

Southampton Voi e-scooter trial

Full Q&A

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GENERAL

What is the Solent e-scooter rental trial?

In November 2020, Solent Transport, launched the regional electric scooter (e-scooter) rental trial, funded by the Department for Transport's (DfT) Future Transport Zone programme. The Solent trial began in November last year with the first location being on the Isle of Wight. Further locations in Southampton and Portsmouth are being rolled out now. The e-scooter trial will continue until November 2022 and is one of many nationwide DfT trials taking place. The E-scooter operator Voi have been nominated to operate the Southampton City trial. The trial is being introduced in line with the easing of Government lockdown measures.

As a reminder, **rental e-scooters** should only be used as part of your **essential journey**. To check the latest government guidance on travel during the pandemic visit <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-coronavirus-restrictions-what-you-can-and-cannot-do>

What is Voi?

Voi is the fastest-growing European micro-mobility operator working with Europe's cities to offer efficient, affordable transportation solutions, including e-scooters. Founded in 2018, Voi currently operates in 50+ cities in 11 countries. To date, Voi has served 35 million rides and has over 6 million regular users.

How can e-scooters help to solve the transport problems in towns and cities?

E-scooters are just the start of a revolution in how we move around cities. E-scooters allow for personal point-to-point travel, which means that a rider is not tied to a timetable or a route. During the pandemic, they also provide a method of travel that allows for social distancing. They are particularly useful for connecting the last or first mile of travel, when there can be a temptation to use a car, as well as for journeys of 1 to 3 miles, which make up 60% of all road trips in the UK. Their aim is that e-scooter use should be affordable, particularly for those who need to go farther than they can walk and don't have access to a car.

Is there demand for e-scooters in the UK?

Even before coronavirus, councils were talking about e-scooters to encourage active alternatives to car journeys and to use low-carbon transport. More than 50 cities and towns have expressed an interest in running e-scooter pilots, including London, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle and Cambridge. We know that many British consumers have tried Voi in other countries and have asked when the service will launch in the UK.

What are the main benefits of e-scooters for Southampton?

- Provide a socially distanced, outdoor mode of transport.
- Support short key worker journeys.
- Relieve issues with lesser capacity on public transport as we come out of lockdown.
- Provide convenient, affordable and flexible travel for point-to-point journeys, or for the first or last mile to public transport.
- Lower environmental footprint, with huge potential to improve air quality and reduce climate change.
- Provide a green, carbon-neutral transportation solution to lower the cities' emissions and improve air quality.
- Creates new job opportunities, which is especially welcome during the difficult employment market due to the pandemic.

Why did Southampton apply for e-scooter trials?

The Council's Economic and Green Growth Plan, the Local Transport Plan and the Green City Plan set the strategic context for growing alternative forms of micro-mobility to help people move around the city coupled with the Department for Transport (DfT) fast-tracking and expanding trials of rental e-scooters meant it was possible to be part of this trial. E-scooters offer the potential for fast, clean and inexpensive travel that can also help ease the burden on transport networks and allow for social distancing. As of July 2020, local and combined authorities could apply to the DfT to host a 12-month e-scooter trial. Southampton City Council in partnership with Solent Transport, along with Isle of Wight Council and Portsmouth County Council applied and gained a DfT approved trial licence. As the government undergoes a transport revolution, Voi is pleased to support this trial.

What regulations do e-scooters follow?

Safety is the top priority for e-scooter usage. E-scooters can use the same road spaces as bikes, including cycle lanes. E-scooters may be used on the road (except motorways) and in cycle lanes and bus lanes within the approved trial area.

The e-scooter trial will be introduced under an Emergency Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO). If you would like to feedback on the trial, please email Traffic.OrdersLegal@southampton.gov.uk

Riding on pavements is strictly prohibited for the rental e-scooters. Voi will strictly monitor rider behaviour and employ a variety of measures to identify misuse and fine and/or block those riders. If you have any questions over regulations, please contact support@voiapp.io.

Private e-scooters are not part of the Solent e-scooter trial. Privately owned e-scooters are illegal to use in all public spaces and roadways. Private e-scooters are only legal to use on private land.

How can people offer feedback on the trial?

Voi encourages feedback from riders and the public. Please contact support@voiapp.io. You can also provide feedback to Southampton City Council Traffic.OrdersLegal@southampton.gov.uk

You can also report e-scooter misuse at <https://www.voiscooters.com/report/uk/>

How will the trial be evaluated?

Voi and Southampton City Council will monitor and evaluate the trial. The Department of Transport (DfT) will also evaluate all the trials separately through its own monitoring and evaluation exercise.

What happens at the end of the trial?

After assessment, the Department of Transport (DfT) may approve and legalise rental e-scooter schemes long term. Cities and combined authorities will then have the opportunity to broker contracts with e-scooter operators, depending on local funding availability.



How long will e-scooters be in Southampton?

The e-scooter trial will launch on 18 March 2021 and should remain active until November 2022

How can people tell the difference between Voi e-scooters and privately-owned e-scooters?

Voi e-scooters are easily identifiable by their distinctive coral (a pinkish orange) colour. "Voi" is also emblazoned in white on the e-scooter's shaft.

It is worth noting that Voi e-scooters are the only legal e-scooters that can be used on public roads and spaces in Southampton; the use of private e-scooters is illegal.

How many Voi e-scooters will be deployed in Southampton?

Southampton currently has over 1000 Voi e-scooters.

How many parking hubs will Voi be deploying in Southampton?

At present there are just under 200 parking hubs. For up-to-date information, please download the Voi App and use the in-App map.

What is Voi doing to ensure users park the e-scooters correctly?

The Southampton Voi team monitors e-scooter activity, including checking e-scooters are parked in the designated Voi Parking Hubs.

Voi introduced an enhanced version of the 'end of ride photo' asking riders to take and submit a photo of their parked e-scooter at the end of each ride. Photos are reviewed daily by Voi, and action is taken if riders do not comply with the safe parking guidelines.

Riders must not:

- X Leave e-scooters lying on the ground
- X Obstruct the pavement
- X Cause an obstacle to other road/pavement users

An educational warning message will be sent first, followed by a £25.00 fine if the rider ignores the rules for a second time.

How will the e-scooters be spread out across the city?

Voi will be guided by Southampton's needs and where it is safe to ride (for example, e-scooters will not be allowed in highly pedestrianised areas). Voi will work closely with Southampton City Council to ensure e-scooters are placed where there is demand. Voi will always be careful not to overwhelm locations. The local Voi team will relocate e-scooters throughout the night and day ("re-balancing the fleet") to ensure that they are available where riders want them.

What times can I hire an e-scooter?

For the start of the service, e-scooters will be available for hire 04:00 – 22:00 in Southampton. These hours were selected based on discussions between the council and Voi and looking at essential journey restrictions and key worker shift patterns. These may change as the trial progresses and as restrictions on travel are eased.

Will my rental suddenly stop at 22:00?

No, your rental will continue until you chose to stop it and park it in a designated parking zone. Once stopped you'll be able to hire another e-scooter the following day from 04:00.

How do Voi e-scooters integrate with public transport?

Voi is currently in talks with various transport operators in Southampton and will announce these partnerships in due course. The Council and Voi's aim is to integrate fully and compliment with other transport services across the region, looking at possible integrated ticketing options and joint working arrangements.

Are e-scooters permitted on trains and buses?

No. If you are using an e-scooter to get you to another mode of transport, please find your nearest parking zone and end your ride.

Are private e-scooters also allowed?

No. Trials are limited to Voi rental e-scooters. This allows trials to take place in a controlled manner while we and the DfT assess their safety and other effects. It is illegal to ride a private e-scooter on all public roads, pavements and spaces.

Southampton City Council are aware of the uptake on private e-scooters locally. This does demonstrate that even without the trial of rental e-scooters there will be people using them across the city. The provision of rental scooters as being trialled will cater for the use of this new mode of transport while allowing closer monitoring and controls on its use and impact. This trial and collated information on use will inform future decision making and help mitigate concerns raised. The rental e-scooters will be pink and easy to differentiate from private e-scooters which are illegal unless on private land.

Please note that Police can seize any private e-scooter if they are being used on a public road or footpath and the rider may also be liable for prosecution for traffic offences.

This is also the case for anyone using Voi e-scooters without a licence or falsely registering with the Voi app as this is what covers you under their insurance.

E-scooters are classified as Personal Light Electric Vehicles (PLEVs), so they are treated as motor vehicles and subject to the same legal requirements, such as:

- **MOT** • **Licensing** • **Tax** • **Insurance**

Will riders need a driving licence? Why?

Yes. To ride an e-scooter in a trial area, a rider will need to register using a UK provisional or full driving licence or an International driving licence. This is mandated by the Department of Transport (DfT) and Voi also believes this ensures people know the rules of the road and will be more responsible riders.

Provisional licences can be obtained in one week, through an online application (subject to DVLA Lockdown workloads). Riders cannot begin their first ride without first verifying their licence in the App. Verification is performed by Onfido, a trusted technology that verifies personal identities using a photo-based identity document, a selfie and artificial intelligence algorithms.

What is the minimum age to ride an e-scooter?

The Department of Transport (DfT) requires riders to be at least 16 years old. **In Southampton, riders need to be at least 18 years old to ride a Voi e-scooter.**

What is the maximum speed of a Voi e-scooter?

The DfT regulations for the trial rental e-Scooters have a maximum limit of 15.5mph. However, the maximum speed of the Southampton trial is 12.5pmh at present. This speed limit will potentially increase as the trial progresses, but it has been put in place initially for safety reasons and to help riders feel more comfortable on the e-scooters. There will also be pre-set “slow-go” and “no-go” zones within the city, where the e-scooter will slow down to between 5-8mph in slow zones and come to a stop as it approaches a “no go” zone. It is worth noting that private e-scooters — which are illegal to ride unless on private land or with express permission of a landowner — can travel at much higher speeds.

What is the maximum weight that a Voi e-scooter can carry?

Voi e-scooters can carry a maximum of 100 kg. (Please note that this included anything riders are carrying). However, only one adult may rent and ride the rental Voi e-scooters, Double person riding one e-scooter is prohibited and will be subject to Voi’s enforcement procedures such as warning, fines and/or bans from their service.

How do riders start using an e-scooter?

1. Download the Voi app.
2. Open the app and search for nearby e-scooters.
3. Follow the instructions provided in-app.

4. Scan the QR code to unlock.
5. Enjoy your ride, follow local regulations, use bike lanes where available, and do not ride on pavements.
6. Reach your destination and “End Ride” in the app. Park correctly and make sure the e-scooter is not obstructing others.

What does it cost to use a Voi e-scooter?

It costs £1 to unlock the e-scooter and then £0.14 per minute of usage.

There are 24-hour passes and 30 day passes available to buy in-App. Simply download the app and click on Voi Pass. The subscriptions allow riders to take an unlimited number of 45-minute rides at a fixed rate. At the end of the 45 minutes, the e-scooter must always be returned to a parking area. If the rider is interested in continuing the journey, they can then rent another e-scooter. For more info, visit <https://www.voiscooters.com/voi-pass/>

There are special rates for students, NHS and emergency and MoD services personnel and discounts offered to those on low incomes. There is more information about these special rates and how to apply at <https://www.voiscooters.com/voi-4-discounts/>

Why is the journey limited to 45 minutes for Voi pass users?

E-scooters tend to be used for journeys from 1-3 miles, and from the data we have the average length of a ride is 12-15m. This duration (45m) was considered reasonable, and this way, another rider can then use the scooter - Voi is for all.

What happens if a ride goes over the 45 minutes limit when using a Voi pass?

While using a Voi pass, if the ride is not ended within 45 minutes, users will be charged for the exceeding time in accordance with the pricing on a pay-per-ride basis.

Are riders insured when using Voi e-scooters?

Yes. As required by legislation, Voi riders have motor third-party insurance. Voi has also decided to go beyond the Department of Transport (DfT) requirements and have included personal accident coverage insurance for all trips.

What is “geofencing”? How does it work for the e-scooters?

Geofencing is a term that is often used when people talk about the e-scooter trials. It helps to ensure that e-scooters can only be ridden in safe and approved areas as the e-scooters can be remotely tracked and pre-set with city restrictions through agreement with the council.

Geofencing is a technology that uses GPS to create a virtual geographic boundary, enabling software to trigger a response when a mobile device enters or leaves a particular area. When an e-scooter attempts to go beyond a certain boundary, the e-scooter’s speed will reduce gradually. The motor will not stop completely, because this could be dangerous for the rider. In a no-ride zone, the motor slows down on approach to the zone until it comes to a stop, so that the no go zone stop is not an abrupt one and to make it easier for riders to turn the e-scooter back to the operating zone. In a slow-ride zone, the

e-scooters are capped at 5mph. Riders can see their locations and operating zone in the in-App map.

Where are the slow-ride, no-ride and parking zones located?

Maps of the trial area, including parking, slow-ride, and no-ride zones will all be in the Voi App. Each zone is colour coded on the in-App map.

Please note all Southampton Parks as well as Southampton Common are no-ride zones.

Are e-scooters permitted in heavily pedestrianised areas? Are some areas restricted? Why have some areas been designated “no-scoot” zones?

Voi and Southampton work together to define areas where it is safe and convenient to use e-scooters. E-scooters are generally not permitted in pedestrian-heavy zones and are pre-set as “no-ride” zones in pedestrianised areas. For the most up-to-date information, please consult the maps in the Voi App. No-ride zones have been put in place for safety reasons; sometimes they also reflect private land.

Can a rider keep an e-scooter overnight so they can use it again first thing in the morning?

No, Voi e-scooters are not permitted to be stored on private property. If a rider is caught storing an e-scooter on private property, they can be fined. Riders must park in the designated parking areas and re-hire in the morning subject to e-scooter availability. This includes day-time storing.

SAFETY

How can someone ride a Voi e-scooter safely?

Voi believes in pushing safety through rider education screens and training screens. New riders can earn credits from completing modules of the [Ride Like Voila](#) traffic school. To date, more than 500,000 riders have participated in the Voi traffic school. Riders can also learn important tips from the Voi App and on the found Voi street teams and ambassadors subject to lockdown restrictions.

There should only be one rider per scooter. Riders should follow the Highway Code, wear a helmet, avoid riding on pavements, abide by speed limits and keep vigilant of their surroundings.

Voi offer a Southampton trial helmet “give away” offer via their App pages.

What is Voi doing to ensure e-scooter safety?

Safety is the number-one priority. Voi is continually working with partner cities and regions, including Southampton, to assess and improve services. In the UK, Voi is introducing new measures to ensure safe riding:

- Increasing the number of on-the-ground staff to answer questions, help people and monitor activity.
- Increase collaboration with the police to ensure there is better reporting of riders who disregard the rules.
- Voi will constantly monitor whether riders are in conflict with any pedestrians and by updating the slow-ride and no-ride zones through the trial

- Reinforce the message that e-scooters (just like bikes) should NOT be ridden on the pavements.
- Introduce clear number plates on e-scooters to help identify rogue riders.
- Consistent e-scooter rider education and in-App trigger messaging to riders.
- Giving away free helmets. See Voi in-App offers upon registration.
- Introduce greater deterrents to unsafe riding
 - Charge riders a premium for abandoning or parking an e-scooter in no-parking zones.
 - Block riders who are abusing the terms and conditions, such as underage riders
 - Anyone caught using e-scooters illegally could face criminal proceedings. For misuse, 6 points could be added to a rider's driving licence.

Does Voi ban riders for disregarding regulations?

Voi takes riding safely and legally very seriously. If you see someone disregarding regulations on a Voi e-scooter, please report it via this page: <http://www.voiscooters.com/report/uk/>

If Voi receives a confirmed report of an offence from the police, or via their customer service support centre, then Voi will always seek to take action against the rider responsible, such as issuing a warning or permanently removing the rider from the service. To do this, Voi will ask the police for supporting information, including the date, time, and place of the offence and, if possible, the e-scooter's number plate.

Will riders need to wear a helmet?

Wearing a helmet is recommended, although this is not mandatory under the DfT trial regulations. It is safer to wear a helmet, just as one should be worn when cycling.

Voi believes in education and rewarding safe, responsible behaviour. When a rider begins a ride in the App, they will be asked if they want to take a "helmet selfie". Once the App confirms that the rider is wearing a helmet, the rider will be rewarded with ride credits at the end of the ride.

During the trial, Voi is also committed to distributing free helmets to riders in Southampton.

Can people ride e-scooters in the dark?

Yes. Voi e-scooters are equipped with both front and rear lights, to aid in e-scooter visibility for the rider and other road users. A list of advice and tips for riding at night on its [blog](#).

Each Voi e-scooter also has a bell to alert other road users.

How can riders keep safe from coronavirus when using an e-scooter?

Since e-scooters operate in the open air, they are a much safer choice for commuters than other forms of public transport at this time. To make sure the fleet is safe, Voi have increased their cleaning and maintenance frequencies. Voi scooters are fitted with handlebars made of a material that inhibits the transmission of viruses and bacteria, thus offering antibacterial, bactericidal and antiviral protection. All scooters are disinfected regularly and daily by the street scooter redistribution teams Voi is also providing COVID-19 information and advice via its App. We encourage riders to use gloves if that makes them feel more comfortable.

How will e-scooters be kept clean while COVID-19 is a risk?

Rider safety is the number-one priority. The scooters are disinfected regularly, including every time a scooter is handled for a battery swap, re-balancing, or maintenance. Voi uses high-quality anti-viral cleansing agents that last up to 24 hours. Their mechanics and logistics teams are equipped with sanitary kits, including masks, gloves and anti-bacterial gel and they follow social-distancing guidelines. We are testing a new handlebar material that inactivates and minimises the transmission of coronavirus. Using reputable third parties, they take viral and bacterial tests of randomised samples of scooters to make sure they are keeping things clean. Voi educate our riders about how to keep themselves safe and encourage them to use hand sanitiser and wear gloves.

E-scooters can travel at high speeds. Are they safe?

- Southampton's Voi e-scooters are capped at a speed of 12.5 mph at present. This may be increased to 15 mph during the trial. Regular bicycles often reach the same speed or higher.
- We have the ability to implement slow-speed zones in selected areas, where the e-scooters automatically slow down to walking pace.
- It is also important to differentiate between private and shared e-scooters. Private e-scooters often reach much higher speeds, even though it is not permitted.

Won't e-scooters just be a menace on the streets and dangerous for some road users, such as the visually impaired?

It's Voi's job to educate riders about traffic rules using technology and in App pop-ups. Safety is always Voi's number-one priority and they tackle this through rider education and technology. Voi are the first e-scooter company to offer an online traffic school, [Ride Like Voila](#). Voi work with Southampton City Council to control the number of e-scooters on the streets and their locations. Voi can incentivise people to park them correctly and will employ local ambassadors to educate riders on using and parking safely. The local teams will work closely with police to ensure that the e-scooters are not a menace for other road and pavement users, particularly groups who may feel that they are vulnerable. When Voi deploy infrastructure (such as parking hubs) they abide by the relevant government guidance and recognised standards for street furniture and design in public spaces.

What will Voi do to keep Southampton safe for those with visual impairments or hearing difficulties?

- At a national and local level, Voi works closely with associations representing those with sight loss, including the RNIB, Guide Dogs, London Vision and Thomas Pocklington to ensure that they understand the needs of as many vulnerable people as possible. As a result of our conversations, the sector has published advice for e-scooter operators and local authorities participating in trials. They evaluate all of our operations against this advice.
- Voi will elicit feedback from these as well as other relevant groups within the first few weeks of launching the trial, so that they can make sure the operations do not add to street clutter or cause obstacles.
- Based on consultations with groups representing vulnerable road users, Voi has added

additional content to [Ride Like Voila](#) (Voi's online traffic school) to educate riders about the safety of vulnerable road users. All Voi U.K HQ staff and Voi's Southampton management team are required to complete RNIB training including (i) Visual Awareness Training and (ii) Pan Disability Awareness Training.

How will Voi stop people from riding on the pavement?

Riding on pavement is illegal in the UK (unless there is a designated cycle lane) and education plays an important role in making sure that riders abide by the rules. The free online traffic school, [Ride Like Voila](#), teaches riders the rules of the road and rewards riders with ride vouchers when they complete modules. Voi actively communicate to riders that they should never ride on pavement throughout their journey, from in-App communications during the onboarding registration and sign up process through to ongoing road safety communications.

What happens if someone rides an e-scooter on the pavement?

Pavement riding is strictly prohibited unless there is a designated cycling lane. If someone is caught riding a Voi e-scooter on the pavement by a Voi ambassador, the ambassador will complete a reporting form and issue a strike or a block to the rider (a rider is usually blocked on the third strike, unless the violation is serious). Non e-scooter riders can report poor rider behaviour directly to Voi noting the location, time and date and e-scooter number plate if possible and via their web pages, App and telephone customer support centre. If the offending rider is caught by the police, the police report the incident to Voi ambassadors, who will carry out the strike or ban policy noted above.

How will Voi prevent people from riding while under the influence of drugs or alcohol?

Riders have a huge responsibility, not only towards themselves but towards other road users and pedestrians. We believe that education is a powerful tool, such as the [Ride Like Voila](#) e-scooter traffic school. Voi has developed an in-App reaction-time test or puzzle that is activated during certain hours of the day when people are likely to be drinking. The test aims to educate riders on why drunk riding is unsafe (impacts reflexes, balance, overall judgement), and to encourage them to consider alternative modes of transport if they get poor results in the cognitive test. Voi can also implement no-parking zones in areas with bars and nightlife to discourage e-scooter use.

How does someone report a problem or an e-scooter that is misplaced or blocking traffic?

Voi has a 24-hour customer service helpline (0800-3768179) and a support email (support@voiapp.io). Riders can find out more information at <https://www.voiscooters.com/report/uk/>

How does Voi work with the police? Will the police take action against private e-scooters?

Voi will work closely with the local police force to ensure that appropriate safety and enforcement measures will be put in place. The police are aware of the rules of the DfT trial and they can report rogue riders and recommend blocks to Voi accounts. Police are also aware that private e-scooters are illegal to ride in public places and they will take appropriate action if an offending rider is caught.

Where can riders find out more information about safety? What about e-scooter dos and don'ts?

Safety is Voi's top priority and there are many resources available to riders. Voi recommends all riders complete [Ride Like Voila](#), its online traffic school. Voi regularly sends riders safety information via its App and publishes regular safety content on the blog, such as recent articles about [e-scooter safety during the COVID-19 pandemic](#) and [safety initiatives in the U.K.](#) There is also a [comprehensive FAQ](#) on the Voi website that includes safety information. If a rider has specific questions, they can contact support at support@voiapp.io. Voi also offer live Voi ambassador led education and training events subject to covid restrictions permitting.

What should a rider do if they have an accident?

Rider safety should always be addressed first.

If a rider is involved in an accident involving a Voi e-scooter, they should contact the police on 101 or, if needed, emergency services at 999.

The rider should then contact Voi via support@voiapp.io or the 24-hour customer service helpline (0800-3768179) with as many details as possible about the incident and the associated police report number.

SUSTAINABILITY

Are e-scooters good for the environment?

Transport is Europe's largest source of greenhouse gas emissions, and air pollution levels exceed safe levels in many European cities. Like other electric vehicles, e-scooters can help to limit transport emissions as well as reducing congestion in cities. The UK is particularly suitable for e-scooters because 60% of car trips here are for 1- to 3-mile journeys. Improvements to e-scooters, which now last a minimum of 60 months, meaning that each e-scooter's lifecycle cost is 71% lower than it was when the last major assessment was done in California two years ago.

How sustainable are Voi's e-scooters?

- Voi's e-scooters are a safe, sustainable choice of transportation. They are zero-emissions vehicles.
- Shared e-scooters are an important catalyst for people to leave their cars behind when travelling in dense urban areas.
- With a lifespan of 5+ years, e-scooters have a carbon dioxide footprint of only 18g CO₂ eq. per passenger per kilometre. By contrast, for a car it is more than 120 per person per kilometre.
- Voi e-scooters are equipped with swappable batteries, which is a game-changer when it comes to green operations, because the batteries can be changed on the spot rather than transporting entire e-scooters back and forth to Voi's warehouses. This allows for greener operations, with less service trips for charging and deploying e-scooters. The batteries can also be transported with lighter electric vehicles, such as cargo bikes, which are charged via renewable energy.
- Voi has also pledged to recycle e-scooter parts wherever possible and recycle all materials used in the vehicles.
- As a company, Voi has been operating carbon-neutral operations since January 2020.

Any other questions, please go to the Voi 24-hour customer service helpline (0800-3768179) and a support email (support@voiapp.io).

Riders can find out more information at www.voi.com