



Connecting
our customers
2019-20



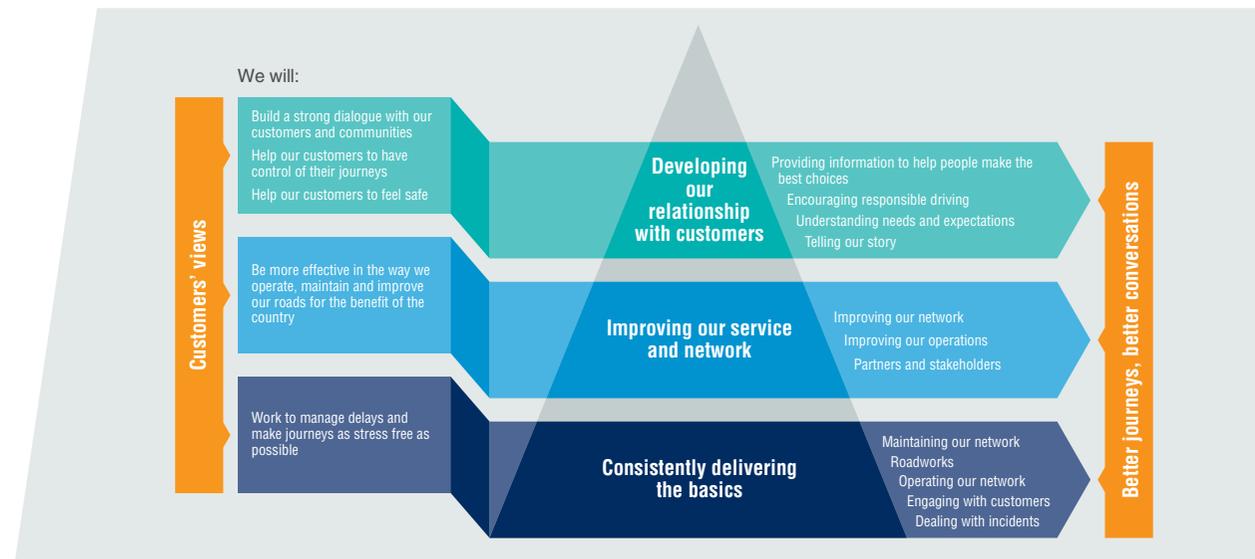
Foreword

We're here to connect the country. We care about our customers and we continue to listen to how they feel and what they need from us.

We're proud of the work we've done to improve our customer service since we were established in 2015; getting the basics right and building trust with our customers, partners and stakeholders. We're making roadworks work better for our customers, including using more 60mph speed limits, and we're improving how we communicate with our customers during their journeys. We're also upgrading emergency areas on motorways; helping customers to feel safer when travelling on our network.

Our maturity as a customer service organisation is growing and we recognise that there is still more to do before our customers really see and feel that we care about their journeys. This plan outlines what we will be doing this year to continue building relationships and creating better customer experiences.

Mike Wilson, executive lead for customer service



Introduction

Our **Customer Service Strategy** remains at the core of what and how we deliver, and this is driven by customer insight. Each year we review our customers' priorities to ensure that our annual customer plans address their frustrations. We also carry out monitoring activities to strengthen the work we've done to date.

“It is vital that Highways England continues to focus on delivering improvements for road users. The actions set out in its customer service plan are an important part of that.”

**David Hunt, Head of Economics and Policy,
Office of Rail and Road**

We care about our customers' journeys and we are committed to getting them home safe and well. Customer satisfaction with our roads and services is currently measured through the National Road Users' Satisfaction Survey (NRUSS). While our satisfaction score of 88.41% was slightly below our target (of 90%) this year, we have worked across our business and supply chain to improve the overall experience for our customers.

Our customer satisfaction score for roadworks is at its highest level since the beginning of our first five-year road investment period in 2015. We have also seen a continual rise in our signage and information scores.

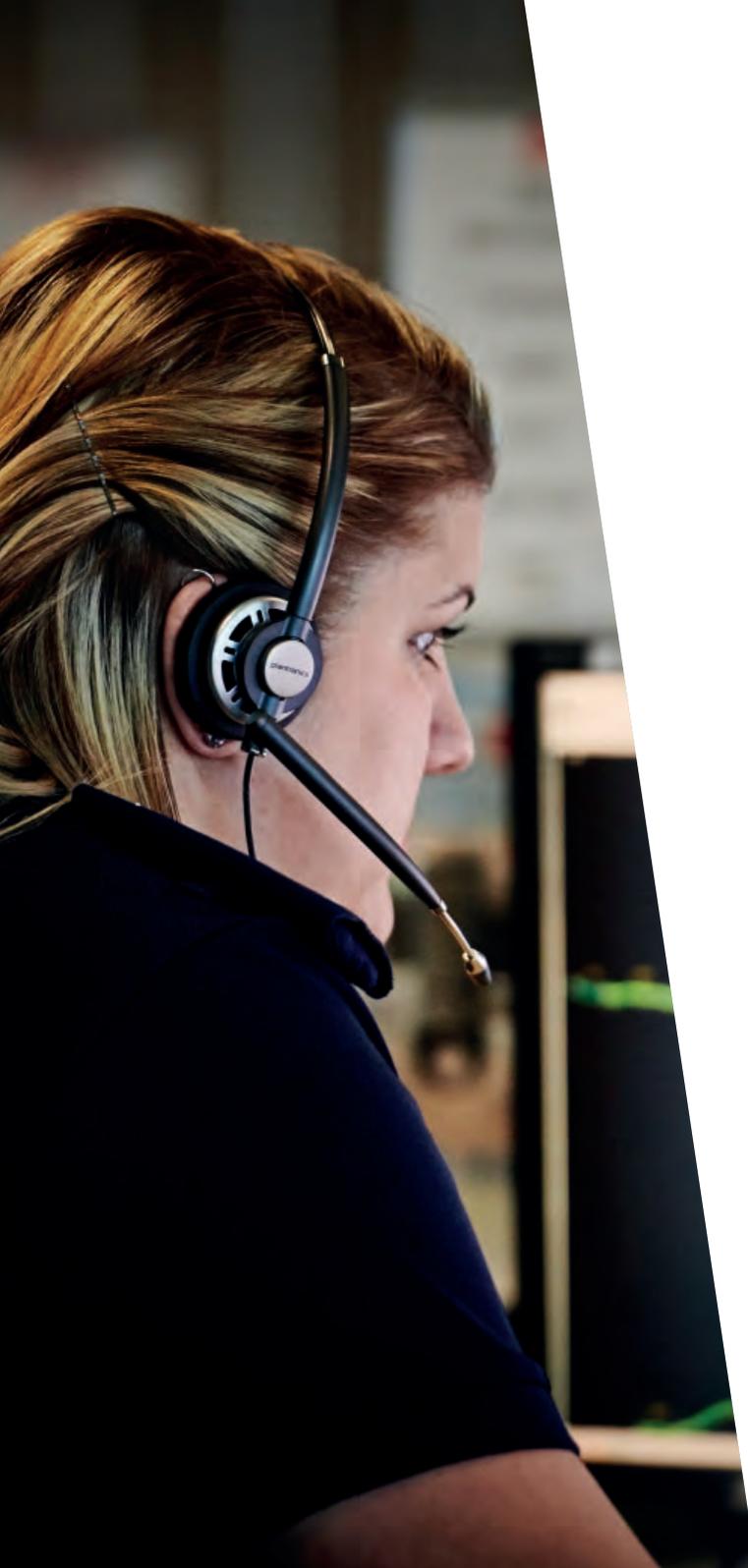
Many customers tell us that information is important to them, so to complement what we are measured against in NRUSS, we've been making improvements to our on-road signs and other information channels, such as social media.

We work closely with Transport Focus – the independent transport user watchdog – to make a real difference for road users through sharing information and collaborating on research. We've been helping Transport Focus to develop the new Strategic Roads User Survey (SRUS), which replaces the current National Road Users' Satisfaction Survey (NRUSS) next year. By listening to the views shared by our customers in these surveys, we can help to meet their needs and expectations.

We're setting out our priorities for improving our service and network for the people who use, or live in the communities around our roads. Our plan highlights the main activities we'll be delivering in 2019-20 to improve our customers' satisfaction, as measured by NRUSS. This includes building on our 2018-19 initiatives, where our focus was on consistently delivering the basics. This year we'll also continue to carry out a range of enabling activities, such as encouraging a customer-focussed culture within our organisation and our supply chain. These aren't all things our customers will see, but we know that they are essential to improving our customers' experiences.

“Road users will be pleased to see the focus on customers set out in this customer service plan. All road users want reliable, smooth journeys with good information and the plans set out here will underpin that. Using the independent Transport Focus Strategic Roads User Survey to measure success is also an important part of building confidence.”

**Anthony Smith, Chief Executive,
Transport Focus**



Improving our service

Our work this year will focus on improving our customer satisfaction performance, as measured by the National Road Users' Satisfaction Survey.

Knowing how long a journey will take plays an important role in the daily lives of our customers, so we're making journey times more reliable on our roads. Our customers' journeys will more often take the time they expect, with a lower likelihood of extreme variations caused by incidents or roadworks.

We will:

- 1** Create an operational culture of 'every second counts' by:
 - re-launching our protocols with the emergency services (CLEAR) to improve incident management
 - improving how we manage incidents which last over three hours

We don't just clear incidents, we CLEAR them

Our CLEAR (Collision, Lead, Evaluate, Act, Reopen) approach to incident management provides joint working principles that minimise disruption to our customers following a road traffic incident. CLEAR principles direct the conversations we have on scene with emergency services, the recovery industry and our maintenance and repair teams. This helps us to reopen our roads as quickly as possible and keep our customers moving.

- 2** Improve the co-ordination, scheduling and publishing of all road closures by:
 - achieving 90% accuracy on our road closure schedule released by 1pm each day
 - establishing a baseline and measure for seven-day advanced notice of road closures

More accurate information at our customers' fingertips

We know our customers want reliable information to help them plan their journeys, so we've been finding ways to improve the service we provide. We're sending a daily road closure schedule to 34 major hauliers and over 200 subscribers across our wider stakeholder community. It's also available to download from our website. The accuracy of this schedule has been improving monthly, with a high of 93% accuracy in April 2019.

We're now aiming for the same levels of accuracy in our seven-day look ahead schedule, which we know will help the freight industry with their forward planning.

We aim to plan and deliver our roadworks in a way that our customers understand and feel is reasonable, by minimising disruption and providing more information about the long-term benefits.

We will:

- 3** Use 60mph more often and in more circumstances on our major motorway roadworks, by:
 - providing guidance for road project teams on a range of 60mph scenarios, for example how to operate with the increased speed limit in roadworks with narrow lanes, using contraflow and on weekends
- 4** Better understand the ‘tipping point’ between being satisfied or not in roadworks, by:
 - designing and starting a trial of truly ‘customer-centric’ roadworks

“I have lived through the alterations to the junction on the A64 at Barton Hill and I would like to thank you for the consideration shown to us during the roadworks. Highways England has taken us into consideration at every stage, answering queries and assisting when required, both politely and sometimes with humour.”

Kath Allaway, local resident

To help our customers get home safe and well, we’re making sure that the general upkeep of our network supports smooth, stress-free journeys. This year we will improve our maintenance approach so that we are quick to address customer concerns and take care of upkeep issues.

We will:

- 5** Improve maintenance planning, focussing on making a difference to customer satisfaction, by:
 - adopting a new approach to prioritising maintenance activities that helps our customers see we are operating a safe and tidy network
 - using customer insight to understand and measure the ‘ride quality’ of their journeys
 - trialling (in one area), ways to remove things that block us from fixing defects more quickly
 - testing interventions on specific routes to establish which maintenance activities make a difference in our customers’ eyes

Taking ownership for the care of our network

We’re bringing roles previously fulfilled by our supply chain into our business so that we can take ownership of asset delivery, including asset investment and operational decision making. This puts us in control of important maintenance and incident management decisions, creating an environment that looks and feels safe for our customers. We’re now over half way through the roll-out of this new approach across regions.





Having the right information at the right time helps people feel in control of their journeys. We're working hard to provide information that meets the needs of our customers, including improving our signs beside the road.

We will:

- 6** Put together a plan to improve the information we provide to our customers:
 - considering insight from research we've conducted with Transport Focus and the Office of Rail and Road
- 7** Deliver a programme of improvements to variable speed limits, by:
 - raising variable speed limits in certain situations
 - ensuring they're displayed only when needed, making the information we provide more relevant to our customers

We want our customers to feel safe when using our roads, confident that our network is a safe and accessible place for them.

We will:

- 8** Develop a plan to help customers feel safe, by:
 - increasing our understanding of what affects how safe our customers feel
 - establishing a plan to make a difference to how safe our customers feel on our roads



“As a wheelchair user, it's hugely important for me to have the choice to drive. A smooth journey for me is all about knowing what will happen – as far as is possible. So, tools like the Highways England app are a routine part of how I plan.”

Peter Carr, Chairman, SpursAbility (supporters club for Tottenham Hotspur Disabled Supporters Association)

Continuous improvement

We will continue to build on the improvement initiatives we started in 2018-19. These initiatives also contribute to the performance indicators within the National Road Users' Satisfaction Survey.

We will:

Help our customers feel safe by completing the upgrade of emergency areas on smart motorways.

Build orange emergency areas on all new smart motorways, and upgrade existing emergency areas on all smart motorways currently open to traffic.

“The new emergency areas will provide much better visibility for the public. The changes are very positive – the orange colour makes a big difference, while the increased regularity of the signs will really help.”

Derek Muir, Health and Safety Manager, RAC

Develop and embed customer service standards to address customer frustrations.

Implement best practice standards for diversion routes, customer correspondence and road signing to ensure consistency for our customers.

Help our customers understand the demands on our roads, and how this could impact their journeys, so that they are better equipped to plan their travel.

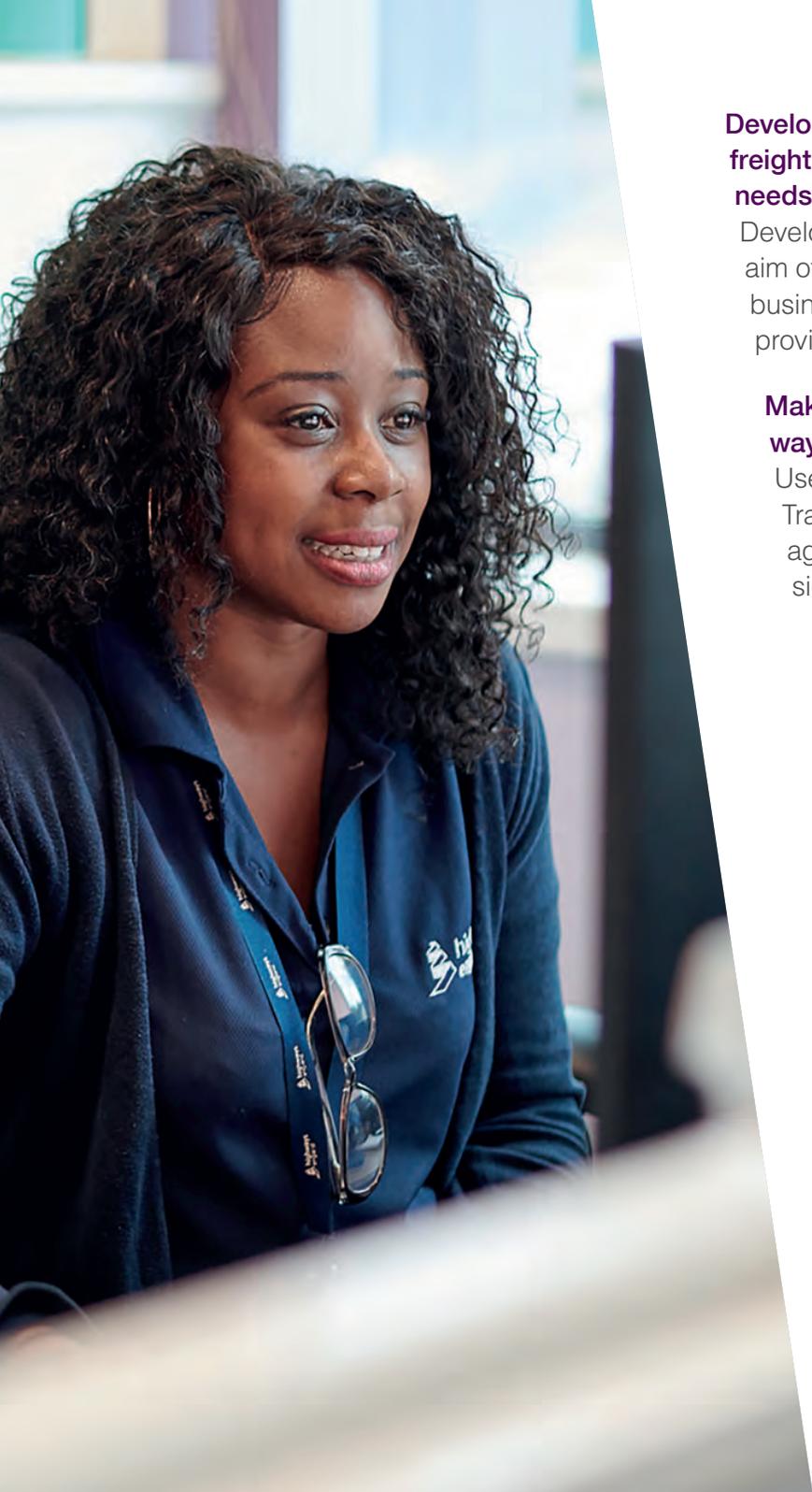
Further develop our approach to travel demand management and start to embed it into our processes, including initiatives like personal travel planning.

Our approach to travel demand management

We work with business communities in areas where our work may temporarily be disrupting traffic, to increase the range of travel choices for their employees. This includes supporting the development of flexible working arrangements, encouraging car-sharing and promoting sustainable travel. Our personal travel planning tools provide these businesses with journey time information, including typical travel times for:

- peak and off-peak journeys along main routes
- alternative transport options
- alternative road routes





Develop relationships with more of our key freight customers to better understand their needs and make improvements.

Develop an improvement programme with the aim of delivering a better service to our big-business customers, with a focus on information provision.

Make it easier for our customers to find their way to roadside facilities.

Use customer insight from our own and Transport Focus' research, to develop and agree an action plan for the improvement of signs to roadside facilities on A-roads.

Improve journeys on diversion routes by making them easier to follow.

Review diversion routes against existing requirements and new customer service standards to improve safety and reliability of these journeys.

Continue to improve how we manage incidents.

Deliver a programme of incident management continuous improvement activities, to complement our service improvements.

“The Highways England team are amazing. They looked after my daughter and I so professionally when we had a blow-out on the motorway in a horse box with horses on board. Hugely efficient, helpful and organised - I can't speak highly enough of them, both on-site and at control.”

Casey Pearson, road user



Enablers

We are a world-class construction and delivery company and our ambition with our customer service strategy is to become a customer-focussed organisation. We recognise that there is more we need to do therefore we will also be working on enabling activities within our organisation, including a focus on our people and our supply chain, to drive customer-led thinking.

We will:

Encourage a customer-focussed culture.

Build on our current customer experience maturity as an organisation, by:

- helping our employees to understand their combined contribution to customer service
- using data from our employee engagement and customer maturity surveys to develop improvement plans
- embedding customer-focussed thinking into every part of our organisation

Support our supply chain to think and do more for our customers.

Enable our supply chain to deliver good customer experiences, by:

- making sure that our approach to customer service is shared, understood and demonstrated in our supply chain
- supporting our supply chain partners to develop their capabilities in order to meet our customer service expectations
- developing customer assurance through our Commercial Control Framework, including selection processes that test customer capability and contract documents that clearly articulate our customer requirements

Improve our relationships with our customers to demonstrate our trustworthiness and care for their journeys.

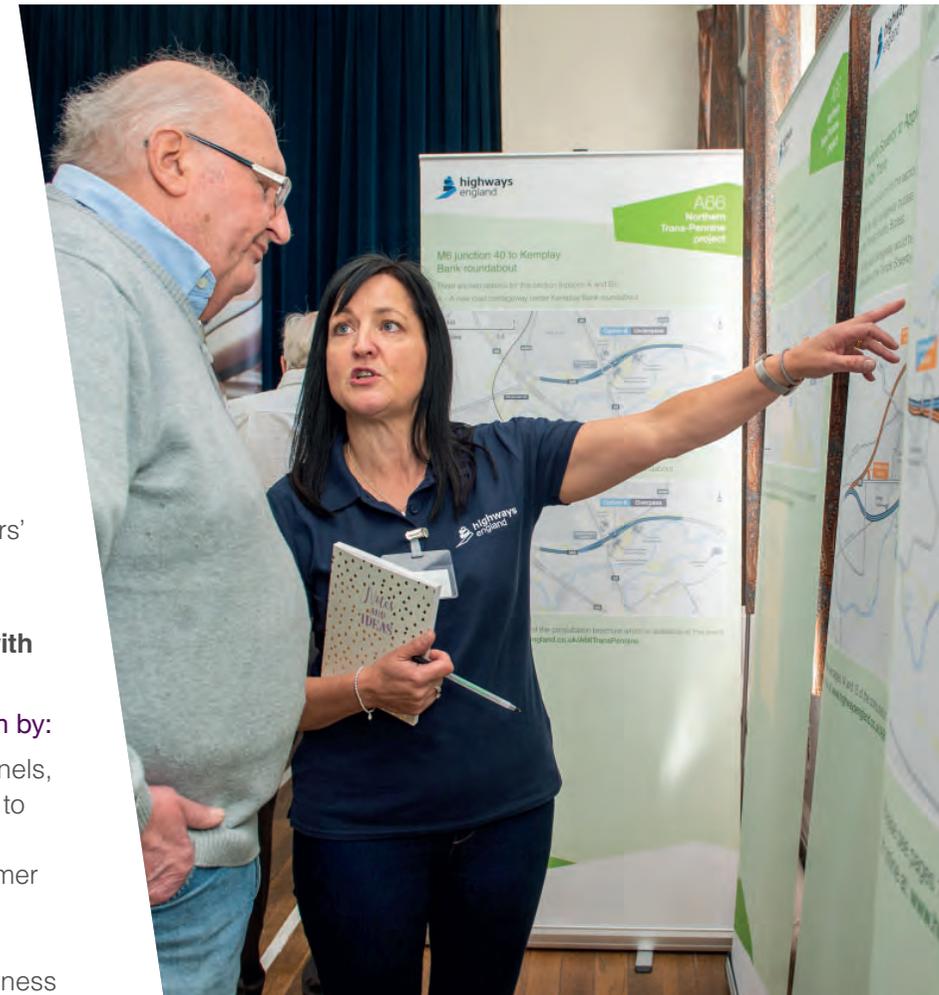
Have better conversations with our customers, by:

- explaining the impact and benefits of our work in relevant and plain language
- engaging our customers through new media, to demonstrate openness and encourage dialogue
- developing our understanding of our customers' needs and how they are impacted by our work
- using our understanding of our customers' needs to inform our business decisions

Make sure the ways customers interact with us feel real and meaningful to them.

Embed our new customer contact approach by:

- modernising our customer contact channels, including making it easier for customers to provide feedback
- setting shorter response times for customer enquiries
- consolidating customer relationship management processes across our business



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