

Recruiting Customer Experience Representatives to better serve our customers

The front gate of a construction site is traditionally overseen by a traffic marshal, to direct deliveries and traffic. For Costain Skanska joint venture (CSjv), this gate is also a shop window to signpost 45,000 daily commuters in and out of Euston station. Customer Experience Representatives have improved the safety of pedestrians around Euston.



CSjv is working on the High Speed Two (HS2) Enabling Works programme in London, with a significant amount of demolition, utility and archaeological activity directly outside Euston station, one of London's busiest train and underground links. The station also serves the Royal National Institute of Blind people (RNIB) resulting in significantly more visually impaired pedestrians using the area.

As works ebb and flow, pedestrian access and walkways change on an almost weekly basis across more than 25 different interfaces. The challenge for our team was to keep pedestrians informed and moving, whilst deliveries and works continue. We also wanted a team approachable to the public, aware of local shortcuts and services. Working with the local community, Kings Cross Construction College and our supply chain partner Clipfline, we have innovatively solved this problem by redesigning the role of a traffic marshal into a Customer Experience Representative (CER's).

What is a customer experience representative?



Our team of CER's are responsible for ensuring a high standard of safety for pedestrians and the community close to our works. Whilst they have the same qualifications as a traffic marshal, we provided additional training to ensure they were customer focused whilst carrying out their duties. The key differences between a CER and a traffic marshal are outlined in the table below.

	Traffic Marshal	Customer Experience Representative
Responsibilities	To receive deliveries to site and supervise the site gate.	In addition to marshal duties, to create a safe environment for pedestrian and vehicle movements and enhance the reputation of HS2 in the area. To be smart, well-kept and approachable to the public.
Training completed	Basic traffic marshall training – usually 1 day awareness course	Specific training for the role: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A73 with CPCS accreditation - LANTRA qualified for highways - Customer care - Conflict resolution - Communication
Uniform	Standard PPE (orange)	Yellow & green PPE to be visible from workforce Name and 'how can I help you?' printed on jacket Cap, rather than hard hat No tinted glasses permitted Umbrella in the rain to speak to pedestrians
Tools and materials	Varies by site	Leaflets with HS2 helpdesk Map / signposts for diversions Speakers to talk to large crowds
Briefings	Start of shift each day at 0730	Start of shift each day at 0730 Specific CER brief about interfaces, and new routes for pedestrians Monthly brief about local events in the area Monthly feedback brief from local stakeholders
Shift patterns	10 hour shifts	Between 6 and 10 hours shifts based on personal requirements

How did we recruit the team?

The 37-strong team was recruited via three channels; existing and qualified traffic marshals, existing Clipfine staff and locally recruited people new to the role.

Previous traffic marshals were essential to provide experience, and supervision for the new CER's.



Clipfine identified existing staff that were interested in re-training as a CER. This route attracted the majority of female applicants due to the emphasis on customer-facing responsibilities. It was agreed that Clipfine would upskill these members of staff on the basis that CSjv provided employment for a set period of time for the investment to pay off.



I was really excited when Clipfine told us about the programme. I love that I can talk to people in this role... and people have been astonished to



see a woman working in this role! *Claudia, Customer Experience Representative*

CSjv operates in a low-income area of Camden. To support social mobility we ran a local recruitment campaign seeking people with an interest in a public-facing role or with similar experience (e.g. retail or hospitality). This was in partnership with Kings Cross Construction. We placed an advert via Job Centre Plus and ran a drop-in session to meet interested candidates. The next stage was to drugs and alcohol test applicants to ensure all that were selected were permitted to work on site.

Training was provided in stages; an initial 3 day basic CPCS A73 Traffic Marshalling Upskilling Course course took place on a CSjv site in Acton. This was to introduce the CER's to the role and assess their motivation, before investing in a full LANTRA course 1 month later. This ensured the investment in training was recouped by the CER staying in employment with Clipfine and CSjv.

The benefits of CER's

The benefits of employing Customer Experience Representatives

- The CER's engagement and proactive communication has resulted in **zero safety incidents** and improved safety for pedestrians around Euston. 67% of customers said that they **felt safer** with CER's.



"Last week I was at Euston station and was lost searching for my destination. I was approached by Alfonso who offered me help. Mr. Trombetta was one of the most helpful and friendly people I have ever interacted with. He was professional, helpful, and impressive."

Kimberly Brown, Head of Humanitarian Policy - British Red Cross



- The team are **visible to the public**, engaging with around 100 different people per shift. We receive compliments from members of the public in the CER's approach and friendly way finding.
 - Speaking a total of 13 different languages ensures the team can communicate to tourists visiting the area, and local people with English as a second language. **This has improved interaction with our local stakeholders.**
 - Shifting the traffic marshal role to a customer facing position has resulted in more women joining the team – 23% are female, compared to the UK average of just 2%. Not only does this ensure the team **reflects the customers it serves**, it also helps solve **the rail skills shortage** of an additional 63,000 people to join the industry by 2021 (National Skills Academy for Rail – NSAR).
 - Employment of local residents ensures the team know how to re-direct the public, and leaves a **lasting social legacy** for social mobility in Camden.
-

Lessons learnt

The CER's are the first team of their kind in the construction industry, and the programme is exemplar best practice. Customer experience representatives have the potential to change the face of the construction industry, improve public pedestrian and make our sites and their interfaces safer. We have 3 key lessons learnt to be considered for future programmes:

- 1. Make your expectations clear from the start** – CSjv were clear from the onset that the CER programme was going to be something innovative to improve the industry. We met with potential tenders to share our vision, and invited their ideas and innovation about how we could transform the role of traffic marshals. Finding Clipfine, a partner that were prepared to think outside the box to deliver our vision was essential to making the CER's a success.
 - 2. Save money and use local training providers and space** – through Kings Cross Construction College we were able to utilise funding to provide training and subsequent employment for local people out of work. In hindsight we didn't use this connection to its full potential – next time we will ring-fence roles to be recruited in this way. Using the CSjv space in Acton saved the cost of finding a training venue.
 - 3. Once the CER's have started, continue to place emphasis on their customer-facing duties** – once the programme was up and running, it could have been easy to revert to traffic marshall 'business as usual' and forget our vision. Refresher training ensures that this isn't the case and monitoring daily interaction with the public enables us to pinpoint where improvements are needed.
-