

Influencers invited into National Highways control rooms as part of new safety campaign

Sarah Alexander, who uses a wheelchair, and Deaf YouTubers and best friends Jazzy Whipps and Benny Ngo were given an insight into how National Highways keep the roads network moving and about driving on motorways.

They were invited to the National Traffic Operations Centre and West Midlands Regional Control Centres which are both in Birmingham.

During the visit they discovered how staff deal with calls from motorists and the systems in place to make it easier for disabled drivers to get in touch such as being able to text National Highways if unable to use roadside telephones. Also the interpreting service SignLive for British Sign Language users.

The group watched traffic officers monitoring the network, working with police partners and dealing with ongoing incidents. Traffic officer Nigel Lea also demonstrated some of the kit carried in his vehicle and talked about dealing with incidents on motorways including stranded motorists.

The influencers are sharing useful information from the day with their many followers. The visit was part of the National Highways campaign, Driving on Motorways, which aims to ensure drivers know how motorways work and what to do in the event of a breakdown.

National Highways Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager Julian Horsler said:

We are committed to ensuring that disabled drivers can travel safely on our roads and are very grateful to Sarah, Jazzy and Benny for taking the time to visit us and for sharing important information with their followers.

We want to make sure all drivers feel safe on our roads and know what to do if something goes wrong. Therefore it is important that we reach out to all groups of road users and use every platform available to us to do so.

Benny, Sarah and Jazzy at the National Traffic Operations Centre

After the visit, Sarah posted:

I visited National Highways in Birmingham to learn all about their #DrivingOnMotorways campaign, and as someone that loves to drive I was super excited to go behind the scenes and find out what they do at their operations centres.

Not only do they monitor the motorways in England but they are on hand 24/7 to answer calls to help you plan your journey, inform you of any traffic delays, let you know if there are roadworks, and more. You can also call them if you need assistance, if there's debris on the road or if you need to inform them about an issue on the motorway.

National Highways are taking advice and listening to disabled drivers, with 1.9 million drivers having a medical condition registered with the DVLA. They're working on various support tools to help us when we need assistance so if you have any ideas get in touch!

Road safety is incredibly important and the #DrivingOnMotorways hub has so much info on keeping you and everyone else safe on the road, so check that out here! I learnt so much, and had a really fun and informative day.

Benny and Jazzy also shared videos and advice from the visit which they described as a 'good day learning about lots of things to keep us safe on the road.'

Jazzy commented:

I don't have to be stressed when having a breakdown as National Highways provides accessibility for deaf people now.

As part of the Driving on Motorways campaign, TV presenters Suzi Perry and Ortis Deley have produced practical videos and clips about using motorways.

Footage shows the pair driving on sections of smart motorway, discussing the differences from conventional motorways and explaining how technology is used to keep traffic moving and motorists as safe as possible.

The clips will be posted on the Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn channels of National Highways and advice displayed at motorway services as part of the campaign which runs until the end of the month.

But the video can be viewed any time on the [Driving on Motorways](#) section of the National Highways website which also offers useful advice and information.

That includes what to do in the event of a breakdown which is to 'go left'. Drivers should leave at the next junction or service area if possible but if not, move left onto the hard shoulder or nearest emergency area.

Everyone should get out of the vehicle if possible and it is safe to do so via the passenger door. They should then get over the safety barrier on to the verge and keep clear of the vehicle and moving traffic.

If the vehicle stops unexpectedly and it isn't safe to get out, keep seatbelts and hazard lights on and call 999 immediately.

Many breakdowns can be avoided by carrying out basic vehicle checks before setting off and ensuring that the vehicle has enough fuel for the journey.

General enquiries

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

Media enquiries

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