

# News story: Congestion busting scheme rolled out to benefit drivers

Long traffic jams caused by roadworks could be a thing of the past as a scheme which has already significantly reduced delays in Kent and London is rolled out nationwide.

Lane rental schemes, where utility companies are charged up to £2,500 a day for digging up the busiest roads at peak times, could now be adopted by councils nationwide after successful trials in the south-east.

They incentivise firms to work on quieter roads or outside of rush hour, or even to collaborate with other companies to stop roads being dug up multiple times, to reduce the impact of roadworks on drivers.

Pilot lane rental schemes in London and Kent have seen congestion on the busiest roads drop, saving drivers time and boosting the economy.

Transport Minister Jo Johnson said:

Drivers often see red when roadworks cause them delays, especially if no one is working on them.

Lane rental has seen a massive drop in disruption to drivers as utility companies have changed when and where they carry out work. Now we want millions of motorists around England to get the same benefits.

The Department for Transport carried out a [consultation into the scheme last year](#), and the majority of those responding supported its rollout nationwide. Many said they wanted to take advantage of the 'clear benefits' of lane rental schemes.

RAC head of roads policy Nicholas Lyes said:

This is a very welcome announcement. Trials showed that some of the worst congestion caused by planned utility works in London was reduced by half on roads where lane rental was in operation, so rolling this out will extend the benefits nationwide.

While motorists accept that some roadworks and congestion are unavoidable, lengthy and unnecessary queues are incredibly frustrating. RAC research suggests congestion on our roads and journey time reliability are growing concerns for motorists so introducing lane rental should encourage better planning and coordination of roadworks, and mean utility works are completed in a swifter, more efficient manner.

About 2.5 million roadworks are carried out each year, costing the economy £4 billion in increased costs to businesses through late employees or deliveries.

In London, utility companies have worked together more than 600 times since lane rental was introduced in 2015, up from just 100 beforehand.

The Department for Transport will produce guidance in the autumn to help councils develop lane rental schemes for approval. The first schemes could start by the end of 2019.