

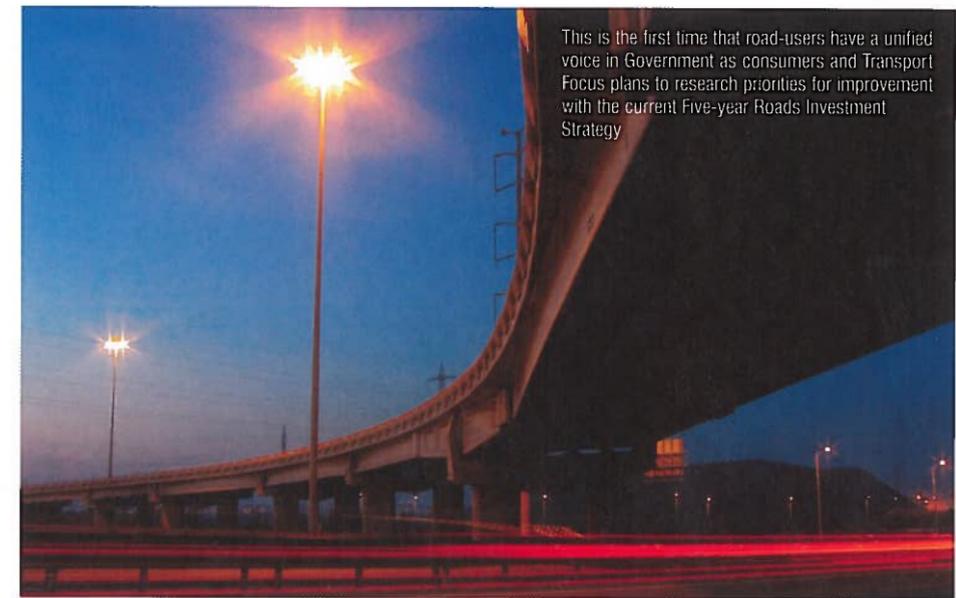


Transport Focus will use its many years of experience in representing passengers to work in the interest of all those using motorways and the Strategic Road Network

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SECTOR HIGHLIGHTS

- Supply Chain
- Transport Planning
- Active Travel & Travel Planning
- Bus & Coach
- Freight Forwarding



This is the first time that road-users have a unified voice in Government as consumers and Transport Focus plans to research priorities for improvement with the current Five-year Roads Investment Strategy

Transport Focus: the road ahead

Transport Focus, the new name for Passenger Focus, has started work helping to improve and monitor the performance of the Highways Agency. Anthony Smith FCILT, Chief Executive, Transport Focus, looks at how the organisation can benefit road-users.



Transport Focus is guided by three principles: focusing solely on what users experience and want; being useful to those that make the decisions about transport services; and basing its work on evidence.

Transport Focus will use its many years of experience in representing passengers to work for the interest of all those who use motorways and the most significant A-roads, known as the Strategic Road Network (SRN). That means working for a range of road-users including those travelling for personal and business purposes, and non-motorised users such as cyclists and pedestrians.

User satisfaction surveys will allow us to benchmark how different parts of the SRN perform. This is a powerful tool for driving change as we have found in public transport. We think this is the first time work like this has been done by an organisation representing users. It is exciting, but we need your help to make it a reality.

What it will do

This change from Passenger Focus to Transport Focus was brought about by the Infrastructure Act, which gained Royal Assent in February 2015. Government is reforming the way major roads are run to make sure that the big increase recently announced in investment in the network is delivered effectively and for the benefit of users.

The Highways Agency has become a Government-owned company called Highways England. Its efficiency will be monitored by a unit that will sit within the current Office of Rail Regulation, working alongside but separate from Transport Focus's role as the transport user watchdog.

The organisation has recently published its first road-user research, launched a new-look website

and sent out the first edition of a new monthly newsletter: *Road User Voice*. A key piece of work will be to produce the satisfaction survey that will replace the existing survey run by the Highways Agency.

Transport Focus plans to research priorities for improvement to help identify areas where unallocated investment in the current five-year Roads Investment Strategy and future strategies can make most difference. Following this, it will look at issues in more detail, which could include the way roadworks are carried out, information, reaction to extreme weather conditions and how accidents are cleared up. It also hopes to work with Highways England on the design and communication of major schemes: how can users be involved and informed of the options and benefits.

What road-users want

The first piece of work from Transport Focus: *The needs and experiences of road-users*, exploring how different groups use the SRN and what their issues are. Research was carried out with focus groups, accompanied journeys and interviews with a range of road-users, including those travelling for personal and business purposes, and non-motorised users, such as cyclists.

For drivers, the positive aspects were mainly cost, convenience and comfort. Some drivers on longer journeys went to great lengths to maximise their enjoyment, planning music playlists, snacks and drinks. Drivers felt a positive experience was one where they had a sense of control over the journey.

The negative aspects of driving on the SRN were mostly to do with the external environment and other drivers' behaviour. Drivers' most negative experiences often involved suboptimal road conditions, delays, congestion, bad weather and poor visibility.

In conclusion

This is the first time that road-users have a unified voice in Government as consumers. There are many well-established organisations and businesses that speak effectively for different types of road-user and we are working closely with them to draw on their experience. We use hard evidence drawn from real transport users to get Government and industry to make the changes that matter. We are looking forward to this new challenge and hearing your views in the coming months as we gain momentum.

About the author

Anthony Smith FCILT is Chief Executive, Transport Focus.

FURTHER RESOURCES

To subscribe to *Road User Voice*, email: communications@passengerfocus.org.uk with the word *Subscribe* in the subject line.

The report: *The needs and experiences of road-users*, is available, website: www.transportfocus.org.uk

Below: The organisation published the first edition of a new monthly newsletter

transportfocus  **Road User Voice**
April 2015

Anthony Smith's editorial
Representing users of the Strategic Road Network
Recently standing in a cavernous, cold food distribution centre brought home to me just how important the road industry is
[Read more](#)

New people appointed to represent road users
We have appointed a new board member and a road user director.
[Read more](#)

What do road users think of the Strategic Road Network?
We talked to more than 130 members of this diverse group about their experience of using the SRN.
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More news
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[Why roads matter for freight](#)
[What next?](#)

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