Community Union

Community is a general union with membership in sectors across the economy including:

- Motor Trade including members working in the AA.
- Justice and Custodial
- Education
- Finance and Professional
- Steel
- Third Sector
- Manufacturing
- Logistics
- Self-employed
- Footwear

Smart Motorways

Smart motorways have a number of positive elements to them, for example, evidence shows that variable speed limits facilitate a reduction in traffic jams, and the ability to provide dynamic messaging is welcome.

Some drivers are concerned that sudden variable speed limit changes can cause sudden braking. Highways England should ensure there is an adequate delay between the changing of limits and speed cameras enforcing them, as well as publicising information about how this works.

We have serious safety concerns about the removal of hard shoulder on our Motorways.

There have been a number of publicised serious accidents where cars have been stopped in the inside lane of a smart motorway and have been hit by a vehicle travelling behind. Though the red X signage system is in place, it is clearly insufficient.

Furthermore, the distance between refuge areas prevents those in vehicles that have broken down from being able to reach a place of safety, particularly in the case of sudden engine failure. And the operation of refuge areas is not widely known or understood by the public. Particularly concerning is the lack of understanding that support from Highways England is required to re-enter the traffic.

We believe that this feature of smart motorways is reducing safety.

Hard shoulders should be retained or returned in all cases.

In the absence of a decision to return hard shoulder to all motorways, dynamic hard shoulder and all lane running smart motorways should be improved by shortening distances of ERAs and improving publics knowledge and understanding.

Evidence submitted by Anna Mowbray.
Please direct questions to research@community-tu.org