

# National Road Users' Satisfaction Survey 2014-2015



# Executive Summary

The National Road Users' Satisfaction Survey (NRUSS) provides information that enables Highways England to understand customer satisfaction and the expectations of users of the Strategic Road Network (SRN).

## Road users' priorities for improvements

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Maintain surfaces to a high standard
- 

Minimise delays through roadworks
- 

Reliable signage

The key drivers of dissatisfaction are delays of over 5 minutes, and where progress at roadworks is perceived to be slower than necessary.

The roll out of the smart motorways programme has contributed to the increased proportion of road users who see roadworks. Long stretches of reduced speeds cause irritation to

drivers, as does a lack of information about schemes. Consequently, satisfaction with roadworks management on motorways has declined, while it has increased for roadworks seen on trunk roads.

The performance measure for 2014-15 was 89, (on a 0-100 scale). This represents a high level of satisfaction with the last journey on the SRN. However, satisfaction has declined over time, notably in the Midlands and both northern regions.

The highest scoring journey aspect was Safety (92), and the lowest was Roadworks Management (67).

## During 2014-15

### Key findings


- Journeys on the SRN are rated more highly than those on local roads.
- Where no negative experiences occur on a journey, people are generally satisfied.
- The main cause of dissatisfaction with journeys on the SRN is being delayed.
  - 30% of journeys were delayed to some extent:
    - 6% for 5 minutes or less
    - 5% for more than 30 minutes
  - However, road users are tolerant of short delays, just 2% are dissatisfied with journey time where delays are 5 minutes or less
- Road users accept that roadworks are a fact of life, but aspects which cause dissatisfaction are:
  - not seeing works in progress when travelling through roadworks
  - not seeing signage explaining the roadworks


### Key trends

- Increase in the proportion of journeys with a delay, from 21% in 2011-12 to 30% in 2014-15, and in the average length of delay from 19 minutes in 2011-12 to 22 minutes in 2014-15.
- Increase in the proportion who passed roadworks on motorways to 18%, largely as a result of the roll out of the smart motorways programme.
- Increased tendency to use journey planning information, 12% check travel conditions pre-trip and 37% during trip.
  - Mobile phones are now the most frequently used source of information for pre-trip planning, used by 35% of those who checked conditions pre-travel, compared to 10% in 2013-14
- Increase in proportion who felt unsafe, 6% on motorway and 5% on trunk road.
- Decrease in proportion who thought variable message signs were accurate, 61%.

  
**Journeys with a delay**  
 30% 2014-15  
 21% 2011-12

  
**Passed roadworks**  
 18% 2014-15

  
**Mobile phone used for checking travel conditions**  
 35% 2014-15  
 10% 2013-14

  
**Felt unsafe**  
 6% motorway  
 5% trunk road

  
**Perceived accuracy of Variable Messaging Signs**  
 61% 2014-15

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# 1.0 Introduction

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As part of the objective to seek and respond to feedback from road users, Highways England (formerly the Highways Agency, to April 2015) commissions a number of surveys. This includes a Road Users’ Satisfaction Survey, to monitor awareness and satisfaction amongst network users.

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## Objectives

The objectives of the National Road Users’ Satisfaction Survey (NRUSS) are to:

- Monitor the performance measure based on the last journey made on the network.
- Understand the causes of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with use of the strategic road network (SRN) and Highways England services.

The current approach to measuring satisfaction was introduced in April 2011 following a research programme to identify the factors that were important to road users. This report contains an analysis of the 2,011 interviews conducted between April 2014 and the end of March 2015.

### Notes:

Comparisons are made, where appropriate, with data collected in the previous 3 years. Note that no weighting is applied to the data. A copy of the questionnaire is included in Appendix A, and other appendices provide additional breakdowns of the survey results for reference.

Where results are significantly different at the 95% confidence level (that is, the results are not just due to chance), these are highlighted in the report and in the appendices. Throughout this report, Figures reported are for NRUSS 2014-15 unless otherwise stated.

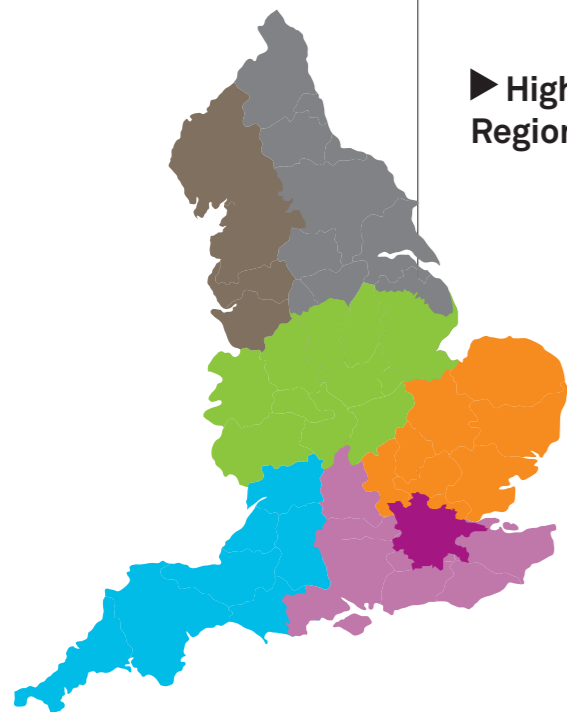
# 1.0 Introduction

# 2,011

2,011 interviews conducted between April 2014 and the end of March 2015

#### One sample point (4 people) will have:

- 2 males, 2 females
- minimum 3 drivers
- minimum 1 person from age groups; 17-34, 35-64 and 65+
- minimum 2 employed



#### ► Highways England Regions [Figure 1.0]

### 1.1 Methodology and sampling — target of 2,000 household interviews per year

The methodology for NRUSS is household interviews administered using Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI). Sample points based on output areas are randomly selected from across England so that there is an equal number in each of Highways England's 7 regions (see Figure 1.0 below).

To be eligible to take part in the survey, respondents must be aged 17 or over and have used the SRN at some time in the 12 months preceding the interview.

Four respondents from within each sample point are selected to quota, to ensure respondents are broadly representative of adults in England who use the SRN.

### 1.2 Performance measure — tracking satisfaction with last journey

The performance measure is calculated from satisfaction ratings for 5 key aspects of the most recent journey undertaken on the SRN by a sample of road users. The resultant Figure represents satisfaction on a 0 to 100 scale. Appendix H provides detail on the calculation. The direction (outward or return) of 'last journey' is selected randomly to ensure an even split of each.

### 1.3 Equality analysis — impacts on groups of road users

To enable Highways England to meet its general and specific equality duties (under Section 149 Equality Act 2010) 'equality analysis' has been conducted. For NRUSS the user groups considered are age, race, gender and disability. Analysis has shown that some variations exist in the travel characteristics of these groups as follows:

**65+** People aged 65+ travelled less frequently on the SRN than other age groups. Their usage of the network was predominantly for leisure rather than work or business.

**17-21** Higher proportions of those in the youngest age group travelled as car passengers than as car drivers, and were least likely to have a driving licence (19% had neither a full or provisional licence). While confident as passengers, they were those least confident as drivers.



In general, women travelled less frequently than men on the SRN and had travelled fewer miles per year. When they did travel, they were significantly more likely to travel as a passenger in a car (83%) than men (56%).




Road users who had a health issue affecting their mobility were generally older and did not work. This resulted in less frequent use of the SRN and fewer commuting or business journeys.

The characteristics of road users interviewed in 2014-15 were the same as those interviewed in previous years. Further details of the sample and travel characteristics can be found in a separate report. A breakdown of the results for the above user group forms Appendix C of this report.

The analysis has shown that there are no equality issues arising from the survey results.

### 1.4 Structure of report

Following this introduction, the drivers of customer satisfaction are explored in Section 2, and in Sections 3 to 7, the components of the performance measure and associated journey experiences are discussed. Section 8 provides other information collected in NRUSS, traffic officers, smart motorways and overall satisfaction with Highways England, together with customer feedback on the priorities for improvement. Section 8 includes a summary of the findings.



**Current performance  
measure of 89  
represents high level  
of satisfaction.**

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## 2.0 Performance Measure: drivers of satisfaction

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Analysis of the factors that drive satisfaction show both personal and journey experience characteristics affect the performance measure.

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### Summary

- Short, incident free journeys score highest, achieving scores very close to the maximum of 100.
- On longer journeys respondents are more likely to encounter those factors that impact on satisfaction including delays, roadworks, seeing litter and experiencing poor driving.
- Some road users are hard to satisfy – for example, being dissatisfied with upkeep even if not feeling it is a problem.  
*“It’s not too bad” — fairly dissatisfied with upkeep, leisure traveller*
- Some road users are satisfied in spite of journey experiences that cause others to be dissatisfied.  
*“The congestion and roadworks held us up” — fairly satisfied with journey time, leisure traveller*
- An encounter with roadworks where there is inadequate signage, no evidence of work in progress and causing notable delay, impacts negatively on the performance measure.
- Journeys made by nervous drivers and passengers have significantly lower scores than those for confident travellers, regardless of the features of the journey.
- The purpose of the journey itself also contributes to customer satisfaction; commuters are less satisfied than leisure travellers for a journey with equivalent road user experience.
- Motorways and trunk roads continue to be regarded more highly than local roads.
- Satisfaction has fallen across all aspects of the journey, except roadworks management which has fluctuated.

## 2.0 Performance measure: Drivers of satisfaction

**Note:**

Instead of 'satisfaction', the scale for 'safety' records 1 for 'very safe' to 5 'very unsafe'.

The score for roadworks management is only included for the 462 respondents who did encounter roadworks on their journey.

### 2.1 Introduction — performance measure

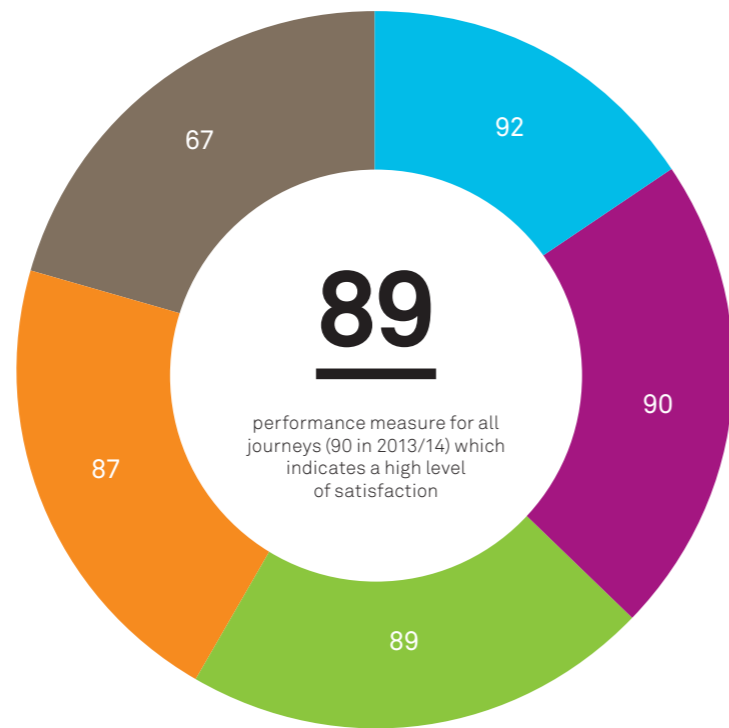
Road users were asked to recall the most recent trip they made using the SRN and provide details about the journey. This included the time, distance and purpose of the journey and experiences on the journey.

The last journey is the basis of the performance measure. Road users give satisfaction ratings on a 1 to 5 scale, where 1 is 'very satisfied' and 5 is 'very dissatisfied' for each of 5 journey aspects: safety, general upkeep, signage (information provision), journey time, and roadworks management.

For each aspect, the proportion of road users who are fairly or very satisfied represents the performance measure for that aspect, for example, 87% of road users were satisfied with the journey time for their last journey on the SRN. Each of the 5 aspects contribute to the overall performance measure, which takes account of both trunk roads and motorways where used.

Figure 2.1 shows the combined motorway and trunk road measure. The highest scoring factor is safety (92), followed by upkeep of the network (90), with roadworks management being the aspect with least satisfaction, at 67.

- Safety
- General upkeep
- Journey time
- Signage
- Roadworks management
- Average performance for all journeys



► Performance measure (2,011 respondents) [Figure 2.1]

### 2.2 Trends in performance measure

#### Decline over last four years

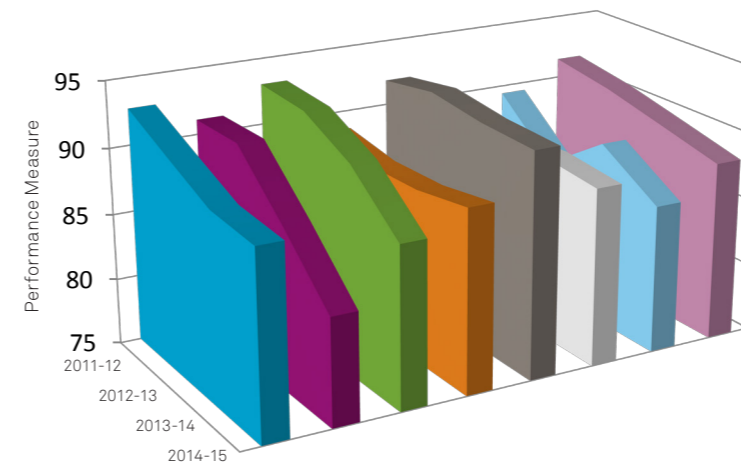
There have been variations over time in both the motorway and trunk road performance measures, but both have followed a downward trend since the first year of the survey in its current format (from April 2011).

Satisfaction has been falling across all aspects, except roadworks management, which has fluctuated.

Figure 2.2 shows the overall performance measure by year, for region and overall. The decreases in the measure have been greater in the Midlands and both northern regions, while there is no obvious trend in other regions.

**Note:**

- Regions with greatest decrease in the measure
1. Yorkshire + the North East
  2. North West
  3. Midlands



#### ► Performance measure by region of travel by year [Figure 2.2]

Bases: Approx 300-450 per region (differ by region by year), 2,011 overall for 2014-15.

- Yorkshire + North East
- North West
- Midlands
- M25
- East
- South East
- South West
- Overall

## 2.3 Last journey

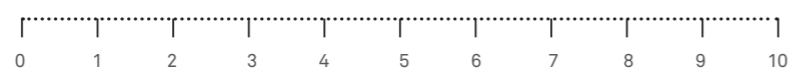
### Perceptions of SRN better than for local roads

To compare the perceptions of the SRN and local roads, respondents were asked, on a scale of 1 to 10, how they would rate their most recent journey (1 being extremely poor and 10 extremely good) by road type.

The average ratings given in 2014-15 by road users are shown in Figure 2.3. For each road type, scores have declined by 0.3 over the last 4 years.

Low scores for all road types were associated with:

- Potholes
- Poor surfaces
- Slow moving traffic
- Congestion



Note: Scale = 1-10

#### ► Rating of most recent journey [Figure 2.3]

The ratings and comments highlight that, providing no problems are encountered, drivers are generally happy with the SRN.

## 2.4 Performance measure — Factors affecting customer satisfaction

Regression analysis has been conducted on the last four years of NRUSS data to understand the factors that most influence customer satisfaction.

The analysis identifies the key drivers of dissatisfaction by taking account of related variables. The results show that there are 2 types of factor which contribute to the performance measure achieved:

- Journey experiences
- Personal characteristics

### Journey experiences

Where no negative experiences occur on a journey, generally people are very highly satisfied, resulting in a performance measure close to 100.

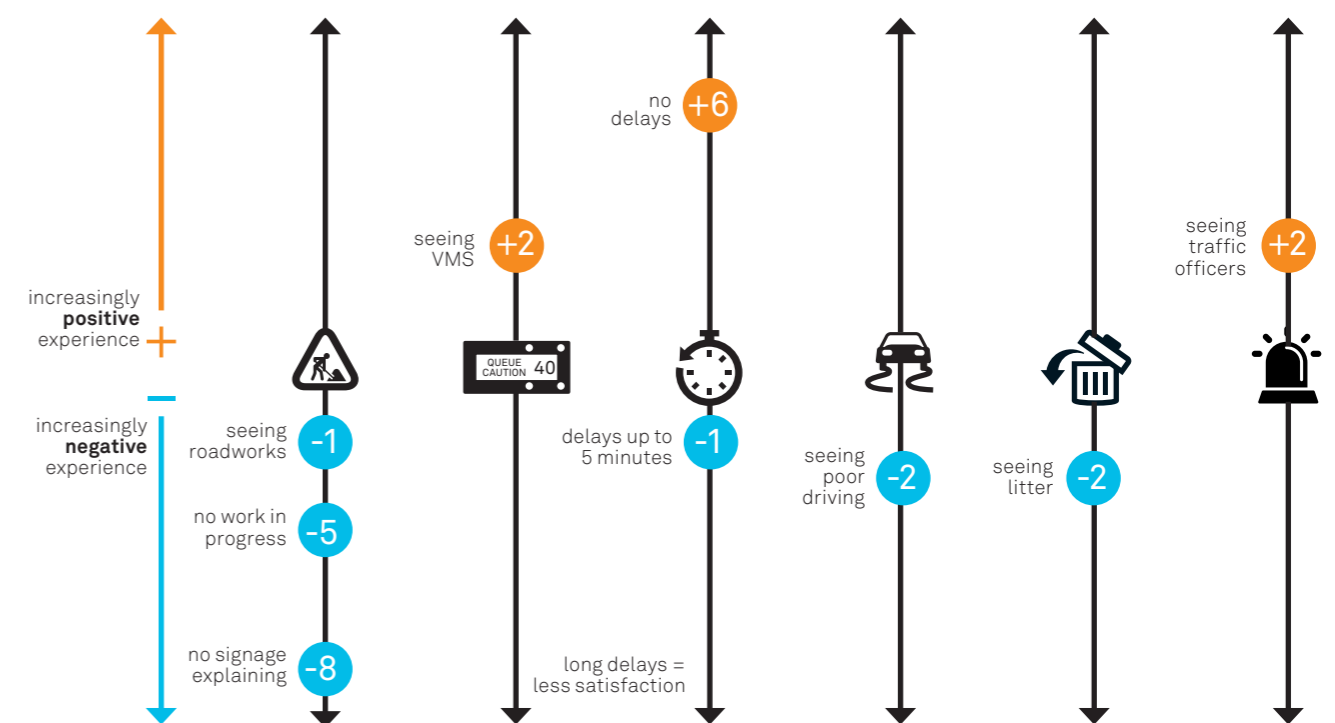
The most significant factor to affect the score is being delayed, with the length of delay relative to the overall

journey length reducing satisfaction accordingly. This is illustrated in Figure 2.4.

An encounter with roadworks may not necessarily lead to a reduction in the performance measure for a journey, but aspects of the management of the roadworks can. For example, passing roadworks reduces the performance measure by 1 point, but:

- if no work was seen to be taking place at the time, the measure reduced by 5 points
- if no signage explaining the roadworks was seen, the measure reduced by 8 points

Seeing Variable Message Signs (VMS) and traffic officers have a positive impact on the performance measure, while seeing poor driving, and litter have a negative impact.



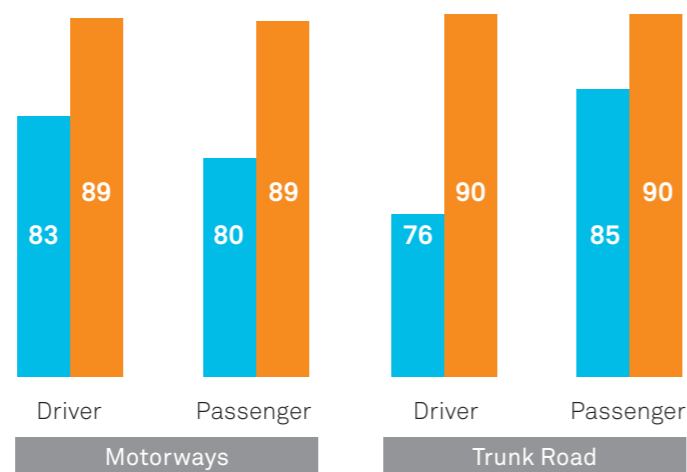
#### ► Performance measure for journey experiences [Figure 2.4]

### Personal Characteristics

Some road users have lower levels of satisfaction regardless of journey experiences. The average performance measure for those who describe themselves as nervous road users is significantly lower than for confident road users as shown in Figure 2.5.

A minority of road users described themselves as very or fairly nervous, for example, 7% said they were nervous driving on motorways compared to 90% who were confident. Females, young drivers and road users with a mobility impairment are more likely to be nervous than others.

■ Confident  
■ Nervous



► **Performance measure for confident and nervous road users** [Figure 2.5]

For a comparable journey in terms of delay, length and purpose, confident road users are more satisfied with the SRN than nervous road users.





Despite 30% of journeys on the SRN being delayed to some extent, satisfaction with journey time is high.

### 3.0 Last journey: experiences and satisfaction with journey time

High proportions of road users were satisfied with journey time on their last journey; 86% of motorway users, and 88% of trunk road users were satisfied.

#### Summary

- Road users have expectations that journeys could be delayed.
- Delays of up to 5 minutes are tolerated.

The proportion delayed on their last journey on the SRN has increased year on year, from 21% in 2011-12 to 30% in 2014-15.

42% of journeys made at peak times were delayed.

39% of commuting and business journeys were delayed, with average delay times of 17 minutes for commuting, and 25 minutes for business trips.

Journeys in the Midlands region experienced most delays at 44% whilst just 22% of journeys in the East region were affected.

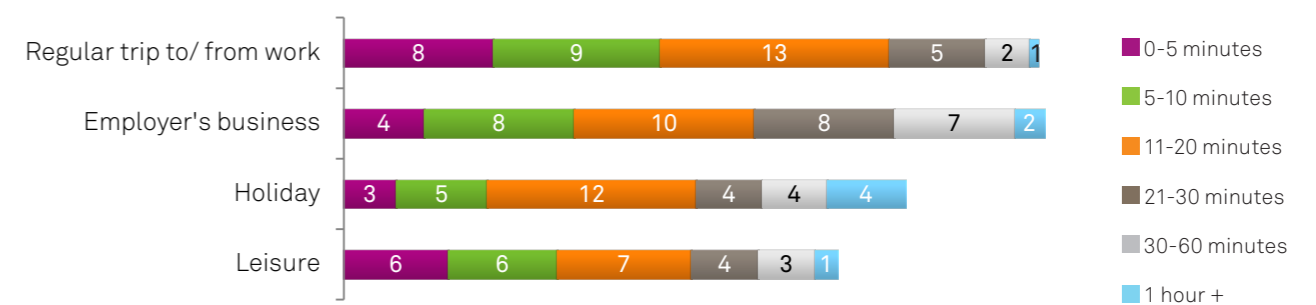
Congestion on the SRN accounted for 20% of delays to journeys, with roadworks accounting for 12% of delays.

The average length of delay has increased from 19 minutes in 2011-12 to 22 minutes in 2014-15.

Tendency to check travel conditions both in advance and during a trip has increased over time, but planning is only undertaken for a minority of trips:

- 12% check travel conditions pre-trip
- 37% check during their trip

Mobile phones are now the most frequently used source of information for pre-trip planning, used by 35% of those who checked conditions pre-travel, compared to 10% in 2011-12.



## 3.0 Last journey: experiences and satisfaction with journey time

### 3.1 Journey time

#### Satisfaction remains high

High proportions of road users were satisfied with journey time; 86% for motorways and 88% for trunk roads. The proportion who were very satisfied has decreased since 2011-12, as shown in Table 3.1.

Journey Time Satisfaction	Motorways				Trunk Roads			
	2011-12 %	2012-13 %	2013-14 %	2014-15 %	2011-12 %	2012-13 %	2013-14 %	2014-15 %
Very satisfied	62	65	62	59	63	59	58	55
Fairly satisfied	29	23	26	27	28	31	31	33
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4	5	5	5	4	6	5	6
Fairly dissatisfied	5	5	6	6	4	3	4	4
Very dissatisfied	1	2	2	3	1	1	1	2
<b>Base</b>	<b>1286</b>	<b>1357</b>	<b>1371</b>	<b>1392</b>	<b>1348</b>	<b>1193</b>	<b>1239</b>	<b>1155</b>

#### ► Journey time satisfaction ratings [Table 3.1]

Over the last 4 years, the proportion delayed on their last journey on the SRN increased, from 21% in 2011-12 to 30% in 2014-15.

This is largely as a result of increased proportions experiencing roadworks and congestion:

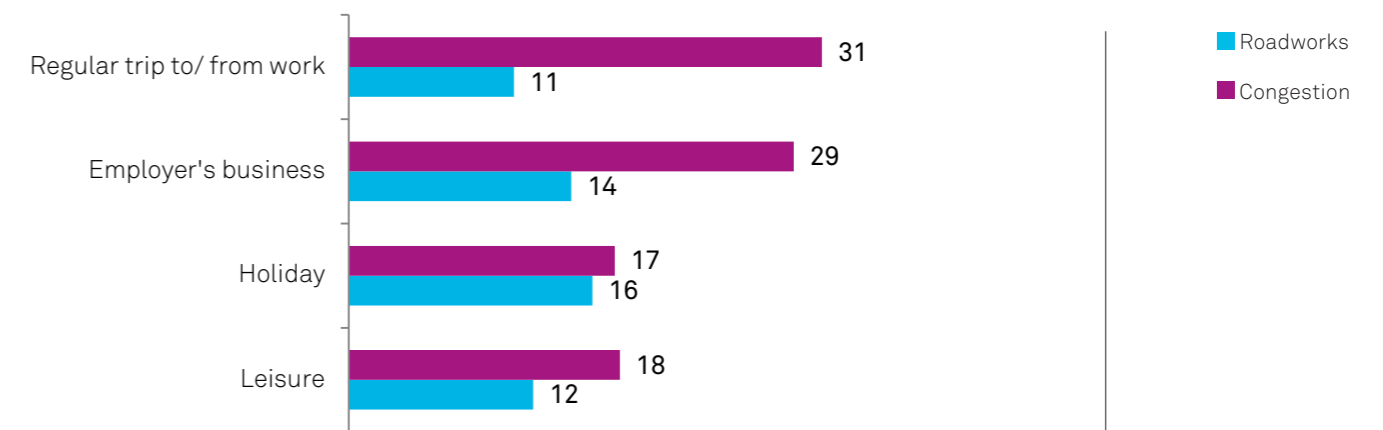
- 7% were delayed by roadworks on the SRN in 2011-12, up to 12% in 2014-15.
- 13% were delayed by congestion on the SRN in 2011-12, up to 20% in 2014-15.

#### Journey Purpose and Journey Time

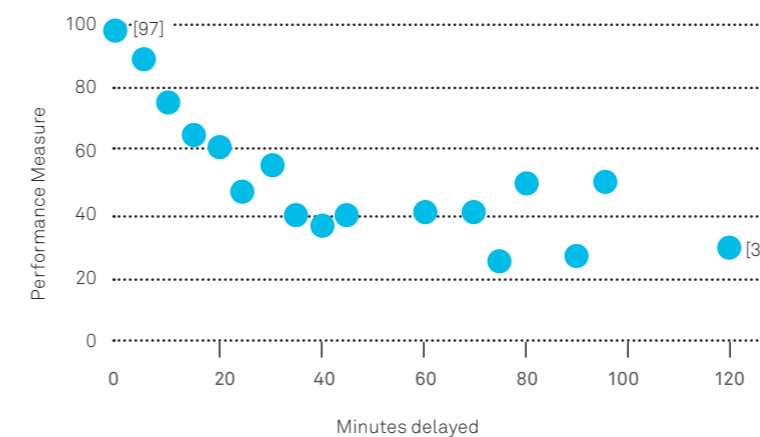
Figure 3.1 shows the proportions delayed from roadworks or congestion by journey purpose.

Congestion accounted for the majority of delays to commuting and business journeys.

Satisfaction was highest for leisure journeys, 89%, and holidays, 87%, and lower for business journeys, 83%. The proportion of commuters satisfied with journey time was significantly lower than for other journey purposes, 76%. Peak time trips were those most likely to be affected by delay (42%).



#### ► Proportions delayed on SRN by congestion and roadworks [Figure 3.1]



#### ► Journey time performance measure by length of delay [Figure 3.2]

##### Delays

The journey time performance measure decreases as the length of the delay increases, as illustrated in Figure 3.2.

The majority of journeys, 70%, were not delayed, and 6% were delayed by no more than 5 minutes. Just 5% were delayed by more than 30 minutes.

The average length of delay increased from 19 minutes in 2011-12 to 22 minutes in 2014-15.

The Midlands region was the worst for delays; 44% of journeys using the roads in the region were delayed, while just 22% of those in the East region were delayed.

Some differences were found by demographics, although these are not statistically significant, and are largely related to type of journey being made and journey experience.

- Older people (65 plus) were the most satisfied age group, with a performance measure of 91 compared to 87 for those aged 45 to 64 years old.
- Fewer females were satisfied (88) than males (89).
- Non-white British road users were more satisfied (89) than white British road users (88).

# 17%

of those making a commuting or business trip said it was extremely important to arrive on time

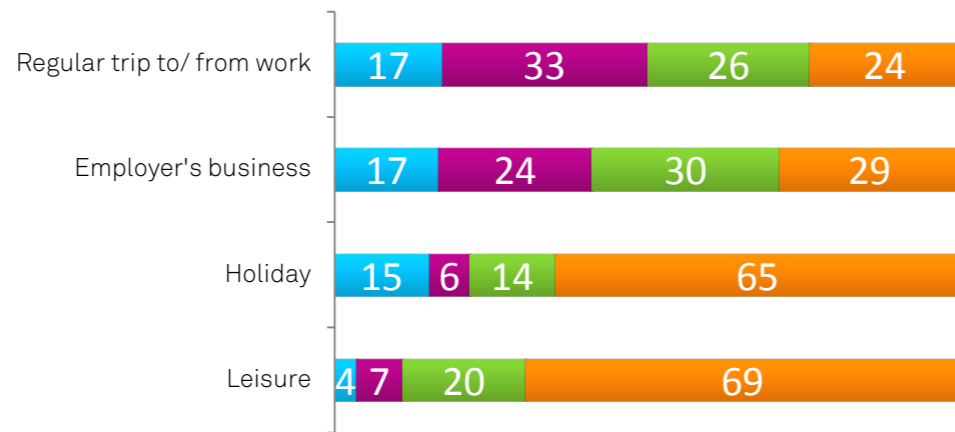
## 3.2 Arriving on time

Not important for over half of trips made by NRUSS respondents

As shown in Figure 3.3, arriving on time was extremely important for 17% of commuting and business journeys. It was of lower importance for leisure journeys, and holiday journeys.

Arriving on time was also more important for outward than return trips, being extremely important to just 4% of returning road users and 13% for outward journeys.

- Extremely important
- Very important
- Fairly important
- Not at all important



► Importance of arriving on time [Figure 3.3]

## 3.3 Use of travel information

Low, but increasing

Road users were asked if they planned their routes and checked travel conditions before or during their journeys.

The proportions who did make use of planning information has increased year on year, with 20% now planning their route in advance, 12% checking travel conditions before setting off and 37% checking during the journey in 2014-15. Tendency to check at any stage varies by journey purpose, as shown in Figure 3.4.

Road users on employer's business undertake most planning at all stages, 59% checked travel conditions during the trip, while commuters plan the least. Those making journeys to

unfamiliar destinations, including for holiday and employer's business, were when routes were most likely to be planned and conditions checked.

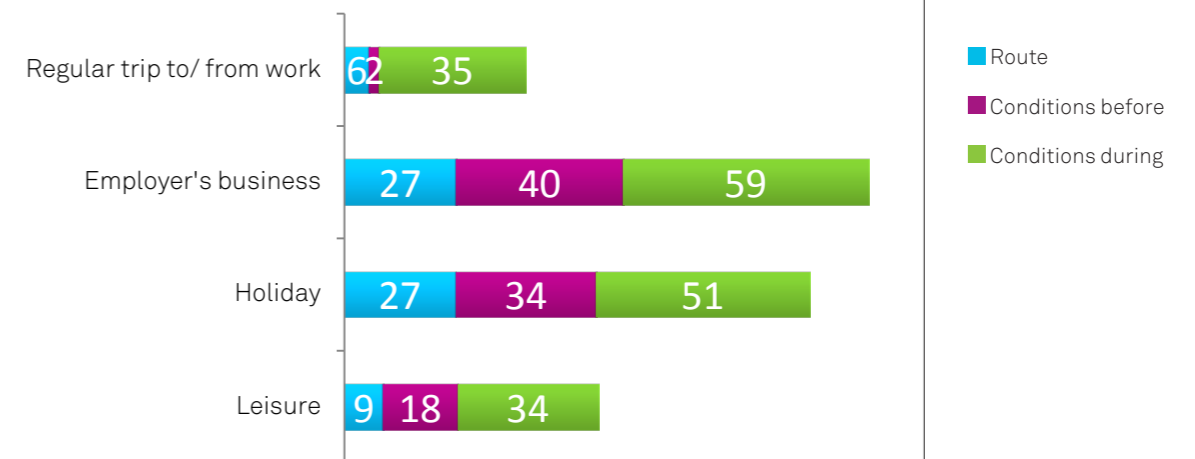
For checking conditions pre-trip, using a mobile phone has increased year on year, from 10% in 2011-12 to 35% in 2014-15 of those who planned pre-trip.

The use of all sources of traffic updates during a trip have increased over time. The most commonly used source for in-trip information was radio traffic updates (25%), followed by VMS (10%).

Of those who checked conditions during their journey, 26% had also checked in advance.

# 37%

Check travel conditions during their journey



► Made checks by stage of journey, by purpose [Figure 3.4]

Road users who were delayed, but still said they were fairly satisfied with the journey time said:

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“  
Considering what they were doing, they did keep it moving”  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Delay:** 1 hour +  
**Reason:** Roadworks, road closures and congestion

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“  
They were just busy”  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Delay:** 1 hour +  
**Reason:** Congestion and bad weather

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“  
It wasn't as bad as I expected, I thought it was going to be busier, I think the school holidays were making the difference”  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Delay:** 45 mins +  
**Reason:** Average speed cameras and congestion

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“  
Delays were not as bad as what it could have been. Being a Bank Holiday, a lot more cars than you would expect on a normal day so you expect a few delays”  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Delay:** 45 mins +  
**Reason:** Roadworks, and congestion

Road users have expectations that journeys could be delayed, and delays of up to 5 minutes are tolerated

### 3.4 Allowing extra time – increased proportion who allow more time

In spite of an increase in the proportion who used travel information pre-trip, the proportion of journeys where extra time was allowed remained low at 17%, with no change over time.

However for those who did allow extra time, this has increased year on year, from 30 minutes in 2011-12, up to 38 minutes in 2014-15.

Customers who were likely to check travel conditions were more likely to allow extra time.



The smart motorway programme has had a negative impact on satisfaction with roadworks management.

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## 4.0 Last journey: roadworks

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Of the 5 journey aspects rated, satisfaction with roadworks management is lowest. However, 66% were satisfied where they had seen roadworks on motorways, and 70% were satisfied with roadworks encountered on trunk roads.

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### Summary

Over recent years there has been an increase to 18% in the proportion of road users seeing roadworks on motorways. Of these, 69% were on routes where smart motorways are being installed.

Consequently, increased proportions reported:

- Seeing closed lanes (43%)
- Seeing narrowed lanes (57%)
- Speed restrictions (83%)
- Being delayed by roadworks (14%)

The main causes of dissatisfaction, especially those associated with smart motorways installation, were:

- Long stretches with speed restrictions
- Not seeing work in progress
- A lack of information as to why works were taking place

# 4.0 Last journey: roadworks

## 4.1 Seeing roadworks

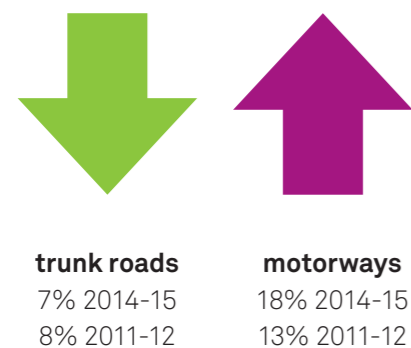
### Increasing proportion of motorway journeys include roadworks

There has been an increase in the proportion of road users who passed roadworks on their last journey over recent years. In 2011-12, 24% said they had encountered roadworks, rising to 30% in 2014-15. This includes 6% who saw them only on local roads, and 7% on trunk roads.

Roadworks were most likely to be encountered on motorways (18%), see Figure 4.1, especially those included in the smart motorways programme, which accounted for 69% of the motorways where roadworks were seen.

Consequently, increased proportions reported:

- seeing closed lanes (43%)
- seeing narrowed lanes (57%)
- speed restrictions (83%)
- being delayed by roadworks (14%)



► **Proportion of last journeys where roadworks were encountered** [Figure 4.1]

## 4.2 Satisfaction

### Fall in satisfaction with management of roadworks on motorways, but increase for trunk roads

Where roadworks were encountered on the SRN, satisfaction with the management of them on motorways has fallen to 66%, from 70% in 2011-12.

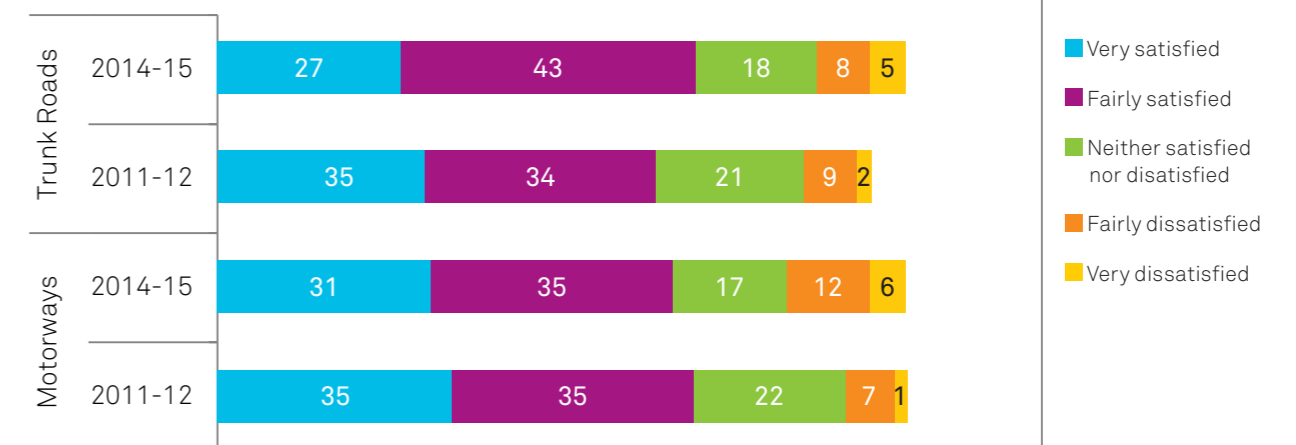
Satisfaction has increased for trunk roads, 70%. For each road type, there has been a decline in the very satisfied proportion, and an increase in the proportion who were very dissatisfied, as shown in Figure 4.2.

- Of those encountering roadworks:
- 44% had seen work in progress
  - 14% had been delayed by them, with an average delay of 23 minutes
  - 17% who passed roadworks on motorways were dissatisfied (20% where smart motorways were being installed)
  - 13% who passed roadworks on trunk roads were dissatisfied

Dissatisfaction arose from:

- Seeing no work in progress
- Seeing no signs explaining the roadworks
- Long mileage of roadworks with speed restrictions

Respondents whose most recent journey had been on a motorway where the smart motorways programme was being undertaken, were generally more dissatisfied. The quotes shown right present the feedback from road users who passed roadworks in connection with smart motorways.



► **Satisfaction with roadworks management, 2011-12 and 2014-15** [Figure 4.2]

“

Not much information and they went on too long a distance with a 50mph limit”


“

Haven't a clue what's going on, poorly managed. Communication zero”

“

There were no signs where I joined to say what is being done. No work taking place and the roadworks are going on for an excessive length along the motorway”

- Very satisfied
- Fairly satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Fairly dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied



**Over 90% of road users felt very safe or fairly safe on their last journey on the SRN.**

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## 5.0 Safety: feeling safe using the SRN

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The majority of respondents felt safe on their most recent journey on the network; 91% on motorways and 93% on trunk roads. However, the proportion of people feeling a bit or very unsafe has increased slightly over the last 4 years.

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### Summary

Poor weather conditions and other people's driving were the main causes of feeling unsafe, but other factors include being a nervous traveller, and aspects of the road layout and infrastructure.

Road users felt slightly less safe on motorways than on trunk roads. Poor driving was reported more frequently on motorways than on trunk roads.

Speeding was the most frequently mentioned type of poor driving, but it does not make people feel especially unsafe. Unpredictable behaviour such as sudden braking and being cut up by other drivers were most associated with road users feeling unsafe. Lower performance measure scores were given for those who witnessed any type of poor driving.

Women, older people and those with health issues making it difficult to travel felt least safe when travelling, regardless of the road conditions.

# 5.0 Safety: feeling safe using the SRN

Unpredictable behaviours such as sudden braking or being cut up by drivers had the greatest impact on feeling safe

- Very safe
- Fairly safe
- Neither safe/unsafe
- A bit unsafe
- Very unsafe

## 5.1 Safety

The highest rated aspect of the performance measure

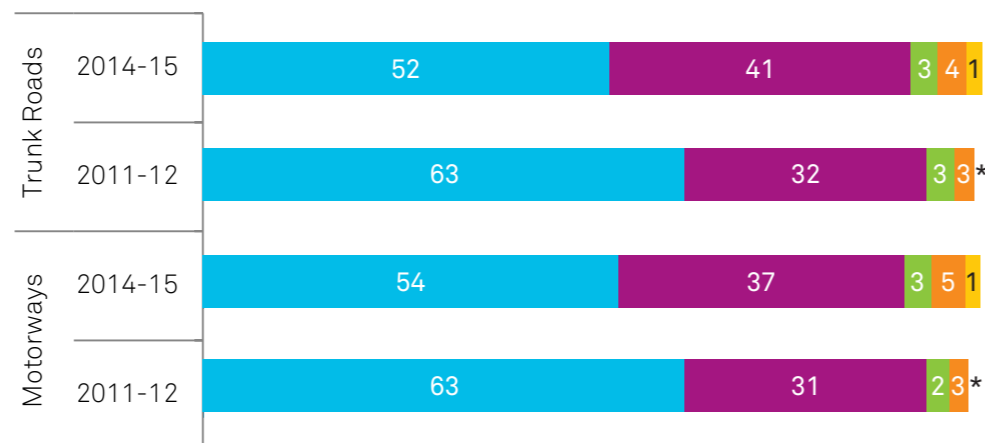
Over 90% of respondents felt safe on their most recent journey on the network. The proportion of people feeling a bit or very unsafe has increased slightly over the last four years to 6% on motorways and 5% on trunk roads. Reasons given for feeling unsafe included:

- the weather
- poor driving by other road users
- features of particular roads, for example, poor road surfaces, merging lanes, no central barrier

- the presence of HGVs
- volume of traffic

Some road users said they were nervous on the roads regardless of conditions, especially females, older people and those with health issues.

The proportions feeling very safe have reduced while those who feel fairly safe have increased over time, as shown in Figure 5.1



\* = >0, <0.5

► Feeling safe on SRN, 2011-12 and 2014-15 [Figure 5.1]

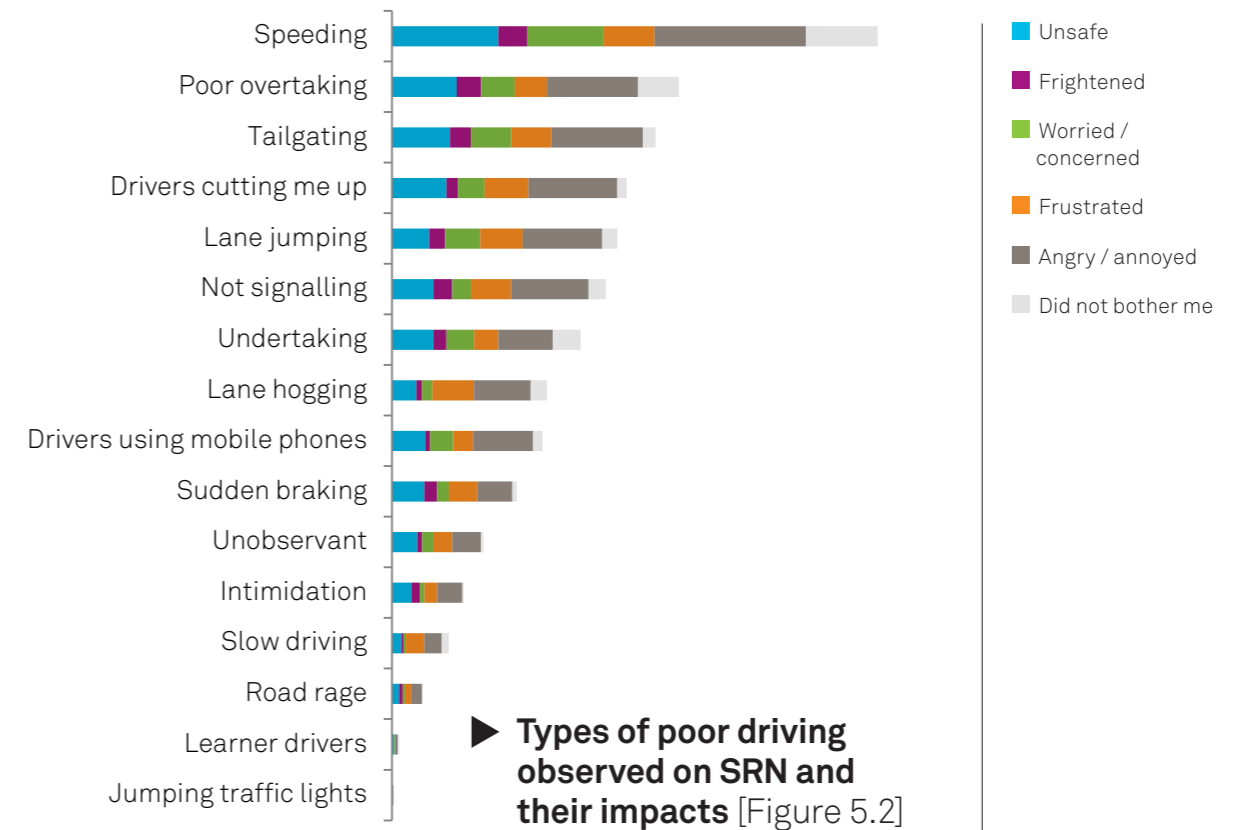
## 5.2 Poor driving

Noticed more on motorways than trunk roads

The proportion of road users who saw poor driving on the SRN decreased to 42% from 46% the previous year.

A higher proportion of those who used motorways on the last journey

experienced poor driving, 47% compared with just 39% who used just trunk roads. Over half (51%) of respondents experienced poor driving where both road types were used.



► Types of poor driving observed on SRN and their impacts [Figure 5.2]

While 16% of road users were not bothered by the poor driving they had seen, 43% felt angry or annoyed by it, and 25% felt unsafe because of it.

As many road users mentioned more than one type of poor driving, it is not possible to directly relate the impact to the type, but, as shown in Figure 5.2, there are some relationships.

The most prevalent type of poor driving, speeding did not bother 19% of those who saw it. Speeding angered 39%, and made 28% feel unsafe.

Just 38% of those who exceeded 70mph when driving themselves said they had seen speeding, compared with 45% of

those who drove at 70mph or below. Speeding caused a higher proportion of slower drivers to feel worried (26%) than faster drivers (10%).

Sudden braking caused 46% of road users to feel unsafe and 18% to feel frightened.

Slow driving caused 42% of road users to be frustrated, as did lane-hogging, 35%. Neither of these behaviours made people feel especially unsafe or concerned.

Whether or not they have seen poor driving, the average safety performance score was lower for females, for older people, and those with health issues that made it difficult to travel.

The most frequently mentioned poor driving behaviours were:

- Speeding: 43%
- Poor overtaking: 23%
- Tailgating: 18%



High levels of satisfaction with upkeep, especially for motorways.



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## 6.0 Satisfaction: upkeep and maintenance

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Satisfaction with upkeep and maintenance on motorways remained high, with 92% being satisfied in 2014-15. Satisfaction was lower for trunk road users, at 88%, falling since 2011-12 when it was 91%.

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### Summary

Litter is one cause of dissatisfaction; the proportion who were dissatisfied with upkeep was 2-3 times higher where litter was seen. Of those who noticed litter, 15% saw it on motorways and 16% on trunk roads on their most recent journey.

For trunk roads, the increase in dissatisfaction is only partially explained by an increase in the proportion of road users who saw litter; dissatisfaction also increased year on year where litter had not been seen. Other principal causes of dissatisfaction were potholes, poor surfaces, and maintenance of verges and vegetation.

# 6.0 Satisfaction: upkeep and maintenance

## 6.1 Satisfaction with upkeep and maintenance

Increased slightly since last year

High proportions were satisfied with upkeep; 92% on motorways and 88% on trunk roads, giving an overall performance measure of 90, a slight increase from 2013-14, but lower than 2011-12.

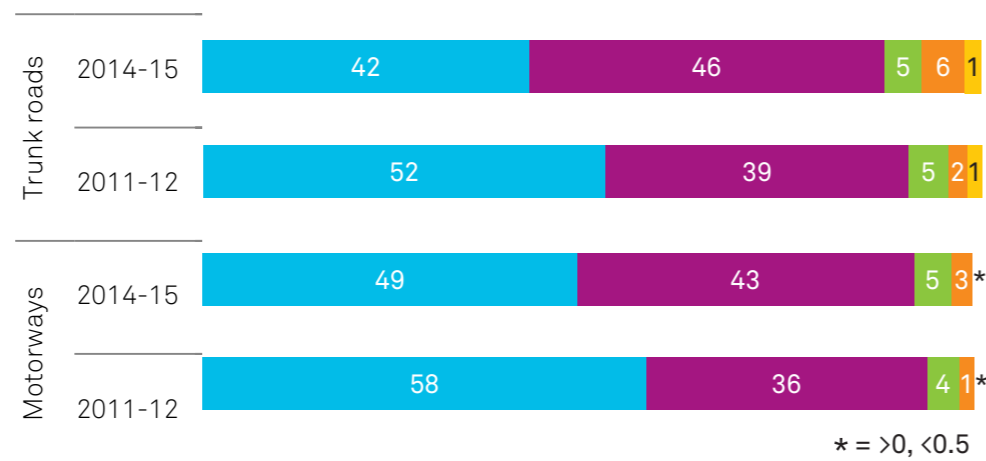
The proportion dissatisfied with trunk roads has increased significantly from 2011-12, from 3% to 7%, as shown in Figure 6.1.

It is possible that confusion between trunk roads and local roads may have contributed to the decline.

Causes of dissatisfaction include:

- potholes, and uneven surfaces
- roadside environment, including verges and vegetation
- road layout, for example needing more lanes

- Very satisfied
- Fairly satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Fairly dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied



► Satisfaction with general upkeep, 2011-12 and 2014-15 [Figure 6.1]

## 6.2 Litter

Increase in road users seeing litter

Fifteen percent noticed litter on motorways and 16% noticed litter on trunk roads. Ten percent of road users could not remember whether or not they had seen litter on their last journey on the SRN. The proportion noticing litter has increased significantly from 2011-2012, when just 8% noticed litter on motorways and 10% noticed litter on trunk roads.

When asked how they felt on seeing litter, around 1 in 10 were not bothered, 3% felt unsafe, and half were angered or irritated.

There were no significant differences by age group or mobility impairment, but there were some notable differences by gender and Socio Economic Group (SEG) in how seeing litter made road users feel, including:

- 14% of males were not bothered by seeing litter, compared with just 5% of females.
- 55% of females were angry about litter compared with 45% of males.
- 11% of those in SEG AB were worried or concerned by litter, significantly more than groups C1 and C2, who were more likely to be angry or irritated by it.

Excluding multi region trips, those travelling on the M25 were most likely to report seeing litter on trunk roads (22%), closely followed by the East region (21%). Similar proportions saw litter on the M25 and South East region's motorways (21%). Litter was seen less frequently during trips made on roads in the North East and North West.

↑ **15%**

Noticed litter on motorways (8%: 2011-12)

↑ **16%**

Noticed litter on trunk roads (10%: 2011-12)



**90% of motorway users satisfied with information provided.**

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## 7.0 Satisfaction: information provision

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Satisfaction with information provision fell slightly in 2014-15, although 90% of road users were satisfied with the information on their last motorway journey, as were 88% for the last trunk road trip.

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### Summary

Causes of dissatisfaction included areas where signs were not clear because of insufficient maintenance, for example obscured by dirt or overgrown vegetation.

There has been a decline in the perceived accuracy of VMS, and in their perceived usefulness. Road users liked to have VMS available, but where the messages seen bring unwelcome news, the effect on customer satisfaction is negative.

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## 7.0 Satisfaction: with information provision

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### 7.1 Satisfaction with information provision

Remains high for motorway journeys

Road users rated satisfaction with information provision on their most recent journey. For motorways, this included electronic VMS as well as static signs such as blue signs.

The overall performance measure has slightly declined year on year, although there have been consistently low levels of dissatisfaction with information provision over the last 4 years of NRUSS.

Comments from dissatisfied road users show the causes were varied, including:

- signs obscured by vegetation
- unable to see signs because of their position at the side of the road
- letters missing/generally dirty
- difficult to see due to poor lighting

### 7.2 VMS

Tends to increase satisfaction unless message is about delay

Seeing VMS significantly increased satisfaction; 93% of motorway users were satisfied with information provision where VMS were seen, compared with 87% where no VMS were seen.

Travel time VMS such as “6 minutes to next junction” and campaign type messages such as “Don’t drink and drive” have little or no effect on driving behaviour. This is to be expected as they provide information and don’t require immediate action. Two thirds slow down on seeing speed restrictions, as do around a third who see warnings of queues or congestion ahead.

Road users were satisfied with VMS where the messages were clear and unambiguous, but not all appreciated messages which gave warnings for parts of the network not relevant to their journey.

Some comments made by dissatisfied respondents were specifically about VMS and the types of message displayed or lack of information.

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“

I would have liked to have seen a sign telling me that my motorway exit was closed due to work on the slip road

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(M60)

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“

Should have been telling us why we were delayed as no obvious reason for the delay

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(M60)

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“

VMS are not updated quickly enough to be of much use

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(M5)

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“

They flash with 40mph when you’re at a standstill

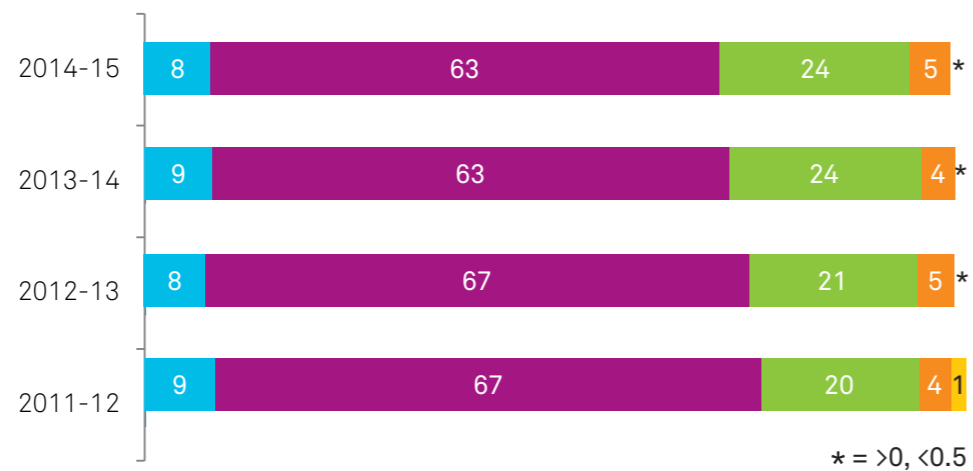
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(M56, M6)

Over half of road users, 57% felt VMS were helpful, similar to previous years. The most useful messages were warnings of accidents, queues and delays ahead.

As shown in Figure 7.1 there has been a decline in the perceived accuracy of VMS over time.

- Completely accurate
- Mostly accurate
- About equally accurate and inaccurate
- Mostly inaccurate
- Completely inaccurate



► **Perceptions of VMS accuracy by year** [Figure 7.1]

The types of information road users want are:

- How to avoid trapped traffic situations before it's too late
- Reasons for delay

### Earlier warning of delay:

“More information providing alternative routes in plenty of time to use the alternative like the exit before the problem”

“If they are telling you of roadworks or delays, they tell you too late and you are not able to change your route in time”

“They could let us know about delays ahead more...had I known about the delays on the motorway in advance I would have gone a different route”

“Have far more information about alternative routes much earlier”

### Reason for delay:


“Should have been telling us why we were delayed as no obvious reason for the delay”

“There could have been an electronic sign to tell us why there were delays”

“They didn't tell us why we were so delayed”

“Would have been nice to know what the delays on the motorway were caused by”

“It would have been nice to know what the problem was”



**Overall satisfaction:**  
As well as satisfaction with the last journey, road users are asked how satisfied they are overall with Highways England (Highways Agency at the time of the survey). The proportion satisfied has declined over recent years, although 82% remain satisfied and just 4% dissatisfied.

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## 8.0 General perceptions of Highways England and its services

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### Priorities for improvement

Road users are also asked what Highways England's priorities should be. Many (13%) felt unable to make suggestions for improvement, and 8% said no improvements were needed. A further 15% gave general positive feedback.

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“Keep doing what they are doing now”

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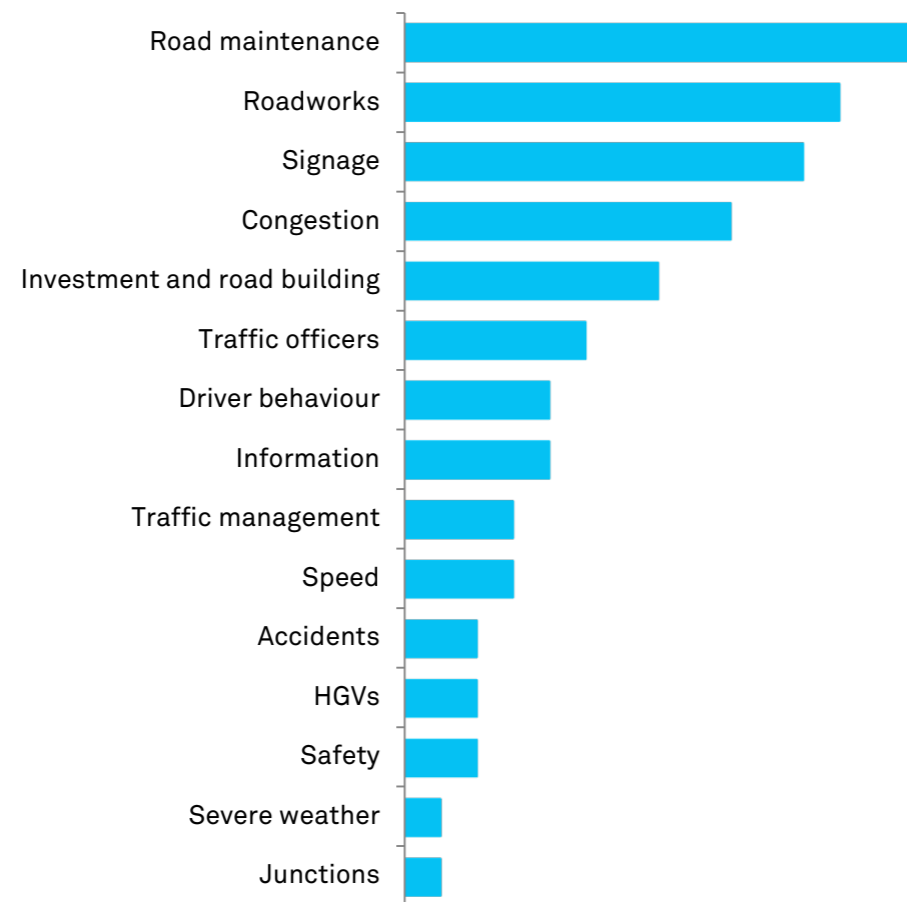
“The Highways Agency do a good job, I would like them to keep up the high standards”

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# 8.0 General perceptions of Highways England and its services

Suggested improvements covered a range of topics, including infrastructure, signage and information, and traffic management. Roadworks and congestion attracted an increased number of comments in 2014-15.

The topics mentioned are illustrated in Figure 8.1. Infrastructure, including road maintenance and investment accounted for around a fifth of comments:



► How could Highways England improve? [Figure 8.1]

“Stay on top of the potholes”

“Clear up big animals that have been killed on the main roads, it does not look nice and can be stressful for children seeing them”

The proportion of road users who mentioned congestion has doubled since 2011-12, reflecting increased volumes of traffic on the SRN.

Comments received indicate that participation in the NRUSS had widened awareness of the organisation’s roles and services. It should be noted that when referring to Highways England/ Agency, some people think only of traffic officers, and they fail to appreciate the wider role, or extent of services provided.

### Smart motorways

Perceptions of smart motorways have improved over time, with the positive aspects such as better reliability and fewer delays being increasingly recognised. In 2011-12 just 18% of road users thought smart motorways were an effective use of existing road space; but as they become more commonplace on the road network, this has increased to 34%.

### Traffic officers

Road users value traffic officers, even though they are only seen on around a fifth of journeys: 86% say they are very or fairly important.

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