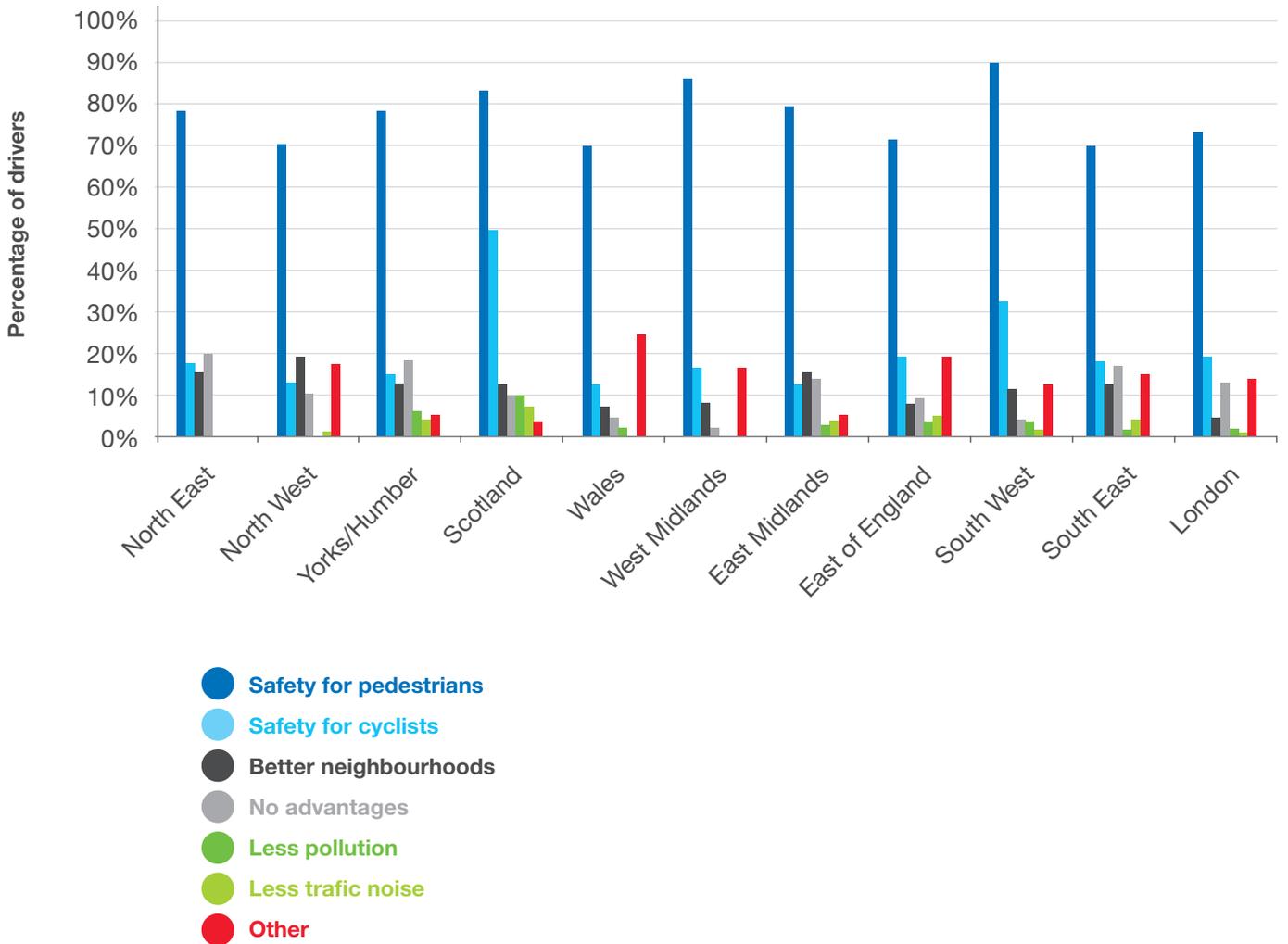


### Key points:

- Around four fifths of drivers of all ages agree that ‘safety for pedestrians’ is the main advantage of 20mph limits, with the exception of drivers aged 45-54 – just under three quarters (73 per cent) selected ‘safety for pedestrians’ as an advantage
- Older drivers are generally more likely to select ‘safety for cyclists’ as an advantage – drivers aged 55-64 (26 per cent) compared to drivers aged 17-24 (seven per cent)

**Region:**

What would you say are the main advantages of a 20mph limit to replace the current 30mph?



**Key points:**

- All regions agree that ‘safety for pedestrians’ is the main advantage of 20mph limits – drivers in the South West have the highest proportion (89 per cent), while drivers in the South East, Wales and the North West have the lowest proportion (70 per cent)
- A significant number of drivers in Scotland (49 per cent) believe ‘safety for cyclists’ is one of the main advantages – 17 per cent higher than the South West – the region where ‘safety for cyclists’ was the next most common after Scotland



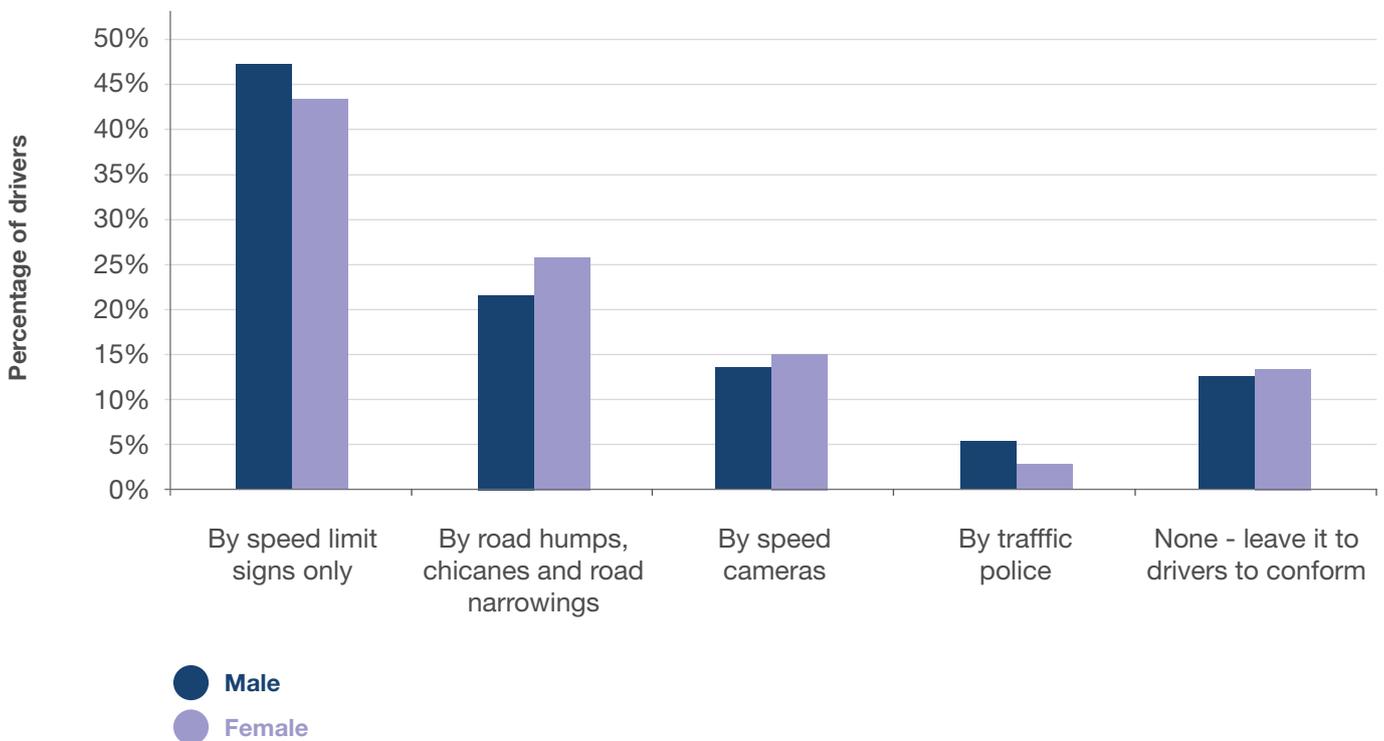
**4** There are various ways of controlling a 20mph speed limit. Which of the following would you prefer?

**By speed limit signs only** (45 per cent)  
**By road humps, chicanes or road narrowing's** (24 per cent)  
**By speed cameras** (14 per cent)

**By traffic police** (four per cent)  
**None – leave it to the drivers to conform** (13 per cent) (Overall)

**Gender:**

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

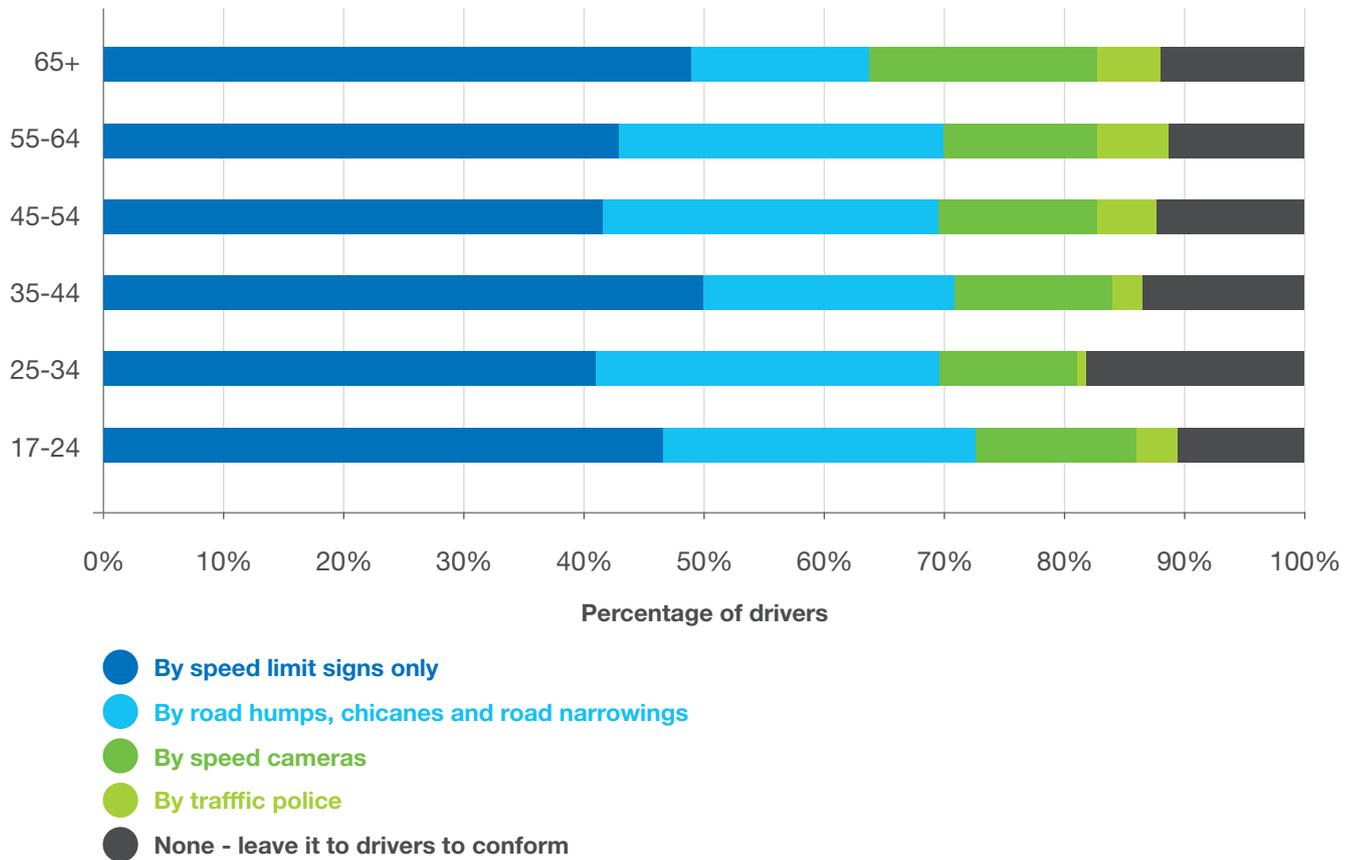


**Key points:**

- Speed signs are the preferred option for both males and females as a way of controlling 20mph speed limits (47 per cent and 43 per cent respectively)
- Female drivers are less definitive in their preferred top two options – the gap between speed signs and road humps is 17 per cent for females and 25 per cent for males
- A very small number are in favour of 20mph limits being controlled by traffic police – five per cent for males and three per cent for females
- 13 per cent of both male and female drivers believe there should be no controls in place

## Age:

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

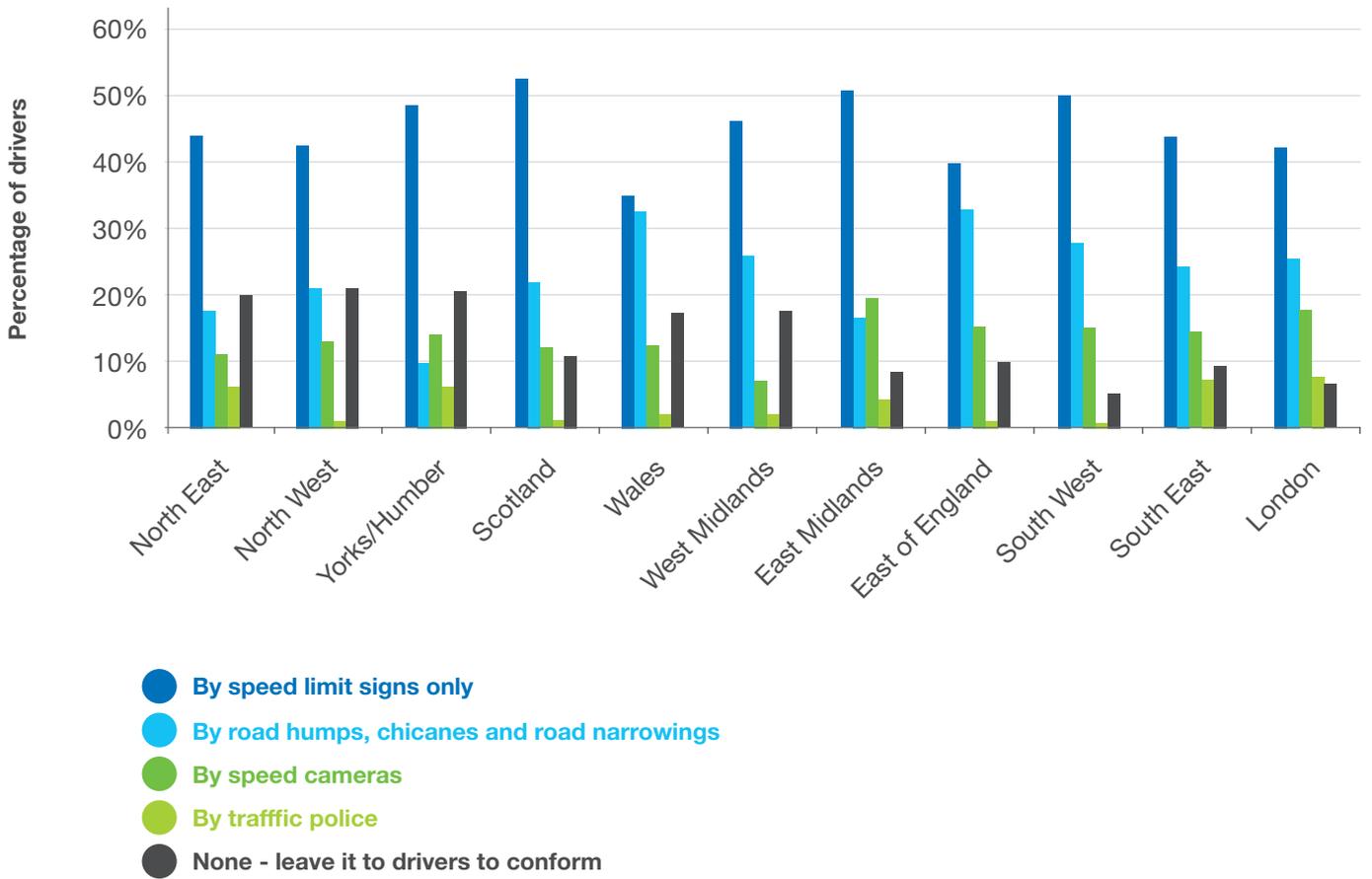


### Key points:

- Exactly half of drivers aged 35-44 would prefer speed signs as a way of controlling 20mph limits – the most of any age group
- The oldest drivers are most likely to be in favour of speed cameras than any other age group – almost a fifth (19 per cent), compared to just over one in 10 (12 per cent) drivers aged 25-34
- Drivers aged 25-34 the most likely to believe there should be no controls (18 per cent)

**Region:**

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



**Key points:**

- Nine out of 11 regions have speed signs and road humps, chicanes or narrowing’s as their top two methods of controlling 20mph limits
- The East Midlands and Yorkshire and the Humber are the only regions to prefer speed cameras over road humps
- At least half of drivers in three regions would prefer speed signs only as a way of controlling 20mph limits – Scotland (53 per cent), East Midlands (51 per cent) and the South West (50 per cent)

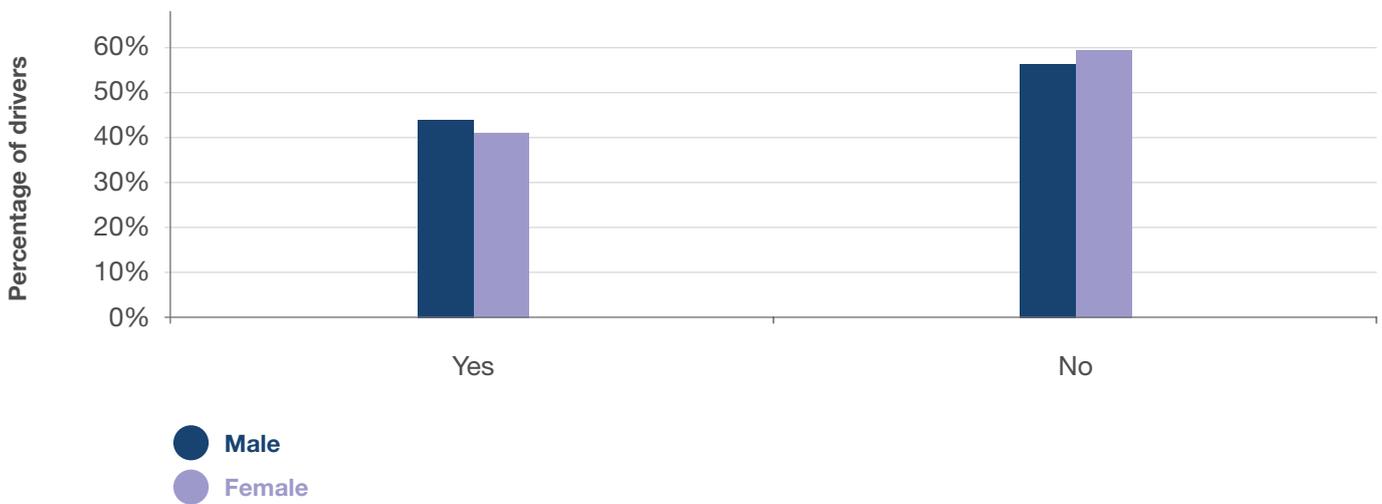
**5** Do you find it difficult to keep to a 20mph limit when driving your vehicle?

**Yes** (42 per cent)

**No** (58 per cent) (Overall)

**Gender:**

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

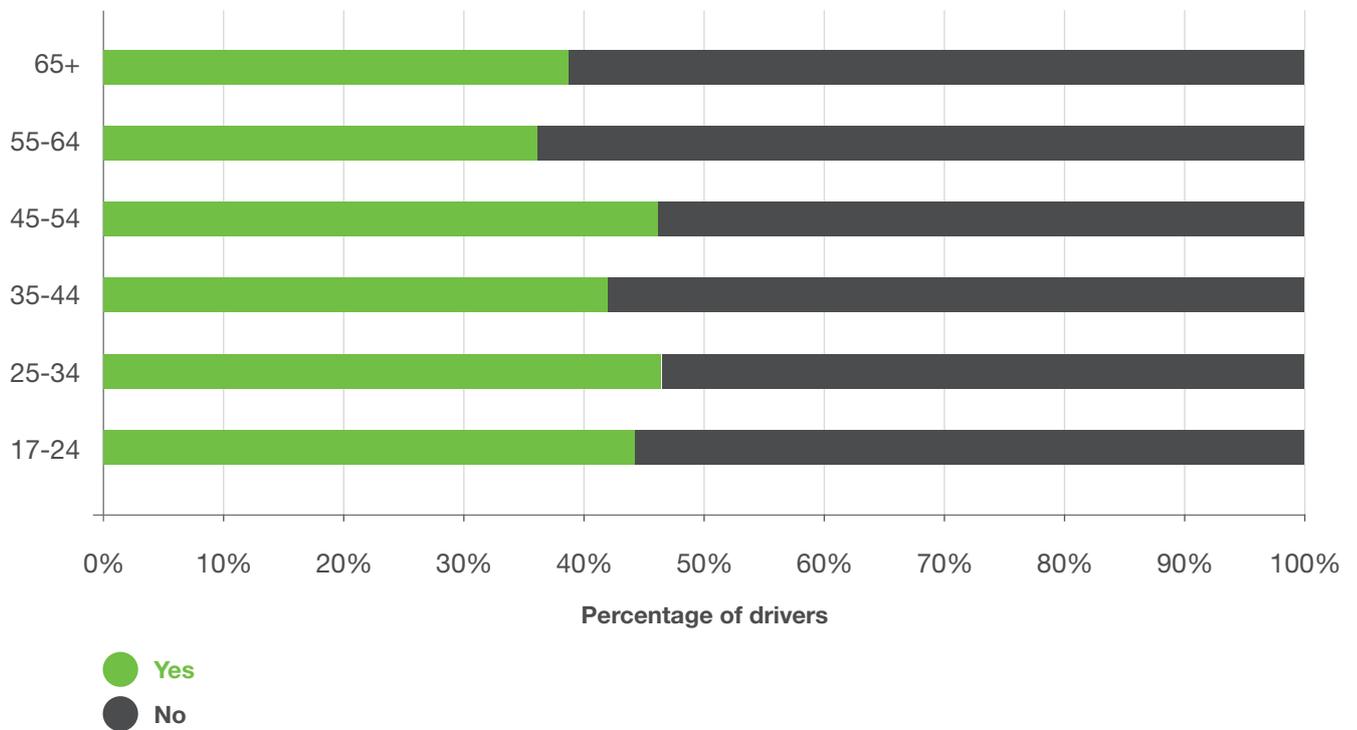


**Key points:**

- A slim majority of both males and females do not find it difficult to keep to a 20mph limit when driving
- Females find it marginally easier to keep to a 20mph limit – a margin of 18 per cent, compared to a margin of 12 per cent for males

## Age:

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

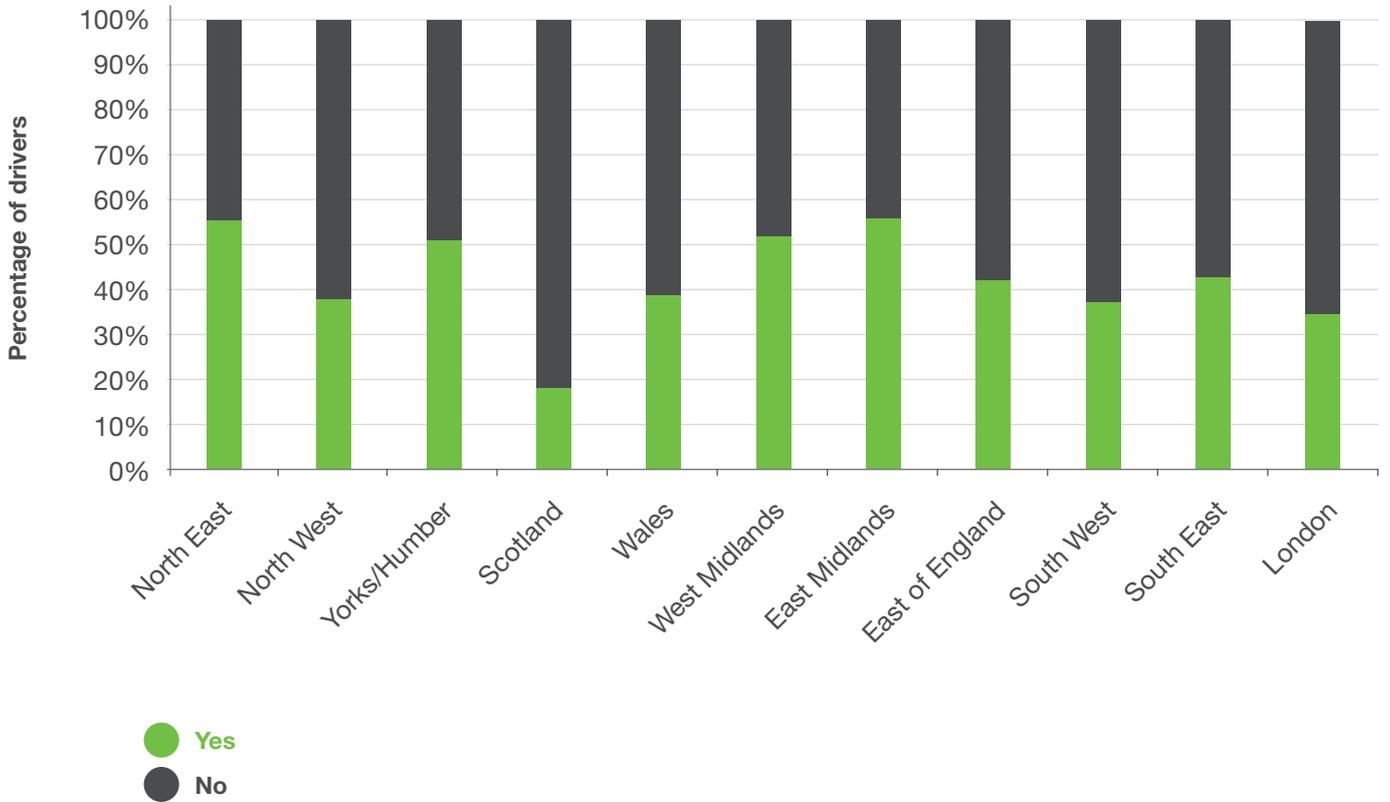


### Key points:

- Drivers across all age groups are more likely to say they do not find it difficult to keep to a 20mph limit when driving
- Drivers aged 55-64 find it the easiest to stick to a 20mph limit – almost two thirds (64 per cent) say they do not find it difficult
- Drivers aged 45-54 are the most likely to say they do find it difficult – just under half (46 per cent)

**Region:**

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



**Key points:**

- Four out of five drivers in Scotland do not find it difficult to keep to a 20mph limit – the most of any region
- Drivers in the North East and East Midlands find it the most difficult – 56 per cent each say they find it difficult to keep to a 20mph limit



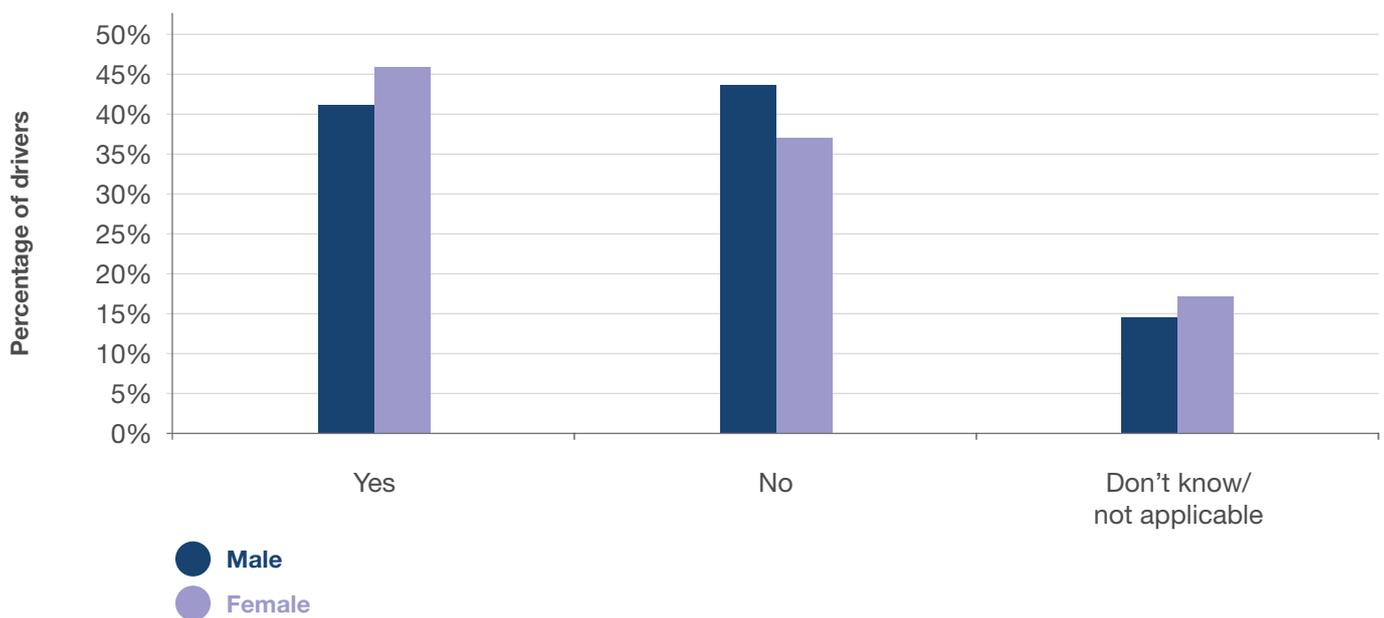
**Yes** (44 per cent)

**No** (41 per cent)

**Don't know/not applicable** (16 per cent) (Overall)

### Gender:

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

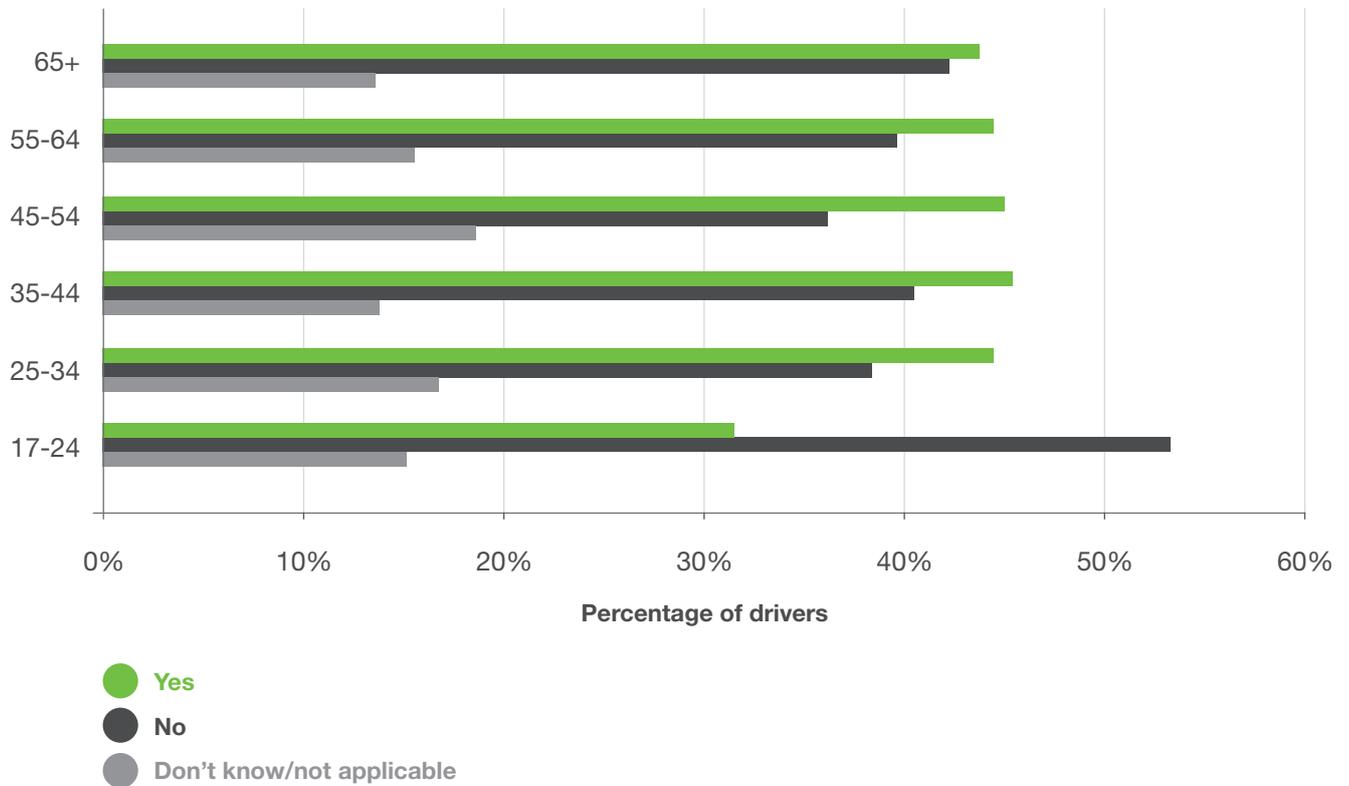


### Key points:

- A slim majority of males (three per cent) would not like the road outside their home to have a 20mph limit (44 per cent compared to 41 per cent)
- In contrast, nine per cent more females would like to see a 20mph limit on the road outside their home than not (46 per cent compared to 37 per cent)

## Age:

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

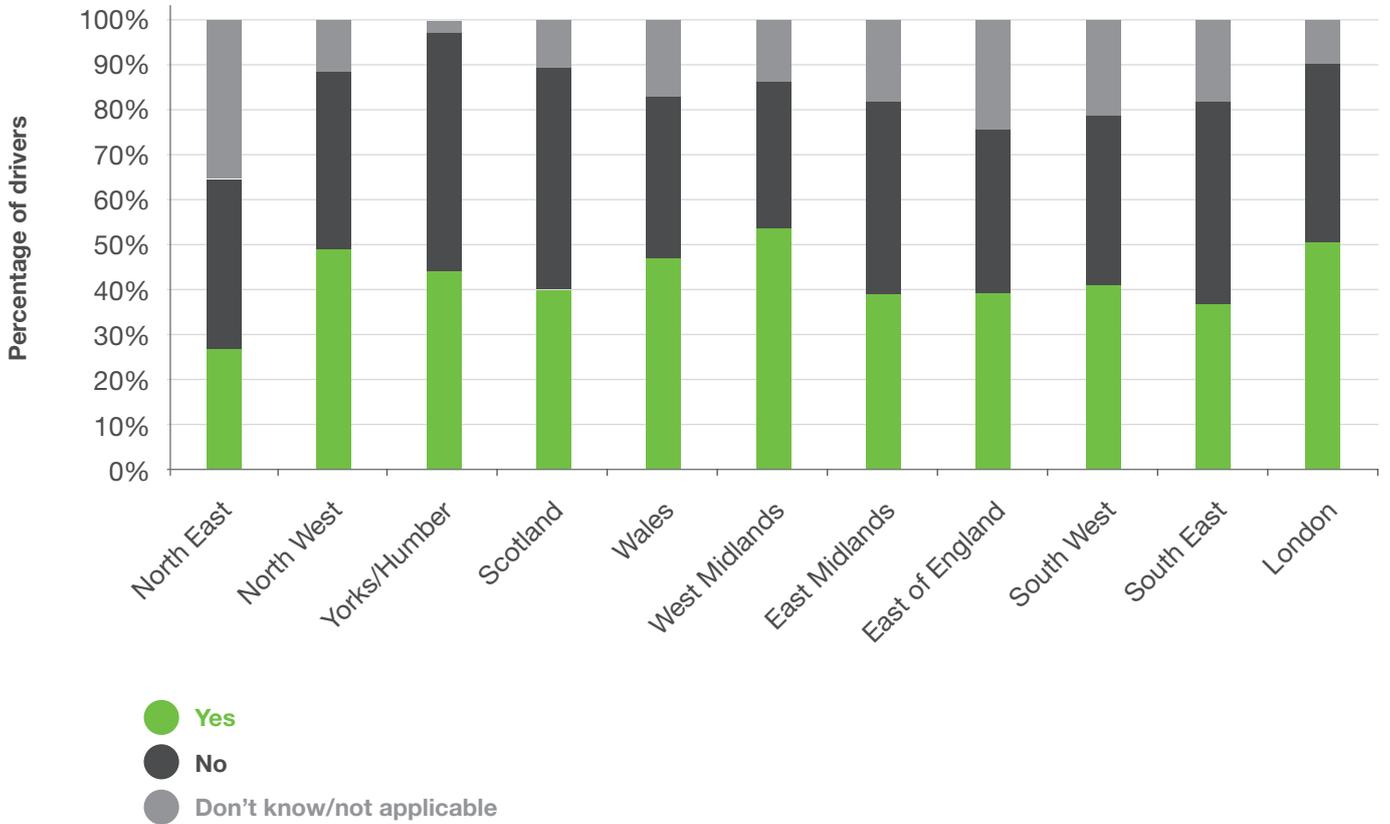


### Key points:

- More than half of drivers (53 per cent) aged 17-24 do not want the road outside their home to have a 20mph limit – the most of any age group and the only group to have a majority of drivers against
- Drivers across the remaining five age groups (25 and over) have similar levels of support for a 20mph limit outside their home (44 or 45 per cent in favour, 36 to 42 per cent against)
- Drivers aged 45-54 are the most likely to say don't know/not applicable (one in five)

**Region:**

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



**Key points:**

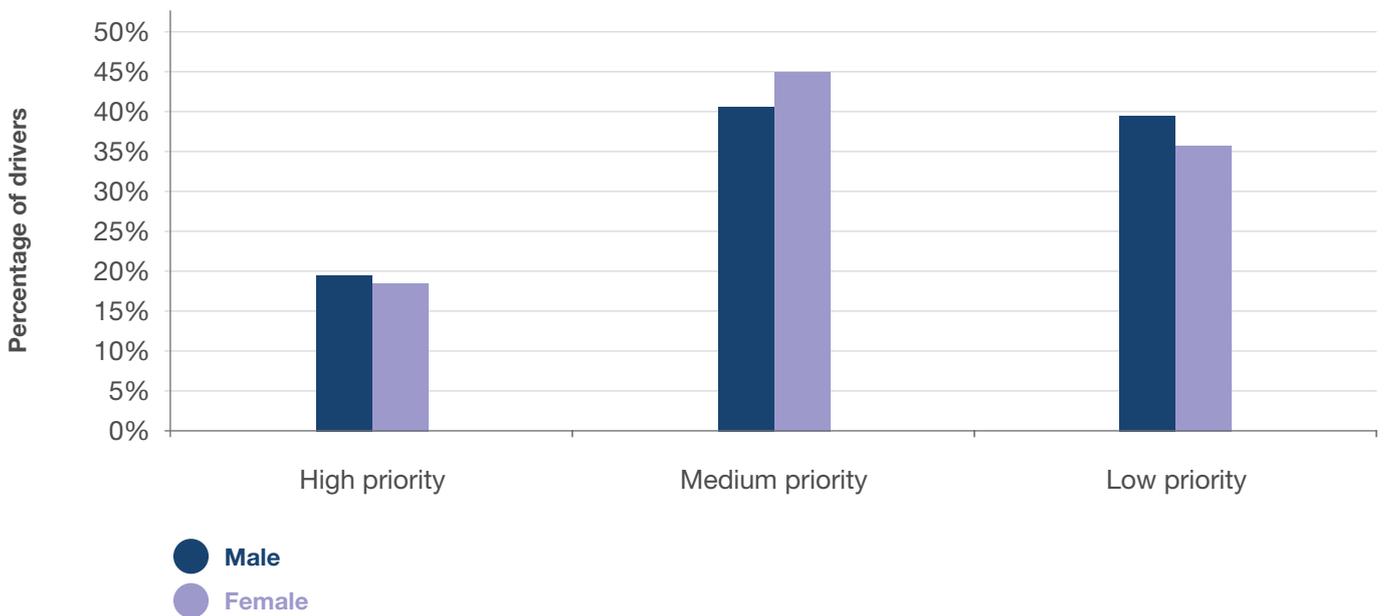
- Drivers in London and the West Midlands are the only groups to have majority support for 20mph limits outside their home – 51 per cent and 54 per cent respectively
- Support is lowest in the North East (27 per cent in favour), however over half of drivers (52 per cent) in Yorkshire and the Humber have explicitly stated they are against a 20mph limit outside their home – the only region to have majority support against
- Drivers in the North East are the most likely to say don't know/not applicable (36 per cent)

**7** In comparison to other traffic police priorities, how important would you rate the enforcement of 20mph limits?

**High priority** (19 per cent)  
**Medium priority** (43 per cent)  
**Low priority** (38 per cent) (Overall)

**Gender:**

In comparison to other traffic police priorities how important would you rate the enforcement of 20mph limits?

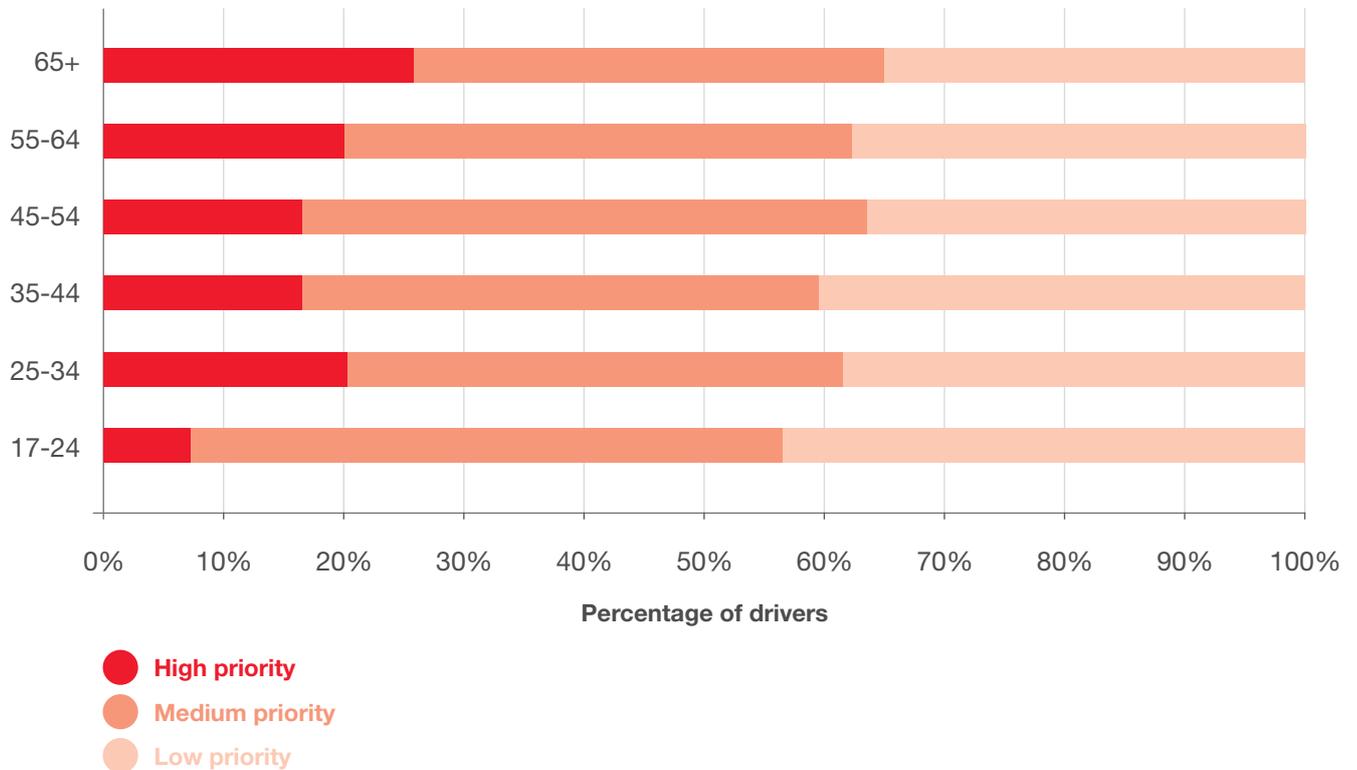


**Key points:**

- A slim majority of females view the enforcement of 20mph limits as more important than males – 64 per cent believe it should be a medium or a high priority, compared to 61 per cent of males
- A significant number believe it should be a low priority – 40 per cent for males and 36 per cent for females – suggesting many believe effective enforcement may be an issue
- A fifth of males and just under a fifth of females (18 per cent) believe it should be a high priority

## Age:

In comparison to other traffic police priorities how important would you rate the enforcement of 20mph limits?

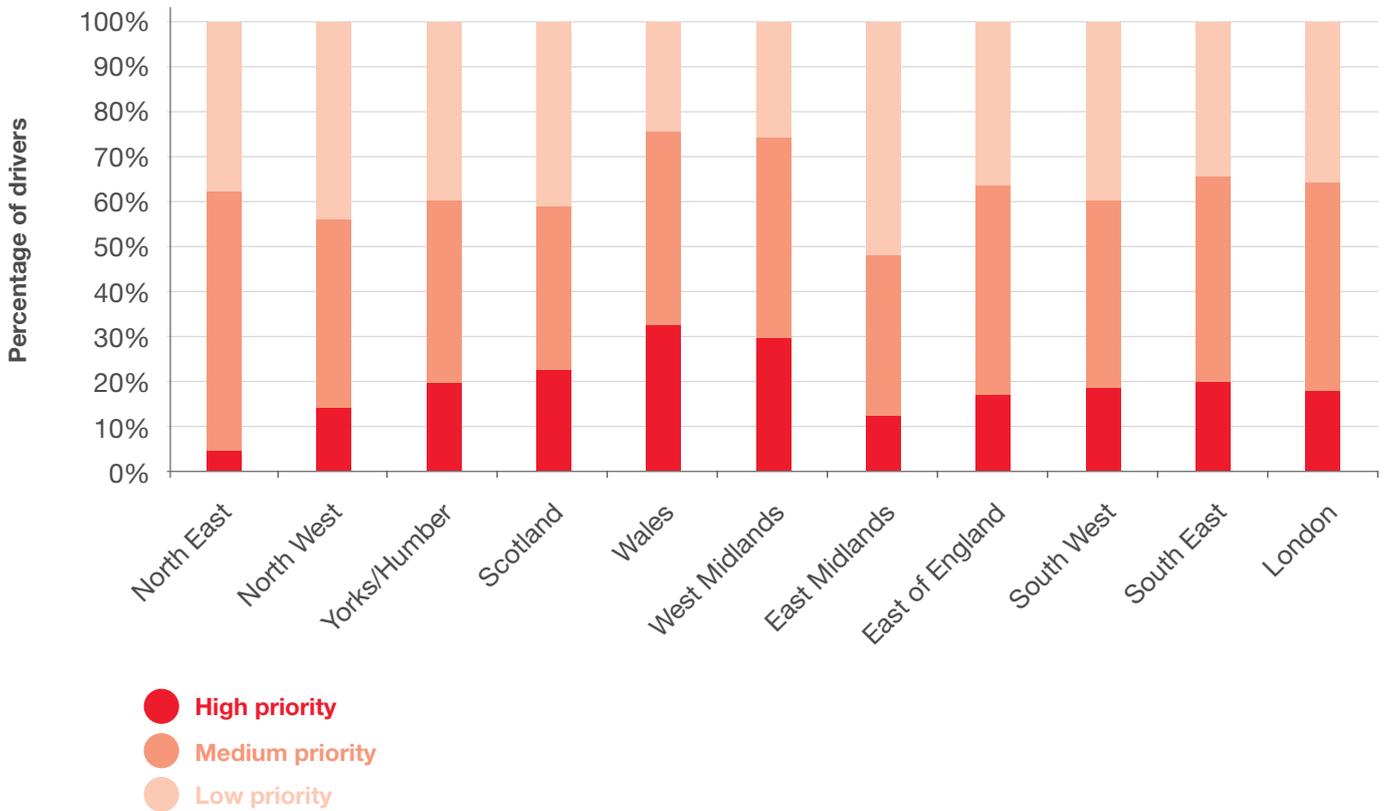


### Key points:

- Drivers over 65 are the most likely to believe enforcement of 20mph limits should be prioritised to a greater extent – nearly two thirds (65%) think it should be a medium or a high priority – over a quarter (26%) believe it is a high priority
- Only seven per cent of the youngest drivers believe it is a high priority – 44 per cent think it is a low priority, the most of any age group

**Region:**

In comparison to other traffic police priorities how important would you rate the enforcement of 20mph limits?



**Key points:**

- Drivers in Wales are the most likely to rate the enforcement of 20mph limits as an important priority than any other region – over three quarters (76 per cent) rate it as a high or a medium priority – a third rate it as a high priority, the most of any region
- Although only four per cent of drivers in the North East believe enforcing 20mph limits is a high priority, a significant number (58 per cent) believe it is a medium priority – the most of any region
- The only region where less than half of drivers believe the enforcement of 20mph limits is a high or a medium priority is the East Midlands (48 per cent) – over half (52 per cent) believe it is a low priority



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

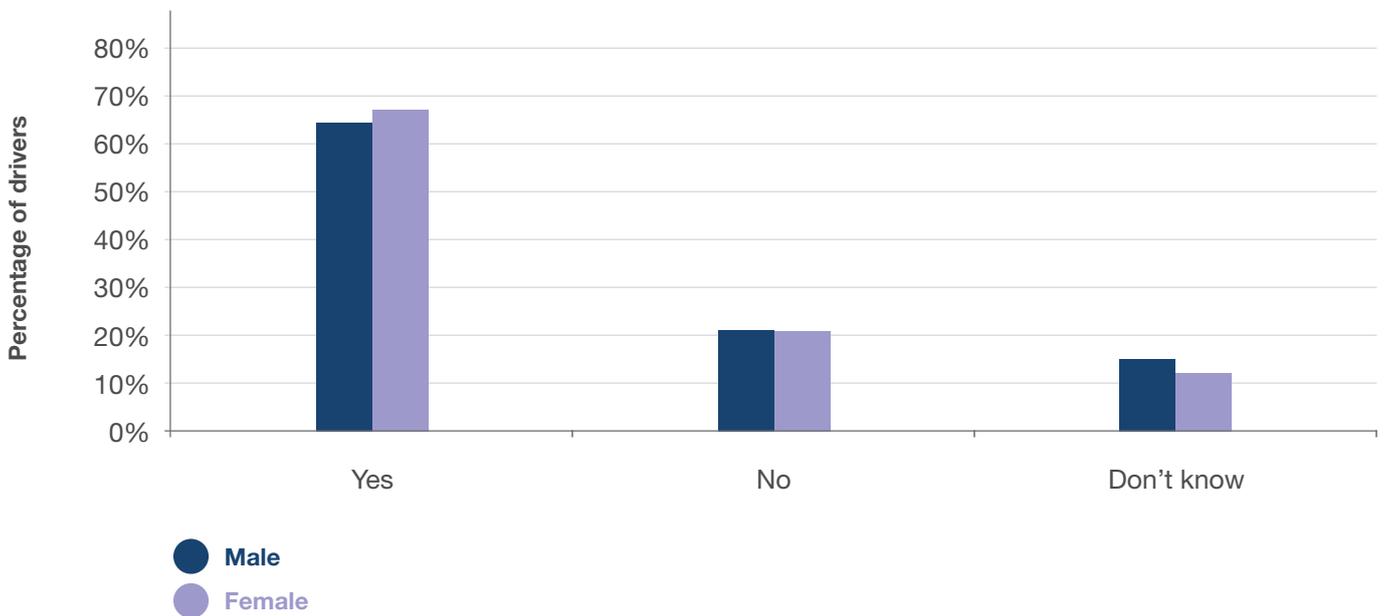
**Yes** (66 per cent)

**No** (21 per cent)

**Don't know** (13 per cent) (Overall)

**Gender:**

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

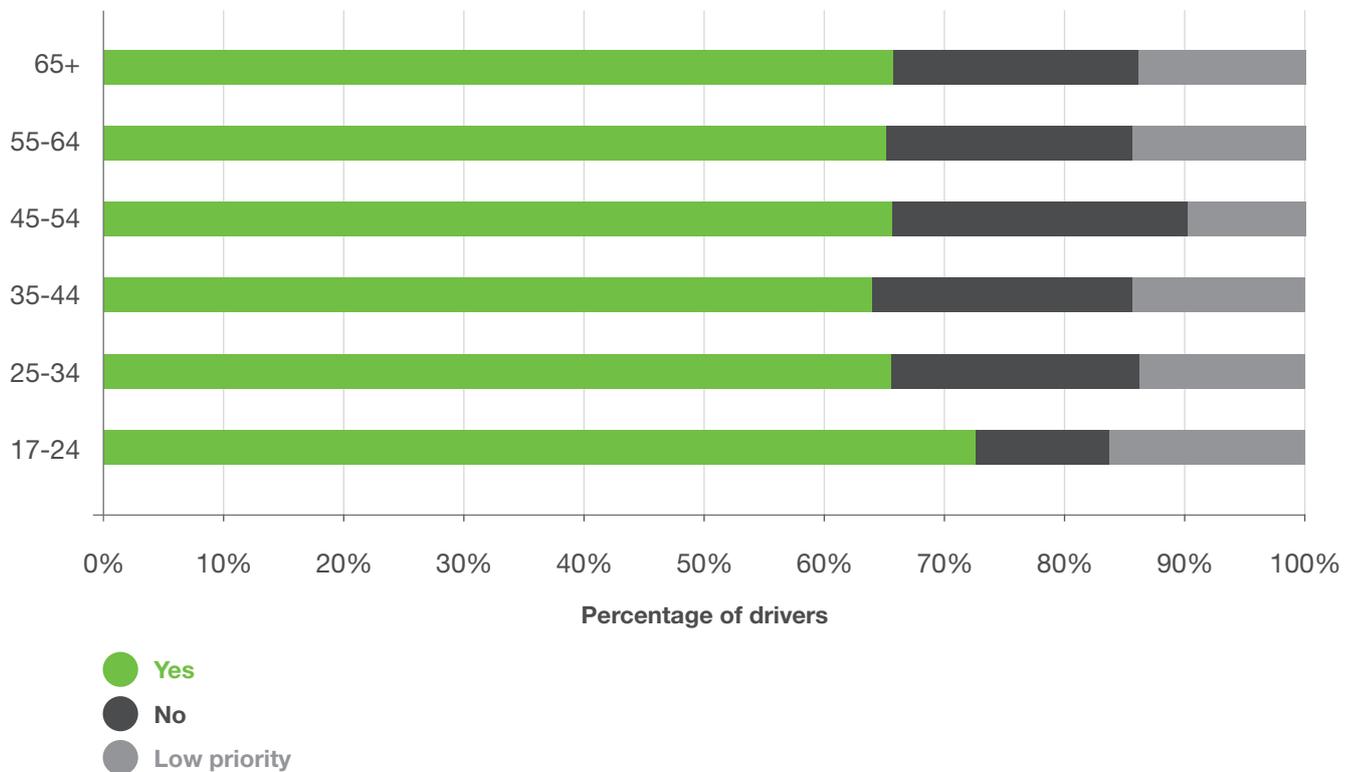


**Key points:**

- Around two thirds of both males and females (64 per cent and 67 per cent respectively) believe a tailored education course rather than a fine should be offered to drivers caught speeding up to 30mph in 20mph zones
- Around a fifth (21 per cent each) believe a fine is more appropriate

## Age:

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

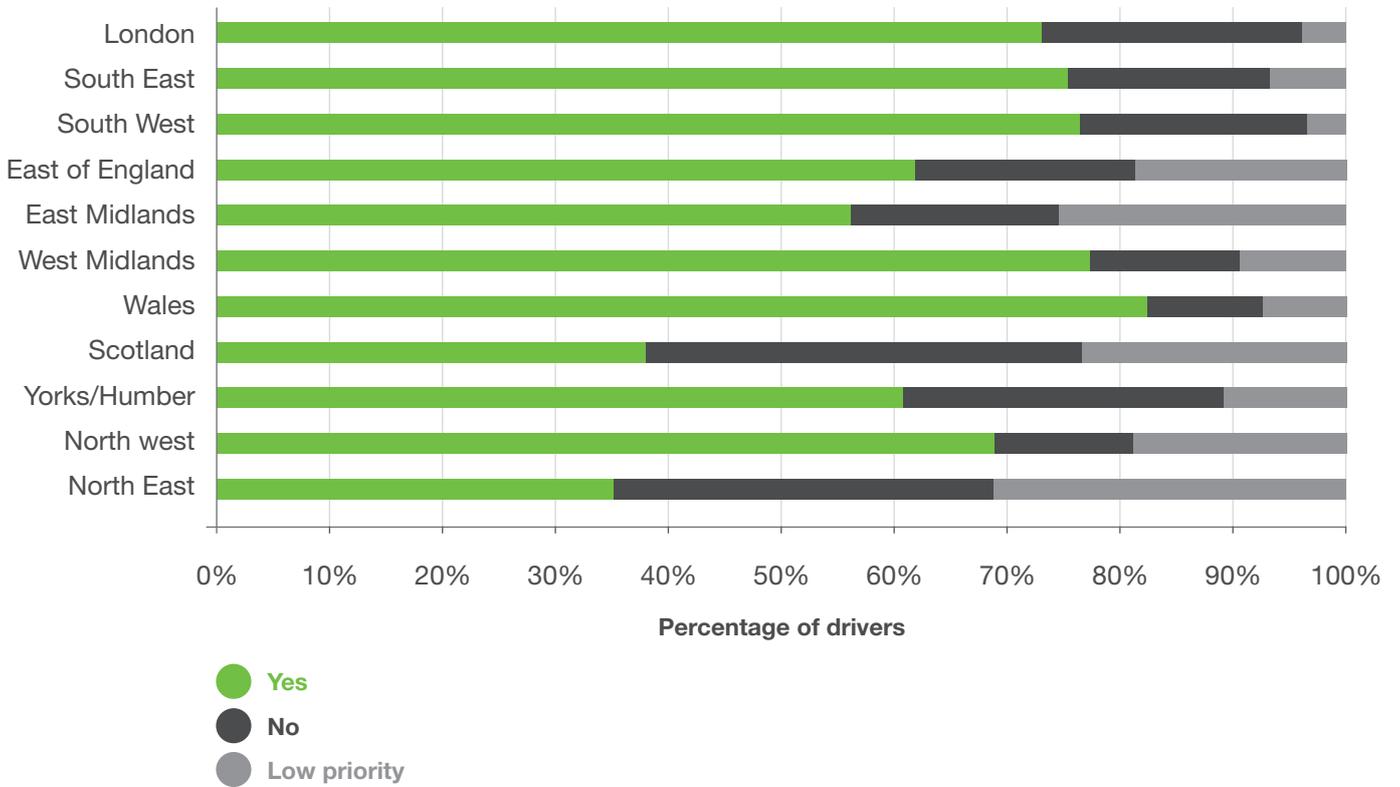


### Key points:

- The youngest drivers are most in favour of a tailored education course rather than a fine (73 per cent) – compared to around two thirds of all drivers over 25 (ranging from 64 per cent to 66 per cent)
- Only 11 per cent of the youngest drivers are against an education course – compared to between 20 and 24 per cent for drivers of all other age bands

**Region:**

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



**Key points:**

- Drivers in Wales are most in favour of a tailored education course rather than a fine being offered (83 per cent in favour, 10 per cent against)
- Although a slim majority are in favour – 36 per cent compared to 33 per cent against – drivers in the North East are the most indecisive (31 per cent are unsure)
- Drivers in Scotland are evenly split (38 per cent are in favour and 38 per cent are against) – the most of any region to be against

# Conclusion

- There is no real appetite for 20mph limits to replace all 30mph limits – **drivers are more likely to be against than in favour** and a sizeable number are neutral
- Support is strongest in Scotland and Wales
- **Roads near schools are the most suitable areas for 20mph limits**
- **Improving safety for pedestrians is the biggest advantage**
- Enforcement by speed limits signs only is the preferred method of control – very little support for traffic policing, suggesting a lack of confidence in proactive methods
- Not an essential priority – older drivers generally view it as more important than younger drivers
- **Strong support for a tailored driver education course** rather than a fine for drivers caught speeding up to 30mph in 20mph zones



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