

Our ref: FOI 101403
Your ref:

National Correspondence Team
Operations - Directorate Services Team
The Cube
199 Wharfside Street
Birmingham B1 1RN

6 October 2020

Dear

Request for information - Pothole data

I am writing to confirm that we have now completed our search for the information, which you requested on 8 September 2020.

In your request you asked for the following information:

Idea overview: How much has time/money has been spent on fixing potholes across the UK:

- 1. How many reports of potholes or road surface defects were made by members of the public in the tax years 2018/2019, 2019/2020 and 2020/21 (to date)? (Please specify if the data is for potholes only or all road surface defects)*
- 2. What was the average time (calendar days) to repair reported potholes in the aforementioned years (tax years 2018/2019, 2019/2020 and 2020/21 (to date)?)*
- 3. How much (£) have you spent on resurfacing and fixing potholed roads over the past three years? Please can you provide a figure for each tax year: 2018/2019, 2019/2020 and 2020/21.*
- 4. How many potholes do you currently have on record? Please provide a figure broken down by road if possible.*
- 5. 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 over the past three years? Please can you provide a figure for each tax year: 2018/2019, 2019/2020 and 2020/21.*
- 6. How much (£) have you paid out to drivers in compensation due to the poor state of the roads over the past three years? Please can you provide a figure for each tax year: 2018/2019, 2019/2020 and 2020/21.*
- 7. Please confirm the minimum size/amount of damage for it to be counted as a pothole.*

By way of background, we manage and maintain the motorways and major trunk roads in England. Other public roads in England are managed by local authorities. Please see our network management map, that shows the roads for which we are responsible for: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/roads-managed-by-highways-england>

Taking each of your points in order:

1. *How many reports of potholes or road surface defects were made by members of the public in the tax years 2018/2019, 2019/2020 and 2020/21 (to date)? (Please specify if the data is for potholes only or all road surface defects)*

Customer contact data is available from 6 October 2019, when we introduced a new customer relationship management database.

The data below, includes all customer contact that has been recorded under the subject header of 'Potholes/poor road surface' from 6 October 2019. Therefore, this data includes reports of all road surface defects, some of which may be duplicate reports of the same defect:

Year	Customer contacts
6 October 2019 to 31 March 2020	2667
1 April 2020 to 29 September 2020	935

2. *What was the average time (calendar days) to repair reported potholes in the aforementioned years (tax years 2018/2019, 2019/2020 and 2020/21 (to date))?*

By way of background, once a surface defect has been identified, they are categorised, and we aim to fill the most serious ones (i.e. safety related defects) within 24 hours. These are known as category 1 defects.

Based on the available data, the average time taken to repair a category 1 pothole for the financial years 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21 (to date), was one day (i.e. 24 hours).

3. *How much (£) have you spent on resurfacing and fixing potholed roads over the past three years? Please can you provide a figure for each tax year:2018/2019, 2019/2020 and 2020/21.*

We do not collect the specific cost of the resurfacing elements for our maintenance work, as this is included alongside other renewal of the road asset activity, such as drainage, lighting and barrier renewal.

In terms of pothole repair costs, we are unable to separate out these repair costs due to the nature of our contracts. Our maintenance contracts are structured so that a "lump sum" is used for a wide range of general maintenance duties, including pothole repairs. These activities are performed on both a routine and ad-hoc basis, to meet contractual requirements.

4. *How many potholes do you currently have on record? Please provide a figure broken down by road if possible.*

Please see **Annex 1** below. This data is not held centrally and has been collated from records produced by our service providers, where the information is held, or is available.

This data will include records of potholes that were logged as awaiting an initial repair (category 1), at the time of reporting, and those that are awaiting the permanent repair which should be completed within 28 days, dependant on weather conditions.

The data in the annex is, therefore, a snap shot of pothole data, captured at specific point in time. The data would only be relevant for one day, as it contains category 1 pothole data, which are largely resolved either on the same day, or the following day.

5. *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 over the past three years? Please can you provide a figure for each tax year: 2018/2019, 2019/2020 and 2020/21.*
6. *How much (£) have you paid out to drivers in compensation due to the poor state of the roads over the past three years? Please can you provide a figure for each tax year: 2018/2019, 2019/2020 and 2020/21.*

Please see table below:

Year	Claims received	Claims paid	Total cost
1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019	1710	1406	£420,066
1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020	1289	326	£138,802
1 April 2020 to 31 August 2020	281	408	£114,692

Due to a particularly harsh winter during the financial year ending in March 2018, we received and processed many of the resultant claims in the 2018/19 financial year.

7. *Please confirm the minimum size/amount of damage for it to be counted as a pothole.*

Potholes, that are classified as safety related defects (known as category 1 defects), are generally wider than 15 cm (6 inches) diameter, or deeper than 4cm (1.5 inches) or the road surface thickness.

If you are unhappy with the way we have handled your request, you may ask for an internal review within 2 months of the date of this response for Freedom of Information requests and within 40 days for Environmental Information Regulations requests.

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. 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 FOI 101403 in any future communications.

Yours sincerely

National Correspondence Team

Manager Email:

Ops_dst@highwaysengland.co.uk

Annex 1

A1	14
A1(M)	9
A1033	1
A11	4
A12	2
A120	5
A14	18
A162	1
A180	2
A21	1
A30	5
A303	10
A36	4
A38	1
A40	5
A421	6
A428	4
A47	18
A5	1
A5036	5
A57	1
A595	1
A628	4
A63	3
A64	1
A663	1
M1	19
M11	2
M18	6
M180	6
M4	12
M5	11
M58	1
M6	7
M602	1
M62	14
M621	2
M67	1