

Our ref: CRS 710,112

Your ref:

NDD - Directorate Services Team
Manager
9th Floor
The Cube
199 Wharfside Street
Birmingham B1 1RN

04 September 2014

Dear

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request email of 06 August 2014 requesting information on potholes. I am writing to confirm that we have now completed our search for the information.

In your request you asked the following questions:

How much have you spent on resurfacing and fixing pot-holed roads in 2012, 2013 and 2014 so far (split by year).

Has the Highways Agency cut its budget for maintaining roads to 'emergency-only' levels this year? Please answer yes or no.

How many claims for compensation were lodged by drivers as a result of damage to their car due to the poor state of the roads in 2012, 2013 and 2014 so far (split by year);

The total amount the Highways Agency has paid out to drivers in compensation due to the poor state of the roads in 2012, 2013 and 2014 so far (split by year);

The road name which is the worst for pothole damage i.e. it has damaged more cars than any other road in the area – and how many cars this road has damaged and over what period (in weeks);

Would you say the Highways Agency has temporarily fixed potholes rather than relaying road surfaces? Please answer yes or no;

How often the average road in your council area is fully re-surfaced (in years).

Taking each question in turn:

How much have you spent on resurfacing and fixing pot-holed roads in 2012, 2013 and 2014 so far (split by year):

In our response to your previous request, dated 15 July 2013, we explained that the Highways Agency's maintenance contracts are structured so that service providers are paid a 'lump sum' for a wide range of general maintenance duties, including among other activities: general repairs, sweeping, cleaning duties and repairing potholes. These activities are performed on both a routine and ad-hoc basis to meet contractual requirements. The Agency does not disaggregate its budget and spend on these types of activities and so exact maintenance costs cannot be extracted.

We have now updated the required financial information:

The total Highways Agency maintenance expenditure for each financial year ending March 31 is as follows:-

2011/12	£809m
2012/13	£708m
2013/14	£792m

These figures are from the Agency's audited accounts.

The accounts for 2014/15 are not yet available and have not undergone audit. Therefore, there is no further figure to provide for 2014.

This maintenance expenditure covers motorway and trunk road repairs and renewals. Please note that we report our financial data only by financial year and not by calendar year.

Has the Highways Agency cut its budget for maintaining roads to 'emergency-only' levels this year? Please answer yes or no:

No. The planned expenditure is more than the previous year.

How many claims for compensation were lodged by drivers as a result of damage to their car due to the poor state of the roads in 2012, 2013 and 2014 so far (split by year):

2012	- 362
2013	- 783
2014 (up to and including 20 August 2014)	- 559

The total amount the Highways Agency has paid out to drivers in compensation due to the poor state of the roads in 2012, 2013 and 2014 so far (split by year):

2012	- £14,658
2013	- £63,508
2014 (to date)	- £32,975

The road name which is the worst for pothole damage i.e. it has damaged more cars than any other road in the area – and how many cars this road has damaged and over what period (in weeks):

The M6 generated most claims over the period. There were 210 in total, 67 of those coming in the winter months (Jan-March) of 2013.

Would you say the Highways Agency has temporarily fixed potholes rather than relaying road surfaces? Please answer yes or no:

No, we relay (meaning we ask for it to be fixed permanently). It is, however, recognised that this will not always be operationally possible where there is an immediate need to address a safety risk under the terms of the relevant service provision requirements. In such cases it is permissible to carry out a temporary fix to mitigate the immediate hazard and ensure that there is no risk to road users. . A repair complying with the Specification for Highway Works (SHW) should be effected as soon as possible after the installation of the make safe repair.

How often the average road in your council area is fully re-surfaced (in years):

The Highways Agency manages and operates England's motorways and major A roads and is not responsible for smaller roads which are managed by individual councils. Resurfacing frequency is dependent on a number of factors, such as the overall wear caused by traffic, the type of surfacing material, the adequacy of the skid resistance provided by the road surface and so forth. We regularly monitor the road surface and the overall structural condition of the road to identify the maintenance programme for the trunk road network. Resurfacing is guided by the Agency's design and maintenance standards plus the monitored road condition. The standards cover road asset investigation and intervention requirements. While there is no precisely defined frequency for the replacement of the road surface, in July 2013 the government made a commitment to resurface 80% of the strategic road network by 2021. .

In keeping with the spirit and effect of the legislation, all information is assumed to be releasable to the public unless exempt. We may therefore be publishing the information you requested, together with any related information that will provide a key to its wider context, via our website: <http://www.highways.gov.uk/>

If you are unhappy with the way we have handled your request you may ask for an internal review. Our internal review process is available at: <http://www.highways.gov.uk/foicomplaints>

If you require a print copy, please phone the Highways Agency Information Line on 0300 123 5000; or e-mail ha_info@highways.gsi.gov.uk . You should contact me if you wish to complain.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

If you have any queries about this email, please contact me. Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

Yours sincerely

Email: ndd_c_dst@highways.gsi.gov.uk