

Press release: North West traffic officers featured in Channel 5 documentary

Three North West traffic officers will be featured in a new Channel 5 series which shows the work involved in keeping the roads moving during the winter months.

A film crew from Winter Road Rescue has spent several shifts with Highways England traffic officers Jason Williamson, Mike Caffrey and Barry Connolly this winter, following the incidents they respond to on some of the England's busiest stretches of motorway.

Jason, Mike and Barry are among over 1,000 traffic officers who respond to over 200,000 incidents every year. They are based at Newton-le-Willows – one of 33 traffic officer outstations on the motorway network – and their patch includes both the M62 and M6.

They can be called out to a wide range of incidents – from minor breakdowns to major collisions – and some of the recent incidents they have attended will be shown in the new series of Winter Road Rescue at 8pm on Channel 5, starting on Monday 13 February.

Jason Williamson, 48, has been a traffic officer for 7 years. The married father-of-three from Macclesfield spent several years with the Royal Air Force Police before signing up as a traffic officer. Jason said:

I was pleased that we were asked to get involved with Winter Road Rescue as we were able to show some of the work we do to keep the roads moving.

Drivers often only see us when we've finished dealing with an incident and the road's reopened. They don't see us helping drivers, moving badly-damaged vehicles or clearing up spillages that would otherwise cause hours of delays, so I hope some of that comes across in the programme.

The new series of Winter Road Rescue will also feature Highways England's North West regional control centre in Newton-le-Willows, where incidents are monitored on CCTV cameras and responded to 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Mike Caffrey, 27, from Warrington, joined Highways England as a traffic officer in September last year. He said:

I really like the variety of the job and the fact that it's such an unusual role. When I applied to become a traffic officer, it

sounded different to anything else I'd done and has definitely lived up to expectations. Every day is different.

I get a buzz coming to work as you never know how your shift is going to play out. We perform a vital job on the motorway network and I feel lucky to be a part of a role helping members of the public to be safe and to arrive at their destination safely.

To be able to make a positive difference to someone's day, no matter how small, is a real enjoyment.

Highways England is urging drivers to adapt their driving to the changing conditions on the road this winter after the latest annual figures revealed that travelling too fast for the conditions is a factor in 1 in 9 of all road deaths in Great Britain.

A new safety campaign is warning drivers that 'when it rains, it kills' after the figures also showed that people are 30 times more likely to be killed or seriously injured on the roads in rain than in snow.

It generally takes at least twice as long to stop on a wet road as on a dry road because tyres have less grip on the surface. In wet weather you should:

- slow down if the rain and spray from vehicles is making it difficult to see and be seen
- keep well back from the vehicle in front as this will increase your ability to see and plan ahead
- ease off the accelerator and slow down gradually if the steering becomes unresponsive as it probably means that water is preventing the tyres from gripping the road

A new road safety video, showing rain falling inside the home of a family imagined to have been involved in a serious road collision, is available to [watch on our YouTube channel](#).

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.