



Department  
for Transport

Rt Hon Sir George Howarth MP  
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From the Secretary of State  
**The Rt. Hon. Grant Shapps**

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12 October 2020

Dear George,

Thank you for your letter of 24 September 2020, on behalf of your constituents about e-scooters.

On 9 May I announced that the Department would run trials of rental e-scooters to assess their safety and the impacts they have on the road. I personally have taken a keen interest in the trials and how they may impact those with disabilities and accessibility needs. This is part of the Government's Future of Transport regulatory review which will decide whether e-scooters and similar vehicles should be allowed on the road and, if so, what rules should apply to them. Trials will also support the Department's green restart of local transport, providing an alternative to car travel in trial areas and helping to mitigate reduced capacity on public transport from the COVID-19 pandemic.

If micromobility vehicles are to be used on the road, we must find the correct balance between maximising the benefits they offer and keeping pedestrians and road users safe. We have read the report from the Transport Select Committee and are considering its recommendations. It is worth noting that our trials adopt a more cautious approach than the Committee envisages for e-scooters in its report. The trials we are running will also help us address the issues the Committee has raised. The Department will respond to the report in due course.

Trials will assess the safety risks presented by e-scooters, the mode shift to e-scooters from other forms of transport, public perceptions around their use and identify other impacts that should be considered for any potential future legalisation of e-scooters.

Rachel Maclean has met with the Inclusive Transport Stakeholder Group. Membership of this group includes representatives from: Age UK, Scope, Alzheimer's Society, National Autistic Society, Disability Rights UK, DPTAC, Guide Dogs and Leonard Cheshire. She has assured them of the Government's commitment to making micromobility options fully inclusive.

She also hosted a round table discussion in July on trials of e-scooters attended by several groups that represent the interests of disabled people and older people, including the RNIB and the National Federation of the Blind of the UK.

The Department held a consultation from 18 May to 2 June on regulatory changes that will allow e-scooter trials to begin. The response to the consultation can be found at:

[www.gov.uk/government/consultations/legalising-rental-e-scooter-trials-defining-e-scooters-and-rules-for-their-use](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/legalising-rental-e-scooter-trials-defining-e-scooters-and-rules-for-their-use).

Following this consultation and our discussions with disability groups, we have required all e-scooters used in trials to have a horn or bell so that users can always make others aware of their presence and have permitted seated e-scooters to allow people with mobility issues to use them. Local authorities are required to engage with disability groups in their areas to ensure their concerns are being heard and any local authority hosting a trial must plan how they will manage parking of e-scooters to avoid them being left on pavements and causing an obstruction for pedestrians.

We will continue to engage with groups representing disabled people as the trials progress so that we can best understand the impacts e-scooter have for them and how we can improve this, before we make any decision on whether to legalise them. A further roundtable discussion was held on 5 October. We understand that for some disabled people e-scooters have the potential to offer an additional means of transport and can aid independence. We are also aware that e-scooters could represent challenges, e.g. discarded e-scooters, or those ridden on the pavement could pose a danger to visually impaired people.

The Department has made regulations that will allow e-scooter trials to begin. The regulations amend the existing legislation to treat e-scooters largely like cycles and e-bikes. The e-scooters will be subject to a maximum speed of 15.5 mph (the same as e-bikes), will be permitted in cycle lanes, and will be exempted from vehicle registration and licensing. Potential users will be expanded to include anyone with a full or provisional licence, therefore the minimum age for use will be 16 years old. Cycle helmets will be recommended, but will not be mandatory. They cannot be ridden on the pavement. The Department must approve each e-scooter that will be available

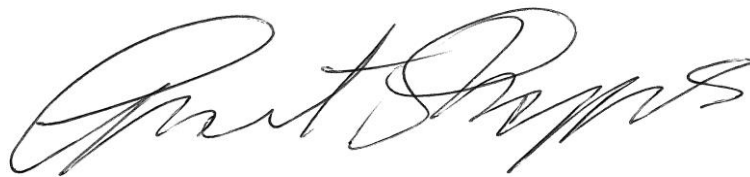
for rental in trials. These must meet minimum technical standards to ensure they are suitable. Privately-owned e-scooters remain illegal during trials.

The Department has published guidance for local authorities and e-scooter operators on how trials will run. This can be found at:  
[www.gov.uk/government/publications/e-scooter-trials-guidance-for-local-areas-and-rental-operators/e-scooter-trials-guidance-for-local-areas-and-rental-operators](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/e-scooter-trials-guidance-for-local-areas-and-rental-operators/e-scooter-trials-guidance-for-local-areas-and-rental-operators)

As part of the process to become a trial area, the Department has made it clear in this guidance that the impacts for people with disabilities must be considered and addressed when drafting applications to participate.

It is likely we'll see a range of approaches in our trials, from which we hope to learn what really works and can be employed more widely, if e-scooters are legalised.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Grant Shapps', written in a cursive style.

**Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP**

**SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT**