

## Driver attitudes and behaviours literature review – summary report

In 2015 Transport Focus identified priorities for improvement to the motorways and major ‘A’ roads managed by Highways England in two reports: *Road users’ priorities for improvement: car and van drivers and motorcyclists*<sup>1</sup> and *Road users’ priorities for improvement: heavy goods vehicle drivers*<sup>2</sup>. This showed that better behaved drivers is one of the top priorities for improvement across all road users: car, van, motorcyclists and heavy goods vehicle drivers.

Transport Focus commissioned a literature review to gain a better understanding of driver attitudes and behaviour. A similar exercise was carried out by the Department for Transport (DfT) in 2010 and published as *Understanding Public Attitudes to Road User Safety*<sup>3</sup>. It considered many key publications and research in this area. However, as it was six years old and focused on all road users, not specifically users of the Highways England network, we felt that a new literature review would be helpful to bring understanding up-to-date.

This literature review is presented in two halves. The first summarises the DfT’s 2010 review, focusing on the areas relating to driver behaviour. The second section draws together all the new research which has been published since 2010. This focused on driver behaviour and safety, speed and enforcement and personal in-vehicle technology.

There were a number of other areas which Transport Focus was keen to study, including how and where do road users want more enforcement of traffic laws; evidence around HGV accidents and use of cruise control; and cultural differences in road user’s attitudes between UK and non-UK drivers. The review found no evidence that these areas have been studied and may be areas that could be usefully explored in future.

### The top three findings from this literature review were:

1. Speeding appears to be culturally acceptable in some instances, such as on the motorway. People like to have choice over their speed – using their judgement about the speed that is appropriate based on different contexts, such as the weather. This could be a reason why ‘moment in time’ speed cameras are unpopular compared with human judgement. *How* speed is controlled can therefore can have an impact on the driving experience.
2. Looking at the issues of emotion and boredom revealed that most research in this area focused on anger. The lack of research into what triggers a positive emotion

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<sup>1</sup>Road users’ priorities for improvement: car and van drivers and motorcyclists, July 2015  
<http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/road-users-priorities-for-improvement-car-and-van-drivers-and-motorcyclists>

<sup>2</sup>Road users’ priorities for improvement: heavy goods vehicle drivers, December 2015  
<http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/road-users-priorities-for-improvement-heavy-goods-vehicle-drivers>

could potentially be an area which Transport Focus could explore in future. Aggression from other road users is likely to impact negatively on a driver's experience. Driver boredom can also encourage risky driving behaviour, as a means to alleviate their boredom.

3. Technology is increasingly having a major impact on the driving experience and safety. Road users desire more technology, yet it is seen as a concern in terms of road safety. In the future, automation may in fact help alleviate some of these issues as the driver may be freer to engage with technology.

### **About Transport Focus**

Transport Focus is the independent transport user watchdog representing the interests of those who use England's motorways and major 'A' roads, rail passengers in Great Britain and bus, coach and tram passengers in England, outside London.