




	<p><b>REGULATION 29 RESPONSE TO A REPORT ON ACTION TO PREVENT FUTURE DEATHS</b></p> <p><b>THIS RESPONSE IS BEING SENT TO:</b></p> <p>1. <b>The Senior Coroner for the Coroner Area of Dorset, Rachael Griffin, of Civic Centre, Bourne Avenue, Bournemouth BH2 6DY</b> in response to a ‘Regulation 28 Report to Prevent Future Deaths’ following an inquest hearing into the death of Stephen Wood that concluded on 07 February 2023.</p>
1	<p><b>NATIONAL HIGHWAYS</b></p> <p>I am ██████████ Director of Road Safety, responding on behalf of ██████████ Chief Executive of National Highways Limited of Bridge House, 1 Walnut Tree Close, Guildford, SURREY, GU1 4LZ.</p> <p>I note that the collision occurred on Coombe Road, Winterbourne Steepleton, Dorchester, Dorset. For clarity, National Highways is the Government-owned company, sponsored by the Department for Transport (DfT), charged with operating, maintaining and improving England's motorways and major A-roads. Responsibility for local roads, including Coombe Road, rests with local highway authorities (not National Highways), and the road network in other parts of the UK rests with the devolved administrations.</p> <p>I am responding in the capacity of National Highways’ responsibility for operating, maintaining and improving England's motorways and major A-roads.</p>
2	<p><b>CORONER’S MATTERS OF CONCERN</b></p> <p>The <b>MATTERS OF CONCERN</b> which were identified are as follows –</p> <p>“That there is a lack of knowledge and/or understanding as to when people should report an obstruction in the road. I would request that consideration is given to making all road users aware of the dangers of obstructions in the road and to encourage them to report any hazard to the local Police force or Local Authority so that it can be removed as soon as possible, or at least other road users be warned of the hazard to prevent a future death.”</p>
3	<p><b>DETAILS OF ACTION TAKEN</b></p> <p>Mr Wood’s death was a tragedy and our sympathies are with his family and friends.</p> <p>At National Highways safety is at the forefront of every decision we make, and we are committed to the safety of everyone who uses our roads.</p> <p><a href="#">Rule 280</a> of the Highway Code gives the following instruction to motorists in relation to obstructions –</p> <p><i>“If anything falls from a vehicle on to a motorway or other high-speed road, <b>DO NOT</b> remove the obstruction yourself. Stop in a place of relative safety (see <a href="#">Rule 275</a>) and call the emergency services on 999.</i></p> <p><i>On other roads, you should only remove obstructions if it is safe to do so.”</i></p> <p>In September 2022, National Highways launched a road user notification study exploring additional actions that could be taken to further increase awareness among the public of what they can do if they spot someone in difficulty on any road. We have begun dialogue with external stakeholders. Our initial scoping discussions have revealed this to be a complex area which impacts and requires engagement with a wide range of public bodies (such as the Department for Transport, emergency services and local authorities) and other interested parties.</p>

	<p>More generally, National Highways has an ongoing national programme of road safety campaign activity, intended to provide important guidance to drivers to make journeys safer, easier and more reliable. This ongoing campaign work includes a specific section on <a href="#">breakdown advice</a>.</p> <p>We worked with external stakeholders to launch England’s first major campaign, in 2021, to raise awareness of the eCall or 'SOS' button function, which increasing numbers of newer cars come with. This button can be used to call for help, by the driver for themselves, or by the driver for someone else needing help, if a situation requires emergency services. This was on digital channels, including a dedicated <a href="#">campaign page</a> on our website at nationalhighways.co.uk. <a href="#">The Highway Code</a> as published by the Department for Transport was updated in September 2021, and also now advises the use of eCall to contact the police and to communicate a specific location directly to a 999 operator, under the Highway Code rules 277, 279 and 283. Further details are available on <a href="#">YouTube</a>. We have since delivered further waves of the eCall awareness campaign, with updated messaging about using eCall if a driver sees somebody else in difficulty.</p> <p>In January 2022 we launched a '<a href="#">Driving on motorways</a>' hub on our website, which provides a central point for our information and advice on motorway driving. The hub was launched alongside a multimedia campaign and radio day, with content featured on over 450 stations reaching over 6 million listeners.</p> <p>These activities were designed to provide even further information and safety advice to drivers travelling on all types of roads. We are committed to providing even more information that is accessible to drivers.</p>						
4	<p><b>DETAILS OF FURTHER ACTION PROPOSED</b></p> <p>National Highways remains committed to helping drivers and their passengers be even safer and feel safer on all roads for which we are responsible. We will continue with our programme of road safety campaign activity as described above, which is intended to provide important guidance to drivers to make journeys even safer, easier and more reliable.</p> <p>We are also continuing the road user notification study launched in September 2022 as described above. It is our intention that, as part of the study, a shortlisted set of options will be prepared that could be implemented to further increase awareness among the public of what they can do if they spot someone in difficulty on any road. We plan to use the initial findings from our study to enable more detailed external stakeholder engagement to help shape these options. Subject to this wider engagement, we aim to complete the study by late Summer/Autumn 2023. Our next step will then be to prepare an implementation plan.</p>						
5	<p><b>TIMETABLE FOR ACTION</b></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="300 1675 1353 1984"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="300 1675 544 1738"><u>DATE</u></th> <th data-bbox="544 1675 1353 1738"><u>ACTION</u></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="300 1738 544 1827">Late Summer / Autumn 2023</td> <td data-bbox="544 1738 1353 1827">Planned completion date of the road user notification study, subject to the wider engagement with external parties.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="300 1827 544 1984">Late Summer / Autumn 2023</td> <td data-bbox="544 1827 1353 1984">Prepare a shortlisted set of options that could be implemented, along with an implementation plan.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>ACTION</u>	Late Summer / Autumn 2023	Planned completion date of the road user notification study, subject to the wider engagement with external parties.	Late Summer / Autumn 2023	Prepare a shortlisted set of options that could be implemented, along with an implementation plan.
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6	<p><b>SAFETY OF ROAD USERS</b></p> <p>The safety of everyone on all roads matters; it is an imperative for our business in what we set out to achieve and a core value of our organisation in how we go about it on the Strategic Road Network.</p> <p>Although roads, especially high-speed roads, can never be risk-free environments, our absolute priority is the reduction of road deaths and injuries on our network.</p> <p>Every road death is a tragic loss of life. We are determined to reduce the number of fatal incidents and injuries on the Strategic Road Network, and we want everyone who travels or works on any of our roads to feel confident and safe.</p> <p>This is why we invest in road safety initiatives and public awareness campaigns, to help prevent death and injury and to help give drivers the information they need to have safer journeys. This is in addition to information provided in other areas, for example The Highway Code.</p> <p>We urge road users to act safely and sensibly, including by informing themselves about what to do in an emergency, who to contact, and how to avoid dangerous situations where possible, thereby minimising the risks to themselves and other road users.</p> <p>We remain committed to providing even more information that is accessible to drivers.</p>
7	<p><b>31 March 2023    Signed:</b></p> <p></p> <p> <b>Director of Road Safety</b>  <b>Chief Executive</b></p>