



Informing Progress - Shaping the Future

FOIL UPDATE 22nd March 2022



Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety (PACTS): Final Report on the Safety of E-Scooters in the UK.

Dated 19th March 2022, the timing of this report could not have been more apposite, given the news of a fatality involving a girl, believed to be 14-years-old, riding an e-scooter on a road and without a helmet.

Indeed, the report has been prepared against the background of hundreds of thousands of private e-scooters being used illegally on public roads in the UK, with the number of casualties steadily rising, including fatalities.

Under UK law, e-scooters are classified as motor vehicles. Although it is legal to sell them, it is almost impossible to use private e-scooters legally on roads or in other public places.

In July 2020, the UK Government decided to permit e-scooter trial rental schemes in England (eight were in place by the end of September 2020 and, to date, none have been permitted in the other nations of the UK). These schemes, which now involve 23,000 e-scooters in 31 areas, are being monitored by the Department for Transport (DfT) which has stated that it wants to introduce legalisation to permit wider use of e-scooters, using the trials as the evidence base. However, the trials have now been extended to November 2022 and no report or legislative proposals have been published.

IN BRIEF

PACT has made recommendations for the future design and regulation of privately owned e-scooters, if they are to be permitted.

It also wants the DfT to take immediate action to address dangerous and illegal private e-scooter use.

PACTS also recommends that the DfT undertakes a public consultation before making any decision about the legislation on e-scooters.

This prompted PACTS to commission a study to provide contemporary data and recommendations to inform the ongoing debate and legislation, should the UK Government decide to proceed. A study has also been carried out to review open-source information about accidents and academic studies examining the stability of e-scooters through controlled crash-testing and computational modelling.

Results show that instabilities caused by an e-scooter's design pose a risk to riders. This supplements evidence from injury reports into the nature of e-scooter riders' falls and the large numbers of single vehicle collisions which are recorded.

It is stressed that e-scooters differ greatly from pedal cycles. E-scooters are propelled entirely by electric power; they have much smaller wheels and the rider's centre of gravity is located further forward; and the severity of head injuries is greater.

In the light of this research, PACTS has concluded that the existing situation is unsatisfactory. The unsafe nature of some private e-scooters, and irresponsible use by some, is leading to serious casualties and risks harming efforts by rental operators and local authorities seeking to provide a safe, lowcarbon mobility option.

PACTS therefore recommends that the DfT:

- Takes immediate action to address dangerous and illegal private e-scooter use;
- Undertakes a thorough public consultation before making any decision on the legalisation of e-scooters;
- Commissions further research; and,
- If the Government decides to legalise use of private e-scooters, it should adopt regulations for their construction and use.

Those regulations should provide for:

- A maximum possible speed of 12.5mph (20km/h);
- Maximum continuous rated motor power of 250 W;
- Anti-tampering mechanisms should be included in construction and tampering should be prohibited by law;
- Minimum front wheel size of 12 inches (30.5cm) and minimum rear wheel size of 10 inches (25.5cm);
- Two independently controlled braking devices, one acting on the front wheel and one acting on the rear wheel;
- Lighting to be mandatory at all times;
- Maximum unladen weight of 20kg;
- An audible warning device to be mandatory;
- Helmet wearing to be mandatory;
- Riding on the footway (pavement) or footpath to be prohibited;
- Rider age limit of at least 16 years;
- Carrying of a passenger to be prohibited;
- Drink driving, dangerous or careless riding, and handheld mobile phone use to be prohibited;
- In-person rider training and third-party insurance are also recommended.

Whatever legislation is proposed, PACTS considers it is important that the police retain their current road traffic policing powers, provisions, and offences in respect of e-scooters.

The full report is available at: [PACTS-The-safety-of-private-e-scooters-in-the-UK-Final-Report.pdf](#)

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