

Making a difference for our customers

Customer service strategy

Foreword from our Chief Executive

Since we first published our *Customer service strategy* in 2016, we've made real strides in our level of customer focus. Customer service is one of our top priorities, and we've made many improvements for our customers year-on-year through our annual customer service plans.

Now the time is right to refresh our *Customer service strategy*, acknowledging the progress we've made and ensuring we consistently deliver the basics in an ever-changing world. We're responding to the evolving needs, wants and expectations of our diverse range of customers, so that we can continue to deliver lasting benefits, now and in the future.

Nick Harris



Making a difference

Our road network is integral for our customers' journeys and is the backbone of the country's economy. We build, operate and maintain over 4,300 miles of motorways and major A-roads; connecting people, building communities and helping our nation thrive.

This strategy outlines how we will make a difference for our diverse range of customers – the public, business users, freight hauliers and local communities. It's been developed using customer insight and feedback and reflects our company-wide strategies and programmes. Our work over the coming years will help us to achieve the aims of this strategy, including the work we will do through our [designated funds](#) to improve customer experience.

We are in a period of great change for our roads, and the millions of people who use them every day. Traffic volumes are forecast to grow, and our customers' expectations are evolving, from the ways they use technology to how they travel. We're determined to be accessible and meet the needs of all our customers.

We're committed to delivering net zero carbon highways. We'll achieve net zero for our own emissions, construction and maintenance, and enable decarbonisation of road transport, including helping our customers switch to electric and other zero carbon vehicles.

We're embracing new technologies, data and connectivity to deliver enhanced customer experiences, through our *Digital, data and technology strategy* and our vision for *Digital roads*.

We're building capability by empowering our people and developing better relationships with our customers. This will help us to improve how we deliver the basics, operate a well maintained and safe network, and provide better information for our customers. Ultimately, we want to enable our customers to have better end-to-end experiences and their journeys to take the time they expect them to.

What customer service means to us

Our customers are the people who use, or are affected by, our roads and services.

Although not everyone may necessarily see themselves as our 'customer', we use this term when we design, plan, build and run the country's motorways and A-roads. It's just one of the ways we're making sure that the feelings and experiences of those affected by our work shape the things we do. We listen carefully to what our customers say and design our products and services to meet their needs.

We recognise that our customers' journeys don't begin or end on our network, so it's vital that we connect seamlessly with other roads and other forms of transport. It's also important that we consider the communities who live or work near our network; keeping goods and services moving, improving local facilities for walkers, cyclists and horse riders and leaving a positive legacy.

Measuring the difference we make

The Strategic Roads User Survey (SRUS) has been developed by Transport Focus (Britain's independent watchdog for transport users), so that we can measure our customers' experiences effectively. It is our key performance indicator for road user satisfaction. However, our customer service ambition goes far beyond achieving our SRUS targets. Transport Focus research and our own customer insight and behavioural science teams help us to understand how our customers feel, so we can focus on customer priorities that bring about the greatest benefits.

We're also continuing to improve our engagement and collaboration with key stakeholders, freight partners and businesses that rely on our roads, understanding their challenges and responding to their needs.



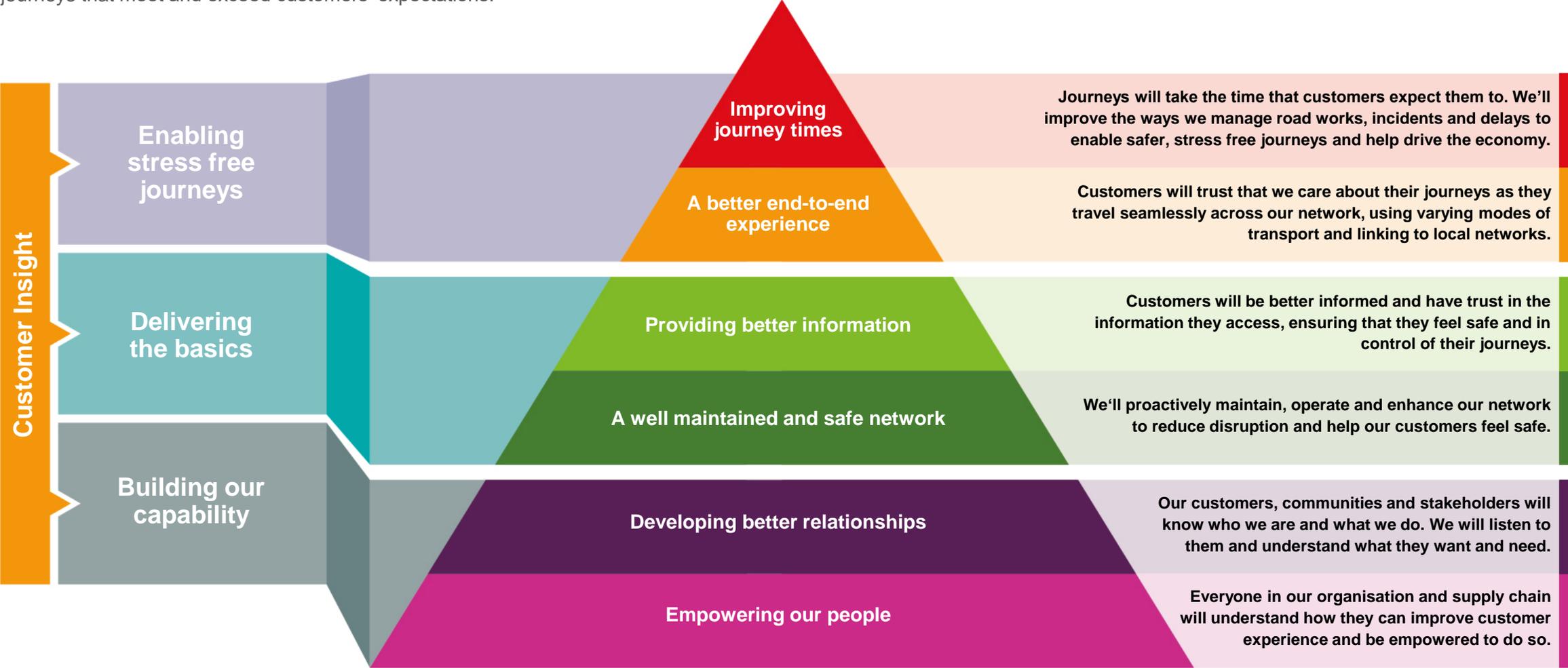
Our customer vision

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



Our approach

Our approach is based on customer insight and our performance goals for the second road period (2020-25). We'll work across our six customer themes in parallel. By building our capability, we'll get better at delivering the basics in an ever-changing world. Ultimately, we want to enable stress free journeys that meet and exceed customers' expectations.



Our customer themes

Empowering our people

- **We all** have our role to play in delivering great customer experiences as part of **the wider National Highways team**.
- Many of our people have customer facing roles, such as **traffic officers** patrolling 24/7, every day of the year and our **contact centre** responding to customers around the clock.
- We'll **support and enable all our people** to understand the difference they make and **empower them** to make better decisions for our customers and communities.
- We'll improve our insight capability, enhance our **customer experience training** and make **our roles more customer focussed**.
- We'll continue to **develop our customer culture and maturity**, so that everyone (including our supply chain) is aware of and understands how they can act on **customer needs and expectations**.

Developing better relationships

- We'll **build customer awareness of National Highways**, so we have a shared understanding of **who we are and what we do**.
- We'll enhance our ability to influence travel behaviour where needed, seeking active involvement from our customers and stakeholders to **improve safety and congestion**.
- We'll work to ensure that, when our customers contact us, we're easy to reach, professional and empathetic; **actively listening to what they need**.
- We'll keep making improvements for the UK's vital freight and road haulage sector, and our bus and coach customers. This includes **supporting the development of better roadside facilities** and providing **more tailored journey information**.
- We'll reduce disruption from road works and focus on **leaving a positive legacy for communities** when we've finished.

A well maintained and safe network

- We'll design, build, maintain and operate our network to deliver a level of service that **meets our customers' needs**, and helps reduce their **carbon footprint towards net zero**.
- We'll improve our understanding of the existing condition and future requirements of our network. This will help us identify programmes of work to **maintain performance**.
- We'll use the **latest technology** to inspect our assets and enable **intelligence-led maintenance**, with customers at the heart of all our decisions.
- We'll consistently and proactively maintain the **road surface** in a good condition, improve visibility of **signage** and **reduce the risk of flooding**.
- We'll ensure our **network is resilient**, including keeping customers safe and moving during severe weather.
- We will continue our partnerships and campaigning to **reduce littering, fly tipping and graffiti** across our network.

Providing better information

- We'll continue to make **improvements to our signs and signals**, to ensure they display information that is helpful and appropriate for the conditions.
- We'll **provide the information our customers need**, so they feel safe and in control of their journeys.
- We'll work with industry to make use of technological advances in providing **in-vehicle information** to our customers.
- We'll work with **third party suppliers and vehicle manufacturers** to share our data. So that no matter what channel our customers use, they have **access to timely and accurate information**.
- We'll **improve the accuracy** of overnight road closure information issued seven days in advance of work starting.
- We'll **explain the benefits of our road works**, and how we're improving the ways we work to reduce disruption as much as possible.

A better end-to-end experience

- We'll **increase our collaboration** with local authorities **to improve** ways of working where our networks interact.
- We'll work with local authorities and transport partners to **enhance integration, share information, and facilitate better travel choices**, including for walkers, cyclists and horse riders.
- When our customers need to be diverted from our roads due to road works or incidents, we'll ensure our **diversion routes are clearly signed and suitable**.
- We'll improve **signing for roadside services** on A-roads, so that our customers know **where and what facilities are available**.
- We'll work with **motorway service operators** to improve journey planning, including better information on **accessible facilities for disabled customers**.

Improving journey times

- We'll proactively manage **incidents and congestion**, working to prevent them from occurring.
- When incidents do happen, we'll **clear them as safely and quickly** as possible so we **minimise the impact** on journeys.
- We'll use data to enable us to **have greater awareness** of what is happening on our network **and share better information** with our customers.
- Where it's safe to do so, we'll **increase speed limits** through road works.
- We'll be **more flexible** with our approach on closing roads when we need to do works. We'll adapt the length and duration of road closures based on location, traffic flow and time of day, to **improve customer experience**.
- We'll work collaboratively with our supply chain partners to ensure we seek **the least disruptive option** when we have to do works.

Making a difference

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

Improving journey times is not just the goal of our colleagues who manage incidents, delays and road works. We all aim to help enable stress free journeys; from those who analyse data and share lessons learnt from previous events, to those who safely create new ways of working based on customer insight.



We all work towards a **better end-to-end experience** for our customers. This may be working with local authorities, roadside service operators, walkers, cyclists and horse riders or working on the road near to our communities.



Every one of us helps in **providing better information**; whether through developing new technology, setting signs, enhancing road work information, providing timely updates, customer testing our messaging or simply ensuring we report inaccurate information.



The basic level of service we need to provide is a **well maintained and safe network**. All our people from inspectors, those that develop standards, manage our supply chain to road workers themselves, play a part.



We all contribute to **developing better relationships with our customers, communities and stakeholders**; this may be through communications, stakeholder management, the way we engage during road works or how we respond to customer contact.



Everyone in our business helps in inspiring and **empowering our people** to work together to improve customer experience. From our leadership and people managers, to coaches, HR and learning and development teams, everyone plays an important role.



Further information

To find out more or talk to someone contact
CustomerServiceDevelopmentGroup@nationalhighways.co.uk

© Crown copyright 2022.

You may re-use this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence: visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This document is also available on our website at www.nationalhighways.co.uk
For an accessible version of this publication please call 0300 123 5000 and we will help you.

If you have any enquiries about this publication email info@nationalhighways.co.uk or call 0300 123 5000*. Please quote the National Highways publications code PR56/22.

*Calls to 03 numbers cost no more than a national rate call to an 01 or 02 number and must count towards any inclusive minutes in the same way as 01 and 02 calls. These rules apply to calls from any type of line including mobile, BT, other fixed line or payphone. Calls may be recorded or monitored.

Printed on paper from well-managed forests and other controlled sources when issued directly by National Highways.

Registered office Bridge House, 1 Walnut Tree Close, Guildford GU1 4LZ
National Highways Limited registered in England and Wales number 09346363