

CASE STUDY

Trials of 60mph speed limits through roadworks (Highways England, 2016-2020)



The Challenge

Customer satisfaction and safety are critical components of Highways England's vision for the future; as part of this vision, Highways England is committed to improving the customer experience through roadworks by maximising safety (for both road users and road workers) and minimising disruption caused by roadworks schemes. One potential measure to improve customer satisfaction at roadworks is raising the speed limit through roadworks from a 50mph limit to 60mph.



CASE STUDY

Our Approach

TRL led a programme of work to design simulator and on-road trials to determine the impact of increasing the speed limit upon customer satisfaction and safety. Simulator trials were designed to provide analysis of the impacts of the road layout changes on driver behaviour and workload. The results from which fed into the design of the on-road trials, which balanced the requirements of a robust trial with the practicalities of road worker operations.

The data and statistics team were instrumental in the design of these trials, ensuring sufficient data were collected before and after the speed limit change, and from comparable control sites (where the speed limit did not change) to account for external factors which couldn't be controlled during the on-road trials (e.g. levels of traffic or the weather).

The results

In July 2020, based on the 'extensive and innovative research and trials' carried out by TRL, Highways England announced it will increase the basic speed limit at which motorists can drive through roadworks from 50mph to 60mph.