



National Highways Digital Lab: Improving customer journeys through data and digital partnerships

By Kamran Ashraf, Head of Digital Lab, National Highways

National Highways has evolved significantly in recent years and is looking to evolve further into a customer service provider, as we look ahead to fulfilling our vision of connecting the country. We have made some bold decisions about how we should operate in a digital world. Decisions such as how we invest and grow value from the unique data that we hold, and our place in the mobility ecosystem - a connected network of organisations that contribute to, are impacted by and use the road network.

As set out in our Digital Roads 2025 strategy, we are looking to realise the value of our data across the strategic road network (SRN) – the 4,500 miles of motorway and major A-roads that we design, build, maintain and operate. Our data is currently valued at £69 billion for UK plc. It has enormous potential to further benefit our customers and communities, in partnership with the mobility ecosystem.

Our customers have told us that they want real-time, accurate and reliable information about their journeys in whatever digital device they choose. We know that customers rely significantly on wayfinding apps and sat nav products to plan and navigate their journeys. To meet their needs, we are on the journey of sharing trusted information and forming strategic partnerships with these companies, to help our customers feeling better informed, safe and in control of their journeys.

This has led us to invest in the National Highways Digital Lab, acting as an open platform for data-led insights and innovation to better connect the country. It is the digital partnerships capability through which new relationships are being formed across the mobility ecosystem, to share National Highways data and support its adoption into customers' digital products and services.

Digital Lab is launching five data services, containing the most valuable data sets for our partners, including Road and Lane Closures, Digital Variable Message Signs, Diversion Routes, Road Limits and Features and Speed Managed Areas. The data services have been designed as 'plug and play' APIs (application programming interfaces). They are hosted in a developer portal, providing all the ingredients for partners to innovate their products and services. In a single step, anyone can register on the [Digital Lab Developer Portal](#) for free, as part of the Government Open Data Licence, and explore our first live data service release, Road and Lane Closures.

We know that the value of this data will only be realised through collaboration and a new way of working, to satisfy the use cases identified with our partners. These use cases outline how the integration of National Highways data will benefit customers. The mobility ecosystem is extensive, and we are forming partnerships with organisations including freight, logistics, local authorities, vehicle manufacturers, technology companies, data aggregators and journey planners.

Building relationships with partners based on shared purpose and goals means that we are able to open new opportunities to convene the market, to design more tailored and personalised journeys for all. A great example of this is how data and digital experiences can be used to improve journeys for those with accessibility needs. What do we mean by this? Take a look at some of the insights from our recent [Navigating Neurodiversity report](#).

Wondering how you can partner and engage with Digital Lab?

Visit our [Digital Lab website](#), register on the [Developer Portal](#) or contact us at digitallab@nationalhighways.co.uk to continue the conversation.