

## DfT's national evaluation of the e-scooter trials<sup>1</sup>

Comment from David Davies, Executive Director, PACTS, 16<sup>th</sup> December 2022

PACTS welcomes the publication by the Department for Transport of the evaluation report for the e-scooter rental trials, and the government response. Publication was originally planned for late 2021 and PACTS has been calling for its release ever since. There has been much debate about e-scooters and it is helpful to have this factual information in the public domain at last.

It is a detailed report. It will take time to read properly and digest the data and the government response. PACTS will comment in detail in due course. For now, a few points stand out.

- Rental e-scooters have proved popular with some people, predominantly males under the age of 35. [p44]
- The casualty rate per mile for e-scooter riders is considerably higher (three times) than the rate for pedal cyclists. [p61]
- The casualty rate for e scooters is much higher than for walking and public transport – the main modes that people would otherwise have used. [p35]
- The impacts on pedestrians (pavement riding, obstruction, clutter etc) are acknowledged. [p68]
- e-scooters mainly reduce trips by active travel modes yet the health implications of this are given only cursory attention while the active travel elements of public transport are downplayed. [p91]

The government has made clear its intention to legalise e-scooters. The issue now is how to prioritise safety and public benefit.

In its 2020 report, the Transport Select Committee specifically recommended that e-scooters should not reduce active travel. The government needs to find ways to specify e-scooter rental schemes that provide benefits while minimising impacts on active travel. This could be through the parallel promotion of e-bikes and walking, appropriate pricing and other incentives, and greater protection for pedestrians.

The casualty evidence from the trials bears out the safety recommendations in the PACTS report.<sup>2</sup> In particular, that speeds should be limited to 12.5mph and helmet wearing made mandatory.

The rental schemes have provided important information on the ways in which schemes can be specified and managed so that risks to users and the public are minimised. This learning should be incorporated into the contract specifications for all future rental schemes. This should include high-quality scooters, provision of helmets, geo-fencing and active management of users.

The safety options in rental schemes cannot be applied to private e-scooters where greater safety issues lie. The DfT report does not address these issues although it draws on the PACTS report. There is still a need for more information and debate before private e-scooters are legalised. As the Transport Bill is now delayed until sometime later in 2023, there should be time. PACTS will continue to contribute, thanks to an additional grant from The Road Safety Trust. We will also be holding a conference on 28 March.

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<sup>1</sup> [National evaluation of e-scooter trials findings report \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

<sup>2</sup> [PACTS-The-safety-of-private-e-scooters-in-the-UK-Final-Report.pdf](#)