



Cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians:

views about journeys using National
Highways' network in Yorkshire
and the North East

November 2021



Foreword

The research presented here is a continuation of work to understand the experiences of cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians who make journeys involving National Highways' roads.

Transport Focus represents the interests of those using the roads managed by National Highways (formerly Highways England). This includes cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians travelling on, alongside or across England's motorways and major 'A' roads, where they are permitted to do so.

This latest research looks at what cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians want from National Highways across Yorkshire and the North East. The focus on active travel in the Government's plan *Decarbonising Transport: A Better, Greener Britain*, underlines the need to take account of what these road users want.

The key points to note from this research are:

- Cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians feel low down the pecking order when it comes to National Highways' priorities.

- They feel there is limited infrastructure in place for them to make their journeys as efficiently as motorised road users.
- They have concerns about safety. Their physical safety in terms of being hit by vehicles and using what is seen as poorly maintained infrastructure. And their personal safety using poorly lit, isolated routes, bridges, and underpasses.

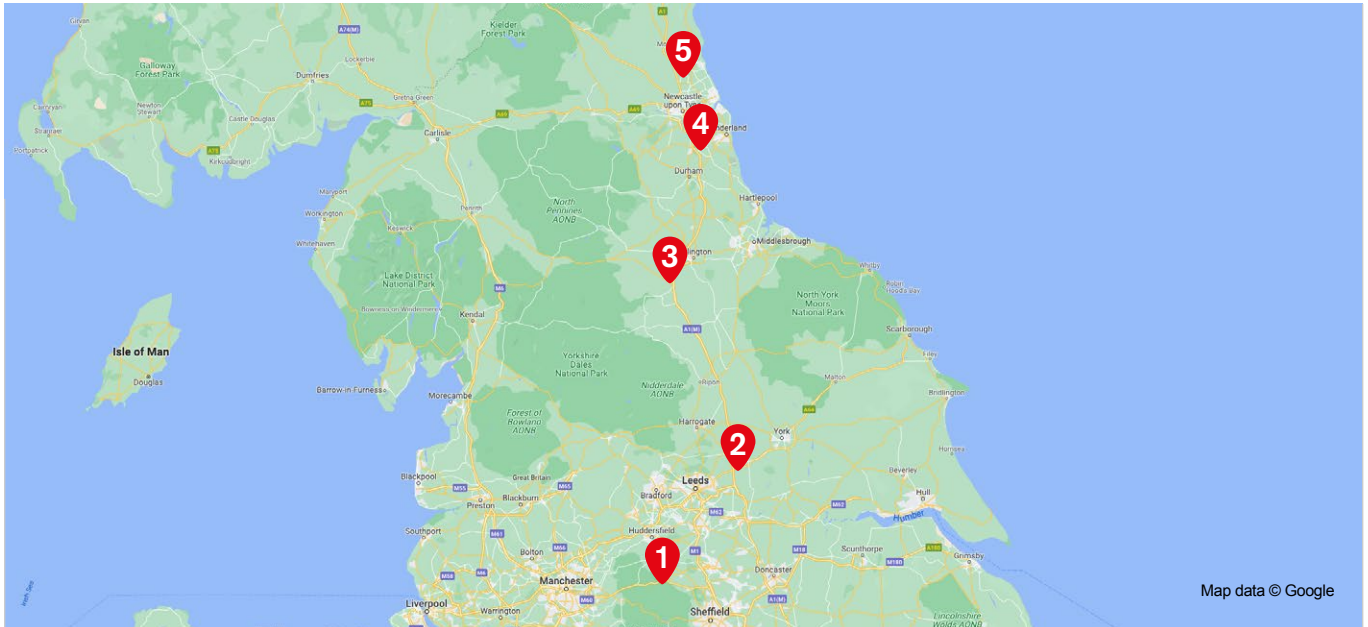
Transport Focus will use these insights in its ongoing work with National Highways.

We will shortly carry out similar research in other parts of England, while continuing to engage with National Highways over development of the survey set out in the second Road Investment Strategy (RIS2).

Anthony Smith
Chief executive

Summary

As with previous cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians research, Transport Focus concentrated on the experience of road users in a small group of locations.



In this case we focused on five locations across Yorkshire and the North East. These were:

1. the A616 at Langsett
2. the A64 between Leeds and York
3. the A66 west of Scotch Corner
4. the A19 around Cold Hesledon, Seaham
5. the Silverlink junction (A19/A1058) between Newcastle and North Shields.

Some of the findings were location-specific while others were more universal, echoing what we had found in earlier research.

First, **cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians feel that their needs on National Highways' network are afforded lesser priority than other, motorised, road users.**

While they understand that those using cars, lorries and motorbikes are the primary users of these roads,

they want it recognised that those on bicycles, horses and on foot make journeys which need to involve motorways and major 'A' roads to get where they want to go (even if only to cross them).

There is insufficient, suitable infrastructure on and around the National Highways network that allows them to make their journeys.

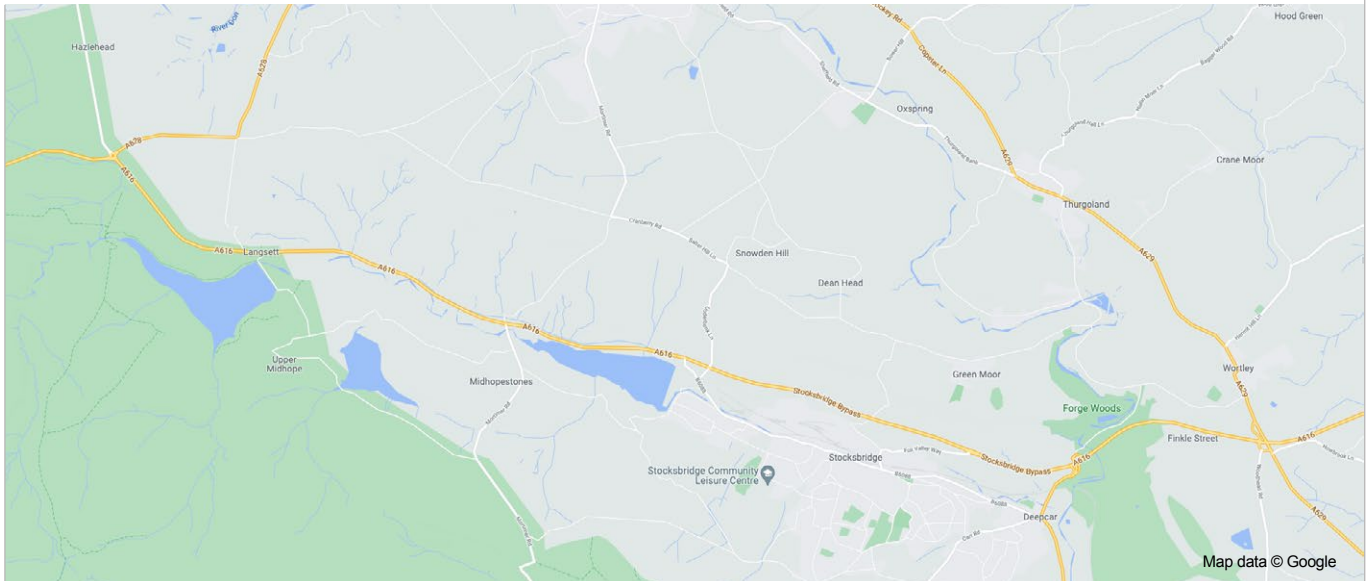
For example, cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians involved in the research frequently mentioned the limited availability of bridleways, cycling and walking networks and suitable crossing points. This was in addition to poorly maintained, narrow, and badly lit paths. These experiences further reinforced these road users' view that their needs are being ignored.

Lastly, the research found that safety, in terms of the **physical separation of these road users from fast moving traffic**, is key. This was connected to safety/personal security concerns due to **poor lighting, poor surface quality and inadequate signage.**

Area specific findings

Here we take a closer look at the five locations, giving a summary of the research, its key findings and suggested improvements.

A616 at Langsett



Overview of the location:

As well as being the main route between Manchester and Sheffield, the A616 is an all-purpose road which is used by pedestrians and cyclists. Langsett is promoted as a tourist destination. In most cases the areas of interest are situated on the south side of the road with some parking on the north.

Key issues mentioned by cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians:

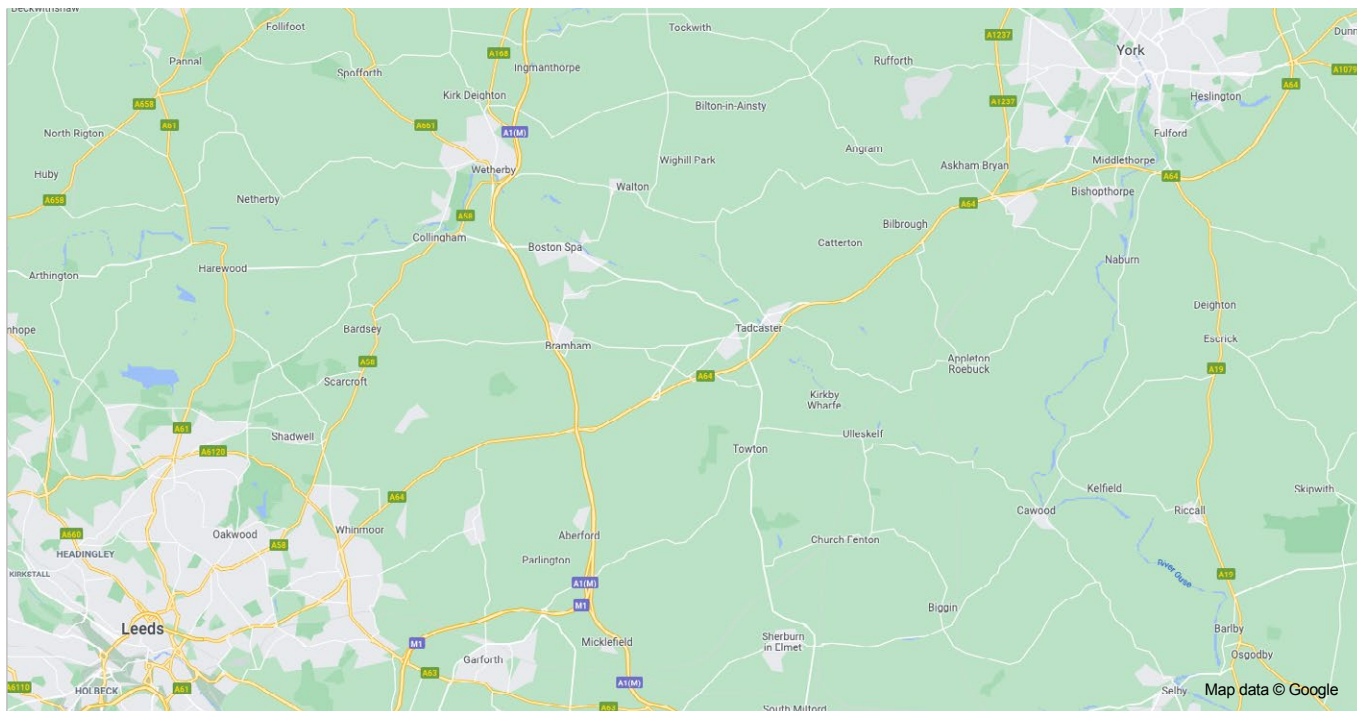
- there are many bridleways and footpaths which are cut in two by the A616 and a lack of suitable crossing points on the road
- cars parking on roads near locations of interest blocking paths for cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians
- poor maintenance of the paths near to the A616 and fly-tipping are issues for cyclists and pedestrians in the area.



Suggested improvements:

- increase the number of crossings on the A616
- better signage alerting road users to the presence of equestrians using the roads
- consider the use of additional speed controls/restrictions in areas of high cyclist, pedestrian, and equestrian use.

A64 between Leeds and York



Overview of the location:

The A64 is the main road between Leeds and York. From Leeds to the east of York it is a dual carriageway, then becoming a single carriageway for most of the route to Scarborough.

Key issues mentioned by cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians:

- insufficient crossings/ability to cross being prevented by central reservation barriers
- narrow shared paths, particularly between Tadcaster and the York bypass
- the lack of a coherent, connected cycle network.

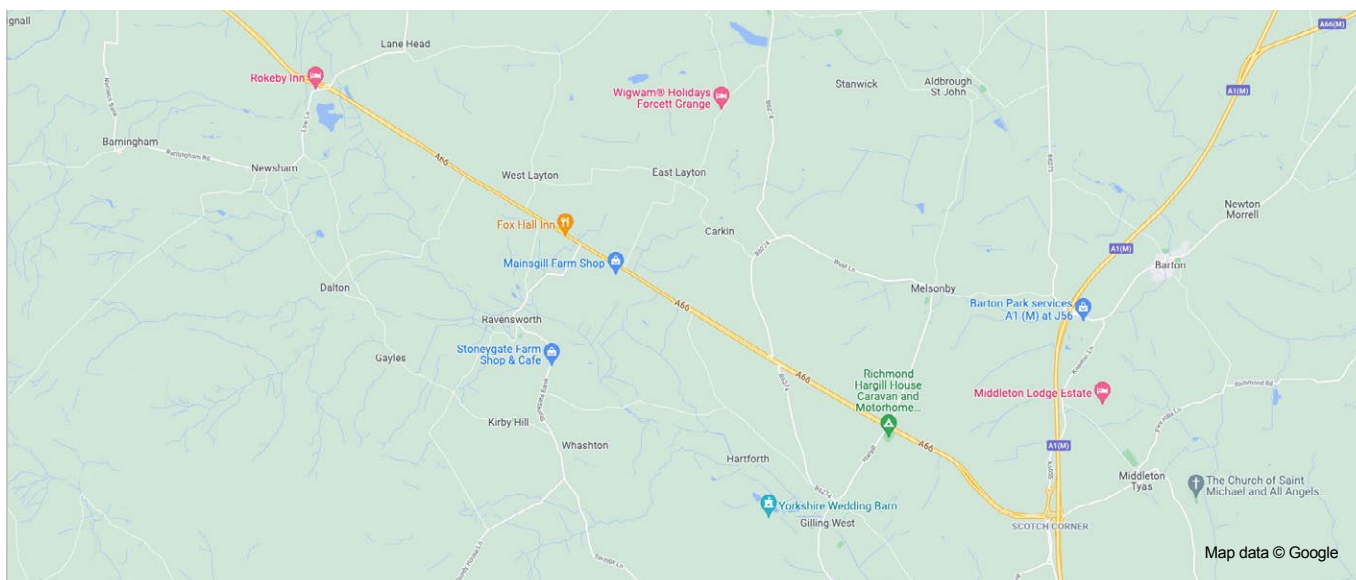
Suggested improvements:

- better maintenance of bridleways



- increase the number of crossing points
- increase the number of barriers along the route which protect cyclists and pedestrians from fast-moving traffic.

A66 west of Scotch Corner



Overview of the location:

The A66 forms a barrier between two areas which are well used by pedestrians and equestrians. There are extensive bridleway networks on both sides of the road, while cyclists are more likely to use the network of quiet roads on either side of the A66.

Key issues mentioned by cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians:

- insufficient and unsuitable crossings on the A66
- increasing traffic due to the development of additional retail units alongside the road
- issues related to parts of the road being changed to dual carriageway.

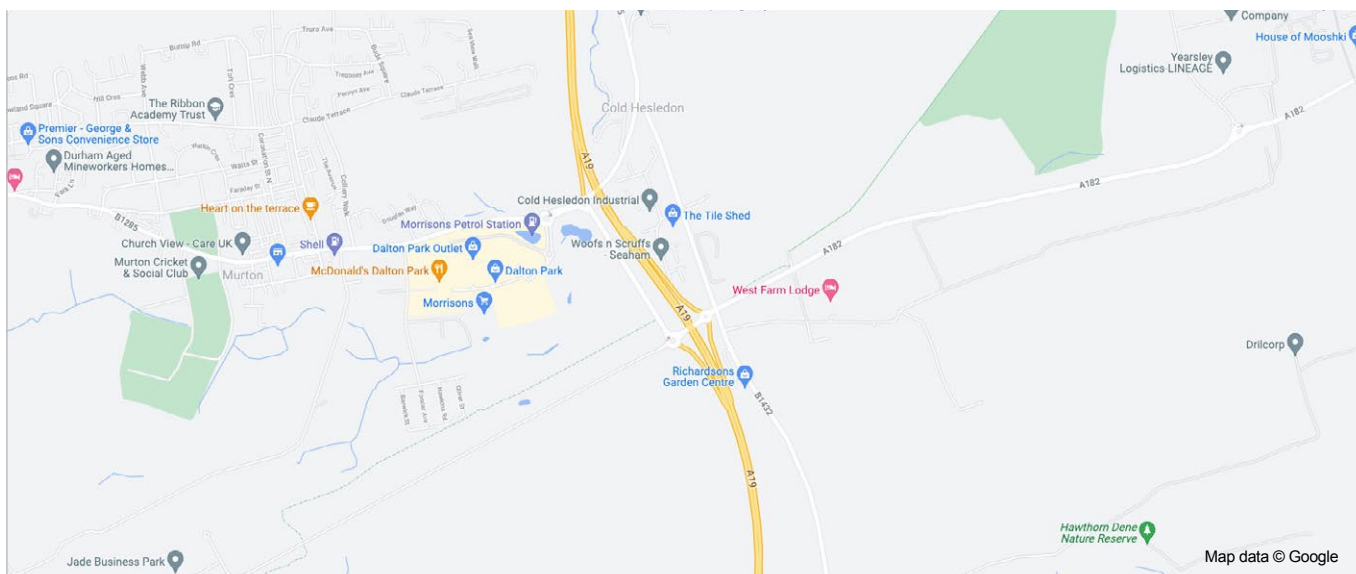
Suggested improvements:

- increase number of crossing points on the A66, and better maintain (particularly height of foliage for equestrian users) the existing crossings



- improve surface quality at some locations
- increasing signage ahead of crossing points to alert drivers to the presence of cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians in the area.

A19 around Cold Hesledon, Seaham



Overview of the location:

The A19 is a major dual carriageway which can be very busy, especially at peak times of the day or the year. It forms a barrier to several bridleways and footpaths. There are places where bridleways end at the road and there are no clear ways to cross.

Key issues mentioned by cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians:

- insufficient crossings and curtailed bridleways
- inadequate links to the National Cycle Network
- some antisocial behaviour on the bridleways and footpaths near to the location.

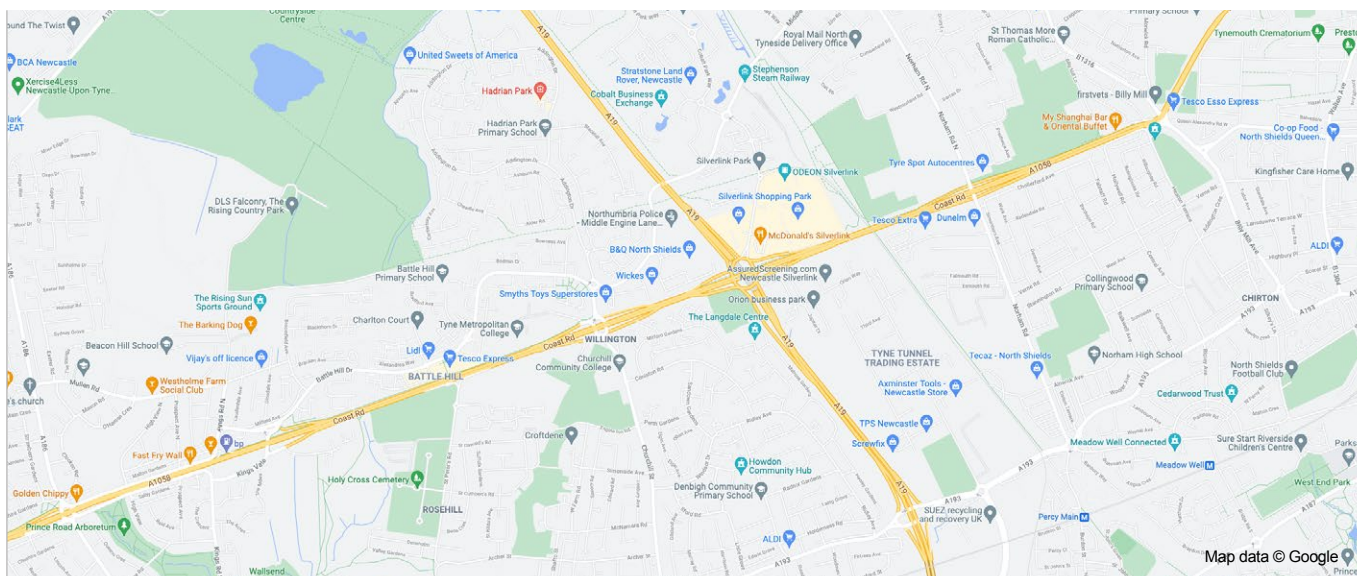
Suggested improvements:

- link up bridleways for longer and more continuous routes for equestrians



- increase signage near to existing crossing points, alerting drivers to the presence of cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians in the area
- better maintenance of road surfaces on the roundabouts which connect to the A19.

Silverlink junction (A19/A1058) between Newcastle and North Shields



Overview of the location:

The site is next to a business park and is a point at which two major roads cross one another. The A1058, or coast road, is a local authority dual carriageway with cycle provision only on its north side. Areas further north of the junction are used by pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians, but equestrians are likely to be deterred from using the Silverlink junction itself as there is no safe way for them to do so.

Key issues mentioned by cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians:

- new developments in this location have delivered good infrastructure for cyclists and pedestrians
- more issues are found away from the Silverlink junction itself including narrow paths and a lack of crossing points
- some argue that poor planning has resulted in no access across the slip road going north-south.

Suggested improvements:

- maintain the bridleways in the area and provide more crossing points for equestrians



- introduce more barriers which separate cyclists and pedestrians from the fast-moving traffic on the roads
- take steps to improve how safe pedestrians feel when using the underpasses or develop overpasses/bridges instead.

Summary of improvements suggested across all locations

- more signage to raise awareness that cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians use the roads
- where possible provide shared paths that cater for the differing needs of these road users and separate them from fast-moving traffic
- improve the maintenance of all paths
- provide more, appropriate crossing opportunities for these road users
- thorough cutting back of foliage, improve the sight lines at existing crossings.



Give cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians a way of being involved in discussions

As a final stage of the research, cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians who use the roads at these locations were invited to a discussion with National Highways, stakeholders from the local authority and local interest groups.

This was a positive experience which enabled the various parties with an interest in the locations to discuss the issues and to consider possible solutions. It also allowed the road users to gain a greater understanding of how these roads are managed.

Awareness of National Highways is low, and it is largely assumed that the local authority is responsible

for the roads used.

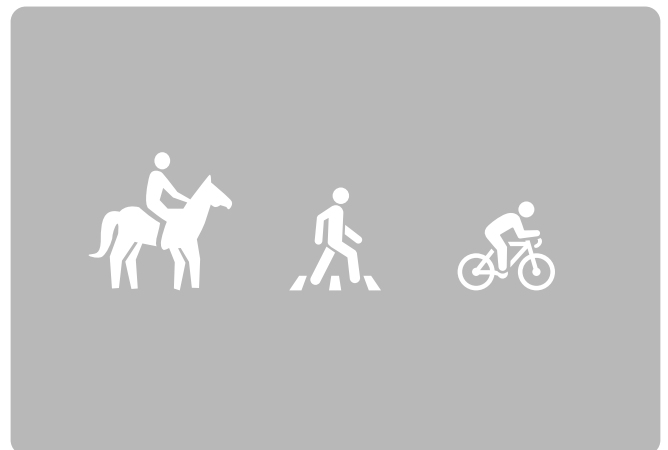
Cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians do not feel that their views are well accounted for in discussions concerning the locations covered. This is often where local authority roads join or cross over National Highways' network and the process of decision-making is considered unclear.

Transport Focus encourages greater consultation with cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians and also that National Highways and local authorities work together more effectively to improve the experiences of cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians.

How we plan to use this research

In this research we aimed to explore in detail the experience of cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians making journeys which involved using roads on National Highways' network. In doing so, we sought to provide specific insight to National Highways which will help it improve the experience of these road users.

Our plan is to continue this work looking at other areas of England, and work with National Highways in considering the design of its roads with cyclists, pedestrians, and equestrians in mind.



How we did this research

In February 2021 Transport Focus commissioned the independent research agency 2CV to help us to explore the views of cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians making journeys which interacted with National Highways' roads in five locations across Yorkshire and the North East. The research used a staged approach, consisting of interlinked elements:

1. Initially the research agency conducted five online 'round-table' sessions with stakeholders in the locations to get perspectives on the local issues. The stakeholders included Sustrans, the British Horse Society, Cycling UK, public rights of way officers and sustainable travel officers from local authorities, members of parish councils and members of local cycling and rambling groups.
2. 45 cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians who make journeys in the locations were asked to complete a

series of online tasks over a ten-day period. They then uploaded photos and videos of the journeys they made to an online tool and the experiences were discussed in detail.

3. After the digital tasks were completed, a small number of the participants were invited to online interviews with the research team to talk in greater detail about their experiences.
4. Finally, we held an online workshop with both the stakeholders and the road users where both groups discussed the findings and explored possible solutions.

To view the accompanying research agency report or previous research into other cyclist, pedestrian and equestrian experiences across England, please visit:

www.transportfocus.org.uk

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:

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

We work to make a difference for all transport users.