

Press release: Commuters' perfect working day revealed

Commuters could speed up their journeys by up to 10 miles per hour by starting and finishing work just one hour later, according to new research.

The study by Highways England was carried out on a 9-mile-stretch of the M62 which links the M6 near Warrington to the M60 near Manchester. The route is used by 120,000 drivers every day and construction work is currently taking place to upgrade it to a smart motorway, increasing its capacity by a third.

Commuters had previously faced speeds of just 36 miles per hour between 5pm and 6pm when almost 9,000 drivers take to the short section of motorway on their way home from work.

The study has found that drivers who set off for work after 9am are likely to get there much more quickly than those travelling during the two hours after 7am.

Drivers using this stretch of the M62 who wait until 6pm before leaving the office are also likely to travel 10 miles per hour faster than those leaving at 5pm, or 20 miles per hour faster if they wait until 7pm – cutting journey times by around a third.

Overall, the research found that commuters travelling 20 miles each way and working the traditional 9am to 5pm day could be spending almost an hour extra on the road every week, compared to those working from 10am to 6pm.

Mike Bull, Highways England's smart motorways programme manager for the North, said:

We all know that our roads are at their busiest during the morning and evening commute but it's surprising that shifting our working days by just one hour could have such a significant impact on journey times.

Many people won't have a choice about the hours they work but if some are able to start and finish work an hour later then it could benefit everyone – and save some drivers around an hour each week.

We're also doing our bit to improve journey times for drivers at Highways England by converting some of our busiest stretches of motorway into smart motorways, adding extra lanes and using technology to prevent tailbacks caused by sudden braking.

The hard shoulders on each new smart motorway will be converted into permanent extra lanes and new emergency areas will be created for drivers to use if they break down. New CCTV cameras will also provide 100% coverage of

the routes.

One of the most important signals on a smart motorway – the red X – is used to identify when a lane is closed and indicates that drivers should move into an open lane to continue their journeys.

Driving in a closed lane is dangerous, as there could be debris in the road or an accident or breakdown up ahead. Keeping the lane clear gives the emergency services the access they need to help.

More details about how to drive on a smart motorway are available at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-drive-on-a-smart-motorway>.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

[News story: Life-saving officer honoured for heroic actions](#)

A quick-thinking mariner who jumped into freezing waters to save a stranger's life has been given the top maritime honour for his bravery.

Stephen Chamberlain is one of [19 people who are receiving the Merchant Navy Medal for Meritorious Service](#) for going above and beyond in their service to the maritime industry.

Mr Stephen Chamberlain awarded the Merchant Navy Medal for Meritorious Service for an act of bravery in saving a life.

The Wightlink deck officer risked his own life in February (2018) to help a man struggling in the cold water in Portsmouth Harbour at 11pm. The crew on the St Clare ferry spotted the man in danger and Mr Chamberlain saw he was not able to reach the flotation device. The officer jumped in and kept the man, who was suffering from hypothermia, from drowning.

Another winner is Captain Belinda Bennett – the first black female captain in the commercial cruise industry, whose maiden voyage was a cruise to the Caribbean aboard a 148-passenger Windstar ship.

Maritime Minister Nusrat Ghani said:

Our merchant navy is crucial to keeping the UK thriving – helping deliver goods, energy and food to our homes.

These 19 people are a credit not just to the maritime industry but to the wider nation. They have gone above and beyond their duty for the benefit of others.

Stephen's heroic act and Belinda's trailblazing are just two examples of the outstanding service provided by our mariners.

Captain Belinda Bennett awarded the Merchant Navy Medal for Meritorious Service for services to the promotion of the maritime sector.

This is the third year the Merchant Navy Medal for Meritorious Service will be awarded to those who have set an outstanding example to others.

Among the other winners this year are Captain Timothy Charlesworth who, on top of his service, provides sailing opportunities for people with mental health and addiction problems, Captain Michael Reeves who has 5 decades of merchant navy experience – much of which has been spent promoting seafaring to young people – and Captain Antonio Gatti who has played a crucial role in scientific research on board a Royal Research Ship during his 33 years of service.

The medals will be awarded by Her Royal Highness the Princess Royal, at a ceremony in Trinity House on Wednesday, 26 September 2018.

Nominations have been put forward for those working in the Merchant Navy and Fishing Fleets of the United Kingdom, the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands.

This state award replaces the shipping industry's previous Merchant Navy Medal which was awarded annually from 2005 to 2015 by the Merchant Navy Medal Fund.

[Press release: UK Government response to recent loss of life in Yemen](#)

A UK Government spokesperson said:

The Government expresses serious concern at the tragic loss of life in Yemen over the last month. In the first two weeks of August

alone, over 400 Yemenis lost their lives, including young children, and many more continue to face egregious violations of their basic human rights.

We are also deeply concerned by the tragic incidents of 2 August, 9 August, and 23 August in which so many Yemenis were killed. We offer our sincerest condolences to the families of the victims.

We welcome the speed of the investigation into the incident of 9 August, and the Coalition's announcement of regret and action to address the recommendations of that investigation. We are reviewing the investigation's conclusions.

We welcome the Coalition's announcement of an investigation into the incident of 23 August and encourage the publication of the outcomes of this investigation as soon as possible. We also call for clarification of the circumstances around the incident of 2 August.

The Government condemns the attacks against Red Sea shipping, and regular missile attacks against Saudi Arabia which have been launched by the Houthis with Iranian support. These attacks have targeted residential areas and shown no regard for civilian life. Coalition countries have a legitimate right to defend their own territory.

The UK urges all parties to the conflict to do everything possible to protect innocent civilians and to demonstrate their commitment to International Humanitarian Law.

This conflict began following a seizure of power in some parts of Yemen by the Houthis, forcing out the legitimate government from these areas. The urgency now is for everyone to enable and support the UN-sponsored political process beginning with talks in Geneva on 6 September.

Further information

- Follow the Foreign Office on Twitter [@foreignoffice](#) and [Facebook](#)

- Follow the Foreign Office on [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#) and [LinkedIn](#)

Media enquiries

For journalists

Email

newsdesk@fco.gov.uk

Newsdesk

020 7008 3100

[Press release: UK Government response to recent loss of life in Yemen](#)

The UK Government has expressed concern at recent loss of life in Yemen.



A UK Government spokesperson said:

The Government expresses serious concern at the tragic loss of life in Yemen over the last month. In the first two weeks of August alone, over 400 Yemenis lost their lives, including young children, and many more continue to face egregious violations of their basic human rights.

We are also deeply concerned by the tragic incidents of 2 August, 9 August, and 23 August in which so many Yemenis were killed. We offer our sincerest condolences to the families of the victims.

We welcome the speed of the investigation into the incident of 9 August, and the Coalition's announcement of regret and action to address the recommendations of that investigation. We are reviewing the investigation's conclusions.

We welcome the Coalition's announcement of an investigation into the incident of 23 August and encourage the publication of the outcomes of this investigation as soon as possible. We also call for clarification of the circumstances around the incident of 2 August.

The Government condemns the attacks against Red Sea shipping, and regular missile attacks against Saudi Arabia which have been launched by the Houthis with Iranian support. These attacks have targeted residential areas and shown no regard for civilian life. Coalition countries have a legitimate right to defend their own territory.

The UK urges all parties to the conflict to do everything possible to protect innocent civilians and to demonstrate their commitment to International Humanitarian Law.

This conflict began following a seizure of power in some parts of Yemen by the Houthis, forcing out the legitimate government from these areas. The urgency now is for everyone to enable and support the UN-sponsored political process beginning with talks in Geneva on 6 September.

Further information

Published 2 September 2018

[Press release: UK Minister Mark Field attends Pacific Islands Forum to lead](#)

global effort on climate change

Mark Field, Minister of State for Asia and the Pacific at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office will travel to Nauru for the three-day (3-6 September) Pacific Islands Forum where climate change is top of the agenda.

The UK is leading global solidarity on action to tackle climate change, and Mark Field's visit is the second successive year a UK Minister has attended the Pacific Islands Forum, where climate change is threatening the very existence of several island nations.

The Pacific Islands Forum comprises 14 countries, of which 11 are Commonwealth members. The UK will be stepping up its engagement in the region with three additional diplomatic missions in Samoa, Tonga, and Vanuatu. This will enable greater joint working on climate change issues, as well as further regional work to promote the rules-based international system.

Minister Field said:

Britain has proudly led the way on tackling climate change around the world and, as a developed country, we have a moral imperative to help those around the globe who stand to lose most from the consequences of man-made climate change.

The message I am taking to this important Pacific Islands Forum is that unless we work together, with our Commonwealth friends and those who share our values in the region, we risk the very real tragedy of some of these islands literally disappearing off the map.

The UK is among the largest contributors of international climate finance and in the four years to 2020 will be giving developing countries over £5.5 billion to help them mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change. This will build on commitments made at the Commonwealth Head of Governments Meeting in London earlier this year, including the Blue Charter and the Commonwealth Clean Oceans Alliance.

Further information

- Follow Foreign Office Minister Mark Field [@MarkFieldUK](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on Twitter [@foreignoffice](#) and [Facebook](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#) and [LinkedIn](#)

Media enquiries

For journalists

Email

newsdesk@fco.gov.uk

Newsdesk

020 7008 3100