



Cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians:

measuring satisfaction with journeys
on Highways England's network in
the North West and East Midlands
October 2018

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Foreword

Cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians: measuring satisfaction with journeys on Highways England's network in the North West and East Midlands presents the first findings of a new and innovative survey that builds a picture of the experience these users have when travelling along or crossing strategic roads, and will track improvements over time.

In January 2018 Transport Focus published *Cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians: measuring their satisfaction with Highways England's network*. That research aimed to assess the significance that aspects of the journey experience have for these users. It also explored the feasibility of undertaking research to measure how satisfied they are with that part of their journeys made on, alongside, or across England's motorways and major 'A' roads.

While Highways England has started to enhance the network for these users, that research concluded that many parts suffer from unsuitable design and poor maintenance with significant impact on the experience of cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians who use it.

The research also found that a significant proportion of these road users make journeys on, alongside, or across motorways and major 'A' roads; making a measure of satisfaction, at a local level, practical. Transport Focus has therefore developed and piloted a new survey that provides a quantitative measure of satisfaction among cyclists and pedestrians, supplemented by qualitative findings among these users, as well as equestrians.

This document presents findings of the new survey, which was carried out first in the North West of England and the East Midlands. The North West was chosen as it has several motorways near urban areas, while in contrast, the East Midlands has more major 'A' roads in rural areas. There are several common themes including safety, signage and the maintenance of road and walking surfaces. The research has generated a rich understanding of both generic and specific issues in the areas concerned.

Transport Focus will use the findings to press Highways England to improve the service it provides to cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians. We recognise that to do this Highways England may need to work in partnership with others, such as local authorities. Transport Focus intends to carry out similar research in other areas of England as funding permits, and we hope the new survey will become one of the 'reported metrics' used to monitor Highways England's performance from 2020 onwards.

Anthony Smith
Chief Executive

Summary

Transport Focus research in the North West of England and the East Midlands, presented here, confirms that signage, unsuitable design and poor maintenance all have a significant impact on the experience of cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians.

The research also shows that it is possible to assess user satisfaction of cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians when their journey involves crossing or using a motorway or major 'A' road maintained by Highways England. It gives a clear quantitative measure of satisfaction among cyclists and pedestrians. This measure is intended to become a 'reported metric' within the performance regime set for Highways England from 2020. Alongside this the survey provides qualitative information about generic and specific issues that affect equestrians, pedestrians and cyclists.



Key findings

More than three-quarters of cyclists and pedestrians in each of the areas covered by this research are satisfied with that part of their journey made on, alongside, or across the Highways England network of motorways and major 'A' roads. In part they are satisfied by the sheer pleasure of being outside.

Although satisfaction is relatively high, cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians are keen to provide suggestions about how Highways England's roads can be improved to make the experience better still. Our research in this area has consistently shown that feelings of safety and personal security affect the overall level of satisfaction felt by these road users. It can be no surprise to find that improving the features that make cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians

feel safer and more secure are commonly mentioned as desirable improvements.

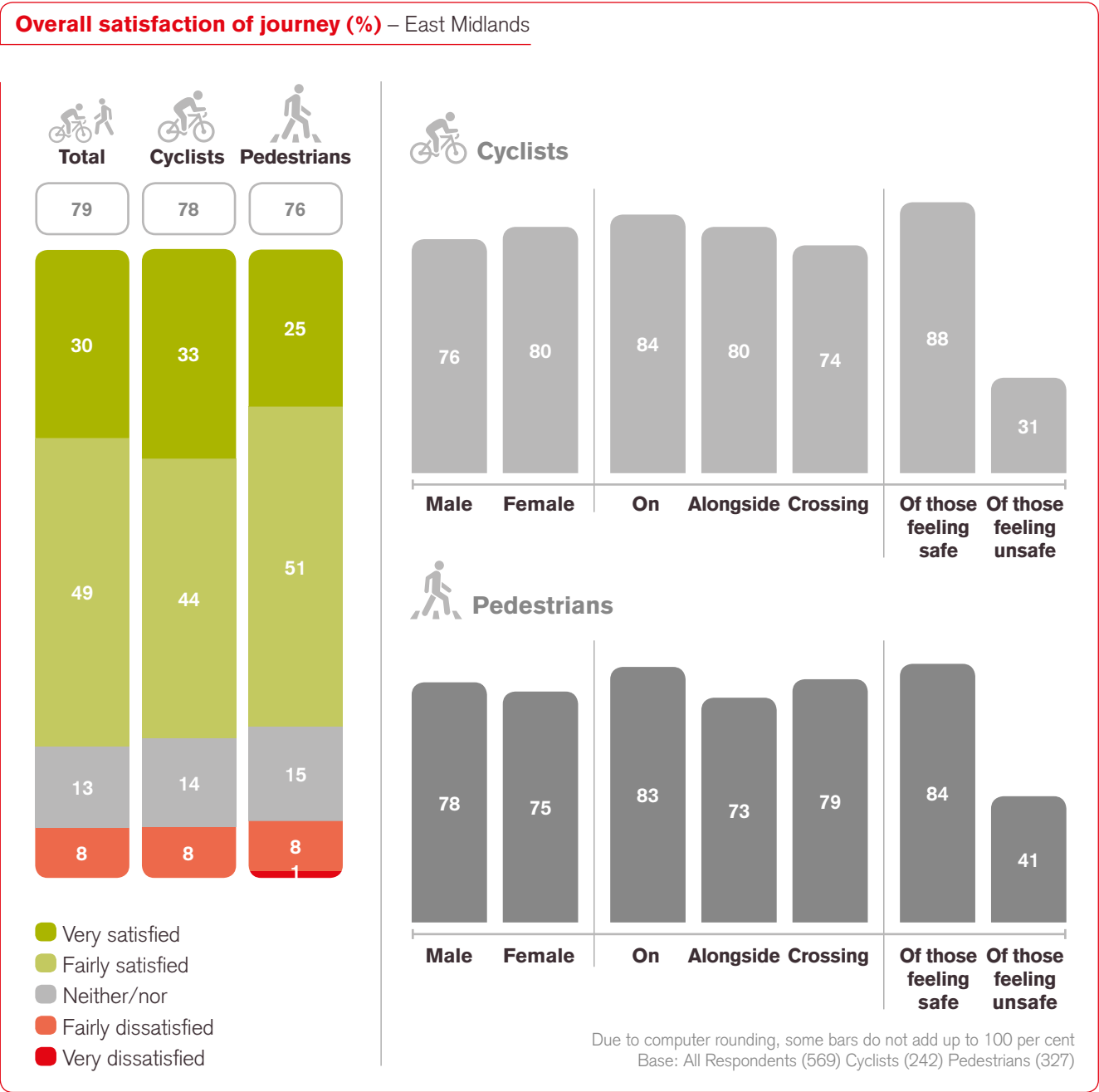
In terms of improvements, cyclists and pedestrians both mention the need to ensure that dedicated paths on or alongside Highways England roads are provided so that fast-moving traffic can be kept at a safe distance. The experience of those crossing roads on bridges is cited as an issue by pedestrians and equestrians who suggest that the provision of higher barriers would improve feelings of (and perhaps actual) safety.

Again, for reasons related both to safety and to personal security, pedestrians and cyclists also mention that the quality of lighting should be improved on footpaths alongside Highways England roads or in underpasses beneath them. The quality of the surface on the path or road is also mentioned, along with the suitability and availability of road-level crossing points; an improvement also often mentioned by equestrians.

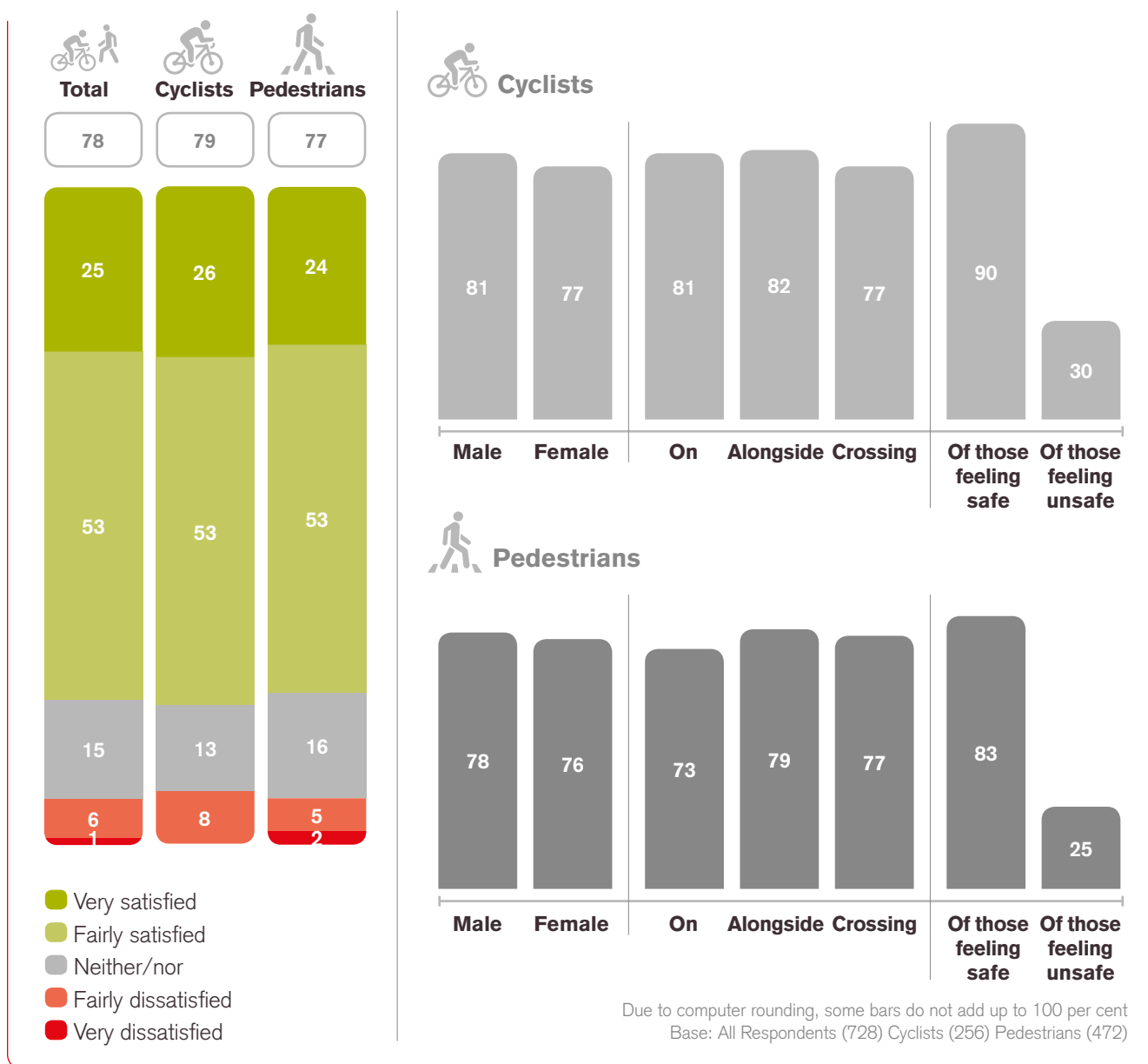
Overall satisfaction

Among cyclists and pedestrians, satisfaction with that part of the journey using the Highways England network is relatively high. 78 per cent of cyclists and 76 per cent of pedestrians using it in the East Midlands say that they are satisfied, as do 79 per cent of cyclists and 77 per

cent of pedestrians using it in the North West. In each case, those who report that they feel safe during this part of the journey are significantly more likely than others to say that they are satisfied.



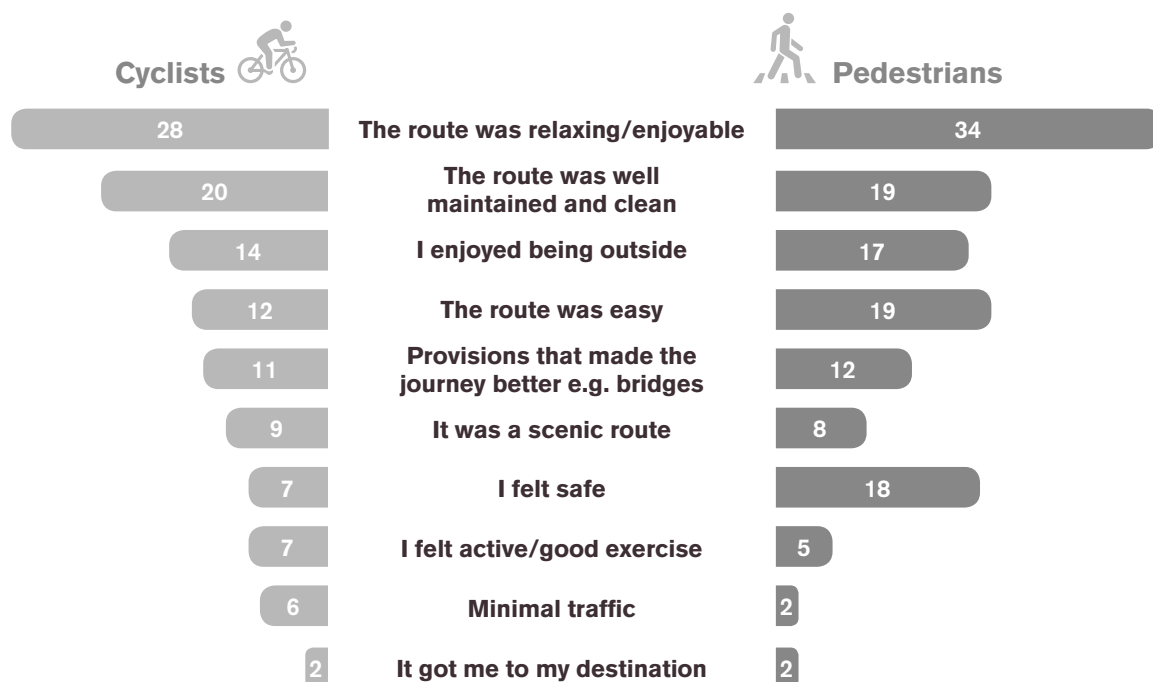
Overall satisfaction of journey (%) – North West



When asked for the reason why they were satisfied, both cyclists and pedestrians were most likely to comment that this was because they found the route relaxing, well-maintained and clean, or simply because it was enjoyable to be outside.



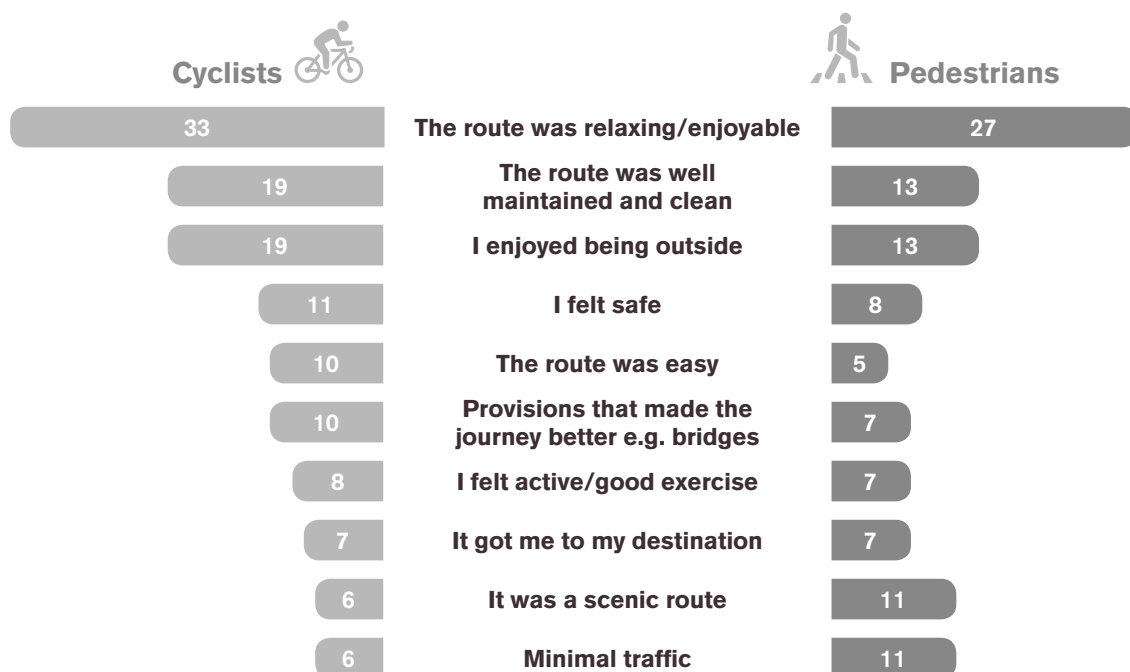
Reasons for overall satisfaction of journey (% mentioned unprompted) – East Midlands



N.B. ordered by cyclist high to low

Due to computer rounding, some bars do not add up to 100 per cent
Base: All Respondents (569) Cyclists (242) Pedestrians (327)

Reasons for overall satisfaction of journey (% mentioned unprompted) – North West



N.B. ordered by cyclist high to low

Due to computer rounding, some bars do not add up to 100 per cent
Base: All Respondents (728) Cyclists (256) Pedestrians (472)

The route was relaxing/enjoyable

"I was just enjoying my walk, and nothing stopped me enjoying it"

Pedestrian, East Midlands

"The route crossed the motorway at right angles so road noise was limited. The route was also picturesque and enjoyable"

Pedestrian, East Midlands

"Very nice views and felt relaxing; also a good chance for exercise"

Cyclist, North West

"Although it is a bit hectic crossing roads, I still find it relaxing and I enjoy the walk"

Pedestrian, North West

The route was well maintained and clean

"The bridge was clean and safe"

Cyclist, East Midlands

"A well-maintained cycle path crossed underneath the A50... Very smooth to ride a cycle on"

Cyclist, East Midlands

"The roads were well-maintained and an easy route crossing over the M56 along to Chester"

Pedestrian, North West

"It was an enjoyable walk. Nice clean area, and easy to get across the M6"

Pedestrian, North West

I enjoyed being outside

"Enjoyed the walk. Nice wide footpath over the bridge, fresh air"

Pedestrian, North West

"Plenty of fresh air, good company and the walk was – if not picturesque – pleasant enough"

Pedestrian, East Midlands

"Being out in the open and fresh air is simply enjoyable"

Cyclist, East Midlands

"It is always nice to have a cycle, fresh air and get outside"

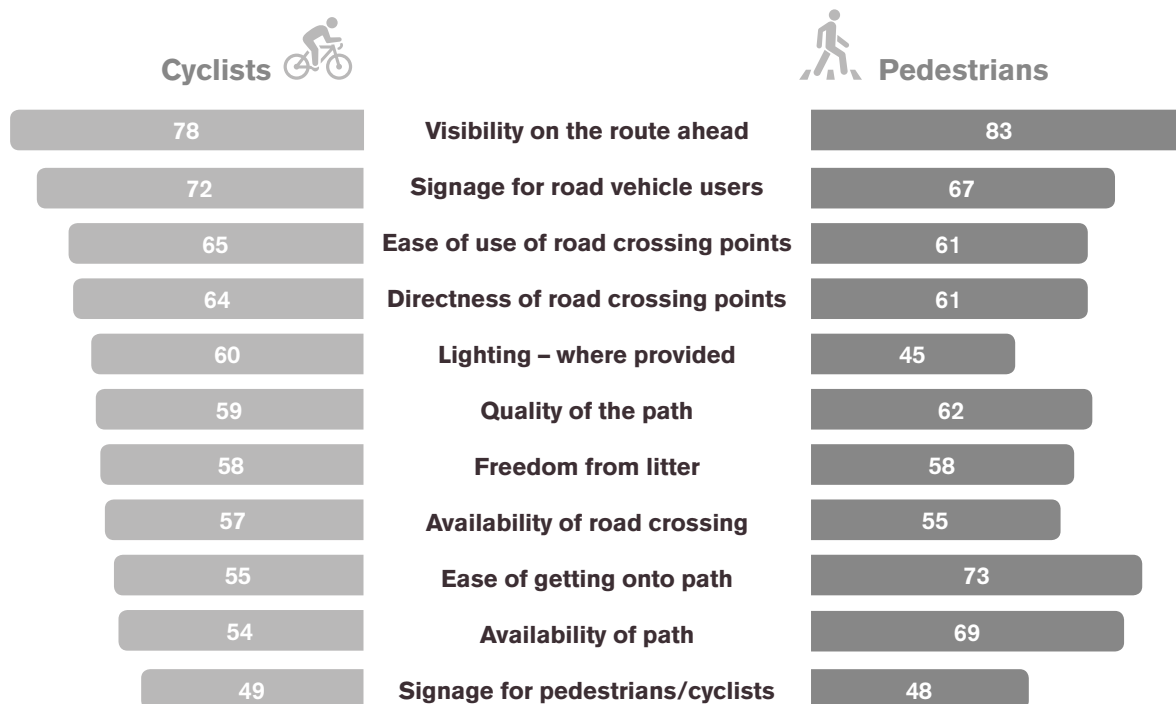
Cyclist, North West

Rating individual aspects of the route

For cyclists in each of the areas, visibility on the road ahead, signage for drivers (to warn them that cyclists may be present), and the ease and directness of road crossing points are rated more highly than other aspects. Conversely, these users rate signage for cyclists, the availability of a path, and the ease of getting onto this path if provided, less well.

While pedestrians, like cyclists, rate the visibility on the road ahead relatively highly, they tend to be happier than cyclists with the availability and ease of accessing any path that is provided. Pedestrians rate lighting, signage for pedestrians, and freedom from litter less well than they do other aspects of the part of their journey on, alongside, or across a Highways England road.

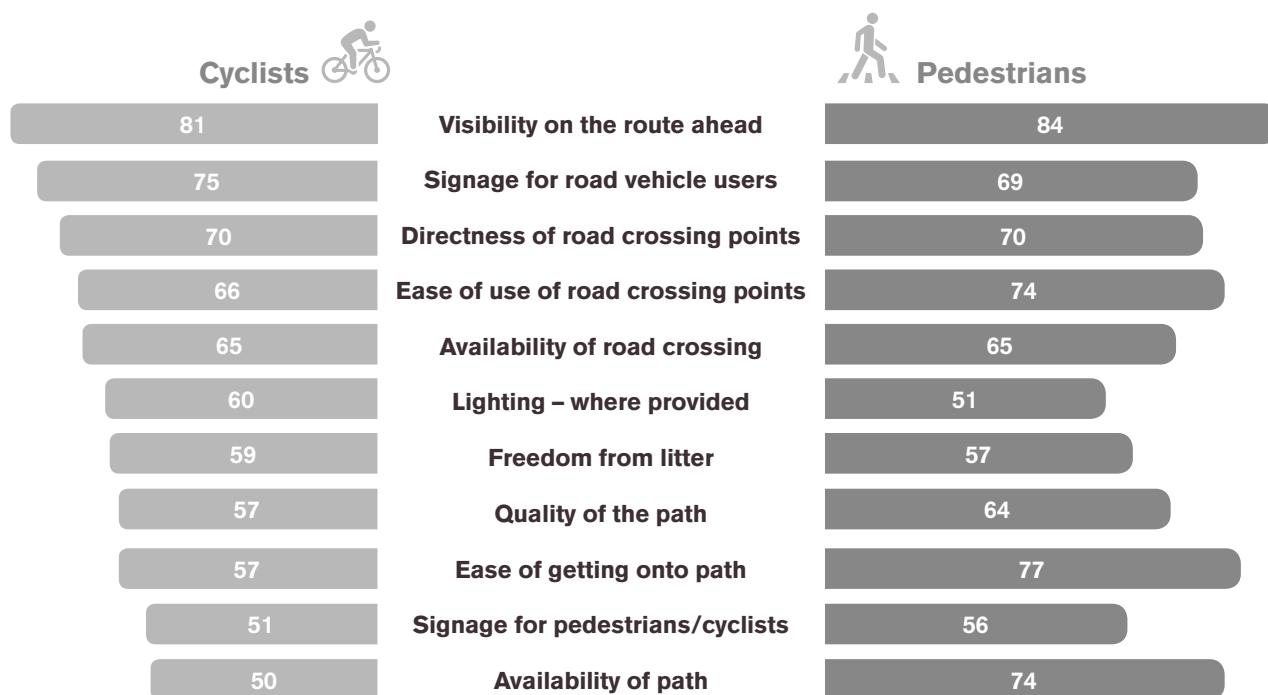
Satisfaction with aspects of the SRN (% very/fairly satisfied) – East Midlands



N.B. ordered by cyclist high to low

Base: All Respondents (569) Cyclists (242) Pedestrians (327)

Satisfaction with aspects of the SRN (% very/fairly satisfied) – North West



N.B. ordered by cyclist high to low

Base: All Respondents (728) Cyclists (256) Pedestrians (472)

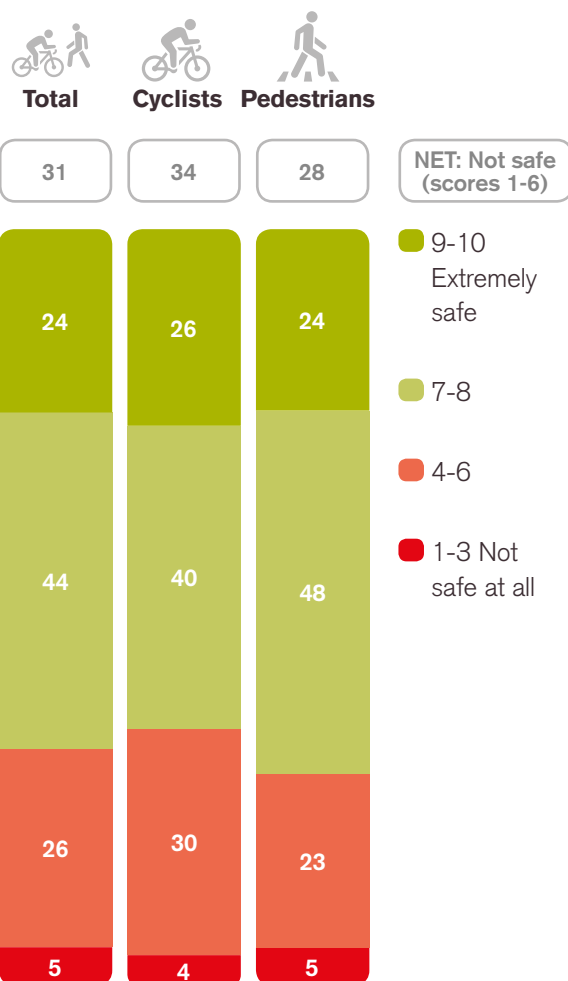
Feeling safe

Cyclists are significantly less likely than pedestrians to feel safe on the part of their journey that interacts with the Highways England network. Among both cyclists and pedestrians who report feeling unsafe, this is generally due to the proximity and speed of the traffic that is nearby.

For pedestrians, personal security along these routes is a particular concern. Pedestrians are more likely than cyclists to say that they feel unsafe because the location is secluded.

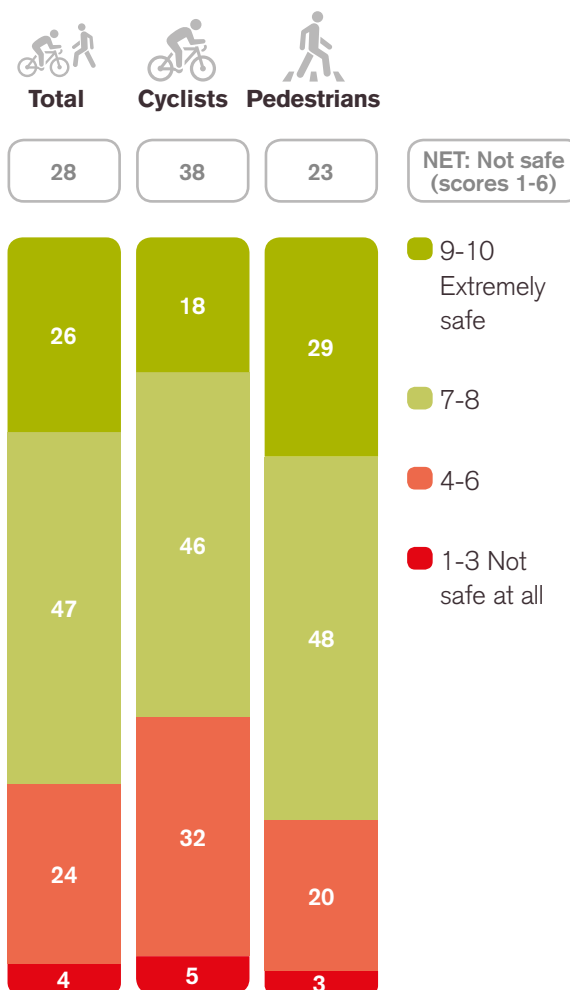


Felt safe overall (%) – East Midlands



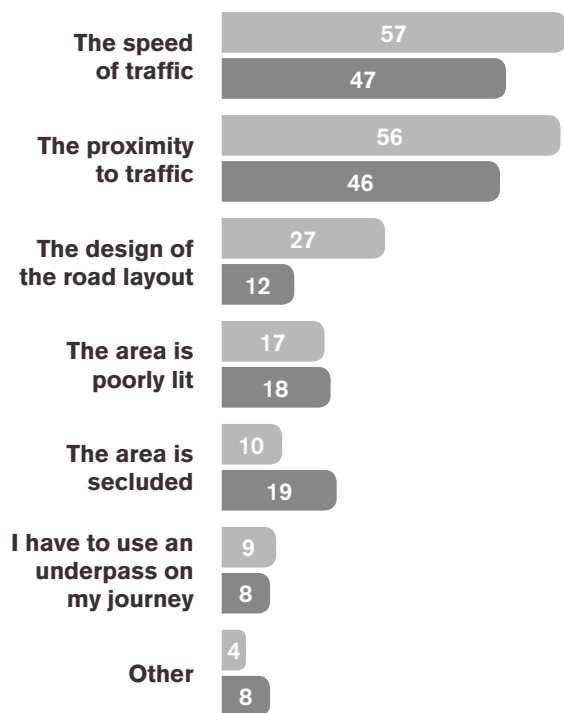
Base: All Respondents (569) Cyclists (242) Pedestrians (327)

Felt safe overall (%) – North West



Base: All Respondents (728) Cyclists (256) Pedestrians (472)

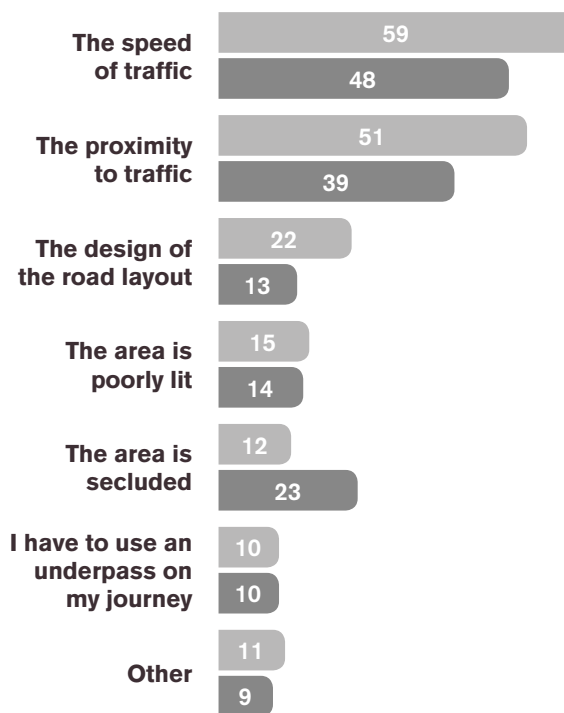
Reason for safety concerns (%) – East Midlands



■ Cyclists ■ Pedestrians

Based on respondents who rated 1-8 on how safe they felt. Cyclists (181) Pedestrians (249)

Reason for safety concerns (%) – North West



■ Cyclists ■ Pedestrians

Based on respondents who rated 1-8 on how safe they felt. Cyclists (210) Pedestrians (334)



Improvements to journeys

Respondents in each of the areas were asked what improvements they would like to see that would make their journey along or across the Highways England network safer. 20 per cent in the East Midlands and 12 per cent

in the North West indicated that there was nothing that needed improving, while the unprompted comments made by the remaining cyclists and pedestrians were grouped into several themes.

Better/more lighting

"Better lighting for those who use the footpath at night"

Pedestrian, North West

"Better lighting around and underneath the bridge"

Pedestrian, East Midlands

"More lighting and less obstruction to the lighting already [there] and a more even road surface"

Cyclist, East Midlands

"Better lighting, better visibility i.e. cut back shrubs etc"

Cyclist, North West

Better/more cycle lanes

"More cycle paths which allow room for both cyclists and walkers"

Cyclist, East Midlands

"A raised cycle lane like the new ones on Wilmslow Road in Manchester, more awareness about giving cyclists a metre"

Cyclist, North West

"Better signage for cyclists, better cycle lane pathways, cycle lane separated from the road"

Cyclist, East Midlands

"A separate cycle lane to ensure not having to contend with bicycles"

Pedestrian, North West

More crossings

"Where the road crosses the A38 it would be better for pedestrians if there was some kind of crossing on both parts of the road"

Pedestrian, East Midlands

"The installation of traffic lights for pedestrian use"

Pedestrian, East Midlands

"More pedestrian bridges or ways to cross safely"

Pedestrian, East Midlands

Most commonly, the suggestions indicated a preference for: better or more cycle lanes; better or more lighting along the routes; in the East Midlands more road crossing points; and in the North West an improvement in road surfaces.

Improve the road surface

"Repair and maintenance of the road surface for all users"

Cyclist, North West

"The pavement on the bridge that crosses the M57 would benefit from being resurfaced at some point"

Pedestrian, North West

"Better road surfaces or at least better repairs of potholes"

Cyclist, North West

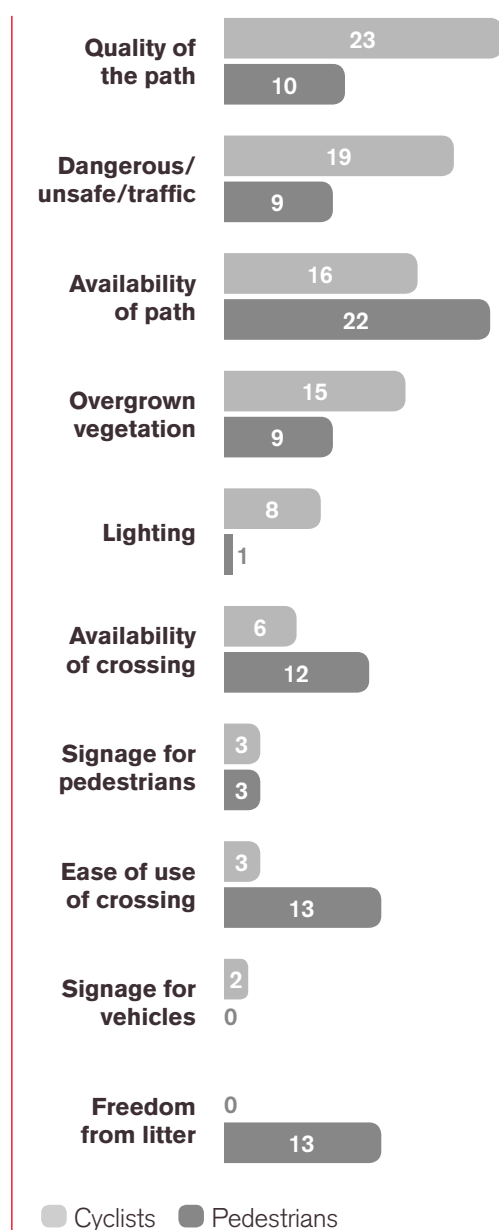


Identification of hotspots

During the survey cyclists and pedestrians who make journeys that interact in some way with the motorways and major 'A' roads in the local area were asked to use a map to identify specific locations where they have found issues and to note what these were. In each of the areas almost a quarter of cyclists and pedestrians noted such places.

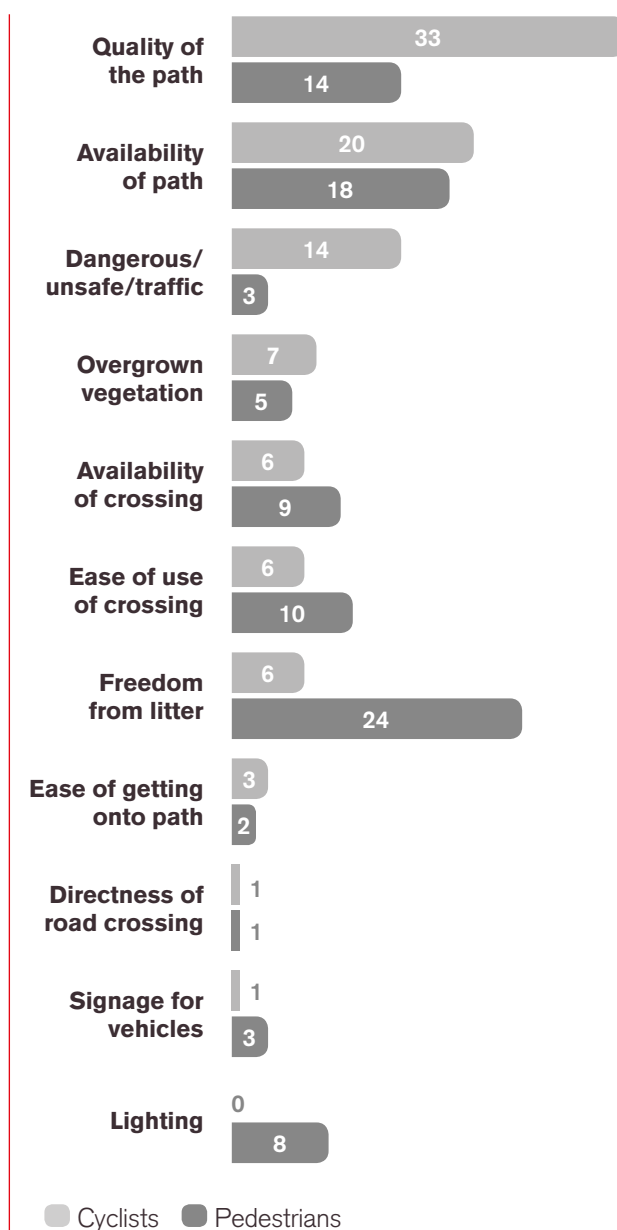
For cyclists, the quality and availability of the path are key concerns alongside issues to do with the traffic nearby. Pedestrians also note that the lack of a path is a key concern. However they also say litter is an issue in many of the places where they travel alongside or across the roads.

Reason for problematic hotspot (%) – East Midlands



Base: All hotspots identified by respondents (139)
Cyclists (62) Pedestrians (77)

Reason for problematic hotspot (%) – North West



Base: All hotspots identified by respondents (196)
Cyclists (70) Pedestrians (126)

Area-specific findings

Using the information provided by those completing the online survey, we identified several locations within each area to investigate in further depth. We then spoke to cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians whose journeys take them through those specific locations and asked them to

tell us more about the issues. A list of the locations where we carried out further qualitative research is provided below. For more details about our findings at each one, please see the research agency report published alongside this document at www.transportfocus.org.uk.

East Midlands – Highways England Area 7

Sub-area 1

A52 Brian Clough Way Retail Park

- Brian Clough Way Retail Park

Sub-area 2

A52 Derby Golf Centre to the University of Nottingham Hospital

- Stoney Lane bridge
- Victoria Avenue bridge
- Sandiacre Interchange roundabout
- Bramcote Leisure Centre roundabout

Sub-area 3

A6 Bridal Gate Lane to Thulston

- Cycle lane, Bridal Gate Lane, A6
- Thulston roundabout

Sub-area 4

A50 Cavendish bridge to Toyota Island roundabout

- Toyota Island roundabout
- Heath Lane bridge
- Lowes Lane bridge
- A50 junction 5 roundabout
- Sawley Junction underpass

Sub-area 5

A38 Burton Albion Football Club to Rawson Green

- Hillfield Lane bridge
- Micklemeadow roundabout
- Markeaton Island
- Markeaton Island footbridge

North West – Highways England Area 10

Sub-area 1

M60 junction 17 to junction 18

- M60 junction 17
- M60 junction 18
- Sandgate Road bridge

Sub-area 2

M60 junction 6 to M56 Benchill

- M60 junction 6
- M56 / A5103 Wythenshawe roundabout
- Hollyhedge Road bridge (near Benchill)

Sub-area 3

M56 junction 3 to A55

- M53 junction 3
- M53 junction 5
- A550 (near Hooton)

Sub-area 4

M6 junction 17 to M6 Bechton Road bridge

- M6 Church Lane bridge
- M6 Reynolds Lane bridge
- Bechton Road bridge

Sub-area 5

M61 Rivington Services to M61, junction 6 roundabout

- M61 Rivington Services
- Junction 6 roundabout (Middlebrook)

How we plan to use this research

This project set out to quantify satisfaction among cyclists and pedestrians in the two areas concerned. It also sought to provide specific insight to help Highways England improve the experiences of cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians using its roads. The resulting case studies have been presented to Highways England so they can start making improvements wherever possible. We hope that these case studies will also influence the way other areas of the Highways England network are designed, maintained and upgraded to better meet the needs of cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians.



How we did this research

In December 2017 Transport Focus commissioned the independent research agency Populus to help us undertake a survey that would generate a robust measure of satisfaction with journeys made by cyclists and pedestrians using Highways England roads. This quantitative phase of the research was used to identify locations to carry out subsequent qualitative research involving not only cyclists and pedestrians but also equestrians making journeys along or across these roads.

- A final data-editing stage in which implausible journeys and those made outside the area concerned were removed from the analysis.

After these stages were complete, 327 pedestrian journeys and 242 cycling journeys interacting with the Highways England network in the East Midlands, and 472 pedestrian journeys and 256 cycling journeys interacting with these roads in the North West, remained in the data.

Quantitative research

In February 2018 Populus contacted people on their online panel to undertake the quantitative survey. In doing so, steps were taken to ensure that those completing the questionnaire had travelled on or across roads Highways England is responsible for, and that only journeys involving interaction with these roads contributed to the satisfaction measure. These steps included:

- An initial screening stage at which respondents were presented with a map and a list of the motorways and major 'A' roads within each area. At this stage respondents were asked to confirm they had walked or cycled on, alongside, or across any motorway or major 'A' road in the area in the previous three months.
- A stage at which respondents were taken to the Transport Focus interactive mapping system, managed by Beacon Dodsworth, that 'knows' which roads are managed by Highways England. Respondents were asked to plot the journey they had taken and anyone who identified journeys that did not interact with a Highways England road were screened out of the survey.

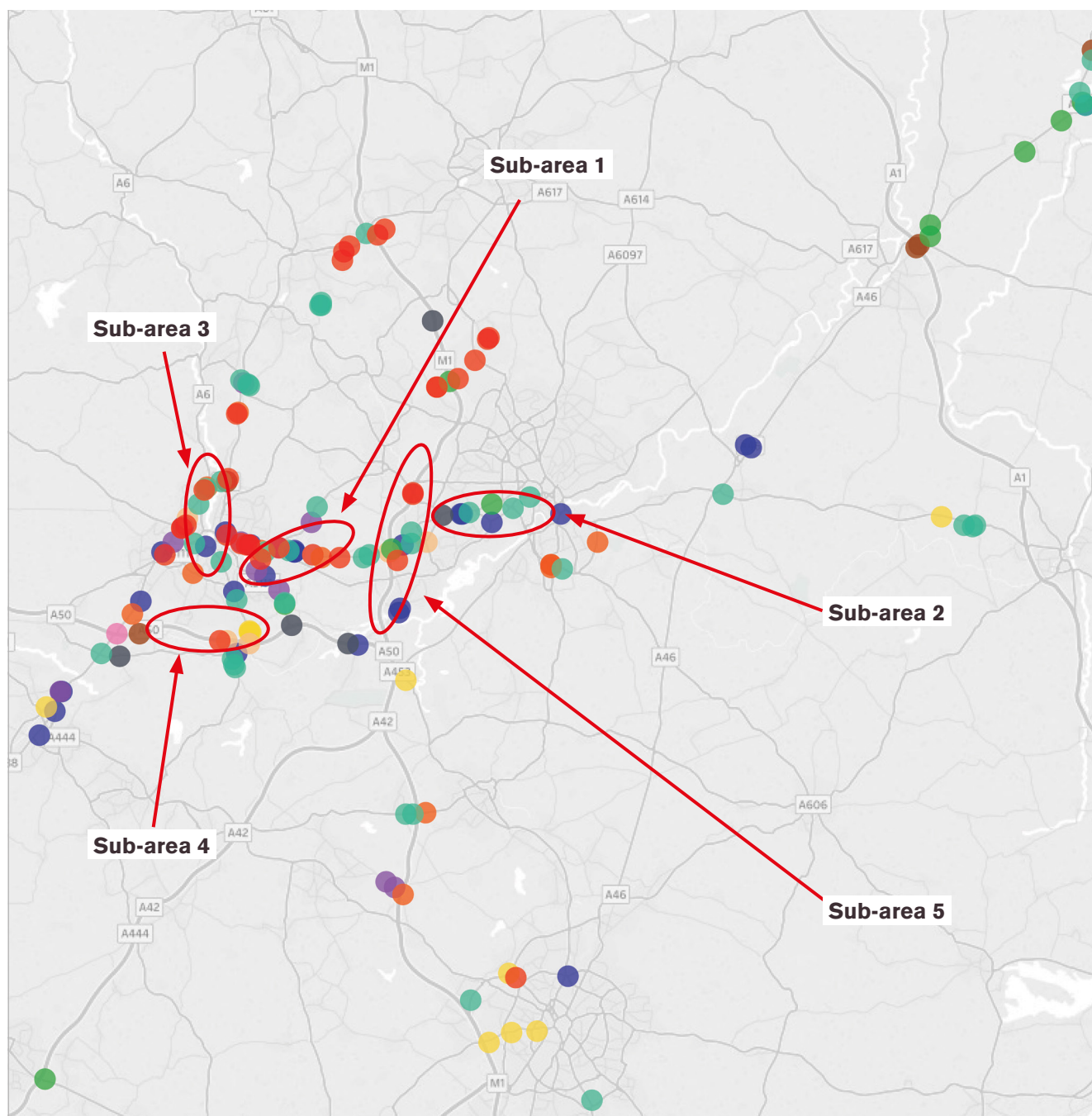
	East Midlands	North West
Cyclists	242	256
Pedestrians	327	472
TOTAL	569	728

Qualitative research

The qualitative research stage was completed by conducting face-to-face in-depth interviews with cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians who use a Highways England road. While several of these participants in the research were recruited via the online survey, others were recruited near to the parts of these roads that were of interest.

Alongside acting as a means of recruitment for the qualitative phase, the online survey played a key role in indicating where qualitative work should subsequently be carried out. During the online survey respondents were asked to pinpoint where they had experienced problems on their journeys. This identified locations with clusters of pinpoints, highlighting hotspots where qualitative research might therefore be productive.

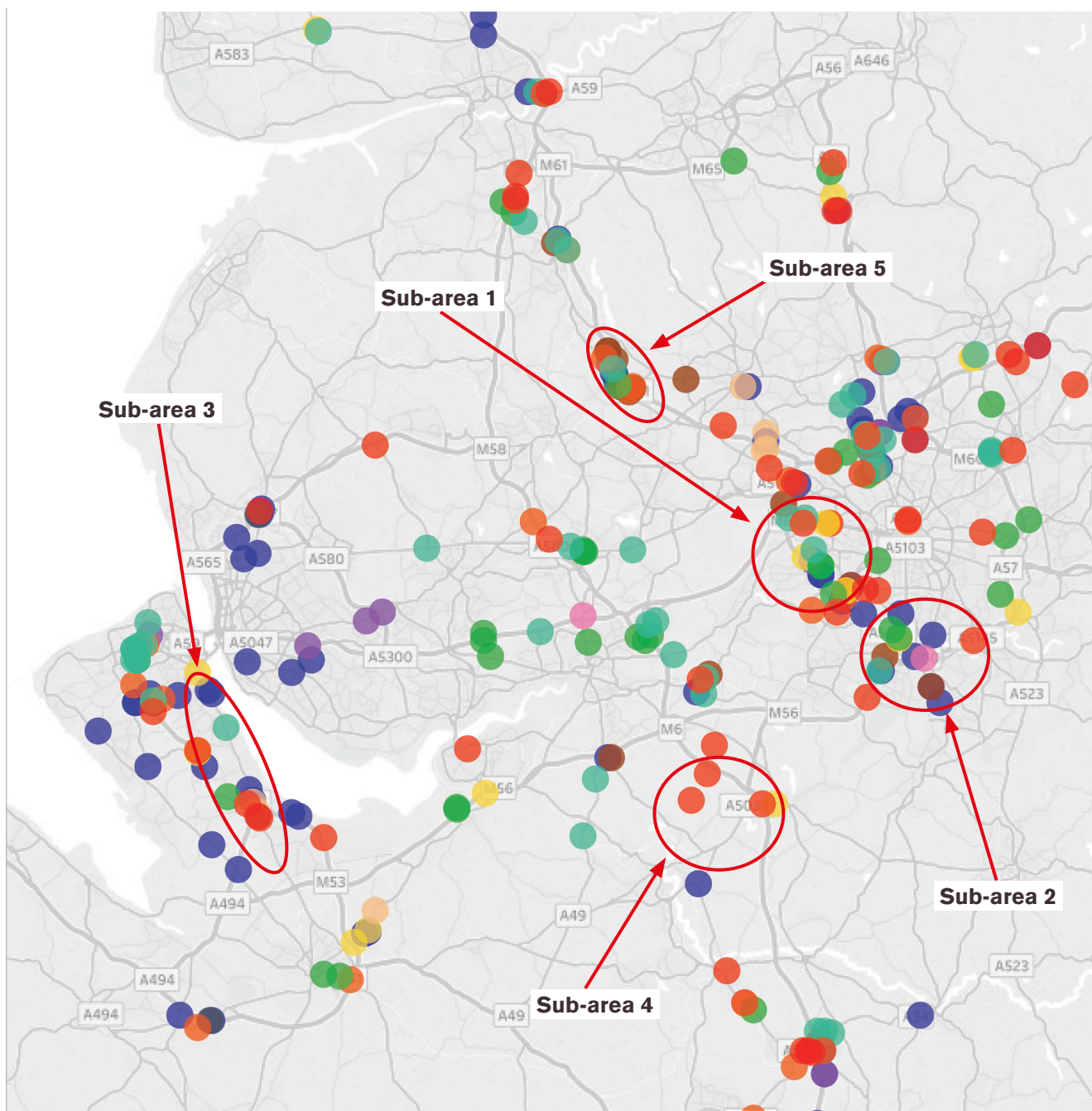
Hotspot locations – East Midlands



Reason for complaint




- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| ● Quality of the pavement or cycle lane surface | ● Ease of use of road crossing points |
| ● Availability of pavements or cycle lanes | ● Signage for pedestrians or cyclists |
| ● Freedom from litter on pavements or cycle lanes | ● Signage for road vehicle users |
| ● Ease of getting onto pavements or cycle lanes | ● Lighting – where provided |
| ● Visibility on the route ahead | ● Dangerous, heavy traffic |
| ● Availability of road crossing points | |

Hotspot locations – North West



Reason for complaint

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| ● Quality of the pavement or cycle lane surface | ● Ease of use of road crossing points |
| ● Availability of pavements or cycle lanes | ● Signage for pedestrians or cyclists |
| ● Freedom from litter on pavements or cycle lanes | ● Signage for road vehicle users |
| ● Ease of getting onto pavements or cycle lanes | ● Lighting – where provided |
| ● Visibility on the route ahead | ● Dangerous, heavy traffic |
| ● Availability of road crossing points | |

	East Midlands	North West
 Cyclists	11	9
 Pedestrians	9	11
 Equestrians	2	2
TOTAL	22	22

In total we conducted 44 qualitative interviews (22 in each of the areas). These included those making journeys on, alongside, or over the Highways England network on foot, by bike, or involving a horse.

Data from the online survey, and that from the in-depth interviews, were all plotted onto the interactive mapping software and are available online at:

East Midlands:
https://public.tableau.com/views/TransportFocus-EastMidlands-ReasonforComplaint/EastMidlandshotspots-reasonforcomplaint?:embed=y&:display_count=yes&publish=yes

North West:
https://public.tableau.com/views/TransportFocus-NorthWest-ReasonsforComplaint/NorthWestshotspots-reasonforcomplaint?:embed=y&:display_count=yes&publish=yes



British Horse Society

Contact Transport Focus

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Transport Focus is the operating name of the Passengers' Council

Transport Focus is the independent consumer organisation representing the interests of:

- all users of England's motorways and major 'A' roads (the Strategic Road Network)
- rail passengers in Great Britain
- bus, coach and tram users across England outside London.

We work to make a difference for all transport users