



Dear ,

Please find below our latest release.

Best regards,

Caroline Holmes

**News Release**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**07 November 2011**

### **Time for an 80mph motorway speed limit**

The IAM is calling for the government to pilot an 80 mph speed limit on a controlled and managed motorway to assess its practicality and safety, and road users' reaction to it.

In September the government announced that the motorway speed limit could be raised to 80mph.

On uncongested motorways more than half of car drivers exceed the 70mph speed limit, and around a fifth exceed 80 mph\*; it is rare for the police to prosecute drivers travelling between 70 and 80mph\*<sup>1</sup>.

Road safety groups have raised a concern that legalising today's tolerated, yet unofficial, 80 mph speed limit would simply create an unofficial 90 mph limit. If this happened average traffic speeds would increase, as would accidents and their severity – more people could be killed and seriously injured.

The IAM highlights the need for a full risk assessment of an increase in the speed limit, and believes strict enforcement is required to ensure greater compliance with the limit. For example driving at 82mph should risk a speeding ticket.

The IAM wants to see 80mph trialled initially on "Controlled Motorways" and "Managed Motorways" where variable speed limit technology is used. These have already been implemented successfully on the M25 orbital motorway in Surrey and the M42 in the West Midlands.

IAM CEO Simon Best said: “A fifth of motorway-users already travel at this increased speed, and more than half exceed 70mph when they can, suggesting that a properly controlled 80mph limit may not show huge increases in carbon or road casualties. A detailed trial is needed to assess these risks though, and if they are shown to increase significantly, of course a better-enforced 70 limit may be a more appropriate system.

“Raising the motorway speed limit has been debated for many years, and the evidence is that the motoring public are ready for it<sup>\*2</sup>. The transport secretary should now publish a consultation with firm proposals.”

ENDS

Notes for Editors:

1. \* Department for Transport: *Road Statistics 2009; Traffic Speed and Congestion*
2. \*<sup>1</sup> ACPO Speed Enforcement Policy Guidance

“The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) has issued speed enforcement policy guidance, which suggests that enforcement will normally occur when a driver exceeds the speed limit by a particular margin. This is normally 10 per cent over the speed limit plus 2 mph. It also sets guidelines for when it would not be appropriate to issue a fixed penalty notice but to issue a summons instead.

Note: These are guidelines and that a police officer has discretion to act outside of them providing he acts fairly, consistently and proportionately.

70 mph speed limit

- ACPO charging threshold (Fixed Penalty) 79 mph
- Summons 96 mph”

Crown Prosecution Service (CPS): *Road Traffic Offences: Guidance on Fixed Penalty Notices*

3. \*<sup>2</sup> IAM on-line poll of 2,400 drivers 2011
4. The IAM is the UK’s largest independent road safety charity, dedicated to improving standards and safety in driving, motorcycling and cycling. The commercial division of the IAM operates through its occupational driver training company IAM Drive & Survive. The IAM has more than 200 local volunteer groups and over 100,000 members in the UK and Ireland. It is best known for the advanced driving test and the advanced driving, motorcycling and cycling courses. Its policy and research division offers advice and expertise on road safety.

ENDS ALL

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