# South London children urge Lambeth Council to act on deadly rise of supersized SUVs



A delegation of primary school children from South London is set to appear before Lambeth Council, urging local politicians to take decisive action against the rise of supersized SUVs—a trend linked with significantly higher risks to child pedestrians. The children’s appeal coincides with groundbreaking research revealing that SUVs are three times more likely to cause fatal injuries to children under the age of ten compared to smaller cars.

This new study, conducted by the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) in collaboration with Imperial College London, comprehensively analysed over 359,000 road traffic deaths in Britain over two decades. The findings are alarming: children aged 18 and under are 77% more likely to suffer fatal injuries when struck by SUVs, while the risk for those aged 0–9 soars to three times that of collisions involving smaller vehicles. The research attributes the increased danger to the greater height and weight of SUVs, which feature tall, blunt front ends that can strike children higher on their bodies, making injuries more severe or fatal.

Dr Anna Goodman, lead author and Assistant Professor at LSHTM, emphasised that the concern is not merely about vehicle size but specific dimensions—weight and height are the key predictors of injury risk, not length. “In the UK, we have seen a huge increase in the sale of ever-larger cars. Our findings highlight that these larger vehicles are particularly dangerous for children, especially young children. This is probably because children are shorter in height, and are therefore more vulnerable to the risks of being hit by vehicles with a tall front bonnet,” she said. The study bolsters arguments for regulatory measures targeting these dimensions as an effective way to improve road safety.

In response, Lambeth Council is reportedly considering adopting a progressive parking charge system based on vehicle size, similar to measures implemented in Paris, which would make it the UK's first local authority to do so. Currently, Lambeth has introduced emissions-based parking charges aimed at reducing pollution, but this proposal would specifically discourage the ownership and use of large SUVs by imposing higher fees on heavier and taller vehicles.

This initiative is supported by local campaigners, including Nicola Pastore, a Lambeth mother and founder of Solve the School Run. “Every day I worry about my children’s safety just walking to school. The rise in massive SUVs on our streets has made a simple journey feel dangerous. Parents shouldn’t have to feel this way. It’s time councillors stepped up with bold, coordinated action to protect children and reclaim our neighbourhoods,” she said.

The heightened risks extend beyond children. The research also confirms that pedestrians and cyclists face 44% higher odds of fatal injury when struck by SUVs or light trucks compared to standard cars. These vehicles’ larger size not only endangers vulnerable road users but also impairs drivers' visibility. The elevated bonnets can obscure children and others from view, increasing near-miss incidents and the likelihood of collisions, especially when vehicles are manoeuvring out of parking spaces or at junctions.

At a strategic level, the London Assembly has passed a motion urging Mayor Sadiq Khan to encourage boroughs to consider higher parking charges and taxes on larger vehicles. Labour Assembly Member Elly Baker highlighted the incompatibility of large SUVs with London’s streets, which were not designed for supersized cars. She pointed to the multiple problems caused by SUVs, including greater risks to pedestrians and cyclists, reduced parking space availability, and increased road damage.

Campaign groups advocating for safer streets also call for fairer taxation systems favouring lighter, smaller cars as part of a broader manifesto to combat "carspreading"—the phenomenon where SUVs take up excessive road and parking space. Such measures aim to shift urban transport towards more sustainable, pedestrian-friendly models.

As the national discussion around vehicle safety and environmental sustainability intensifies, the evidence increasingly supports targeted interventions that address the dangers posed by large SUVs. With children’s lives at stake, the push for reforms like those proposed in Lambeth may serve as a crucial example for other councils across the UK to follow, making streets safer for all.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://highways-news.com/research-shows-suvs-three-times-more-likely-to-kill-a-child-under-10/), [[4]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/transport/supersize-suv-cars-fatal-injury-cyclists-pedestrians-research-b1224908.html)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://highways-news.com/research-shows-suvs-three-times-more-likely-to-kill-a-child-under-10/), [[2]](https://www.lshtm.ac.uk/newsevents/news/2025/being-hit-suv-increases-likelihood-death-or-serious-injury), [[4]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/transport/supersize-suv-cars-fatal-injury-cyclists-pedestrians-research-b1224908.html), [[6]](https://www.thejournal.ie/children-are-82-more-likely-to-die-if-they-are-hit-by-an-suv-than-by-a-smaller-car-study-finds-6691454-Apr2025/), [[7]](https://www.thenationalnews.com/health/2025/04/30/young-children-twice-as-likely-to-die-if-hit-by-suv-than-standard-car/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://highways-news.com/research-shows-suvs-three-times-more-likely-to-kill-a-child-under-10/), [[5]](https://love.lambeth.gov.uk/lambeth-confirms-new-emissions-based-parking-charges-to-help-improve-air-quality/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://highways-news.com/research-shows-suvs-three-times-more-likely-to-kill-a-child-under-10/), [[3]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/transport/sadiq-khan-spread-supersize-suv-cars-london-mayor-london-assembly-b1231575.html)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://highways-news.com/research-shows-suvs-three-times-more-likely-to-kill-a-child-under-10/)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://highways-news.com/research-shows-suvs-three-times-more-likely-to-kill-a-child-under-10/), [[4]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/transport/supersize-suv-cars-fatal-injury-cyclists-pedestrians-research-b1224908.html)
* Paragraph 7 – [[3]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/transport/sadiq-khan-spread-supersize-suv-cars-london-mayor-london-assembly-b1231575.html)
* Paragraph 8 – [[1]](https://highways-news.com/research-shows-suvs-three-times-more-likely-to-kill-a-child-under-10/), [[4]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/transport/supersize-suv-cars-fatal-injury-cyclists-pedestrians-research-b1224908.html)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://highways-news.com/research-shows-suvs-three-times-more-likely-to-kill-a-child-under-10/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.lshtm.ac.uk/newsevents/news/2025/being-hit-suv-increases-likelihood-death-or-serious-injury> - A study by the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) and Imperial College London analysed over 600,000 collisions and found that pedestrians and cyclists are 44% more likely to be fatally injured if struck by an SUV or light truck vehicle (LTV) compared to a passenger car. For children, the risk increases to 82%, and for those under 10, it rises to 130%. The study highlights the increased danger posed by larger vehicles, especially to young children, due to their taller and blunter front ends.
3. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/transport/sadiq-khan-spread-supersize-suv-cars-london-mayor-london-assembly-b1231575.html> - Allies of London Mayor Sadiq Khan have called for higher taxes and increased parking charges for 'supersize' SUVs to address concerns over road safety and congestion. The London Assembly passed a motion urging the mayor to support efforts to reduce the prevalence of large vehicles in the city, citing their impact on road safety, parking availability, and road damage. The motion also calls for a progressive element in Vehicle Excise Duty based on vehicle weight and height.
4. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/transport/supersize-suv-cars-fatal-injury-cyclists-pedestrians-research-b1224908.html> - Research indicates that pedestrians and cyclists are 44% more likely to be killed if struck by a 'supersized' SUV compared to a conventional car. The risk is even greater for children, with an 82% higher likelihood of fatal injury, and 130% higher for those under 10. The study highlights the increased danger posed by larger vehicles, particularly due to their taller and blunter front ends, which strike pedestrians and cyclists higher on their bodies.
5. <https://love.lambeth.gov.uk/lambeth-confirms-new-emissions-based-parking-charges-to-help-improve-air-quality/> - Lambeth Council has introduced new emissions-based parking charges to improve air quality. The system increases the number of parking bands from six to 13, reflecting the impact of vehicle emissions. Drivers are charged according to their car's CO2 emissions for both on and off-street parking permits. The initiative aims to reduce vehicle journeys by 27% and increase walking, cycling, and public transport usage by 85% to achieve Net Zero by 2030.
6. <https://www.thejournal.ie/children-are-82-more-likely-to-die-if-they-are-hit-by-an-suv-than-by-a-smaller-car-study-finds-6691454-Apr2025/> - A study has found that pedestrians and cyclists are 44% more likely to die if hit by an SUV or similar-sized vehicle rather than a traditional car, with the figure rising to 82% for children. The study highlights the increased risk posed by larger vehicles, particularly due to their taller and blunter front ends, which strike pedestrians and cyclists higher on their bodies. The findings have led to calls for SUV-free zones in urban areas.
7. <https://www.thenationalnews.com/health/2025/04/30/young-children-twice-as-likely-to-die-if-hit-by-suv-than-standard-car/> - An analysis produced by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) and Imperial College London shows that pedestrians and cyclists are 44% more likely to die if hit by an SUV, rising to 82% for children and 130% for those under 10. The study highlights the increased danger posed by larger vehicles, particularly due to their taller and blunter front ends, which strike pedestrians and cyclists higher on their bodies.