



Ein cyf/Our ref ATISN 18671

Dear ,

28 July 2023

Request for Information – ATISN 18671

Thank you for your request for information relating to 50 mph zones.

Information requested:-

1. Any internal documents and e-mails, including the policy aims and objectives for the 50mph zones on the M4 motorway.
2. What criteria are used when deciding on such zones.
3. Readings for air quality taken at each measurement interval in each zone for the 3 years prior to the zones being introduced and for each interval since the zones were introduced, or else as much data as is available.
4. The exact date enforcement of the new speed limit began.
5. What plans/contingencies WG has, if any, if the policy aims and objectives are not met
6. What plans WG has, if any, to restore the national speed limit after the widespread adoption of Electric and/or other zero/low emission vehicles.

Our response

Relating to question 1, Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act allows the Welsh Government to refuse a request for general information in circumstances where it estimates that it would exceed the “appropriate limit” to either comply with the request in its entirety or, confirm or deny whether the requested information is held.

The appropriate limit is currently set at £600 for the Welsh Government, which is calculated on the basis of one member of staff taking more than 24 hours to comply with the request.

A search on our system revealed that there were over 5000 ‘hits’ when we entered the phrase 50mph air quality. We would then have to extract the relevant information, it would take one official well in excess of 24hrs to complete the exercise.



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MEWN POBL | **IN PEOPLE**

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding .

I have therefore concluded that it will cost more than the appropriate limit set out in the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004 to deal with that part of your request. I have therefore decided to refuse that part under Section 12 of the FoIA as to comply with it would exceed the appropriate limit.

However, I can advise that we have published many reports linked to your question. This can be found in the following link and further information links at the bottom of the page [50mph speed limits to reduce pollution | GOV.WALES](#)

For Q2, the criteria used for deciding such zones is summarised in the Air Quality Plan [Air quality plan: roadside nitrogen dioxide | GOV.WALES](#) and the rationale is also contained in the [WelTAG Stage 3 reports](#).

For Q3, Air quality data is available on our website in the Air Quality Plan and also here:-

[Interim data on NO2 concentrations for the motorway and trunk road | GOV.WALES](#)
[Annual data on NO2 concentrations for the motorway and trunk road: 2018 to 2019 | GOV.WALES](#)
[Annual data on NO2 concentrations for the motorway and trunk road: 2020 to 2021 | GOV.WALES](#)

For Q4, average speed enforcement cameras [went live](#) across junctions 24-28 in mid-March 2021. Enforcement then commenced 17th November 2022 in [Newport](#).

At the other locations average speed cameras went live mid-September 2019, and [enforcement via warning letters](#) commenced 4th October 2021 with the letters subsequently being withdrawn in April 2022 with the move to full enforcement.

Q5, contingency plans are described in our Air Quality Plan. We can draw attention to the relevant sections on our Precautionary Retained Measures.

Q6, The environmental speed limits will stay in place for as long as required to ensure long-term, sustained compliance with nitrogen dioxide limit values.

Next steps

If you are dissatisfied with the Welsh Government's handling of your request, you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this response. Requests for an internal review should be addressed to the Welsh Government's Freedom of Information Officer at:

Information Rights Unit, Welsh Government, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ
or Email: Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales. Please remember to quote the ATISN reference number above.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. However, please note that the Commissioner will not normally investigate a complaint until it has been through our own internal review process.

Yours sincerely

**Uned Busnes y Llywodraeth / Government Business Unit
Llywodraeth Cymru / Welsh Government**