

Customer Service Plan

2023-24



[Plain text version here](#)

A27 cycle route.



M6 near junction 3/3a, West Midlands.



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Junction 27 on the M62, near Leeds.



Gloucester Services on M5.



Cover image: Junction 5 of the M621 in Yorkshire.

Foreword



As we look ahead to the last two years of the second road period and plan for the third, we continue to respond to the evolving needs of our customers. I'm delighted to share our customer service plan for 2023-24 which outlines how we plan to make a difference for our customers over the coming year.

We have a truly diverse range of customers. They include car, bike, van, and HGV drivers along with walkers, cyclists, horse riders and the communities who live alongside our network, hauliers and delivery organisations, and bus and coach companies. People rely on our roads to connect the country and drive the economy, and the needs of our customers are central to everything we do.

We work closely with our customers to understand what they need, how they feel about the work we do, what 'good' looks like for them, and how we can do better. Our work with independent watchdog, Transport Focus, is also vital to hearing and understanding the voice of our customers and central to this is the Strategic Roads User Survey, our official measure of customer satisfaction.

Our vision is that our customers will have increasing satisfaction with their journeys on our network. They will know we care about their experience and consider us to be a responsible and trusted organisation.

A vital area where we can show responsibility and build trust is environmental sustainability. We have ambitious decarbonisation targets, including to support net zero carbon travel on our road network by 2050.

To help get there we're working with the Department for Transport to make ultra-rapid

charging accessible at various motorway service areas via a high-powered charging infrastructure. This will help to reduce the 'range anxiety' that many customers with electric vehicles can feel when going on long journeys. We're also developing approaches to enhance opportunities for active travel (walking, cycling, scooting) alongside our network.

Collaboration is central to delivering for our customers. We know that our customers' journeys rarely start and end on our network. People expect a greater choice of transport options to get to their destination. We're working to better integrate our network with bus, coach, and rail networks to offer this.

We also understand that delivering reliable, timely information is key to helping customers to feel in control and enabling them to have stress free and safe journeys. We're using digital, data and technology to improve communication to customers about incidents and roadworks via roadside electronic boards and direct to car satnavs and customers' smartphones.

We care about every journey our customers make and we're determined to listen and respond to customers, so we deliver the safe and reliable network and service they expect now and in the future.

Elliot Shaw

Chief Customer and Strategy Officer

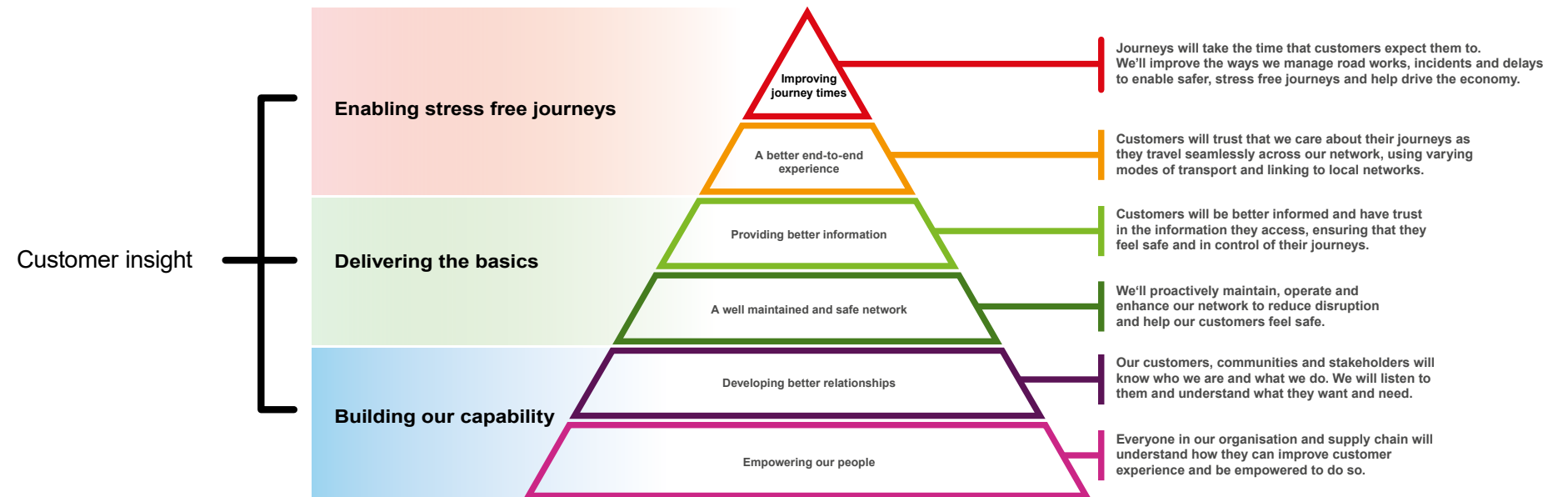
Introduction

This is the third customer service plan National Highways has published since we launched our Customer service strategy: Making a difference for our customers in May 2021. Our strategy set out our vision for our relationship with our customers and our successive customer service plans have shown the detail of how we're delivering against our performance goals for the second Road Period (2020-25).

Each customer service plan uses the six themes from our strategy to show how we're working to achieve our goals for customers. This year we continue to set ourselves ambitious targets ranging from improving how quickly we answer emergency roadside telephone calls, through to improving customers' experience in roadworks, and working with truck stop operators to enhance roadside facilities for truck drivers.

National Highways colleagues are also crucial to delivering the excellent service that our customers expect. Our teams are continually exploring new ways to improve customer service, so customers experience a seamless, consistent approach regardless of who they speak to in our organisation.

Our Executive Customer Service Group oversees the delivery of this customer service plan. Every deliverable within the plan is assigned to a senior colleague within this group who takes ownership of it, ensuring there is a robust action plan for delivery.



A diagram of the Customer service strategy pyramid, which details how the six themes of the strategy come together.

You can access the full Customer service strategy online by clicking the image of the pyramid above.

Improving journey times

What it will look like for our customers.

Journeys will take the time that customers expect them to. We'll improve the ways we manage roadworks, incidents and delays to enable safer, stress-free journeys and help drive the economy.

We will:

- Launch our updated *Roadworks: A customer view implementation toolkit* to support our schemes in improving the overall customer experience during construction.
- Manage long duration incidents better, by using intelligence to focus attention on incident types with the highest customer impact and include customer insight in our debriefing process.
- Improve our customers' experience in roadworks by completing 10 feasibility studies and begin trials of up to three innovations.
- Better manage congestion, be that reoccurring or as a result of an incident, using new technology capabilities such as the Incident Support Tool and the new National Traffic Information Service (NTIS) platform.
- Deliver an ongoing programme to improve the health, safety and wellbeing of commercial drivers to help reduce incidents, with a focus on van drivers (<3.5t).



Traffic Officer on the M6.



Junction 16 on M60 in the North west.

A better end-to-end experience

What it will look like for our customers.

Customers will trust that we care about their journeys as they travel seamlessly across our network, using varying modes of transport and linking to local networks.

We will:

- Enhance customer experience of our diversion routes, identifying opportunities where customers and communities would benefit from better information provision.
- Work with the newly formed bus and coach forum members, and deliver improvements from the bus and coach plan to better integrate with other transport networks.
- Develop and deliver solutions to provide customers with travel choices so they can retime, reroute or remode to a different form of transport for their journey.
- Deliver a programme of improvements at truck stop facilities, through issuing match funded grants to truck stop operators, focusing on welfare facilities, driver and site security, and HGV parking capacity.
- Reduce electric vehicle 'range anxiety' and make ultra-rapid charging accessible and reliable by working with seven motorway service areas to deliver high-capacity energy storage systems to support rapid charging infrastructure.
- Make improvements to the consistency of trunk road roadside facility signing so customers can plan where they stop and understand what facilities will be available.
- Improve the experience of walkers, cyclists and horse-riders by addressing themes agreed with the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) and Transport Focus, and develop an approach to active travel (walking, cycling, scooting etc) to provide a more connected network.



EV charging station at Gloucester Services on the M5.

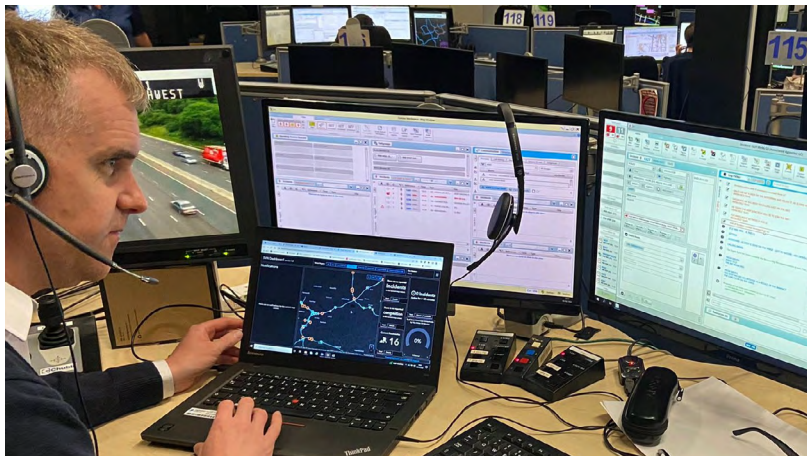
Providing better information

What it will look like for our customers.

Customers will be better informed and have trust in the information they access, ensuring that they feel safe and in control of their journeys.

We will:

- Develop a new data service, advising of current lane and road closures, to improve the quality and accessibility of traffic information for customers.
- Work with public and private sector stakeholders to drive innovation in the way we use our data to improve customer service.
- Improve roadside communication to customers through roadworks by continuing the M40/M42 trial of electronic boards for roadworks and producing a draft 'how to' guide.
- Improve the quality of roadworks information available to customers with the delivery of regional accuracy improvement plans.
- Make customers feel safer by improving the quality of service provided by our regional operations centres including how we answer emergency roadside telephone (ERT) calls.



North West Regional Operations Centre.



Emergency roadside telephone.

A well maintained and safe network

What it will look like for our customers.

We'll proactively maintain, operate and enhance our network to reduce disruption and help our customers feel safe.

We will:

- Improve the reliability of our signs and signals to focus on reducing the time involved in setting them.
- Optimise the number of variable signs and signals set on approach to incidents across the network to improve customer trust in our information.
- Introduce our new ride quality metric to improve customer satisfaction regarding road surface and journey smoothness.
- Identify locations on the network where littering continues to be an issue and plan for the installation of additional roadside infrastructure.
- Maintain our ongoing focus on identifying and addressing defects, upskilling more of our teams to travel the network undertaking customer tours and reporting what they see from the customer's viewpoint.
- Address the issue of littering by implementing both a low/no cost social media campaign and a paid for marketing campaign aimed at education, awareness-building and behaviour change.



M56 in Preston.

Developing better relationships

What it will look like for our customers.

Our customers, communities and stakeholders will know who we are and what we do. We will listen to them and understand what they want and need.

We will:

- Work with communities impacted by our network to understand their needs. This improved engagement will provide community benefits.
- Review how we manage customer contact, including contact channels and response times.
- Monitor customers' awareness of - and trust in - National Highways (using a range of evidence sources) to identify improvement opportunities.
- Develop and provide a clear, consistent and tailored service to stakeholders impacted by the network.
- Embed our corporate approach to access and inclusion, including a programme of activities that ensures the needs of all our customers are considered in everything we do.
- Test the concept of customer hubs to encourage people to provide feedback on their experience.



A66 near Kirkby, Cumbria.



West Midlands Regional Operations Centre.

Empowering our people

What it will look like for our customers.

Everyone in our organisation and supply chain will understand how they can improve customer experience, and be empowered to do so.

We will:

- Deliver a customer contact platform to improve how we understand and manage our customer and stakeholder contact.
- Review and improve how our supply chain delivers service to customers and communities.
- Drive a greater number of positive interactions with more customers and communities by delivering more high quality proactive social media content.
- Implement initiatives using our people's insight to see how our on-road resources (including Traffic Officers and Inspectors) can provide advice and guidance for larger schemes.
- Roll out the use of customer journey maps to inform service improvements.
- Continue to develop our people's capability in customer experience, targeting skills development and talent acquisition in our highest impact service roles.
- Drive consistency of customer service through Highways Inspector and Route Manager training.
- Embed the use of the Strategic Roads User Satisfaction survey (our user satisfaction KPI measure) to drive improvements.



A21 Tonbridge to Pembury site office.



Traffic Officer virtual reality training.

Gloucester Services on the M5.



A12 near the Copdock roundabout, Suffolk.



“There’s lots of good stuff in this plan from a road user point of view. Just crack on and deliver it, National Highways!”

Guy Dangerfield
Head of Strategy at Transport Focus



Family checking tyres at home.

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Cheddar Gorge.