

Road Conditions in England: 2013



Department for Transport



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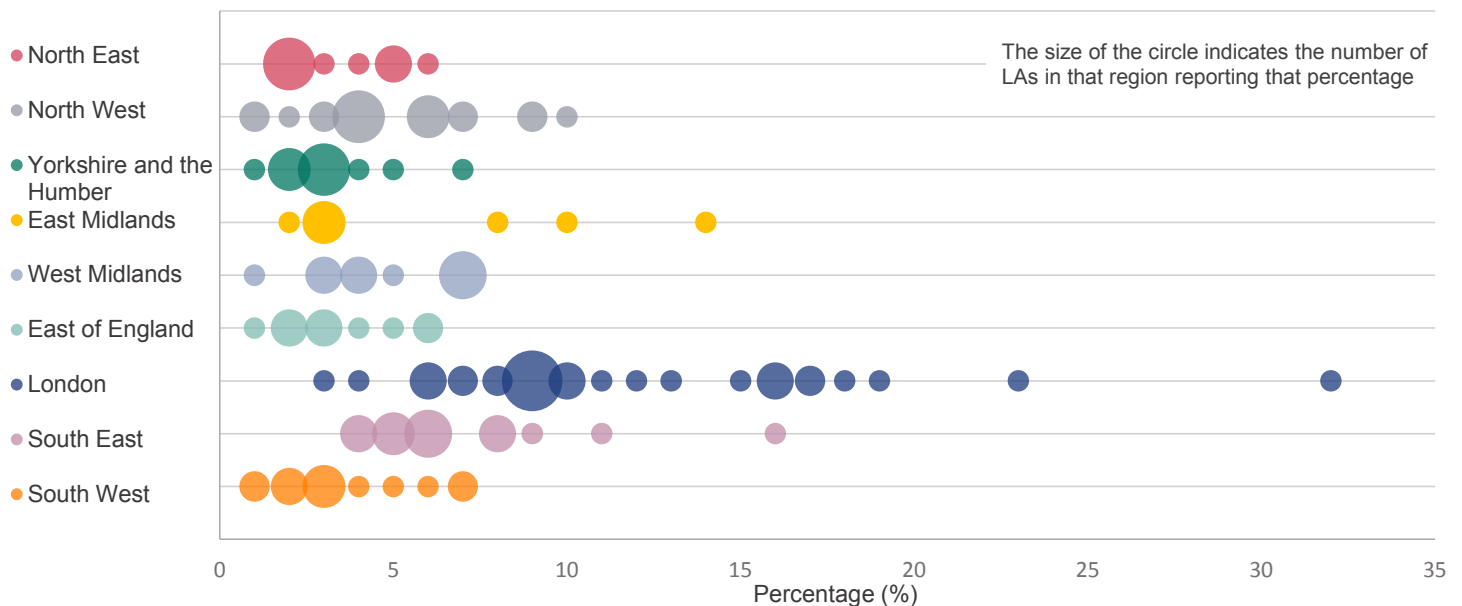
Main findings: 47% of local authorities reported the proportion of their principal road network where maintenance should be considered was lower in 2012/13 than 2011/12.

Of the 151 local authorities in England that were sent road condition surveys, usable data were received from all but five. This was the highest response rate in several years. Local authorities (LAs) across England who provided data for the appropriate years reported that:

- the proportion of the principal road network where maintenance should be considered was higher in 2012/13 than in 2011/12 for 30 per cent of local authorities, 23 per cent said it was the same, 47 percent said it was lower.
- an estimated 6.5 per cent of the principal road network in England received maintenance treatment in 2012/13; on minor roads (B, C and U roads) this figure was 4.0 per cent.

Percentage of principal road network where maintenance should be considered, by local authority grouped by region in England in 2012/13

Source: DfT, based on LA Single Data List returns



About this release

This annual release presents information on the condition of and expenditure on local authority roads and trunk roads in England covering the period April 2012 to March 2013. It also includes provisional revised local authority Surface Condition Assessment of the National Network of Roads (SCANNER) statistics covering the period from April 2009 to March 2011. The figures do not reflect the severe weather of winter 2013/2014 or additional funding announced in spring 2014.

Note: Figures from the main Road Condition Indicator (RCI) / Highways Condition Index (HCI) National Statistics series have not been included as headline findings in this publication as they are currently the subject of a development project within the Department for Transport. This follows the withdrawal of all previous figures in 2012. A new set of revised, provisional, RCI figures are included on page 4 of this release.

Further charts and detailed statistical tables can be accessed on line via the [road condition statistical series](#).

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Local authority managed roads where maintenance should be considered

The chart on the first page shows the distribution of local authorities' responses to the question "what percentage of your principal road network should have been considered for maintenance in 2012/13?", grouped by region.

In 2012/13, local authorities in London generally reported the highest percentages of their principal road networks where maintenance should be considered, including the five highest values. They also reported the widest range of values; 3 to 32 per cent.

In the East of England, the North East and Yorkshire and the Humber, smaller ranges of generally low values were reported.

Comparing 2012/13 to previous years, 47 per cent of local authorities said the proportion of their principal road network where maintenance should be considered was lower in 2012/13 than in 2011/12 and 23 per cent said it was the same. While 30 per cent of local authorities said the proportion was higher in 2012/13 than 2011/12, 46 per cent reported values higher than in 2007/08.

Comparing the proportion of the principal road network where maintenance should be considered to the proportion of the non-principal road network:

- 65 per cent of local authorities reported higher proportions for their non-principal road networks
- 21 per cent reported higher proportions on their principal networks
- 14 per cent reported the same values on their principal and non-principal road networks

It is estimated that maintenance should have been considered on 17 per cent of unclassified roads in England in 2012/13. This is the same as in 2011/12 and 2 percentage points higher than in 2007/08.

Sources of these statistics include local authority surveys and the Single Data List.

Principal and non-principal classified roads where maintenance should be considered [RDC0120](#)

Unclassified roads where maintenance should be considered [RDC0130](#), by Region [RDC0131](#)

Trunk roads where maintenance should be considered

The proportion of the surveyed trunk motorway network where maintenance should be considered was 2 per cent in 2013. On trunk 'A' roads the figure was 3 per cent.

This was lower than in 2012 (3% and 4%) and in 2004 (6% and 10%) on both trunk road networks.

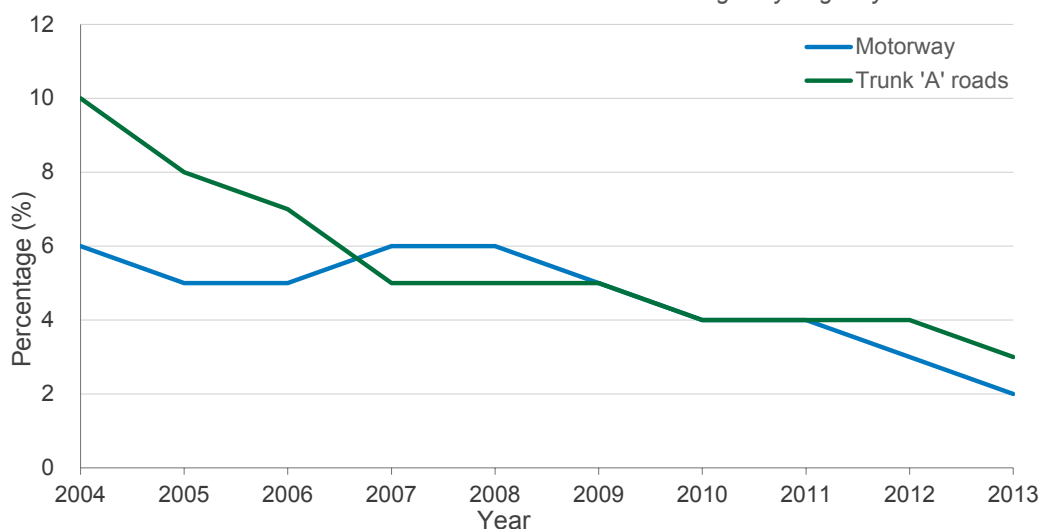
Trunk 'A' roads and motorways make up the Strategic Road Network (SRN). In 2012 the SRN...

made up **2.4%** road length carried **33%** road traffic

Strategic Road Network traffic [TRA41](#)

Percentage of road length surveyed requiring further investigation (lane 1), trunk roads in England 2004 - 2013

Source: Highways Agency TRACS data



These statistics are drawn from TRAFFIC-speed Conditions Surveys (TRACS) of the Highways Agency's network.

The Strategic Road Network is managed by the [Highways Agency](#). Surface condition of trunk roads [RDC0201](#)

Skidding Resistance

Skidding resistance is a measure of the road surface contribution to the frictional forces developed between a vehicle's tyres and the road when accelerating, braking or cornering. The results are presented as three year averages as it is common practice for authorities to survey their principal road network over two or three year cycles.

Over the period 2010/11 to 2012/13, figures from a sample of local authorities estimated 22 per cent of the principal road network in England required further investigation to check whether the level of skidding resistance was acceptable. This is a decrease from the 26 per cent observed in the previous three year period, 2007/08 to 2009/10. The proportion requiring further investigation in 2010/11 to 2012/13 decreased for all local authority types compared with 2007/08 to 2009/10, with London boroughs continuing to have the highest proportion (37%) of principal road requiring further investigation for skidding resistance.

The skidding resistance of trunk motorways and 'A' roads is assessed each year by the Highways Agency. In 2013 the proportion of the trunk motorway network requiring further investigation to assess its skidding resistance was 4 per cent, this is a decrease from 2012 but an increase from the 1 per cent observed in 2009. In 2013, 10 per cent of the trunk 'A' road network required further investigation. This was the same as in 2009.

Skidding resistance of trunk roads [RDC0210](#), Skidding resistance of principal roads [RDC0140](#).

Maintenance treatments on local authority managed roads

In 2012/13, 6.5 per cent of the principal road network across England received maintenance treatment. Over the same period 4.0 per cent of the minor road network (B, C and U roads) received maintenance treatment. The most common treatment used on both road types was surface dressing.

The amount of treatments being applied fluctuates each year and may be influenced by factors such as weather and funding¹.

Percentage of local authority managed roads receiving maintenance treatments in 2012/13

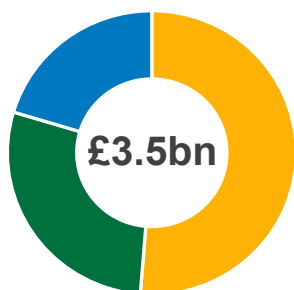
Source: DfT, based on Single Data List returns



Maintenance treatment by road class and type of treatment [RDC0320](#)

Maintenance Expenditure

In 2012/13, £3.5 billion was spent on the maintenance of roads in England, of this:



■ £1.8bn was spent on maintaining local authority minor roads

■ £1.0bn was spent on local authority 'A' roads and motorways

■ £0.7bn was spent on trunk motorways and trunk 'A' roads

Around 60 per cent of the amount spent on each road type was spent on structural treatments with the rest being spent on routine and other treatments.

Maintenance expenditure [RDC0310](#)

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/integrated-transport-block-funding>. Note: Recently announced funding is not reflected in this publication.

Road Condition Indicator

The Department has traditionally produced Road Condition Indicator (RCI) and associated Highways Condition Index (HCI) figures for classified local authority roads in England, in addition to figures requested from local authorities via the Single Data List. This is to provide greater detail on the condition of locally-managed roads without placing further burden on the authorities themselves. These are produced independently by the Department, but make use of the same source data collected by authorities.

The Department's RCI and HCI figures were temporarily withdrawn due to the identification of an error in 2012. This error affected data for the period 2006/07 to 2010/11 inclusive. Please see our website for further details: [Update 31st July 2012](#).

Following the correction of the error we have produced revised provisional RCI values for the years 2009/10 and 2010/11. We have not reintroduced RCI for 2006-07 to 2008-09 inclusive and HCI.

The revised RCI figures are "provisional National Statistics" due to the important role that the sector can provide in completing quality assurance. Although the Department has full confidence that previously experienced problems have been rectified, it recognises that confidence from local authorities of these figures is crucial towards ensuring the figures are widely accepted as accurate. For that reason, parties who wish to comment on the validity of these figures are requested to provide feedback via the process outlined in the Background Information section on page 5. The Department plans to review this feedback and use it to inform ongoing work to further improve the robustness of these figures, with an aim to reinstate a set of final figures at a later date.

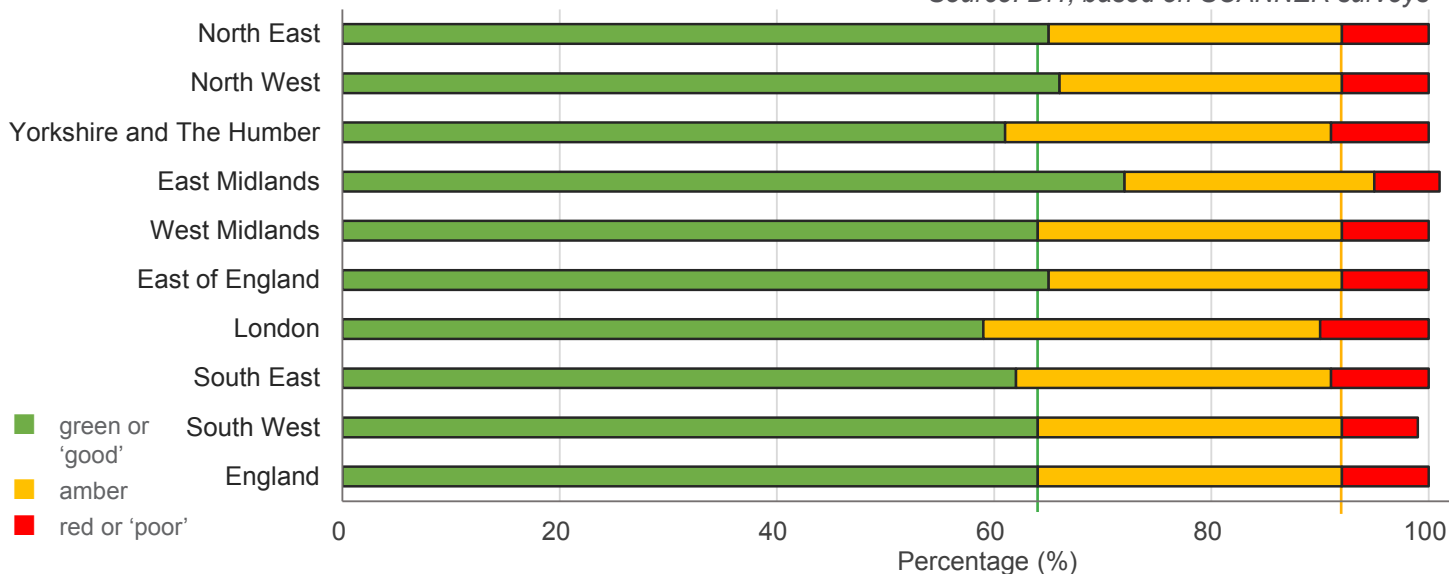
Provisional revised figures for 2009/10 and 2010/11

The Road Condition Indicator (RCI) scores give an indication of the condition of the road surface. They are grouped into 'green' or 'good' where the road requires no work, 'amber' where the road may need some work soon and 'red' or 'poor' where work may be required immediately.

In 2010-11, 64 per cent of the local authority managed classified road network in England was 'green', 28 per cent was 'amber' and 8 per cent was 'red'. In 2009-10 these figures were the same at a national level but fluctuated slightly at local authority and regional level. In both years, a higher proportion of urban classified roads were considered 'green' than rural classified roads.

RCI scores for surveyed classified roads, by region in England 2010/11

Source: DfT, based on SCANNER surveys



Figures may not sum to 100% due to rounding

[Road Condition Indicator scores by road class in England RDC0102](#)

[Road Condition Indicator scores by region in England RDC0104](#)

[Road Condition Indicator scores by local authority in England RDC0107](#)

Users should note that although the RCI/HCI use the same base data as the Single Data List items used in table RDC0120, there are some small differences which would produce different results. The Single Data List items draw on surveys from multiple years, if necessary, to cover as large a proportion of the network as possible. RCI calculations are carried out using just the data surveyed during the relevant year. The Single Data List items report the proportion of the network where maintenance should be considered. The RCI provides an indication of the proportion of the network that is in good condition.

Further information can be found within the [Technical note](#).

Background Information

Request for feedback

We are always keen to receive comments from users of transport statistics and would like to hear the views of users on a number of aspects of this publication. To assist with collecting these views we have set-up a survey for users to complete which can be accessed [here](#).

For any other comments or questions, please contact us using the details on the first page of this release.

Technical information

Further information about road conditions data and surveys can be found in the road condition statistics guide, notes and definitions and the technical note which can all be found on the Road Condition Statistics webpage <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/road-network-size-and-condition-statistics-guidance>.

All the statistics related to this statistical release can be found in tables in the road condition statistics series <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/road-network-size-and-condition>.

Details of ministers and officials who receive pre-release access to these statistics up to 24 hours before release can be found in the pre-release access list <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/road-network-size-and-condition-statistics-pre-release-access-list>.

Further data on road expenditure and on road construction can be found in tables TSGB0717 to TSGB0720. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/tsgb07>.

DfT also publishes statistics on road traffic <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/road-traffic-statistics> and road length <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/road-network-size-and-condition>.

Further information on the Single Data List can be found on gov.uk here <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/single-data-list>.

National Statistics

National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure they meet customer needs.

Strengths and weaknesses of the data

Figures in this publication come from a wide range of sources. Consequently the accuracy of figures will vary between tables. Users are recommended to refer to separately published guidance for more detail on how information for each table was collected: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/road-network-size-and-condition-statistics-guidance>

Users should note that a range of factors will influence trends in road condition and expenditure on maintenance. These include the age of road assets, weather and funding, in addition to decision making at both local and central government levels.

Next update

The next update, Road Conditions in England: 2014, and accompanying tables are due to be published in 2015.