

Our ref: FOI 100713 Your
ref:

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

01 April 2020

Dear

Request for information - potholes

I am writing to confirm that we have now completed our search for the information, which you requested on 10 January 2020, relating to potholes on our network.

In your request you asked for the following information and I will answer your questions in turn:

For the purpose of these questions, please consider all references to a “pothole” to be defined as any physical defect in the surface of the road which potentially poses a hazard to road users, such as potholes, sunken manhole covers, cracks in the tarmac or any other defect.

- 1. How many potholes were reported to Highways England in each of the past five years for which data is available?*

The number of surface defects that have been reported to Highways England, over the past five years, is as follows:

Year	Number of Incidents
2015	5,561
2016	6,178
2017	10,760
2018	17,855
2019	13,677

- 2. How many of those potholes reported to Highways England, in each of the past five years for which data is available, failed to meet the required intervention criteria, as set by Highways England, due to insufficient depth, width or other*

factor? Please provide answers for each year individually. If it is not possible to provide data for the past five years for which data is available, please provide it for the last full year for which data is available.

All reported surface defects, no matter what their size, are logged and will be assessed and repaired to a timescale, dependant on their safety implications.

3. Does Highways England set target repair times depending on the seriousness of an identified pothole/defect?

Under Section 21 of the Act, we are not required to provide information, which is already reasonably accessible to you. Our processes for the identification and the rectifying of potholes is available via:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/847450/FOI_100442_Redacted.pdf

4. How many potholes/defects were repaired by Highways England in each of the past five years for which data is available?

Our network is divided into a number of maintenance areas; pothole/defect repairs are undertaken by our contractors. Full details of our maintenance areas and their contractors, can be accessed via our network management map:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/roads-managed-by-highways-england>

The requested data can only be provided from the start date for each of the current maintenance area contracts, and can only be provided where the data exists.

The number of recorded potholes/defects repaired, over the past five years, is below:

Year	Number of defects repaired
2015	12,688
2016	14,123
2017	19,325
2018	26,747
2019	18,139

Please note, there may be multiple records for a 'defect' included in our database records and therefore, will be included in the above figures. These may represent the complete repair of a defect; the initial work to mitigate any risk the defect presents, followed by the scheduled, permanent repair.

5. *Of those potholes repaired, how many were repaired within Highways England's set target time, for each of the past five years for which data is available? Please provide answers for each year individually. If it is not possible to provide data for the past five years for which data is available, please provide it for the last full year for which data is available.*

This information is not held. For some maintenance teams, where data was held and provided for the 'Number of defects repaired', the corresponding data for the 'Number of defects repaired within set timescales' was not held. Therefore, we are unable to provide data that represents a complete, or comparable record.

6. *How many miles of highway is Highways England responsible for maintaining?*

The total route length of our network is 6,937 kilometres or 4,310 miles.

7. *How many full-time equivalent staff does Highways England currently employ to inspect its highway network to identify and classify highway defects or potential highway defects?*

8. *How many full-time equivalent staff did Highways England directly employ to inspect its highway network to identify and classify highway defects on the 1st of January for each of the past four years (1/1/2016, 1/1/2017, 1/1/2018, 1/1/2019) Please provide answers for each year individually. If it is not possible to provide data for the past four years for which data is available, please provide it for the last full year for which data is available.*

In response to my email dated 5 February 2020, asking for clarification on the above questions, you advised, on 3 March 2020, "Please disregard this question and answer the other questions where possible."

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/complaintsprocedure> 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 100713 in any future communications.

Yours sincerely

National Correspondence Team Manager

Email: Ops_dst@highwaysengland.co.uk