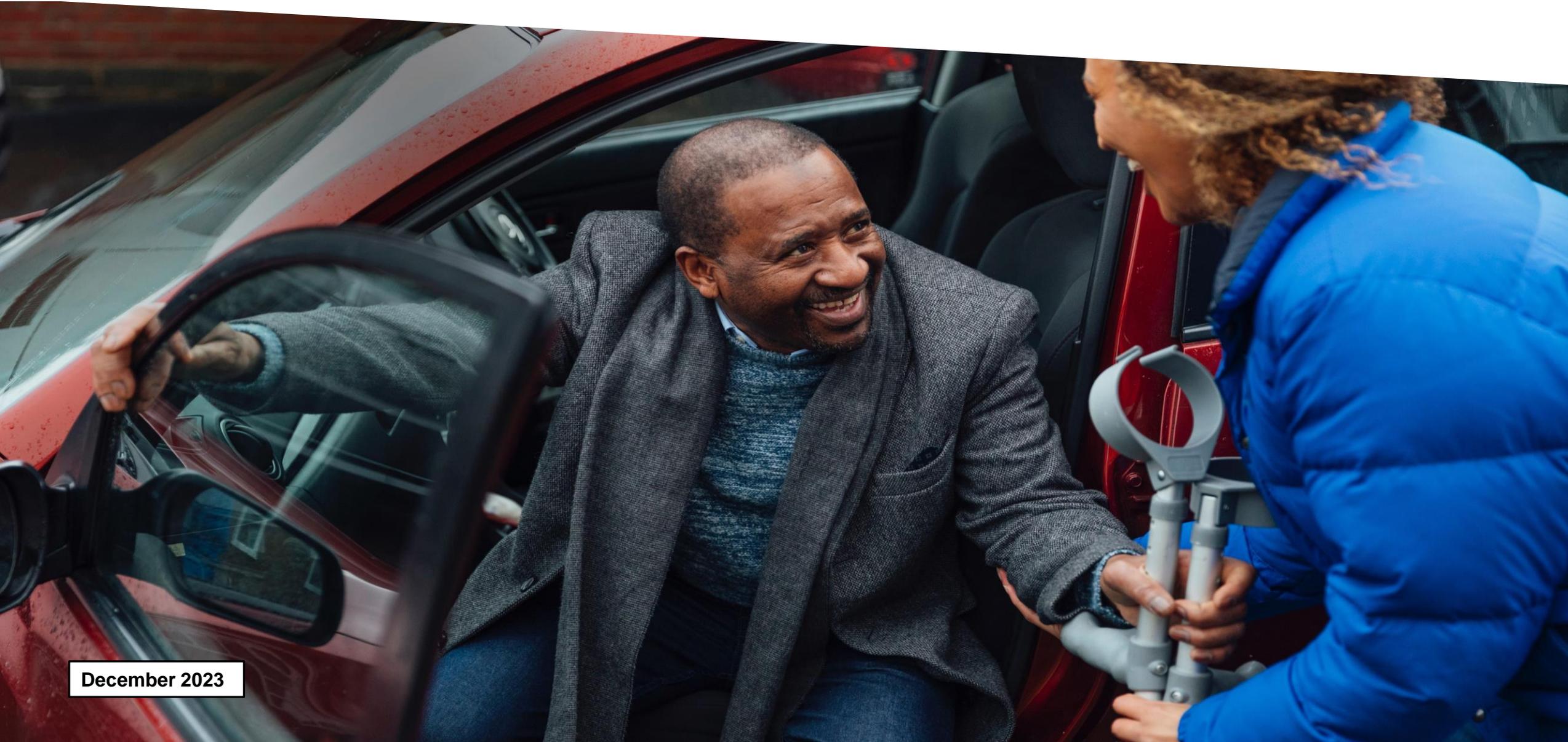


Access and inclusion approach



December 2023

Foreword

National Highways is responsible for operating and maintaining the strategic road network, 4,500 miles of motorways and A-roads across England. This network enables our customers to travel independently and relatively barrier-free as drivers, passengers, pedestrians and cyclists. However, for too many disabled people this isn't the case, which means they take 38% fewer journeys than their non-disabled counterparts¹, missing out on the benefits those journeys bring. This is known as the transport accessibility gap.

We know many of the barriers disabled customers face are when planning their journeys, refuelling, seeking rest and refreshments, breaking down, or travelling through roadworks or diversions. We also want to make it easier for people to walk, cycle and use public transport.

We can only achieve accessible and inclusive roads for our disabled customers by us all committing to the goal and working together to achieve it. It is National Highways' responsibility to make the benefits of travel across the strategic road network in England available equally to everyone.

Improving accessibility is an ongoing challenge, especially given the rapid changes to technology, travel patterns and customers' vehicles. Our customers' expectations around safety, journey times, reliability and communication are changing too. This presents new opportunities and challenges. It is vital that we ensure these changes make journeys easier not harder.

Our approach to access and inclusion, outlined in this document, will drive our thinking and decision making, skills, innovation, and resources, both within National Highways and our supply chain and stakeholders. This will mean we rise to the challenge of what the future holds, reduce the transport accessibility gap and ensure our roads will be accessible and inclusive for all our customers.

Roads that are accessible and inclusive to disabled people are better for all our customers.



Elliot Shaw Chief Customer and Strategy Officer

¹ Motability Transport Accessibility Gap Report March 2022

Introduction

At National Highways we're proud of the services we've developed for disabled and Deaf customers. These are already helping to enhance journeys every day. These services include an SMS service at roadside telephones, a SignLive service for Deaf customers who want to contact us, plus roadside service area access guides.

However, we know there's much more we need to do. This *access and inclusion approach* has been developed through a combination of customer research, insight and stakeholder engagement. It sets out how we will build on what we are already doing to deliver roads and services that are accessible and inclusive for disabled people.

We are hugely grateful for the support of our Roads for All forum in helping us to develop this approach. The forum includes a wide range of disability groups and organisations, from Motability to Driving Mobility, and from Disabled Motorists UK to the British Deaf Association.

Our legal duties and commitments

As a government arms-length body, National Highways must also adhere to relevant legislation and commitments.

As part of the Public Sector Equality Duty within the Equality Act 2010 we must have 'due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic' (such as disabled people).

Part 3 of the Equality Act 2010 also describes how 'service providers must not discriminate when providing a service to the public in the terms or the quality of that service or by failing to provide reasonable adjustments'.

In the UK, disabled people make 38% fewer journeys than non-disabled people:



More than **15%** of people in the UK are neurodivergent which includes Autism, ADHD, Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, or Acquired Neurodiversity

22% of the population are disabled



2 million people have a hearing impairment



In 2021 **2.35 million**

road users held blue badges²

Driving a car is also the most common mode of transport for disabled adults in England, accounting for around **53% of all trips** by disabled people



60% of disabled people, aged 17-64, hold a full driving licence compared with 78% of non-disabled people

² DFT Blue Badge scheme statistics, England: 2021 - Published 25 January 2022

Our vision for access and inclusion

Our roads and services will be accessible and inclusive to all our customers, so that road users and communities are able to use our network independently, confidently and safely.

We will reduce the transport accessibility gap so that disabled people can travel across our network with ease.



How we will make a difference for disabled customers using our network

We'll help our disabled customers to plan their journeys to meet their needs.

Our disabled customers will be able to contact us quickly and easily, without barriers, to plan their journeys. We'll give them the information they need so they feel confident about their journey, including details of roadworks and incidents so they can adapt their plans.

Our disabled customers will be able to travel independently and confidently on our roads.

Our disabled customers will be able to drive safely, with clear and easy to read signs. They will feel confident to stop at any service area and access the services and facilities they need.

We'll help our disabled customers when things don't go to plan.

We'll keep our disabled customers informed about incidents and roadworks so they can adapt their journeys. If they break down we'll provide them with accessible, tailored support at the roadside to help them on their way.



How we will make a difference for disabled people living alongside our network

Disabled customers within our communities will be able to access our network.

Disabled customers will be able to walk or wheel to their destination without encountering any barriers along, or presented by, our road network. They will feel safe walking, without fear of collision with vehicles, bicycles or e-scooters. And they will be able to catch a bus to and from any bus stop along our road network.

We will be a considerate neighbour to our disabled customers living alongside our network.

We will consult disabled customers within our communities to better understand the impact of roadworks. Disabled customers will be able to stay safe, free from construction noise, dust and light at levels that could impact their health and wellbeing. And they will not be disproportionately impacted by the effects of traffic when it is diverted near to where they live, work or study.



How we'll achieve our vision for disabled customers

We've set out six objectives to deliver our vision. These objectives are aligned to our six customer service strategic themes and will drive the delivery of our access and inclusion action plan. Our *customer service strategy* sets the direction for delivering great customer experiences. Our *access and inclusion approach* explains how we will deliver great customer experiences for disabled customers. If we design and deliver for disabled customers, we design and deliver for all.

Improving journey times

Our disabled customers will feel in control and have reliable journey times, we'll focus on:

- Breakdown and recovery experiences
- Electric vehicle charging
- Diversion routes
- Signage

Providing better information

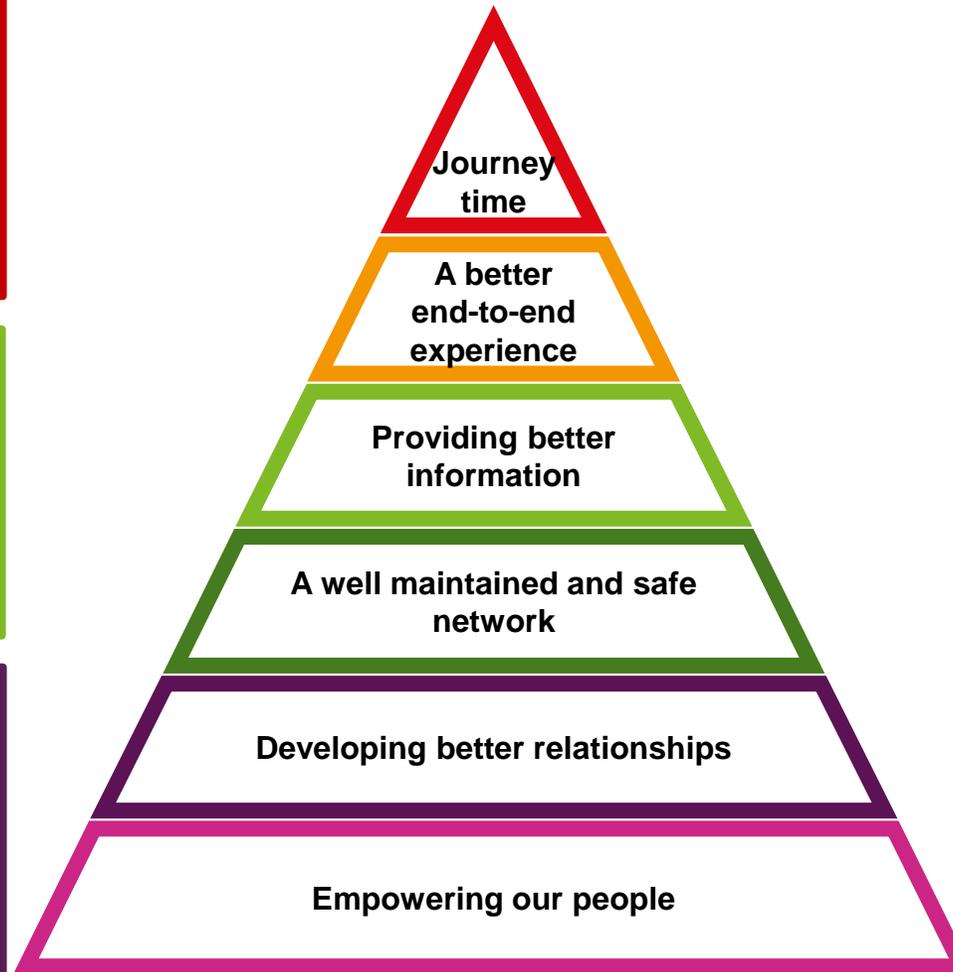
Our information will be accessible and inclusive for our customers and communities, we'll focus on:

- Information access standards
- Joined-up journey planning information
- Digital information for our disabled customers

Developing better relationships

We'll enhance our insight and work with our disabled customers, supply chain and wider transport sector to better identify solutions that will close the transport accessibility gap, this will include:

- More diverse insight and engagement
- Procurement and contract performance



A better end-to-end experience

Our services will be accessible and inclusive for our customers and communities, we'll focus on:

- Accessible active (non-motorised) travel for all
- Accessible service areas, including support for refuelling and recharging

A well maintained and safe network

Our network will be accessible and inclusive, we'll focus on:

- Incorporating access and inclusion into customer design standards and asset management
- Cost benefit assessment

Empowering our people

We'll embed access and inclusion into our thinking and decision making, and build capability to meet and exceed our legal duties and commitments, we'll focus on:

- Access and inclusion maturity and accreditation
- Ways of working
- Financial resources

Making a difference for our customers. Customer service strategy
(May 2021)

Key areas of focus to deliver for disabled customers

| Empowering our people | Developing better relationships | A well maintained and safe network | Providing better information | A better end-to-end experience | Improving journey times |
|---|--|---|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ We'll embed access and inclusion into our thinking, decision making and delivery.▪ We'll enhance our people's skills and understanding in relation to access and inclusion.▪ We'll ensure our employee communications and supporting resources are accessible.▪ We'll empower our people with appropriate resources, governance and processes to deliver this access and inclusion approach. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ We'll work with our stakeholders, partners and supply chain to enhance our ability to influence access and inclusion improvements.▪ We'll enhance and share insight about our diverse range of customers to drive improvements across the network and services.▪ We'll ensure disabled customers are engaged in the design and delivery of our schemes.▪ We'll work to ensure that, when our customers contact us, we are accessible and have the appropriate support in place. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ We'll improve understanding of the accessibility of our network to create focus for improvements.▪ We'll put the mechanisms in place to promote access and inclusion improvements to the network.▪ We'll build access and inclusion requirements into design standards for the network.▪ We'll develop best practice for governance and delivery of access and inclusion to design, build, maintain and operate an accessible network. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ We'll work with third parties and suppliers to ensure digital services are accessible to all our customers.▪ We'll improve how we communicate the resources we have available to help our disabled customers.▪ We will gain an understanding of our disabled customers' requirements for information to support safe and reliable journeys. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ We'll support local authorities and transport partners to ensure our disabled customers can choose their preferred mode of transport.▪ We'll work with roadside operators and lorry parking facilities to improve accessibility.▪ We'll improve access for disabled pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders when using the network. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ We'll investigate disabled customers' experiences to further understand the barriers they face, such as with diversion routes and signage.▪ We'll review access and assistance requirements for disabled customers to reliably charge or fuel their vehicle, and to be appropriately supported when they break down. |

Empowering our people to deliver for disabled customers

To achieve our access and inclusion vision, everyone in our business and supply chain will understand how they can make a difference for our disabled customers and be empowered to do so.

Improving journey times

Improving journey times is about more than the way we manage incidents, delays and roadworks. We will build our peoples' and partners' capability to understand our disabled customers' access and assistance needs when broken down, when we are designing and installing signs, and when installing electric vehicle charge points.



A better end-to-end experience

We will better understand disabled customers' end-to-end journey experiences. We will work with local authorities and roadside facility operators to provide flexibility and choice for our disabled customers.



Providing better information

Every one of us can play our part in helping to provide better, more accessible information to our disabled customers. This might be through promoting best practice to colleagues or improving our digital channels.



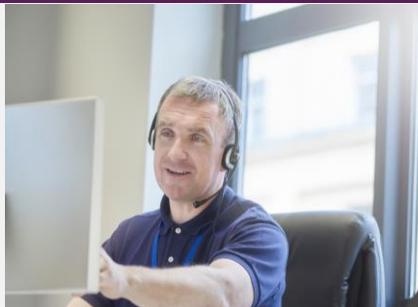
A well maintained and safe network

All our people - from roadworkers to those who develop standards - will know what good looks like and feel empowered to challenge how we work. That way we will deliver an accessible and inclusive network.



Developing better relationships

We can all help to develop better relationships with our disabled customers. This might be in the way we engage with our communities during roadworks, communicate the help we can provide, or how we respond to customer contact.



Empowering our people

Access and inclusion will be a core priority for our customer service delivery. Our leadership team will set the direction so that everyone in our business and supply chain understands the importance of delivering, and exceeding, our legal duty and commitments. We will build the capability to do so.



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