

Our ref: FOI 752,007

Your ref:

Operations Directorate Services Team  
Manager  
10th Floor  
The Cube  
199 Wharfside Street  
Birmingham B1 1RN

04 July 2017

Dear

Thank you for your Freedom of Information (FOI) request dated 31 May asking for data relating to potholes.

In your email you asked for the following information:

*Could you please provide the following information under the Freedom of Information Act:*

- 1. The number of potholes reported within your local authority area in 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 (to date), broken down by year.*
- 2. The minimum depth and width (in inches or cm) a reported pothole must be in order to be recorded as a pothole by your local authority.*
- 3. The number of potholes repaired within your local authority area in 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 (to date), broken down by year.*
- 4. The amount of money the local authority has spent on repairing potholes within your local authority area in 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 (to date), broken down by year.*
- 5. The amount of money the local authority has spent in 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 (to date), broken down by year, on paying compensation to claimants where vehicle damage was caused by potholes/damaged road surfaces.*

*If restricted by time constraints, please answer the questions in order of priority eg 1, 2, 3.*

I can confirm that we do hold the information. Under Section 21 of the Act, we are not required to provide information, which is already reasonably accessible to you. Part of the information that you have requested was provided by Highways England on 15 September 2015: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/potholes>

You ask for local authority data. We are only responsible for operating, maintaining and improving England's strategic road network which comprises approximately 4,300 miles of motorways and all-purpose trunk roads. The motorways and major roads in England that are managed by us can be viewed on our network management map: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/roads-managed-by-the-highways-agency>

Other public roads in England are managed by local authorities. Roads in Scotland are managed by Transport Scotland <http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk/> and in Wales by the Welsh Government: <http://gov.wales/?skip=1&lang=en>

Taking each of your questions in turn:

**1. The number of potholes reported within your local authority area in 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 (to date), broken down by year.**

The number of potholes recorded on our network by our Traffic Officer Service is as follows:

01/01/14 to 31/12/14 - 6,021

01/01/15 to 31/12/15 - 5,478

01/01/16 to 03/09/16 - 4,804

We are unable to provide any centralised data after 03/09/16 due to a technical issue with the database. This will hopefully be rectified within the next few months.

**2. The minimum depth and width (in inches or cm) a reported pothole must be in order to be recorded as a pothole by your local authority.**

Please see previous published response in relation to the guidance on pothole depth and width.

Generally we work to a category or type of defect. Defects which require prompt attention, because they represent an immediate or imminent hazard or because there is a risk of short term structural deterioration, are rectified within 24 hours (category 1) or 28 days, provided a temporary repair has been already instigated. All other defects are repaired within a planned programme of works.

**3. The number of potholes repaired within your local authority area in 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 (to date), broken down by year.**

2014 - 13420

2015 - 18385

2016 - 17414

2017 - 6800

**4. The amount of money the local authority has spent on repairing potholes within your local authority area in 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 (to date), broken down by year.**

Please see previous published response.

Our 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. We do not disaggregate the budget and spend on these types of activities and so exact maintenance costs cannot be extracted.

Total maintenance expenditure for 2015/16 and 2016/17 financial year is as follows:-

15/16 - £955m

16/17 - £896m (subject to final audit of 2017/18 Accounts)

**5. The amount of money the local authority has spent in 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 (to date), broken down by year, on paying compensation to claimants where vehicle damage was caused by potholes/damaged road surfaces.**

Please see previous published response.

The total paid out for successful claims in relation to vehicle damage due to potholes for the 2015/16 and 2016/17 financial year, ending March 31, is as follows:-

<b>Tax Year</b>	<b>Total (£) paid out</b>
2015/16	59,248
2016/17	38,754
2017 to date	24,963

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:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/highways-england/about/complaints-procedure>

If you require a print copy, please phone the Information Line on 0300 123 5000; or e-mail [info@highwaysengland.co.uk](mailto:info@highwaysengland.co.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 letter, please contact me. Please remember to quote reference number 752,007 in any future communications.

Yours sincerely

Email: [Ops\\_dst@highwaysengland.co.uk](mailto:Ops_dst@highwaysengland.co.uk)