

Voi Electric Scooter Trial in Oxford

Who is Voi?

Voi Technology is the fastest-growing 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 or taxi and for journeys of 1 to 3 miles, which make up 60% of all road trips in Britain ([DfT Report, 2018](#)). The 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 Britain?

Even before the Coronavirus, councils were talking about e-scooters to encourage active alternatives to car journey and to use low-carbon transport. More than 50 cities and towns have expressed an interest in running e-scooter pilots, including London, Liverpool, the West Midlands, Manchester, Newcastle, Cambridge, Milton Keynes, and Southampton. We know that many British consumers have tried Voi in other countries and have been keen to access the service here.

What are the main benefits of e-scooters for British cities?

- Provide a socially distanced, outdoor mode of transport
- 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

Why did Oxford apply for scooter trials? What regulations do e-scooters follow?

To support a green restart of local travel and help mitigate the effects of reduced public transport capacity, the Department for Transport (DfT) has fast-tracked and expanded trials of rental e-scooters. 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 an e-scooter trial. Oxfordshire was one of these combined authorities.

Safety remains the top priority for e-scooter use. Regulations allow e-scooters to use the same road spaces as bikes, including cycle lanes. A trial e-scooter may be used on the road (except motorways) and in cycle lanes within the approved trial geographical area, unless otherwise authorised by the local area and as signposted to users. Riding on pavements is strictly prohibited. There are offences and penalties for using an e-scooter illegally. Users can be fined up to £300, have six points added to their driving licence, and the e-scooter can be impounded.

Voi uses a variety of measures to identify misuse and block users responsible. Privately owned e-scooters remain illegal to use in public spaces and will be subject to prosecution.

How does Voi help Oxford?

- Provides an efficient, affordable, socially distant mode of transport
- Provides a green, carbon-neutral transport solution to lower the cities' emissions and improve air quality
- Provides convenient and flexible travel for point-to-point journeys, or for the first or last mile to public transport
- Creates new jobs, which are especially welcome during the difficult employment market due to the pandemic

How can people offer feedback on the trial?

For operational matters - Voi encourages feedback from users and the public. Please contact support@voiapp.io

For feedback on the wider trial – see link to the ongoing ETRO consultation:

<https://consultations.oxfordshire.gov.uk/consult.ti/HeadingtonEscooterExperimental/consultationHome>

For all other enquires please email the dedicated Oxfordshire County Council monitored mailbox: escooter.trial@Oxfordshire.gov.uk

How will the trial be evaluated? How will it be deemed a success?

Voi Technology and Oxfordshire County Council will evaluate the data based on previously agreed-upon terms. The DfT will evaluate all the trials separately through its own monitoring and evaluation exercise.

What happens at the end of the trial?

After assessment and pending approval from the DfT to legalize rental e-scooter schemes long term, cities will have the opportunity to agree contracts with e-scooter operators.

How long will e-scooters be in Oxford?

The e-scooter trial launched on 18 February 2021 and should remain active for the period up to and including 30 November 2021.

How can users tell the difference between Voi e-scooters and other e-scooters?

Voi scooters are easily identifiable by their distinctive coral colour. "Voi" is also emblazoned in white on the scooter's handlebar shaft. It is worth noting that Voi e-scooters are the only legal scooters that can be used on public roads and spaces in Oxford; the use of private e-scooters is illegal and users will be prosecuted.

How many Voi e-scooters will be on trial in Oxford?

Oxford launched with 50 e-scooters. The fleet size will expand in line with demand as it grows across the city and its suburbs. In April 2021, an additional 120 e-scooters will be available amid the next phase of expansion.

How will the demand of escooters be managed throughout the day?

The local Voi team relocate e-scooters throughout the day so that they are available where users want them.

What are the hours of operations for the scooters?

For the initial launch of service, scooters will be available for hire 6 a.m.–10 p.m. in the initial trial area. The hours of operation will be reviewed and amended based on demand.

How do Voi e-scooters integrate with public transport?

Voi is currently in talks with various transport operators in Oxfordshire and will announce these partnerships in due course. Voi's aim is to integrate fully with transport services across the region, and it is working to achieve that.

Can the scooters be folded/collapsed at all?

No, they cannot be folded or collapsed in any way by members of the public.

Are e-scooters permitted on trains and buses?

No.

Can a rider keep a Voi e-scooter in their private residence?

No. The e-scooters are property of Voi, and they are part of a public rental scheme. Misuse of e-scooters can lead to fines, bans, or other forms of prosecution.

Are private scooters also allowed?

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

Will riders need a driving licence? Why?

Yes. To ride an e-scooter in a pilot area, a rider will need a provisional or full driving licence. This is mandated by the Department of Transport (DfT), and Voi also believes that it helps ensure people know the rules of the road and will be more responsible riders. Provisional licenses can be obtained in one week, through an online application. Riders cannot begin their first ride without first verifying their licence in the app. Verification is performed by Onfido, a trusted technology that verify people's identities using a photo-based identity document, a selfie and artificial intelligence algorithms.

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

In Oxford, a user needs to be at least 18 years old to ride a Voi e-scooter.

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

Speeds are capped at 15.5 mph, per regulation. However, at the start of the Oxford trial, the maximum speed will be 10 mph. This speed limit will increase as the trial progresses, but it's been put in place initially for safety reasons and to help riders feel more comfortable on the scooters. 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.

How do riders start using an e-scooter?

To get started, a user needs to download the Voi app from the App Store or Google Play to create an account. A user can locate an available scooter in the app. When the user is standing next to the scooter, they can unlock it with the app. Visit www.voiscooters.com for further information.

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

It costs £1 to unlock the scooter and then 20p per minute of usage. Voi also offers 24-hour (at £10) and 30-day (at £40) subscriptions that allows users to take an unlimited number of rides at a fixed rate.

The subscriptions can be purchased in the app. There are also special rates for students, NHS and emergency services personnel, and those on low incomes. There is more information about these special rates and how to apply at <https://www.voiscooters.com/voi-4-discounts/>.

Are users insured when using Voi e-scooters?

As required by legislation, Voi users have motor third-party insurance. Voi has also decided to go beyond the 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 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 a scooter goes beyond a certain boundary, the e-scooter's speed will reduce gradually.

In a no-ride zone, the motor is slowed to 3 mph (walking pace). It is not put to zero, in order to make it easier for users to return the scooter back to the operating zone.

In a slow-ride zone, the scooters are capped at 5 mph. Users 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, are all located in the app. Please consult the Voi app for the most current information.

How have we identified the parking sites?

An initial 53 sites have been identified as set out in the Voi app, but these sites are subject to regular review throughout the trial.

Each site has undertaken a suitability study by Oxfordshire County Council officers assessing:

- Whether it is on highway land; or subject to a land agreement with private landowners
- Is there a minimum width clearance of 1.5 metres?
- Is it blocking any footways/ crossings/ tactile paving?
- Preferably where possible sites should be placed at the back of the footway (not near the kerb) to minimise the risk of a e-scooter falling into carriageway

Please note all sites are of equal size and should only ever see a total of four e-scooters parked within each geofenced zone.

If there are more than four e-scooters at anytime then they will be suitably redistributed by a member of Voi on-street team.

How do riders park an e-scooter properly?

There is advice in the app about how to park properly.

Park the scooter where it's accessible for other users (never indoors or in a courtyard). The e-scooter should never block pathways, accessibility ramps, driveways, crosswalks, or cars. In Oxford, users can only end their rides in mandatory parking zones, identified clearly in the app.

Users should also follow general parking guidance, including not blocking pathways, pavements, etc.

This information will be communicated to the user via the in-app map.

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

Voi Technology and Oxfordshire County Council will work together to define areas where it is safe and convenient to use e-scooters. Scooters are generally not permitted in pedestrian-heavy zones, and there are some restricted areas.

No-ride zones have been put in place for safety reasons; sometimes they also reflect private land.

For the most up-to-date information, please consult the maps in the Voi app.

Will all scooters have to be parked in racks?

No, but Voi uses a mandatory parking zone approach in Oxford. Users will need to park the scooters in designated areas within the trial zone, which are clearly marked in the in-app map.

Can a user keep a scooter overnight, so they can use it again first thing in the morning?

Voi e-scooters are not allowed on private property. If a rider is caught storing an e-scooter on private property, they will be fined. It is possible to park an e-scooter in a mandatory parking zone close to one's home, and then retrieve it the next morning.

However, there is no guarantee that the scooter will remain in place; other riders are free to use it. E-scooters cannot be reserved.

SAFETY

How can someone ride a Voi e-scooter safely?

Voi believes in pushing safety through rider education. New riders can earn credits from completing modules of the [Ride Like Voila](#) traffic school. To date, more than 500,000 users have participated in the traffic school. Riders can also learn important tips from the Voi app, website, email communications and safety training events.

There should only be one rider per scooter. Riders should follow the Highway Code, wear a helmet, never ride on pavements, abide by speed limits, and keep vigilant of your surroundings.

What is being done to ensure e-scooter safety?

Safety is the number-one priority. Voi is continually working to assess and improve services. In

Britain, 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 flout the rules
- Do more to keep pedestrians and riders separate by updating the slow-ride and no-ride zones
- 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. Increase riding education
- Giving away free helmets at safety events and helmet pop ups, or redeemable online when events are not allowed due to lockdown restrictions
- Incentivising good riding and parking behavior, such as through our helmet-selfie, end ride photo features
- Introduce greater deterrents to unsafe riding:
 - Charge users a premium for abandoning or parking a scooter in a no-parking zone
 - Block users who are abusing the licensing rules, such as enabling underage riders
 - Anyone caught using e-scooters illegally could face criminal proceedings. For misuse, six points could be added to a user's driving license

Does Voi ban users for flouting regulations?

Voi takes riding safely and legally very seriously. If the company receives a confirmed report of an offence from the police, then Voi will always seek to take action against the rider responsible, such as issuing a warning or permanently removing the user 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 scooter's reference code.

Will riders need to wear a helmet?

Helmets are not mandatory, but it is safer to wear one, just as one might when cycling. Voi believes in education and rewarding safe, responsible behavior.

During the trial, Voi is also committed to distributing free helmets to users in Oxford.

Can people ride e-scooters in the dark?

Yes.

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

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, we have increased our 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.

Voi is also providing COVID-19 information and advice via its app. Riders are encouraged 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. Voi's mechanics and logistics teams are equipped with sanitary kits, including masks, gloves, and anti-bacterial gel, and they follow social-distancing guidelines. Voi is testing a new handlebar material that inactivates and minimises the transmission of coronavirus. Using reputable third parties, Voi takes viral and bacterial tests of randomized samples of scooters to make sure we are keeping things clean. Voi educates its users about how to keep themselves safe and encourage them to use hand sanitiser and wear gloves.

What will Voi and Oxfordshire County Council do to keep streets safe from e-scooter clutter?

Both will work together to make sure there are clearly designated parking areas for e-scooters, through technology and incentives. Voi manages its fleet daily to make sure that it is not causing clutter and will be able to quickly identify any problem areas where it can look at initiatives to prevent it happening in the first place.

In addition, Oxford is the first city to benefit from a partnership between itself and [Captur](#) – a London-based software company that gives people a quick and simple way to capture and share photo evidence. The Captur service allows anybody to submit a badly parked e-scooter after scanning the QR code on the scooter. Powered by machine learning, this solution can improve local e-scooter recovery operations, allowing the local team to quickly identify the issues and address them in a more efficient way, driving improvements in accessibility and mobility.

The public can also report poor e-scooter parking at:

<https://www.voiscooters.com/report/uk/>

E-scooter users travel at high speeds and pose a danger in traffic for other road users. How are they safe?

- Voi's e-scooters are capped at a speed of 15.5 mph, per regulation. Regular bicycles often reach the same speed or higher
- During the trial phase in Oxford, we will cap scooter speeds at 5 to 10 mph, depending on the operating area
- Voi has 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 ones 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, e.g. the visually impaired?

It's our job to educate riders about traffic rules using technology and pop-ups. Safety is always our number-one priority and this is tackled through rider education and technology. Voi is the first e-scooter company to offer an online traffic school, [Ride Like Voila](#). Voi will work with the council to control the number of scooters on the streets and their locations. Voi can incentivize people to park them correctly, and we will employ local ambassadors to educate users on riding and parking safely. Our local teams will work closely with police to ensure that the scooters are not a menace for other road and pavement users, particularly groups who may feel that they are

at high risk. When Voi and the council deploys infrastructure (such as parking racks or charging racks) we abide by the relevant government guidance and recognised standards for street furniture and design in public spaces. Voi follows the details laid out in the Manual for Streets 1 and 2.

What will Voi do to keep Oxford 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 it understands the needs of as many vulnerable people as possible. As a result of these conversations, the sector has published advice for e-scooter operators and local authorities participating in trials. Voi evaluates all of its 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 it can make sure its 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's British headquarters staff and Voi's Oxford 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 Britain and education plays an important role in making sure that users abide by the rules.

Voi's free online traffic school, [Ride Like Voila](#), teaches users the rules of the road and rewards users with ride vouchers when they complete modules. Voi actively communicates to riders that they should never ride on pavement throughout their journey, from in-app communications during the onboarding flow through to ongoing road safety communications.

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

Pavement riding is strictly prohibited. If someone is caught riding a Voi e-scooter on the pavement by a Voi ambassador, the ambassador would complete a reporting form and issue a strike or a block to the user (a rider is usually blocked on the third strike, unless the infraction is serious). 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.

What are the consequences for parking in a no-park zone?

No-park zones are indicated in red in the Voi app. A rider will be unable to end their ride in a no-park zone. If the rider abandons the scooter in a no-park zone, an on-the-ground Voi staff member will manually end the ride and retrieve the scooter.

The rider will be charged £25 for the infraction. For more information about parking, read Voi's [guide to parking e-scooters](#).

How will Voi prevent people from riding while intoxicated?

Users have a huge responsibility, not only towards themselves but towards other road users and pedestrians. Voi and the council 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 that is activated during certain hours of the day when people are likely to be imbibing. The test aims to educate users 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 scooter use.

How does someone report a problem, or a scooter that is misplaced or blocking traffic?

Voi has a 24-hour customer service helpline (0800-3768179) and a support email (support@voiapp.io). Users can find out more information at www.voiscooters.com/report/uk/. In Oxford, Voi is also trialing a partnership with [Captur](#) to enable all members of the public a simple, quick way to report scooters by scanning a QR code on the wheel arch of the scooter.

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

Voi has been working closely with the local police since before the trials to ensure that appropriate safety and enforcement measures will be put in place. They meet regularly to discuss issues and measures. Police are aware of the rules of the trial, and they can report rogue riders and recommend blocks to Voi users 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 a top priority, and there are many resources available to riders. Voi recommends all users complete [Ride Like Voila](#), its online traffic school.

Voi regularly sends users 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 user has specific questions, they can contact support at support@voiapp.io.

SUSTAINABILITY

Are e-scooters really 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. Britain is particularly suitable for e-scooters because 60% of car trips here are for 1- to 3-mile journeys (DfT Report, 2018). Improvements to e-scooters, which now last a minimum of 60 months, mean that each 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 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 scooters back and forth to Voi's warehouses. This allows for greener operations, with less service trips for charging and deploying 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 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