



Strategic Roads User Survey

Findings for the Midlands: October 2021 – September 2022

Report published July 2023

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Introduction



Strategic Roads User Survey (SRUS)

Transport Focus represents the interests of users of England's motorways and major A-roads, known as the Strategic Road Network (SRN). These are the roads managed by National Highways on behalf of the Government.

Through the Strategic Roads User Survey (SRUS), Transport Focus gathers journey experience feedback from a representative sample of SRN users.

SRUS is also used by the Office of Rail and Road to monitor National Highways' performance.



Results in this report cover 12 months:

October 2021 – September 2022



Push-to-web approach

Invitation letters are posted to a representative sample of households in England

Instructions in the letter direct participants to an online survey, for which participants are incentivised



Participants answer about:

Their most recent journey on the SRN within the last four weeks at the time of completing the survey

One specific motorway or major A road within this journey (defined using an interactive map). This ensures feedback is received for all regions and across a full range of roads within them



7,342 responses received in total over this period

1,644 for roads in the Midlands

Key findings for this year: SRN experience in the Midlands

69% Just over two thirds of SRN journeys in the Midlands are felt to be satisfactory overall

A little below the national average of 72%. The region is also a little below the national average across other key measures.



Satisfactory journeys (as nationally) are when **traffic flows freely** without disruption



Factors for dissatisfaction here are:

- **Congestion** – a key cause of dissatisfaction nationally, but felt to be particularly prevalent here, and exacerbating the impact of other disruption
- **Roadworks** – also important everywhere, but particularly common and impactful here, with a third of journeys affected and longer resulting delays than all other regions except M25



These issues are especially evident on the region's motorways

Notably the M1, M42 and M6 – where extensive presence of **smart motorways** compound frustration further, with a frequent perception that this design of road worsens the experience



Litter felt to be more prevalent in the Midlands than most other regions

Other trends, which are also common across the whole SRN network:



Safety perceptions high overall, but some feel less at ease: less familiar drivers, smaller commercial/goods drivers, motorcyclists



Poor driving perceived as common – and while drivers are accountable, the way roads are managed can be felt to provoke poor driving behaviour.

Notably, **poor lane discipline seen as more common here than elsewhere, with drivers' comments again indicating that they link this to (poor speed compliance and frustration on) smart motorways**



HGV drivers less satisfied overall, experiencing the same issues but to a sharper degree

Issues for National Highways Midlands to consider

After analysis of quantitative and qualitative data in SRUS about journeys in the Midlands, it appears that National Highways should focus on the following as part of efforts to improve road user satisfaction:

✓ Roadworks

- Ensure roadworks cause the least disruption possible, for the shortest duration and affecting the shortest stretch of road possible
- Strive to reduce instances where SRN users encounter multiple sets of roadworks on the same journey
- Communication. It appears that more work is needed to inform road users in advance where roadworks will have significant impact, in particular when it comes to less frequent users and the best channels to reach them
- Communication. Explaining the benefits that will result and the rationale for temporary speed restrictions may alleviate some frustration

✓ Smart motorways

- Strive to reduce the occasions when drivers see a variable speed limit that feels inappropriate, including when restrictions are felt to stay in place when no longer needed
- Better 'in the moment' communication about why speed limits or lane closures are in place
- Ongoing communication to the public at large about how smart motorways work, including providing evidence of reduced congestion and about safety
- Communication and behavioural nudges to encourage better driving etiquette, and so minimise poor driving practices perceived to be caused by the way smart motorways function.
- While not exclusive to these routes, **particular focus on the M1, M42 and M6** is advisable.

- ✓ National Highways should note that, relative to other regions, Midlands has more road users dissatisfied with **litter**

Some overall findings

“Key metrics”



Just over two thirds of SRN journeys in the Midlands are felt to be satisfactory: a little below the national average across all key measures

Key metrics
Oct 2021 – Sep 2022



Overall satisfaction

69%

Very satisfied 29%
Fairly satisfied 40%

Journey time

69%

Very satisfied 31%
Fairly satisfied 38%

Management of roadworks

46%

Very satisfied 13%
Fairly satisfied 33%

Feeling safe

79%

Very safe 30%
Fairly safe 49%

England-wide

72%

Very satisfied 34%
Fairly satisfied 38%

71%

Very satisfied 34%
Fairly satisfied 37%

49%

Very satisfied 16%
Fairly satisfied 33%

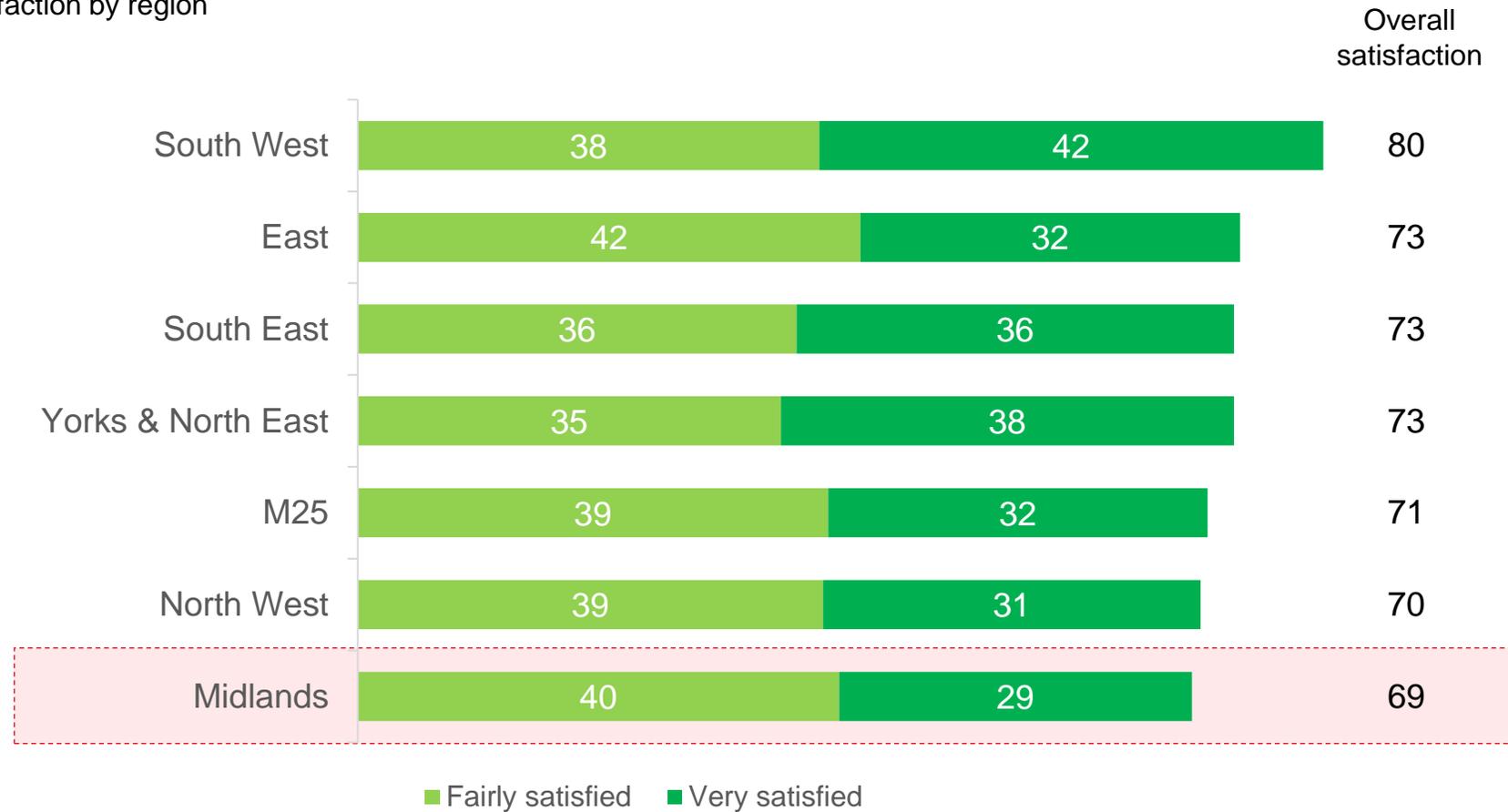
80%

Very safe 31%
Fairly safe 50%

Base: all SRN users surveyed, Oct '21 – Sep '22
All: overall satisfaction (7,322), journey time (7,295), roadworks management (1,690), feeling safe (7,313)
Midlands: overall satisfaction (1,641), journey time (1,634), roadworks management (430), feeling safe (1,637)

The Midlands saw the lowest proportion of very satisfactory journeys of all regions

Overall satisfaction by region
(% very/fairly)

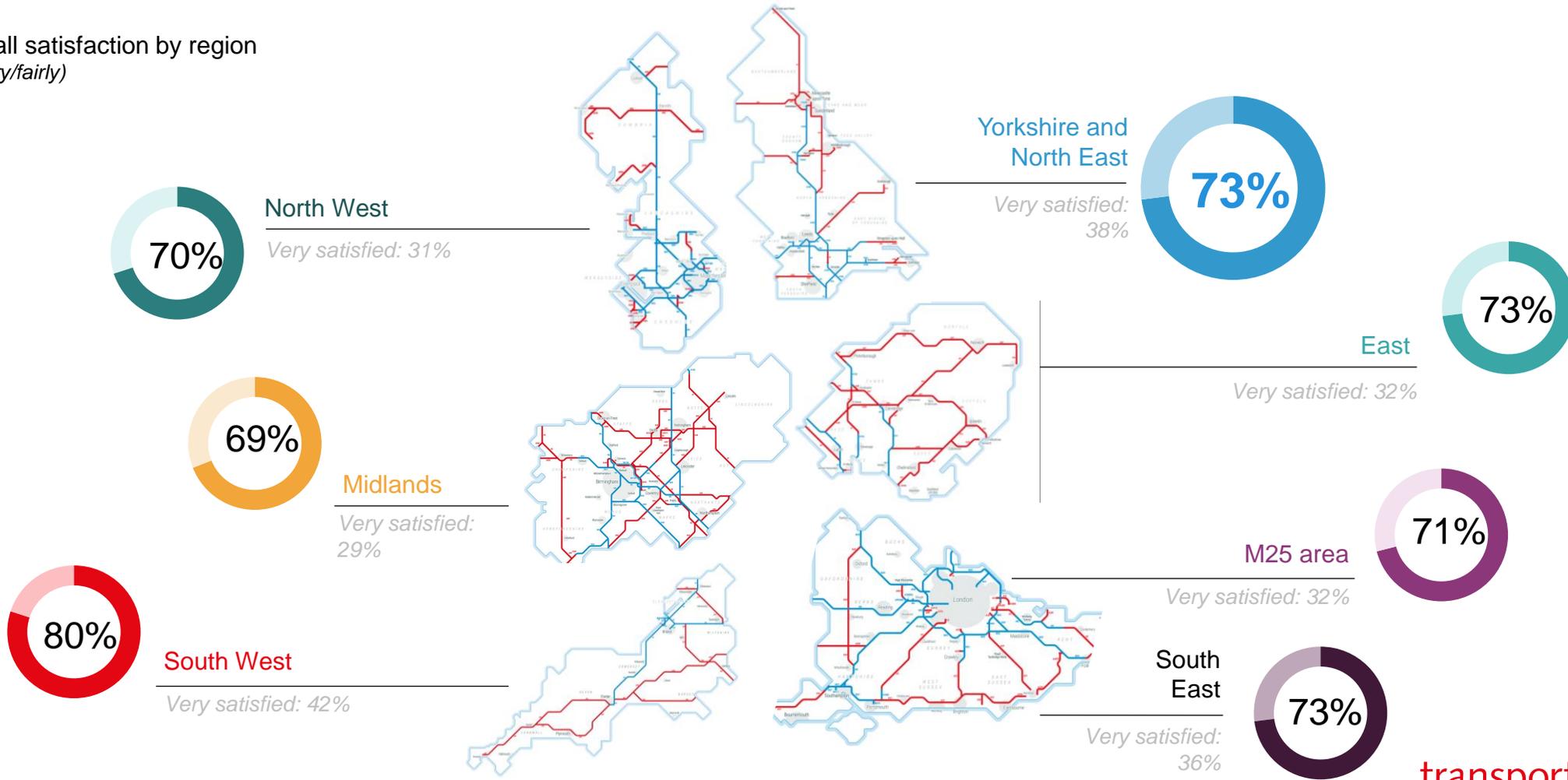


Base: all SRN users surveyed, Oct '21 – Sep '22 (7,322)

South West (917), East (1,047), South East (1,504), Yorkshire and NE: (1,014), M25 (1,057), North West (1,088), Midlands (1,641)

The Midlands saw the lowest proportion of very satisfactory journeys of all regions

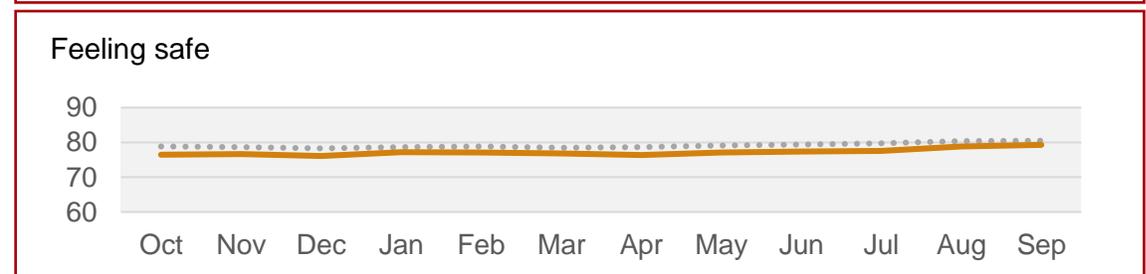
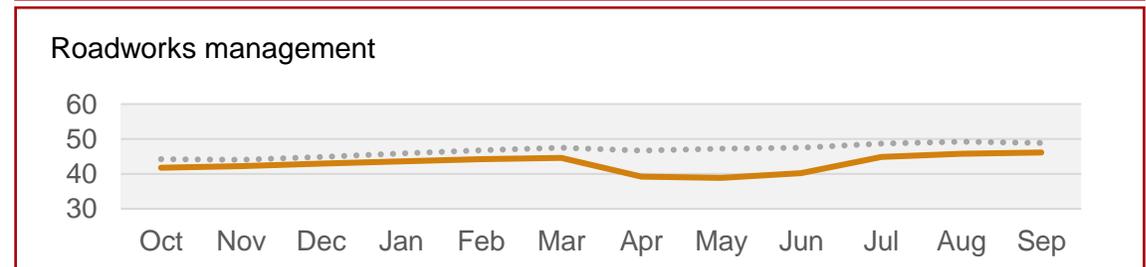
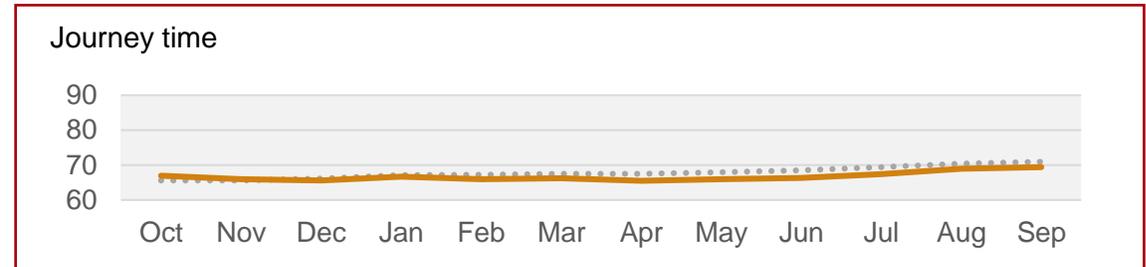
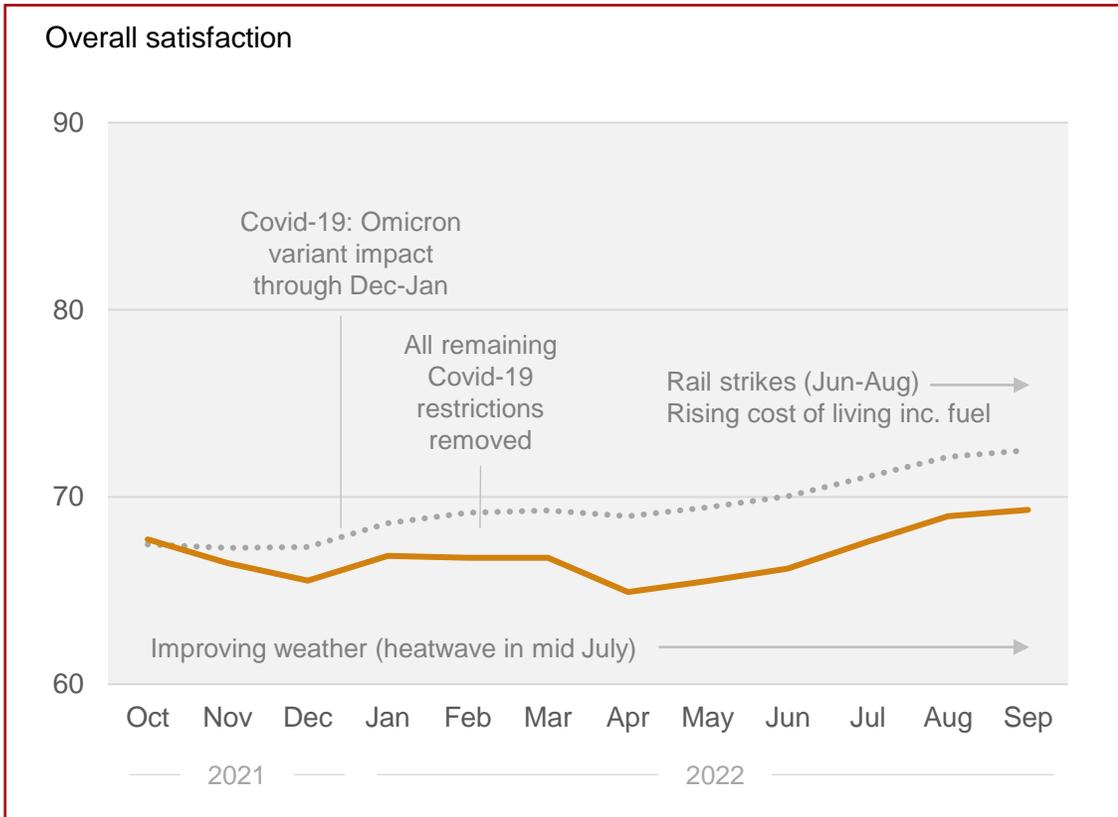
Overall satisfaction by region
(% very/fairly)



Base: all SRN users surveyed, Oct '21 – Sep '22 (7,322)
South West (917), East (1,047), South East (1,504), Yorkshire and NE: (1,014), M25 (1,057), North West (1,088), Midlands (1,641)

A turbulent year for travel, but feedback indicates overall journey experience improved nationally. Similar trend in Midlands following a dip in Spring 2022.

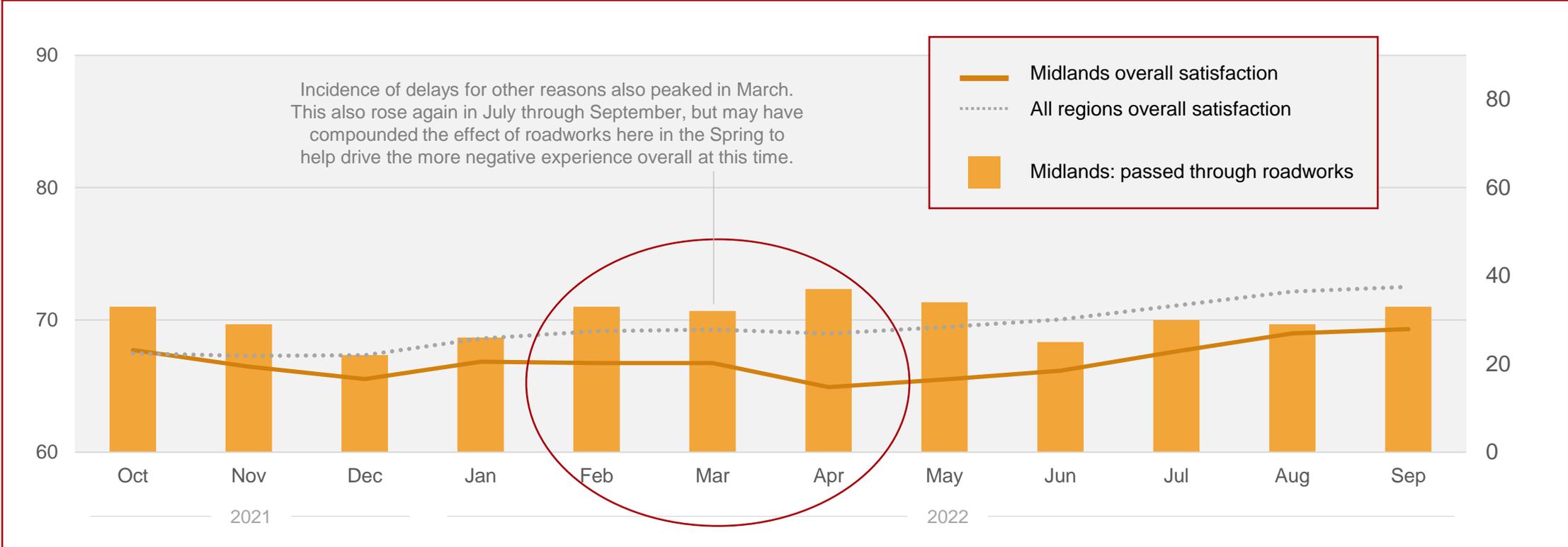
Key metrics over time (% very/fairly, rolling 12 monthly*)



Base: all SRN users surveyed, Oct '21 – Sep '22 (2,844-7,322)
 Midlands: (616-1,641)
 *Until March 2022, data is YTD from April 2021 onwards, due to a methodology change in April 2021
 Data is shown as fully 12 month rolling figures from March 2022.

This Spring 2022 drop in journey satisfaction in the Midlands corresponds closely with a period of (perceived) increased roadworks, peaking in April

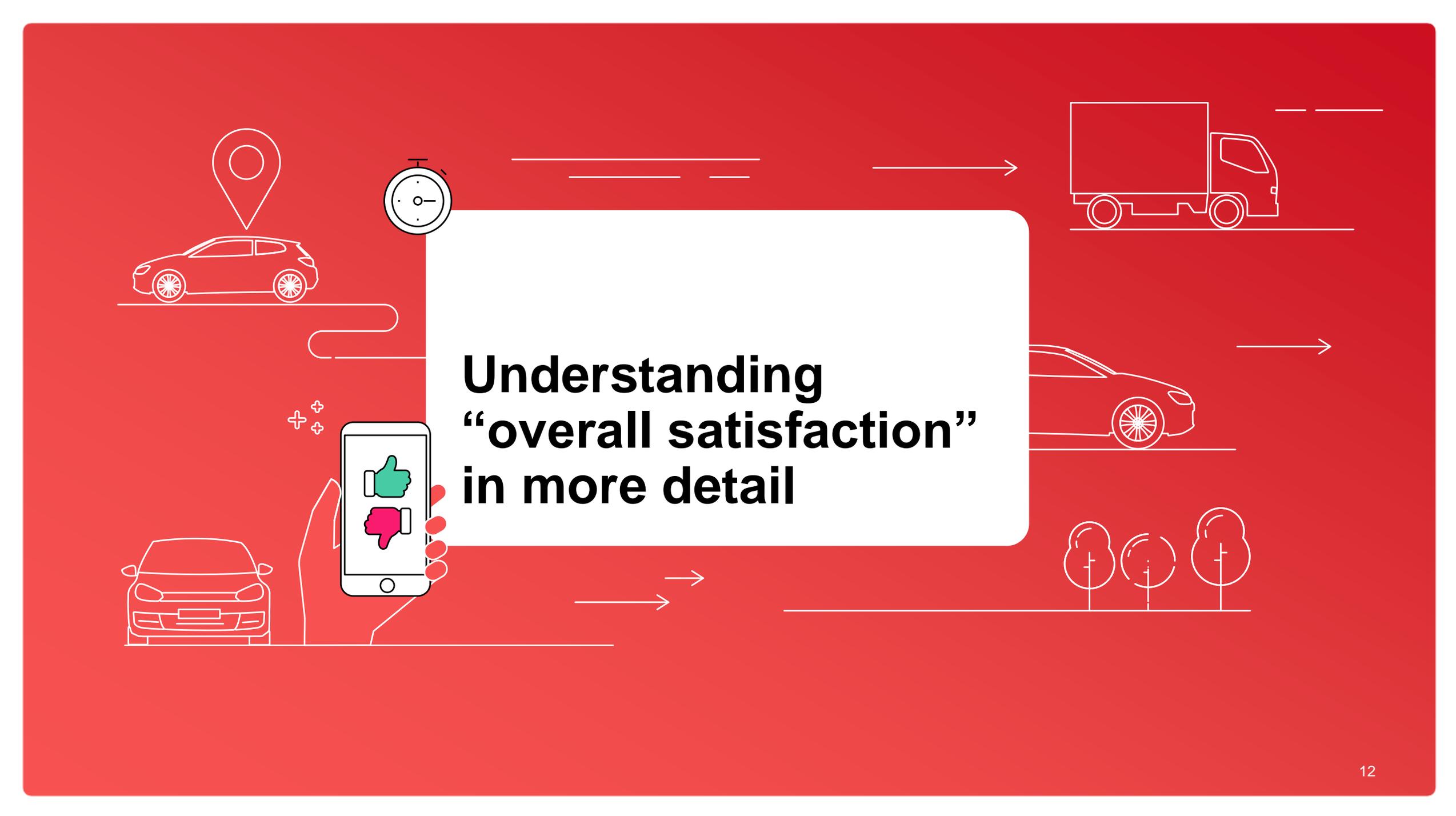
Overall satisfaction (% very/fairly, rolling 12 monthly*)
 + Perceived presence of roadworks (shown for each month individually)



Base for overall satisfaction (shown as rolling 12 monthly*): all SRN users surveyed, Oct '21 – Sep '22 (2,844-7,322); Midlands: (616-1,641)

Based for presence of roadworks (shown as discrete months): Midlands (95-191)

*Until March 2022, data is YTD from April 2021 onwards, due to a methodology change in April 2021. Data is shown as fully 12 month rolling figures from March 2022.

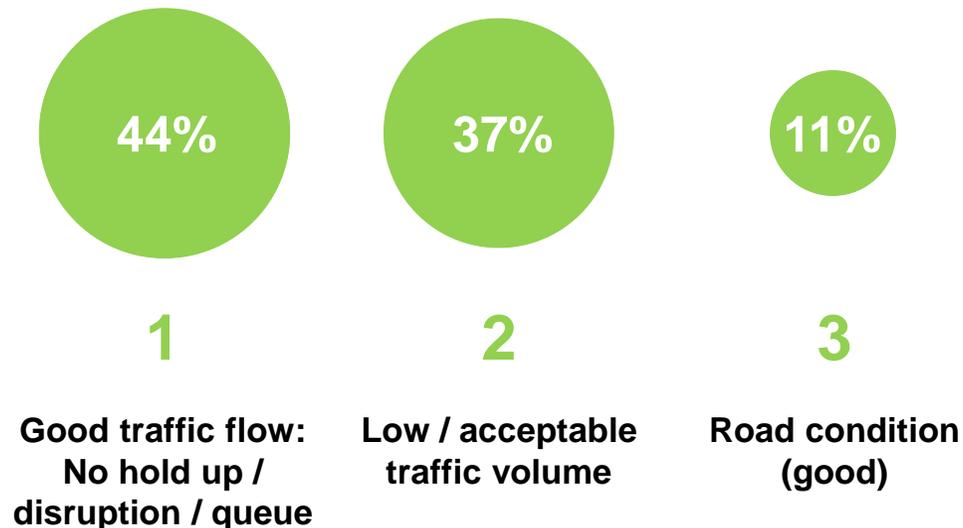


Understanding “overall satisfaction” in more detail

There are three main themes in the reasons users give for satisfactory journeys in the Midlands

Strategic road users in this region were asked **why** they were satisfied or dissatisfied with their journey, in their own words. We have quantified the key themes which arose, from a random sample of their responses.

Satisfaction: top 3 reasons
(very / fairly satisfied)
% mentioning topic



A minority also mention some other factors, including:

- Good lane provision / appreciate dual carriageway
- Good signage

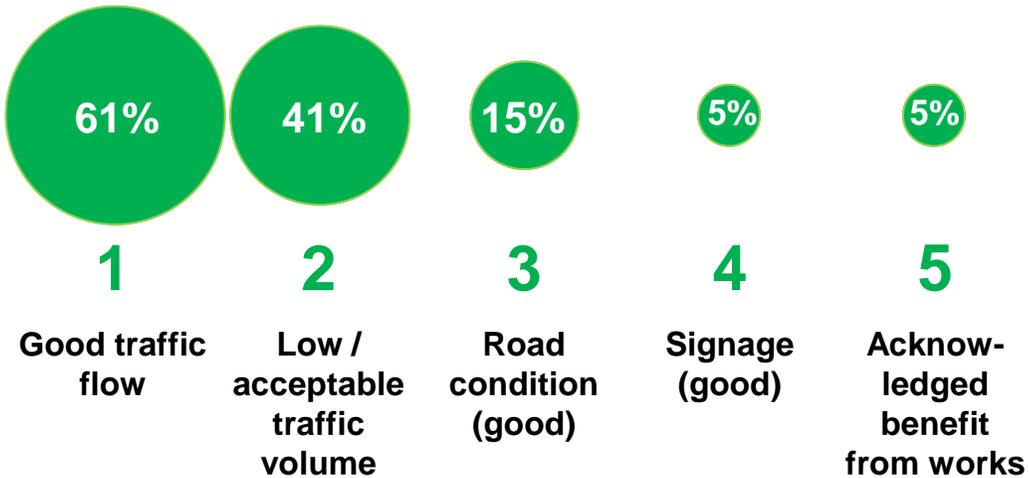
...and some also mention negative factors, which usually explain why they rated their journey as “fairly” rather than “very” satisfactory: see more on this on the next page.

Data shown here is for Midlands; patterns are very similar at national level

Base: sample of those giving a rationale for overall satisfaction rating Oct 21-Sep 22 – satisfied, Midlands (101), all regions (200)

Ultimately the absence of disruptions, i.e. where drivers can “keep going”, makes for **fully satisfactory** rather than simply “ok” journeys

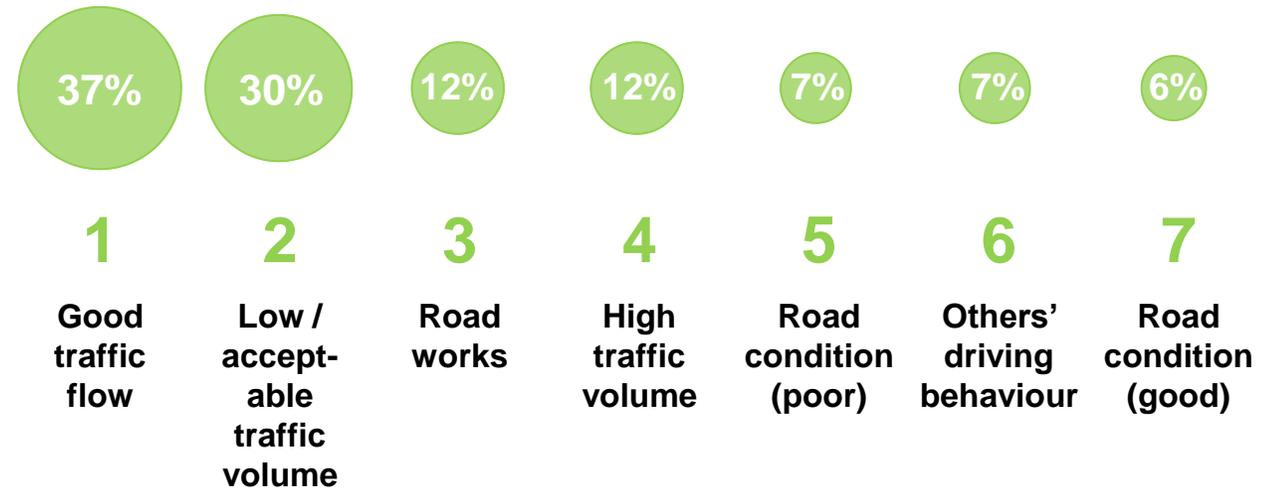
Very satisfied: top reasons
% mentioning topic



Plus:

- ✓ a **range of other factors relating to good management and features** of roads
- ✓ and a **near-total absence of issues** like roadworks, congestion, poor maintenance / markings / signage, etc.

Fairly satisfied: top reasons
% mentioning topic



Plus a **range of other factors relating to poor management and features** of roads

It's worth acknowledging that those who are “fairly satisfied” with SRN journeys often still experience some issues. So while two thirds are satisfied overall in the Midlands, there is scope to increase the proportion who are “very” satisfied (currently around a third in the Midlands, which is below all other regions)

Findings on this page are at national level 

Absence of (anticipated or previous) disruption makes for a good journey; fairly satisfied users often feel some aspect of a journey could have been better – or they see a good journey as atypical

Very satisfied: Example comments (Midlands)

- “ No traffic. Smooth road surface. Good slip roads ”
- “ It was quiet so not too many lorries. M50 is only 2 carriages wide so if it's busy lorries will take up both lanes to overtake which can take a while. ”
- “ No problems encountered, traffic flowed well, good signage ”
- “ I travel on the A38 often and am aware of its upgrades as time has gone on. Only draw back is the number of lorries that use it because it is like a second motorway ”
- “ A46 was made into dual carriageway some years ago. This massively improved journey times. It rarely gets really busy and is a good smooth road to drive on ”
- “ Roadworks had finished so it was a swift journey ”
- “ The M42 was unusually easy flowing traffic and no hold ups ”
- “ We left the heavily congested M42 to take the M6 Toll road which was much clearer. ”
- “ That short part of the A14 that I drove on is relatively new and has an additional lane towards A43 Northampton ”

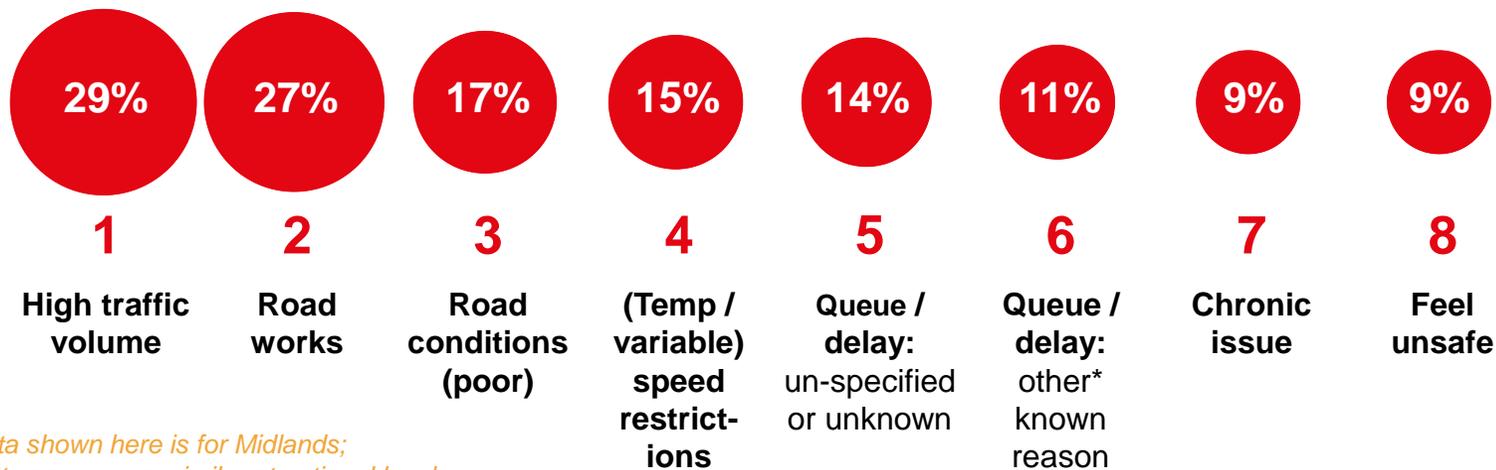
Fairly satisfied: Example comments (Midlands)

- “ Although there are a lot of road works on that stretch currently it is generally well managed. ”
- “ Road in reasonable condition, not a large amount of uneven surface or pot holes. Traffic kept flowing ”
- “ Ok last night, but who knows [because] from one night to another can be different ”
- “ Light traffic and the road surface is adequate ”
- “ There were a couple of places where there were road works or slow traffic ”
- “ Travelled on M6 Toll. Link from M54 to M6Toll is a bit crummy. ”
- “ Tractor in the inside lane causing slow traffic ”
- “ Had to divert onto this road due to multiple accidents blocking the M1. It was a significant diversion ... ”

Congestion and roadworks are the most common reasons for dissatisfaction, along with poor road surface, and other delays and their impact – and many users frustrated with ongoing nature of these issues

Strategic road users were asked **why** they were satisfied or dissatisfied with their journey, in their own words. We have quantified the key themes which arose, from a random sample of their responses.

Dissatisfaction: top reasons
(very / fairly dissatisfied, Midlands)
% mentioning topic



Data shown here is for Midlands; patterns are very similar at national level

Dissatisfaction: other reasons
(very / fairly dissatisfied)
% mentioning topic

Others' driving behaviour	6%
No hard shoulder	6%
Smart motorway (other comments)	5%
Poor signage / info	5%
Too few lanes / closures	5%
Other	19%

Note that **while roadworks are among the most common reasons for dissatisfaction, other delays can be more impactful when they happen.** For journeys affected by roadworks, 21% are dissatisfactory; this compares to 35% when affected by other types of delays, and 52% where traffic is congested for any reason.

Together with qualitative feedback as here, this suggests that there may be some more tolerance for “deliberate” disruptions – about which drivers can be informed in advance – but congestion and delays, especially if unexpected or (perceived as) avoidable, are less acceptable. Information doesn’t solve, but can help to mitigate, these scenarios.

Base: sample of those giving a rationale for overall satisfaction rating Oct 21-Sep 22 – dissatisfied, Midlands (132), all regions (200)

* i.e. not (only) roadworks, speed restrictions / traffic volume; includes accidents, stranded vehicles, debris, and traffic management infrastructure like roundabouts, traffic lights, etc., for example

These issues can cause real frustration – and some aspects of SRN management can be emotive

Dissatisfied (very/fairly): Example comments (Midlands)

“ The M42 was closed at J3a so we could not travel from J3, requiring us to make a diversion off the motorway. Then roadworks from J4 to J6 but no sign of workers ”

“ Lots of very inconsiderate and selfish drivers making even the short journey quite stressful ”

“ If you get to the M1 to join the M69 any time from 7.15am, you hit stand still. I already leave early to ensure I'm in the office before rush hour but it seems to be getting earlier all the time. The exit from M1 to M69 is horrendous! ”

“ Resurfacing roadworks South of Whitchurch with REALLY AWFUL diversions indicated ”

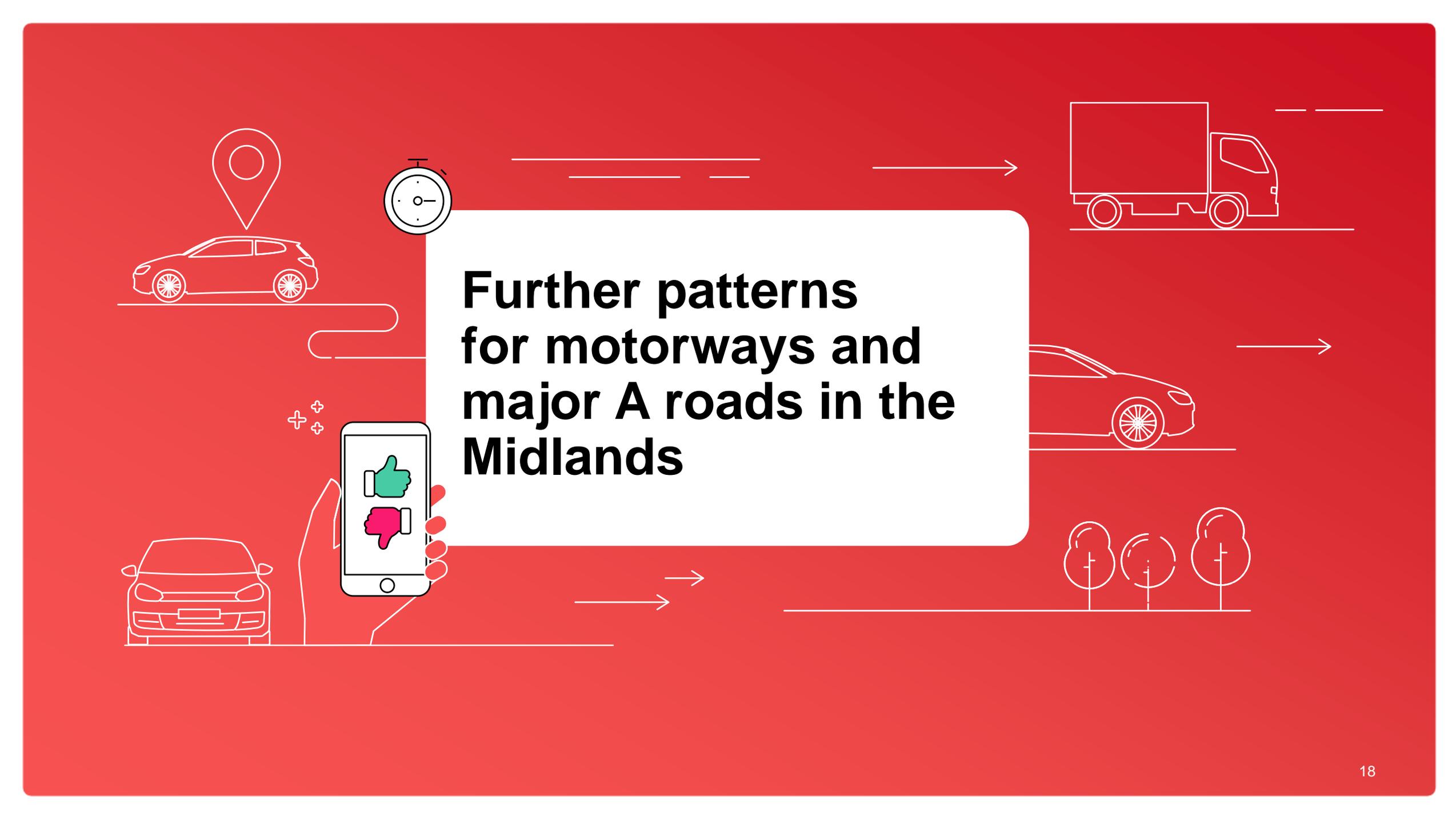
“ I was in a traffic jam for more than 2 hours ”

“ Constant road work ...is making the journeys very slow going. There has been plenty of time to do these in the last two years when the motorway was quiet through covid ”

“ Lanes too narrow, slipways too short, other traffic driving too fast, speed limits inconsistent ...and blind summits ”

“ Every 50 yards there are joins and it is awful. It really bounces the vehicle ”

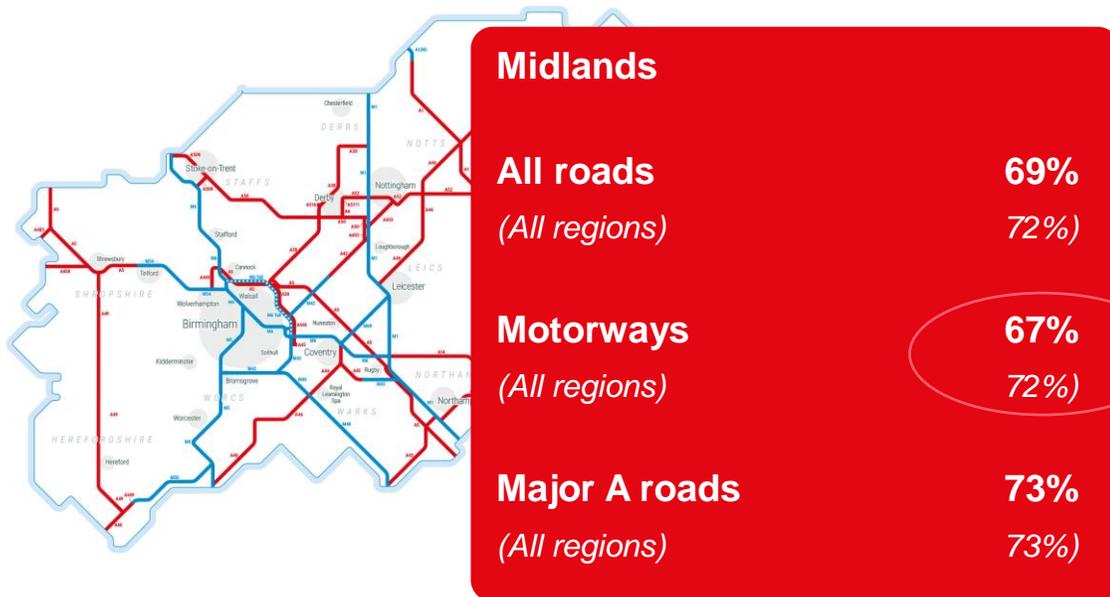
“ M54 runs over bridges between Telford and Cosford which have major errors or incompetence in construction that have created major bumps in road surface, full width. very much like speed bumps only worse when travelling at 70mph. They will definitely be causing vehicle damage and accident risk. ”



Further patterns for motorways and major A roads in the Midlands

There is of course a range of experience within the region, and in particular, **the Midlands' motorways are performing less well, both compared its major A roads, and the all-region average for motorways**

Overall satisfaction by road / road type within Midlands



Lower satisfaction in particular on the M42, and Midlands sections of the M1 and M6

Overall satisfaction by road*

A500	86	A1	70
M40	85	A5	68
A50	79	M42	68
A38	75	M1	66
M5	74	M6	55
A45	74		
A46	73		
A14	73		

*Results shown for individual roads where sample size is ≥ 75 . All data at road level based on Apr '21 – Sep '22.
All Motorways: All regions (3,902), Midlands (807). All A Roads: All regions (3,420), Midlands (834)

Nationally, the biggest causes of dissatisfaction on motorways are roadworks, congestion and other delays (for various reasons)

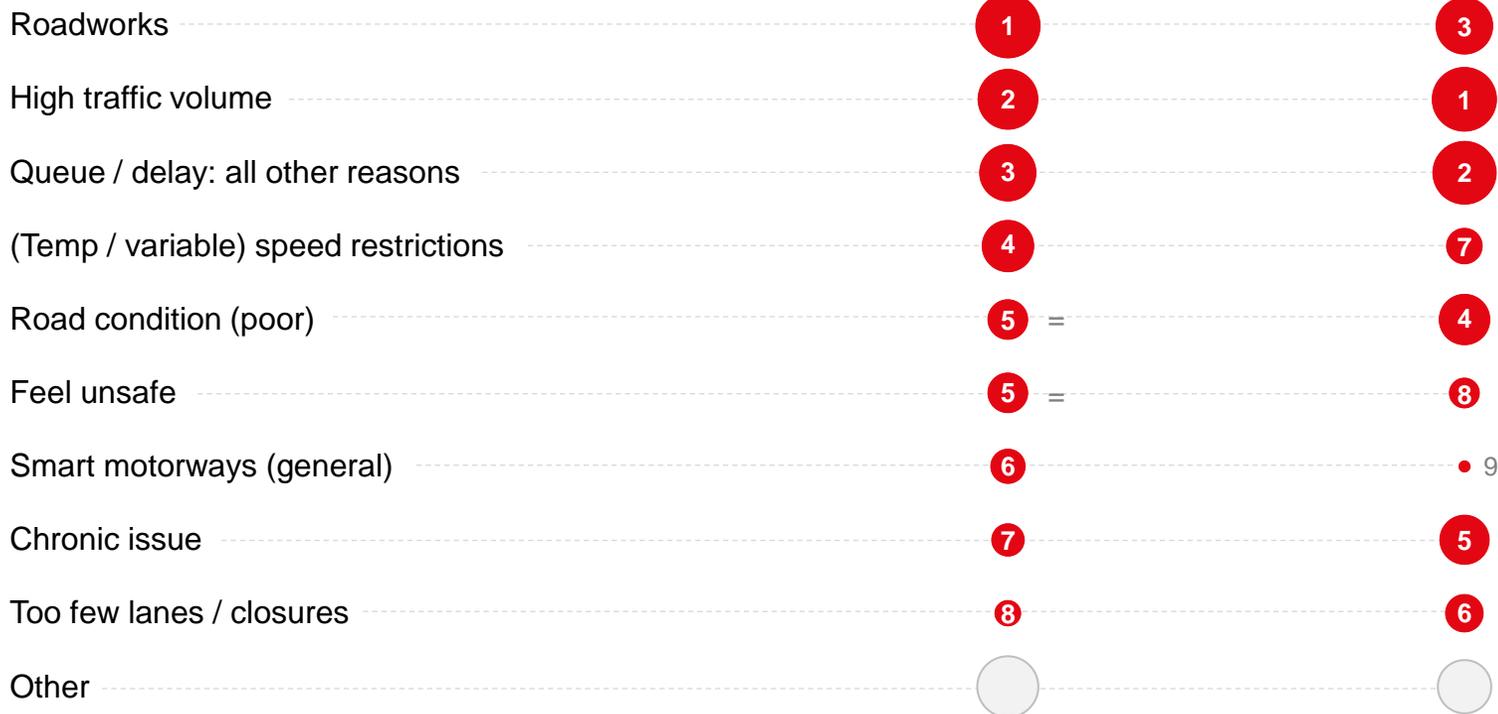
Dissatisfaction: top reasons

(very / fairly dissatisfied)

Bubble size indicates relative frequency of mentions, with rank order shown

Motorways
(all regions)

Major A roads
(all regions)



Findings on this page are at national level 

Temporary speed limits, other features of **smart motorways** and **safety** are also important, for having the **potential to cause dissatisfaction on motorways in particular** (more so than on major A roads)

Base: sample of those giving a rationale for overall dissatisfaction rating Oct 21-Sep 22 – motorways (100), A-roads (100)

Common themes coded up from free-text responses

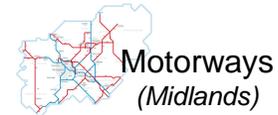
Very similar reasons for motorway dissatisfaction in the Midlands, but **lack / removal of hard shoulders** and **poor driving** seen as a little more prevalent here, along with **perception of issues being ongoing**

Dissatisfaction: top reasons

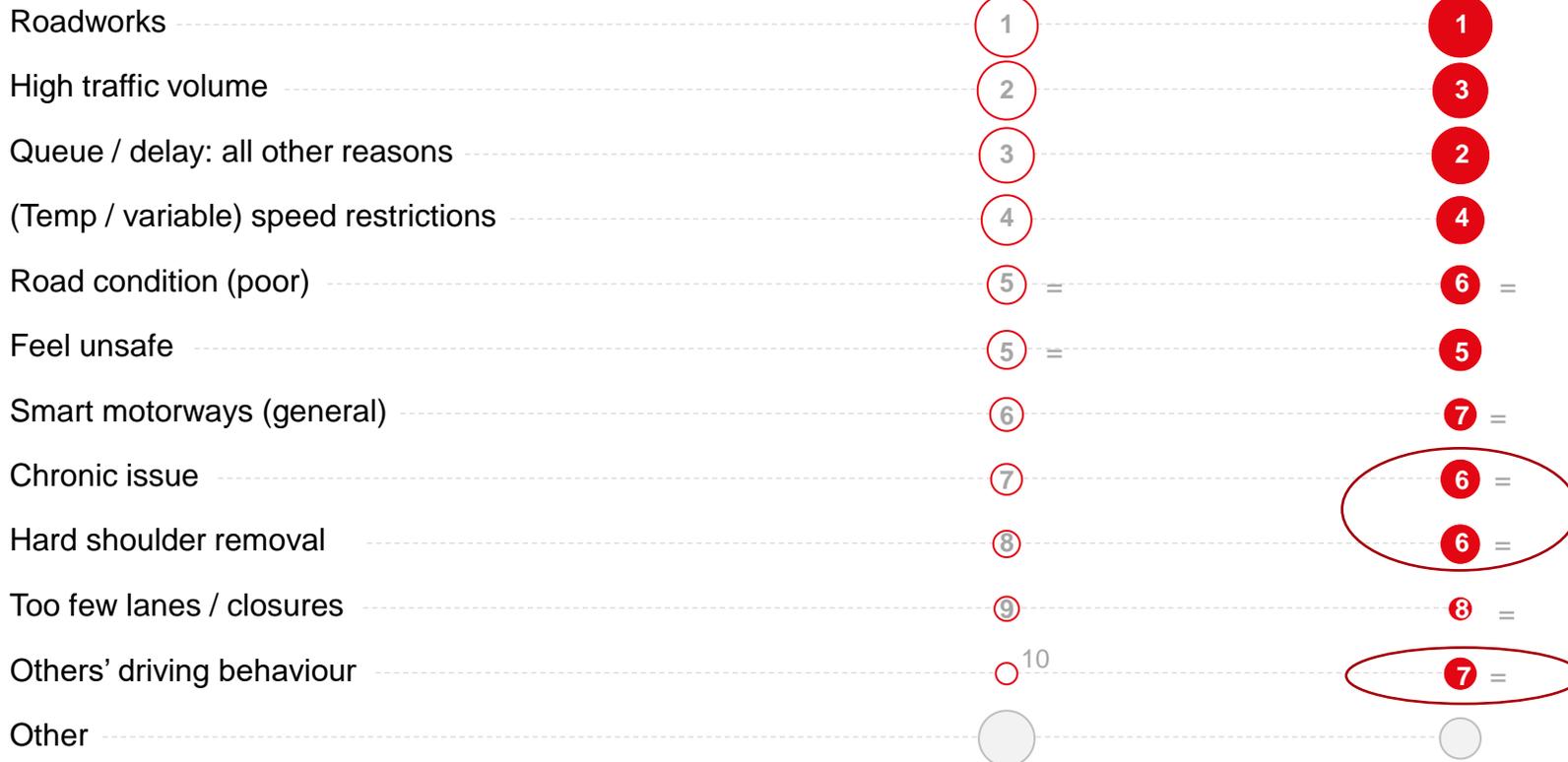
(very / fairly dissatisfied)

Bubble size indicates relative frequency of mentions, with rank order shown

Motorways (all regions)



Motorways (Midlands)



“ A significant number of lorries were overtaking, despite there being clear “no overtaking” signs.... This lead to tailbacks in the fast lane as the lorries take significant time to overtake ”

“ Due to [the] lack of hard shoulder, breakdowns block one of two lanes, [plus] with three roundabouts to pass on this stretch of the A50 traffic backs up for miles over the slightest thing, causing a 20 mins journey to turn into a few hours ”

“ No hard shoulder, and refuge areas extremely dangerously sparse, which causes significant stress and anxiety in all vehicle occupants ”

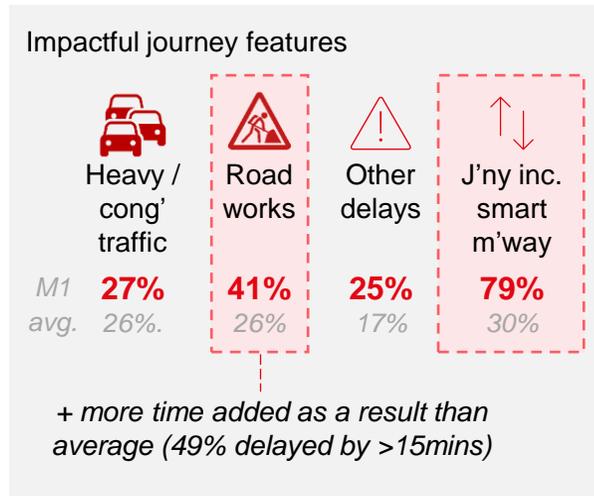
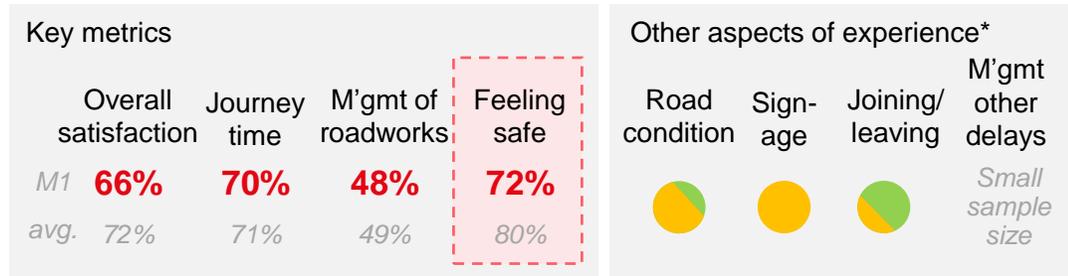
“ Every Friday same story: J10 to J8 crawling for no reason ”

Base: sample of those giving a rationale for overall dissatisfaction rating Oct 21-Sep 22 – All regions motorways (100), Midlands motorways (50)

Common themes coded up from free-text responses

Midlands motorways delivering fewest satisfactory journeys: driven by roadworks, congestion, irritation at smart management, and others' (related?) poor driving

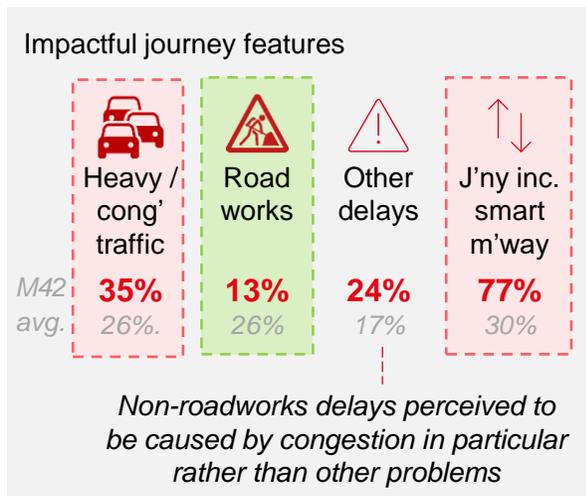
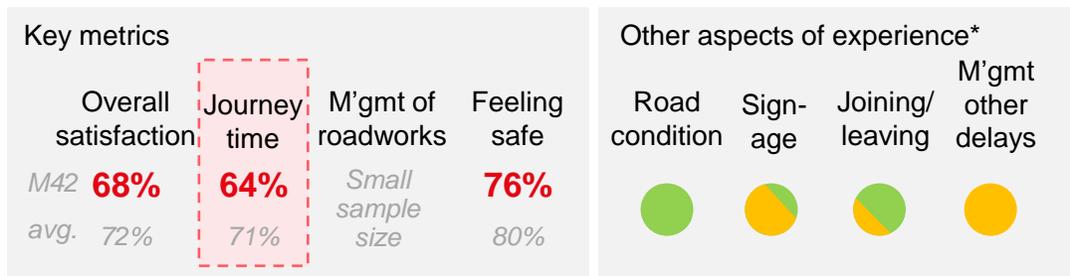
M1 Relatively poor feeling of safety, likely linked to perceived high incidence of works and smart roadway, and poor driving practice



Drivers' own comments reflect all of the issues highlighted here, as well as some mentions of others' poor driving.

This is also evident in the data, with **86% witnessing poor driving**, the highest for all roads in the region, and well above average of 70%. **Poor lane discipline** is the most common issue here (even more so than elsewhere).

M42 Little impact from roadworks, but congestion and smart speed restrictions contributing to poor journey times



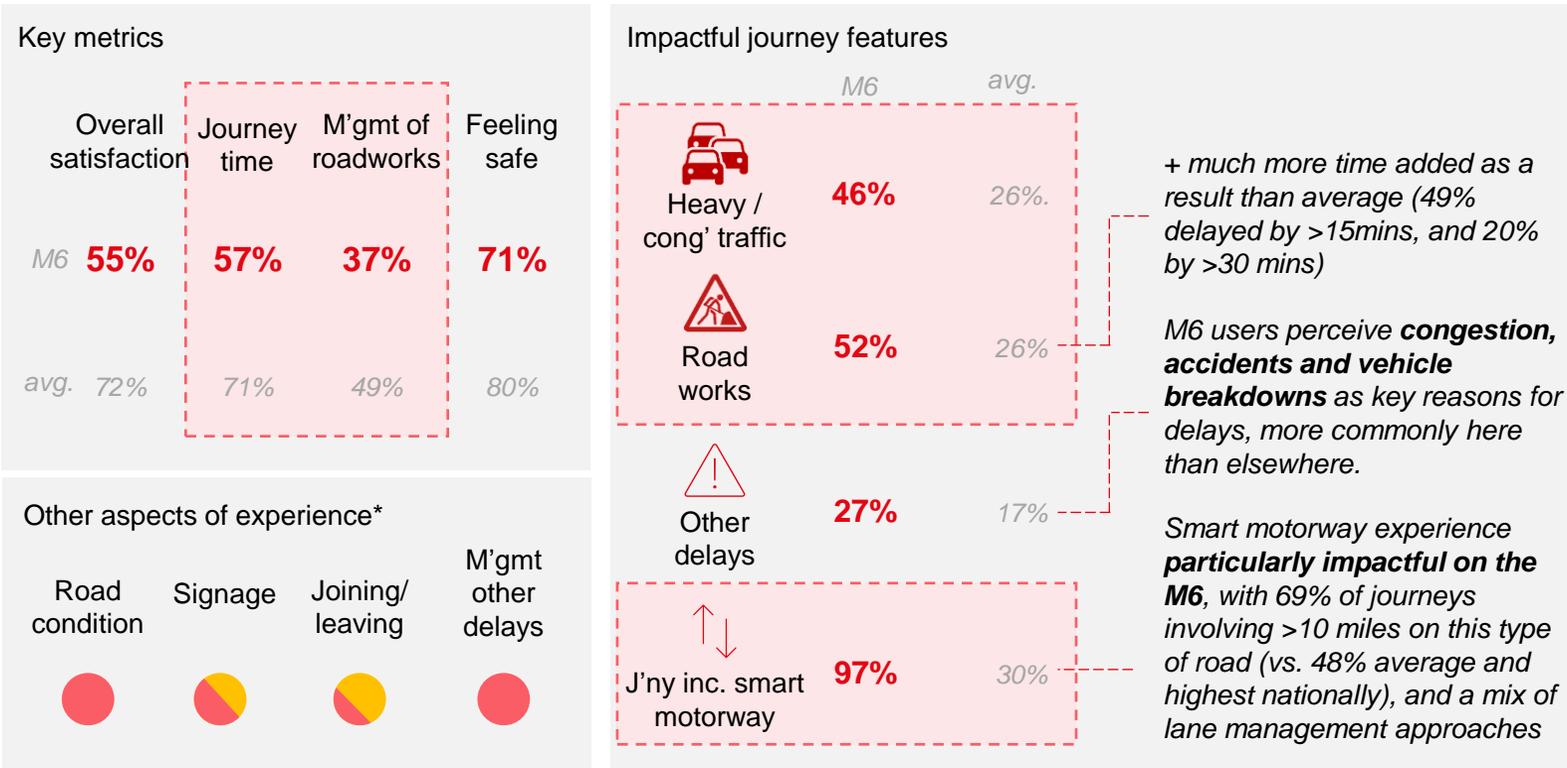
Beyond congestion, comments in drivers' own words focus on **smart measures which they feel cause rather than ease crowding**.

Smart motorway concerns also especially evident in other measures of M42 experience, inc:

- Variable **speed restrictions more often felt to be too low** here, compared to other roads
- Almost all smart sections involve **dynamic hard shoulder, which is often commented upon as particularly disliked**

...all felt more sharply on M6 in particular, where especially high congestion looks to be causing greater impact when disruptions – themselves common – occur

M6 Roadworks and congestion seen as very common, as well as other delays both resulting from and increasing the impact of these factors. Other aspects (condition, signage, etc.) also rated more poorly for M6: perceptions possibly being exacerbated by poor experience overall.



All of this is reflected in the way that M6 users explain their satisfaction rating: their **focus is on congestion, frustration with aspects of smart motorway management, and often a perceived link between the two**

“ Heavy traffic and the congestion lane wasn't open (hard shoulder) ”

“ Massive traffic jam, as normal ”

“ Road works ...add between 30 to 45 minutes more to the journey in rush hours ”

“ The M6 is the M6 to be honest. The 60 mph is unnecessary as 70 mph is sufficient just causes more chaos. ”

Broader experience and opinion of the operation of smart motorways: snapshot

Findings on this page are at national level



Many take the opportunity in this survey to express **disagreement with the concept, mainly around safety concerns from no hard shoulder**, as well as some frustration with variable speed limits

“...since it has been a smart motorway ...I no longer use the M42 during the rush hour because I cannot be certain that I will reach my destination on time.”

“ I do not like smart motorways as they are dangerous... the M27 is being converted. Once completed I will avoid it.”

“...do not like the smart motorways. They are terrifying if you were to break down”

“...the dangerous and stupid smart road which makes journeys take longer and is more dangerous”

Smart motorways make a high contribution to Midlands SRN journeys, second only to M25

46%

Smart motorway on any part of journey vs. national m'way avg 30%

31%

Use unpopular dynamic hard shoulder vs. avg. 11%

62%

>10miles on smart motorway vs. avg 48%

Satisfaction is lower overall among those using smart motorways



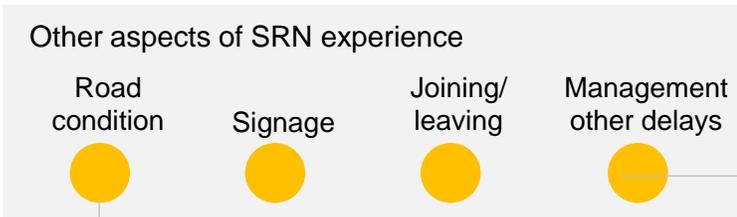
...especially for journey times and safety

Other key metrics	Journey time	R'works management	Feeling safe
Smart motorway	67%	48%	77%
Non-smart motorway	77%*	52%	85%

Journey times more likely to exceed expectations (27% vs 15% for non-smart motorways), be affected by heavy traffic / congestion (31% vs. 20%), roadworks (32% vs 23%) and other delays (23% vs 12%)

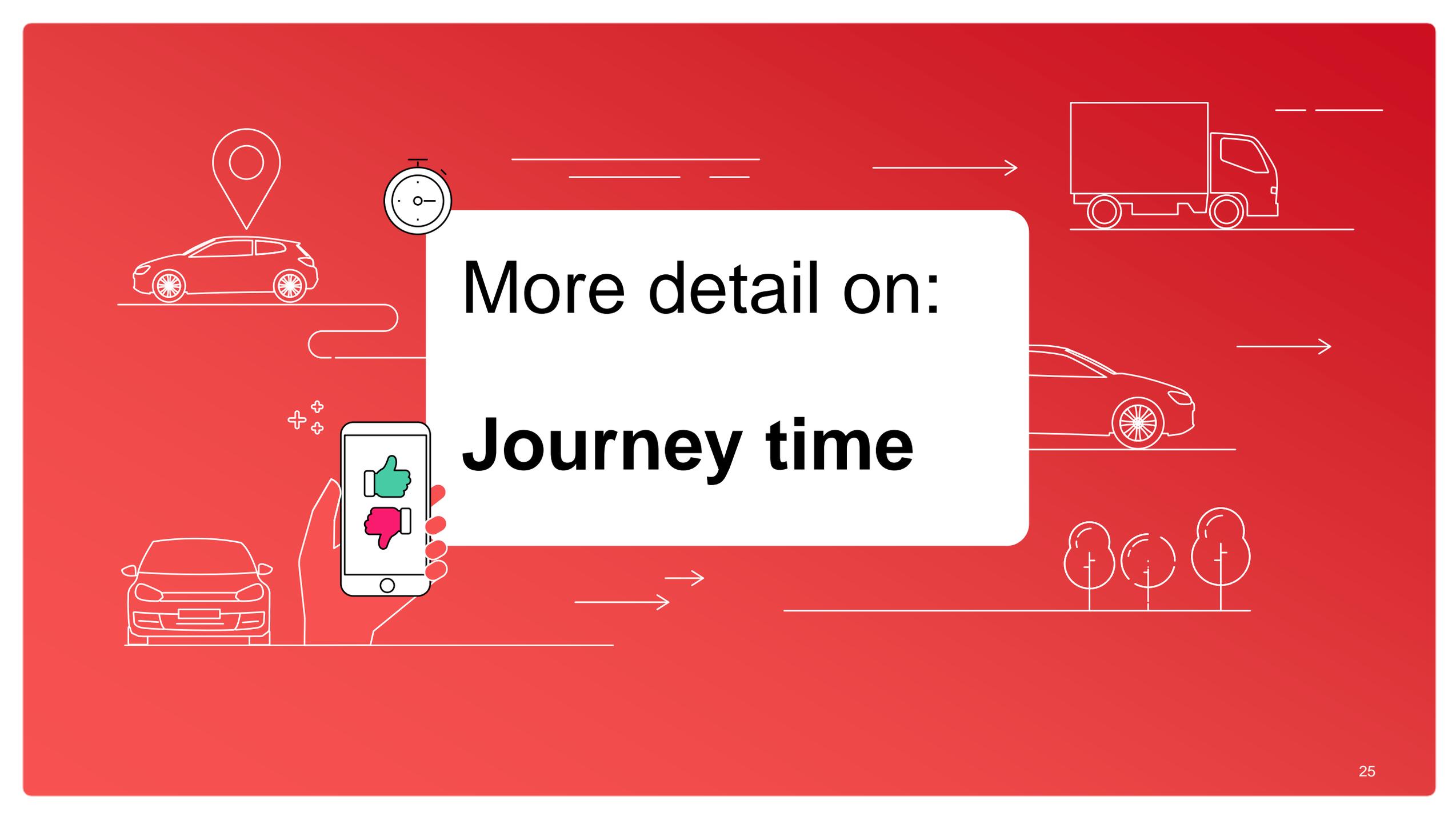
Others' poor driving – mainly lane discipline – also observed more often on smart motorways

Despite some vocal complaints, in practice signage is rated similarly to other motorways



Lighting after dark rated better than other motorways, for these more recently upgraded roads

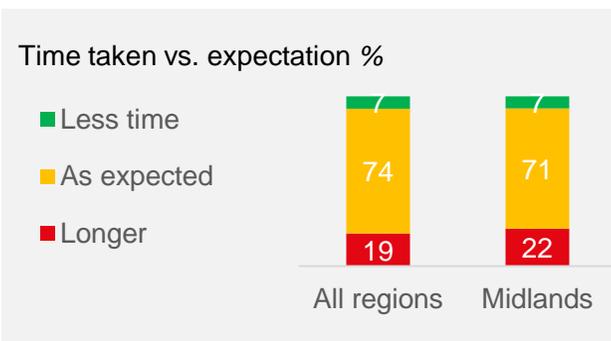
While relatively few drivers (on any road) rate delay management well, smart motorway users are less dissatisfied with information provision. They are typically a little better informed about delays, both in advance and during their journey, with online maps and electronic signage important in this.



More detail on:
Journey time

Users' experience of journey times on the SRN in the Midlands

Journey time a little less satisfactory than the average, with a fifth of Midlands journeys taking longer than expected

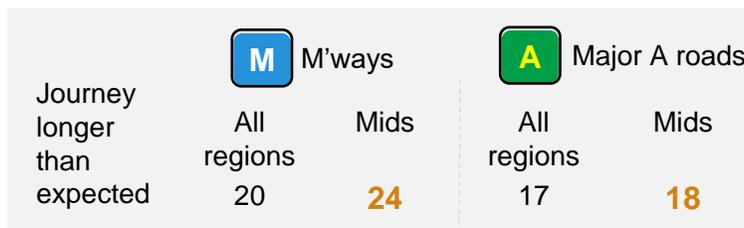


Base: all SRN users surveyed, Midlands, Oct '21 – Sep '22 (1,644)

While major A road journey times here are similarly rated to the national average – if not slightly better – only two thirds are satisfied with motorway timings



...which are more likely to be delayed than in any other region except M25



As we've seen in earlier pages, this is likely linked to:

- More congestion on Midlands motorways than elsewhere
- More frequent roadworks and other delays on motorways here, with greater impact (more time added) for each roadworks encounter in particular
- A feeling that issues are ongoing, and in some cases are linked to motorway management (i.e. smart motorways and lack of hard shoulder exacerbating effect of breakdowns)

Punctuality is overtly important in half of journeys



- This is usually:
- associated with work journeys
 - more for outward journeys, especially in weekday morning peaks
 - a little more so for van/lorry (professional) drivers

59% set off early, allowing 25 mins contingency (vs. 24 mins on average across all regions)

Setting off early is associated with same-day commuting journeys, especially in morning peaks. However, in other contexts, even where arrival time is important, people are no more likely to allow contingency (perhaps they are not able to, e.g. among delivery drivers?)

Many people set off earlier if they can, so **advance information on delays is vital.**

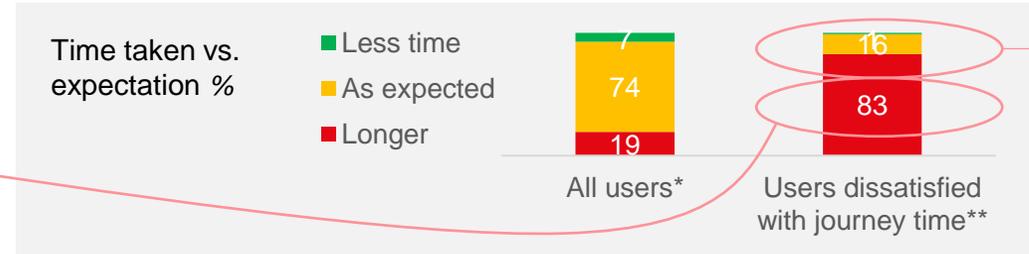
Nevertheless, it cannot be assumed that they will or can do this, so **continued pressure is also needed to improve and protect journey times**, particularly on the region's motorways

What causes dissatisfaction with journey time?

Findings on this page are at national level 

Almost all dissatisfaction with journey times comes when the **journey is longer than expected:**

Similar pattern by region



...but there is also a substantial minority who **know their journey time will be poor, and this is indeed subsequently borne out**

When things don't go to plan

- Heavy traffic features in most journeys which are felt to take too long
- Roadworks also often contribute, but other types of disruption tolerated even less

Journeys with dissatisfactory duration**: % featuring...	(Benchmark: all journeys)
Roadworks	47 25
Other delays	59 17
Heavy / congested traffic	76 24

Base:
 *SRN users surveyed, all regions Oct '21-Sep '22 (6,849)
 **All dissatisfied with journey time (684)
 ***Delayed by xx mins due to roadworks / other (105-902)

When this means added time, there is **some tolerance for delays up to 15 mins for roadworks**, but **much less so for other types** of disruption



Longer term dissatisfactory road provision

Journeys that are expected to, and indeed do take longer than they should, are disproportionately prevalent....

- On major A roads
- In certain regions (especially SE and NW)
- Among frequent users, especially commuters or those travelling for other work reasons
- Weekday morning peaks
- OR after dark
- When weather is worse

And users' comments indicate that often (for c. 40% of journeys), **they experience ongoing issues that they perceive should or could be addressed**

- “ Always surface water ...and always heavy traffic no matter what time of day [M6] ”
- “ Despite upgrades to the surface, [this road] is horrendous... It is so in need of being turned into a dual carriageway...and it is in constant need of repair due to the heavy traffic it takes [A120] ”
- “ Traffic volume...[it's] the only major road [here] ...so everyone uses [it] for every journey [A500] ”
- “ Stupid amounts of traffic lights that ...allow one car out of a pointless side road that barely anyone goes down [A47] ”

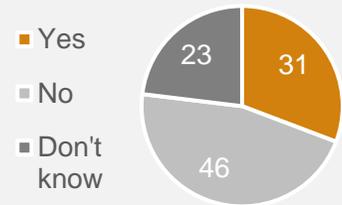
More detail on: **Experience of roadworks**



SRN users' experience of roadworks in the Midlands

A third of journeys in the Midlands passed through roadworks

Passed through works %



Compares to all-regions average of 25% that passed through roadworks

Noticeable prevalence of roadworks is again especially high on motorways in this region:

34% of motorway journeys passed through works, vs. 26% for all motorway journeys, and second only to the North West where 38% motorway journeys are affected

Most journeys affected by roadworks are delayed by no more than 15 mins, but the proportion delayed by more than this is much higher here than any other region except M25

Time added by works %

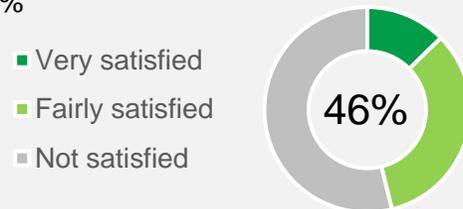


Time added to journeys on major A roads here is in line with the average for all major A roads.

Time added on motorway journeys is above average, with 44% affected journeys taking an additional 15 mins or more, compared to 31% on average for all motorway journeys.

Under half of those affected are satisfied with roadworks management

Satisfaction with works management %



Satisfaction with works management on motorways in this region is below average (43% compared to 49% for all motorways).

Management on major A roads perceived to be a little better than average, but it remains the case that only just over half (54%) of those affected on major A roads are satisfied.

Advance warning increases satisfaction with how roadworks are managed, and the earlier the better (though satisfaction is low overall despite this)

Satisfaction with roadworks management, among those who were.... %	Unaware	Aware after setting off (not before)	Aware before setting off
	35	50	53

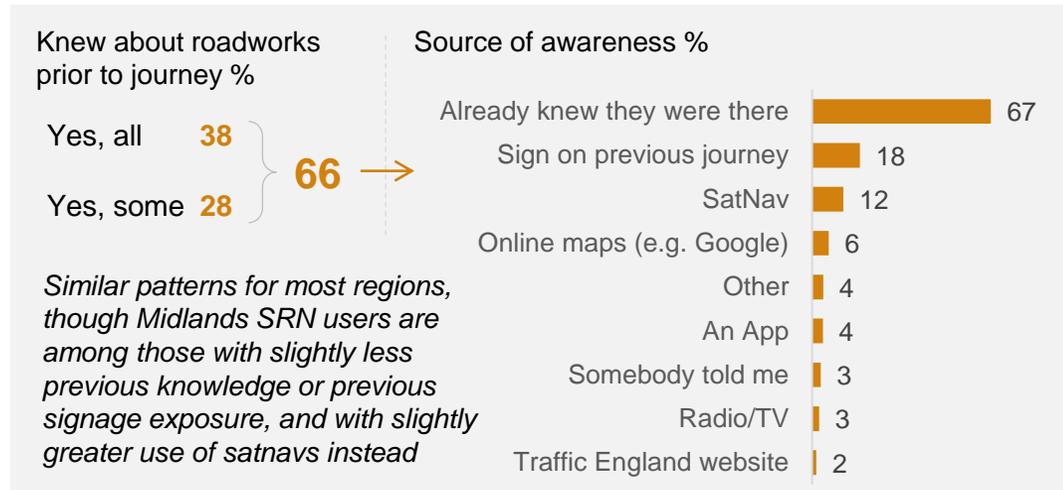
Inevitably it may be difficult to truly satisfy users in the context of a disrupted journey, but other factors in management of works can exacerbate this experience.

Comments from users who are dissatisfied with roadwork management highlight themes including:

- Perception of unreasonable impact:
 - Excessive number of encounters with works
 - Unnecessary length of road affected
 - Excessive duration
- Little evidence of work taking place in practice
- Unclear benefit (or explicit disagreement with purpose, especially relating to smart motorways)
- Speed restrictions – especially multiple variations, and narrowed lanes
- Poor lighting or signage

Finding out about roadworks in the Midlands

Two thirds of those affected were aware of roadworks in advance of the journey, with previous exposure the main source of awareness



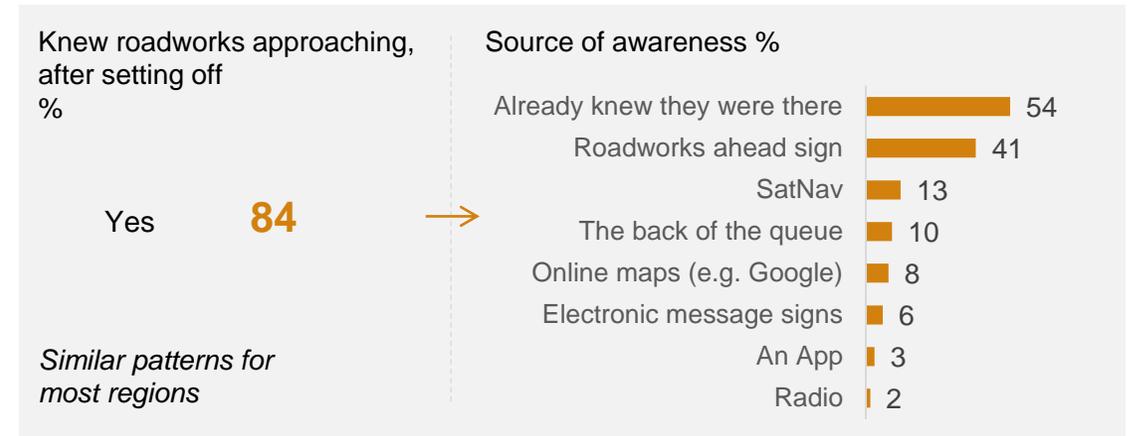
Reflecting this reliance on previous exposure, advance knowledge of roadworks is associated with more frequent usage – especially commuters and professional drivers. **Those making less frequent journeys, typically for leisure, are less informed.**

Likely linked to this, people are less informed when travelling off peak and at weekends, and in sunnier weather or, conversely, after dark.

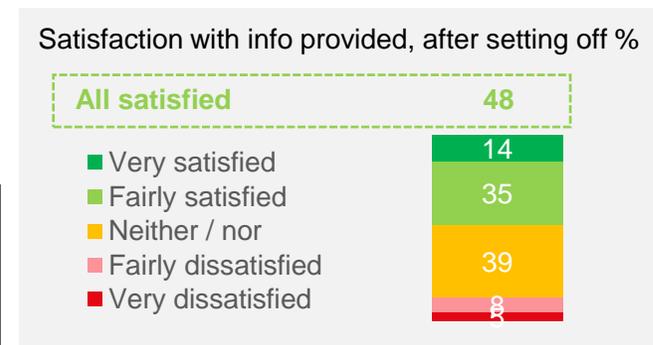
Can more be done in periods of higher leisure travel to target less-informed groups?

Can more be done around road-side signage visibility, especially in the dark?

Most were aware they were approaching roadworks as they made the journey: own experience again important here, along with road signage



And in this context, in-journey information is satisfactory to only half of those who were aware of approaching works (Similar to all-region average)



Information from any source aids satisfaction here.

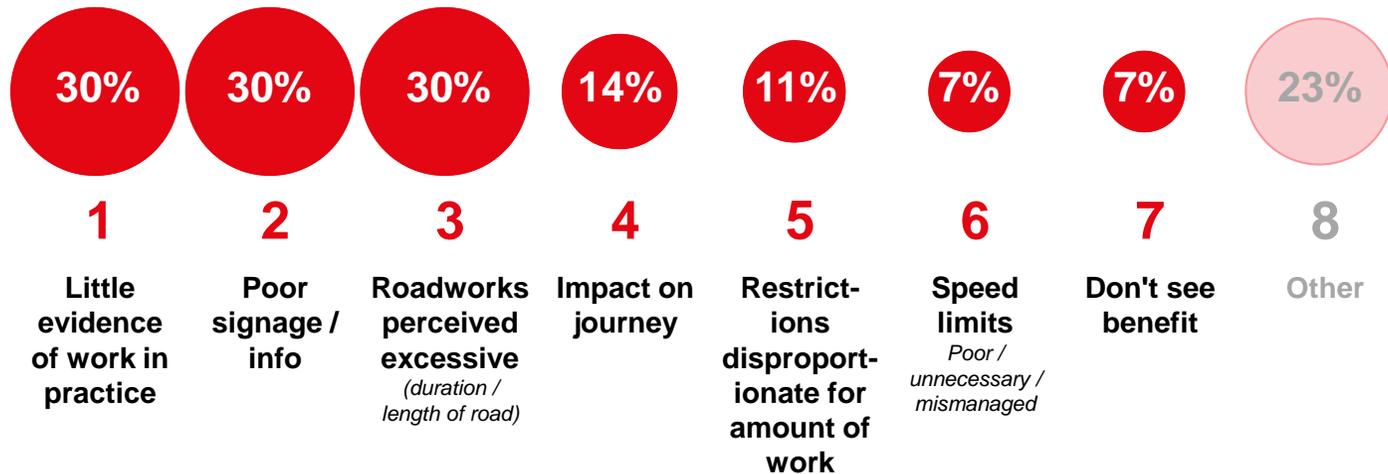
Unsurprisingly, dissatisfaction more likely when roadworks are only known about when already in a queue

Dissatisfaction with works management usually driven by apparent absence of actual work, signage issues, and a general perception of there being too much, for too long

Strategic road users were asked **why** they were satisfied or dissatisfied with roadworks management, in their own words. We have quantified the key themes which arose, from a random sample of their responses.

Findings on this page are at national level 

Dissatisfaction with roadworks management: top reasons
(very / fairly dissatisfied)
% mentioning topic



Similar pattern overall for motorways and major A roads, though with some minor differences.

- M** Dissatisfaction with management of motorway roadworks is a little more often based on:
- the **perception that the length of road affected is excessive**
 - and/or that **restrictions in place are unwarranted** for the perceived amount of work underway

(Likely linked to this), motorway users are also:

- less likely to see the benefit of works
- ...but to experience greater journey impact

- A** Dissatisfaction with works management on major A roads is a little more commonly linked to:
- **duration**
 - **lack of work taking place in practice**

(possibly linked to higher familiarity with major A roads among those using them, compared to motorways)

Analysis here is shown at all-regions level, but **qualitative feedback is similar in the Midlands as a whole.**

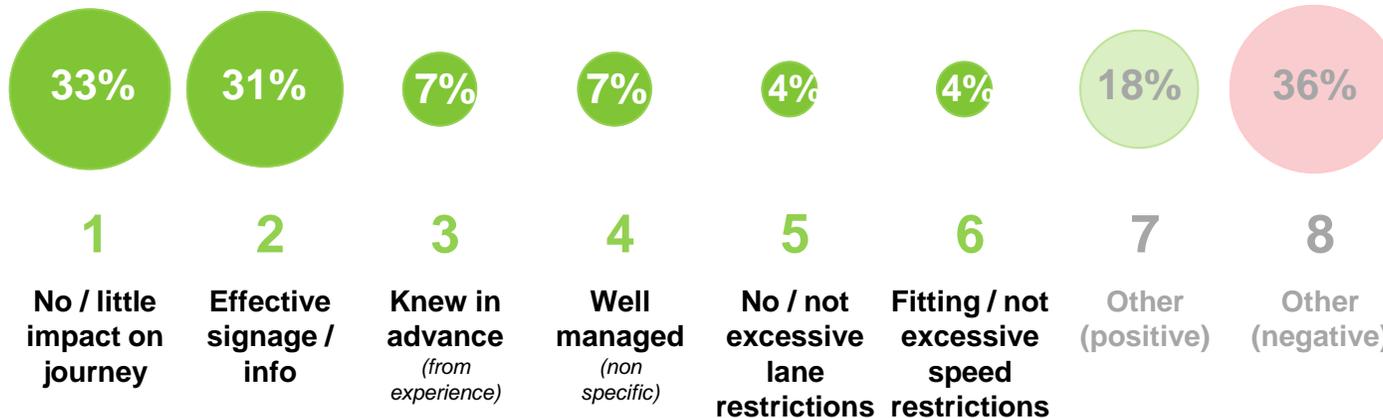
On **Midlands motorways** specifically – where incidence of works is perceived to be higher than most regions – users' comments are especially focussed on **perceived excessiveness**, i.e. that roadworks take too long or affect too much of the road at once. Linked to this, Midlands motorway users also express greater dissatisfaction with **speed restrictions, lane closures and safety around roadworks**, than in other regions.

When Midlands SRN users are satisfied with roadworks management, it's typically due to little material impact, and/or that they feel informed

Strategic road users were asked **why** they were satisfied or dissatisfied with roadworks management, in their own words. We have quantified the key themes which arose, from a random sample of their responses.

Findings on this page are at national level 

Satisfaction with roadworks management: top reasons
(very / fairly satisfied)
% mentioning topic



(Those satisfied overall with roadworks management still have some negative comments)

*Similar pattern overall for Midlands SRN users, though **just over half of comments from those generally satisfied with Midlands roadworks were negative***

Having little impact, and limited lane restrictions are more often mentioned for motorways

Information – especially signage – mentioned more often for major A roads

Base: sample of those giving a rationale for satisfaction with roadworks Oct 21-Sep 22
All (202), A roads (101), Motorways (101)
Midlands (all roads) (50)

Free-text comments relating to roadworks span a range of issues

Findings on this page are at national level 

Perception of unreasonable impact

- “ Extreme number of roadworks / holdups meant I had to find a number of alternative routes. ”
- “ The amount and length of roadworks and variety of speed limits. ”
- “ There is too much road improvement work ...between very short distances ”
- “ Ringwood roundabout is a mess at the moment. Roadworks going on forever. ”
- “ Roadworks have been on this road for over a year and are still causing problems ”
- “ Constant road works ...There's been plenty of time to do these in the last 2 years when the motorway was quiet through covid ...but then when everything back to normal at... more road works ”
- “ There is a 40mph section that seems to have been extended by around 10 miles more than needed as it's for a very small piece of road improvement works in Colchester, but it starts near Chelmsford. ”
- “ That expensive roadworks near Sainsbury has been going on for years! It's really annoying. ”

Management measures

- “ Road works ...very badly lit ”
- “ Resurfacing roadworks ...with REALLY AWFUL diversions indicated ”
- “ ...miles of work has been completed but the reduction to only 2 lanes is still in place. The lane reduction needs removed for the first few miles as it's complete ”

Unclear / disputed benefit

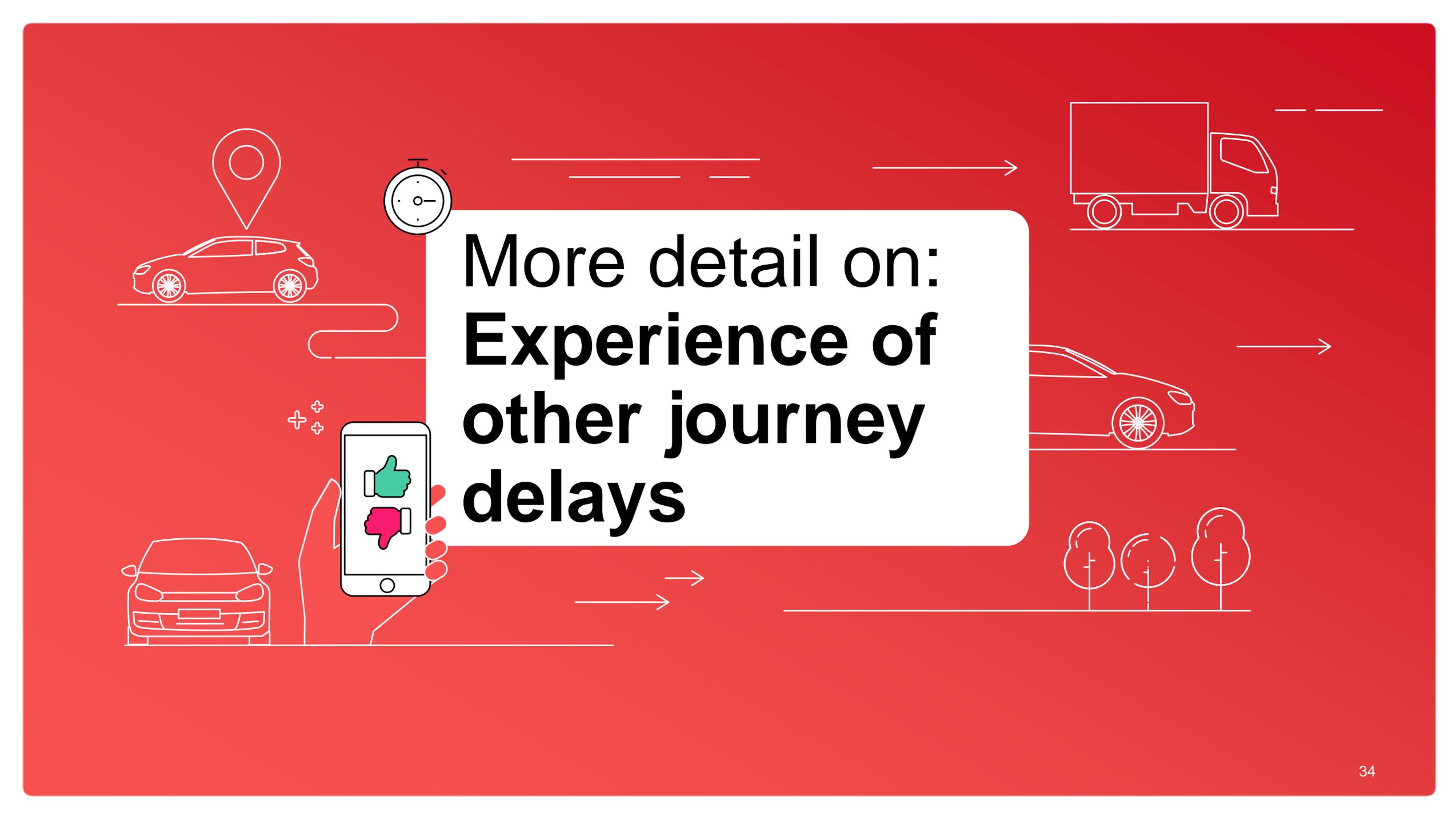
- “ Extensive roadworks and speed restrictions connected to creation of 'smart' motorway; a concept that is fundamentally flawed. ”
- “ Brexit-related roadworks, contraflows and speed restrictions still in place. ...a pain in the backside. One of the worst bits of motorway in the whole country. ”
- “ The "road improvements" they are implementing aren't even a token gesture in addressing the overall problem of the road being totally inadequate for the sheer volume of traffic that uses it. ”
- “ ...always some road closed, yet there are so many potholes on the very same fixed road after years of roadwork. ”

Little evidence of work in practice

- “ Too many road work obstructions with no work being carried out, i.e. traffic calming exercise. ”
- “ Traffic cones limiting lanes but no works apparently underway ”
- “ 40 MPH limit for a long stretch with no work being undertaken and no reason for the limit given ”
- “ Miles of lane closures but little work actually taking place ”

Keeping the impact of roadworks to a minimum is a real priority – with considerations for duration, length of road affected at any one time, and timing/placement of traffic management measures which are not perceived to be excessive

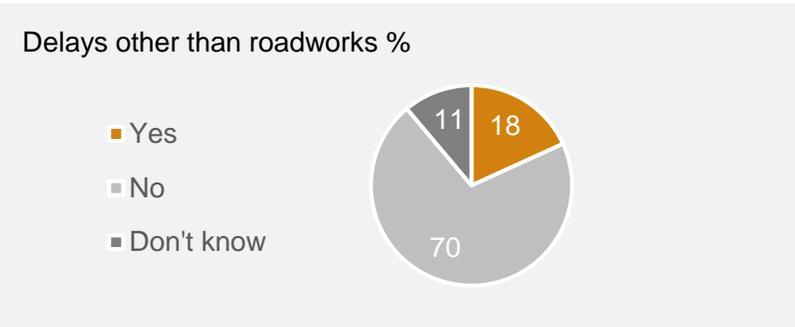
In addition to information to warn about the fact of works taking place, users may benefit from more – or more accessible – information about why works are taking place, along with the rationale for the measures used to manage traffic as they happen



More detail on:
**Experience of
other journey
delays**

Users' experience of other journey disruption in the Midlands

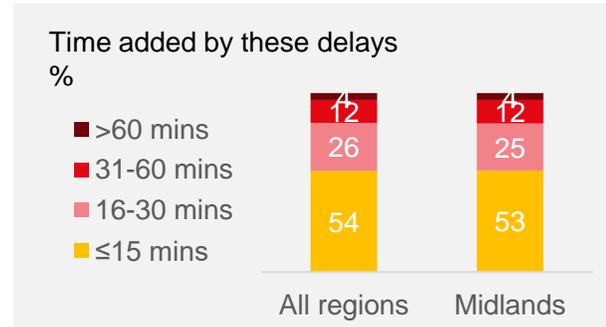
Relatively fewer journeys were delayed for other reasons



In line with all-region average

*Similar pattern for motorways and major A roads at national level, but **delays more frequent on Midlands motorways than other regions** (21% journeys affected vs. 17% average)*

...but these delays are typically longer than for roadworks



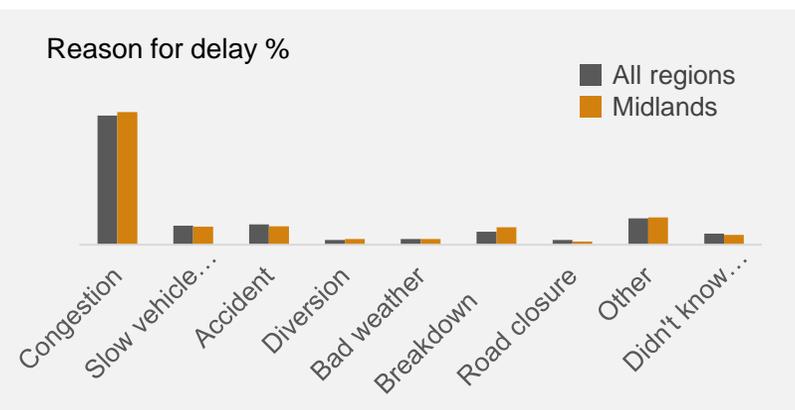
Delays on motorways typically a little longer than on major A roads. A similar pattern in this region specifically.

...And fewer than a third of those affected are satisfied with their management



In line with all-region average.

Satisfaction with delay handling is typically a little stronger on motorways than major A roads; this is also true in the Midlands



*Similar pattern to all-region average, though **congestion and breakdowns are experienced a little more often here than in most other regions***

Breakdowns are seen on motorways in particular in the Midlands

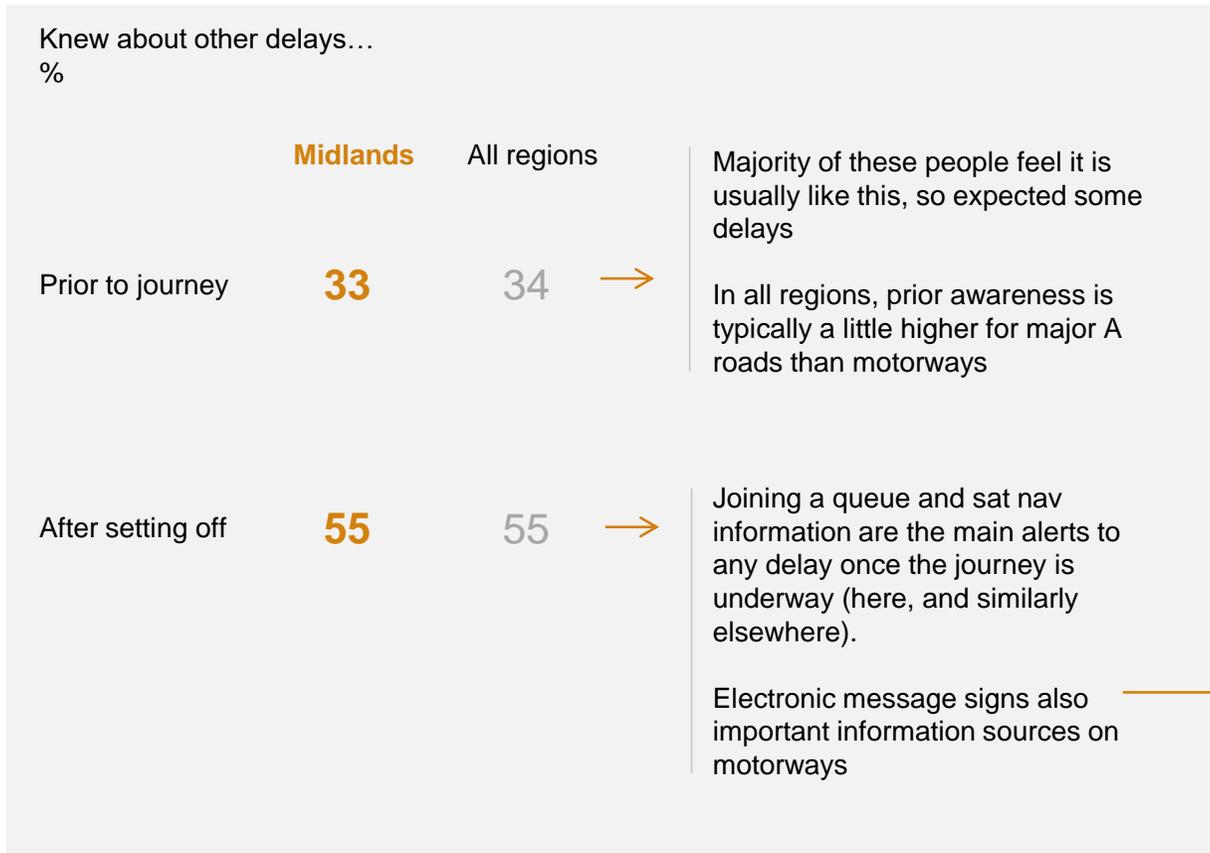
“ Due to [the] lack of hard shoulder breakdowns block one of two lanes [and] with 3 roundabouts to pass on this stretch ...traffic backs up for miles over the slightest thing... ”

“ I have used the M42 for years and since it has been a smart motorway it has been 4 lanes of stationary traffic during rush hour ”

“ Traffic busy, lane closed for no reason causing a tailback for an hour ”

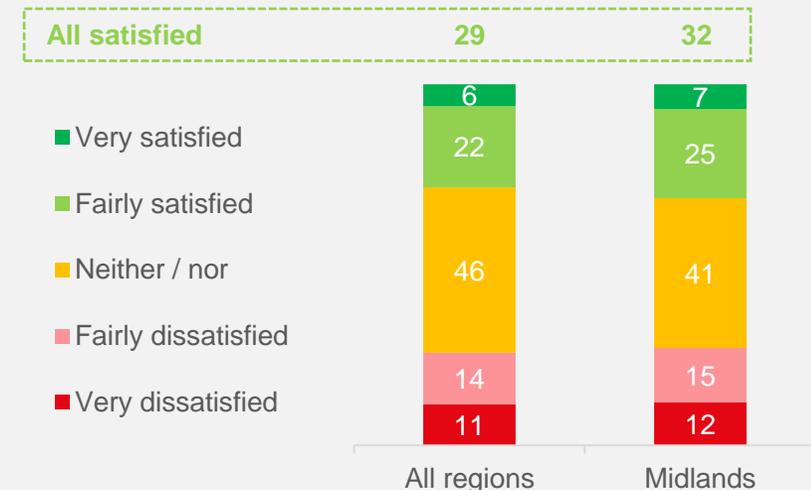
Finding out about other types of delay in the Midlands

Only a third of those affected by other types of delay were aware ahead of the journey, and half after setting off.



...all leading to relatively low levels of satisfaction with delay-related information

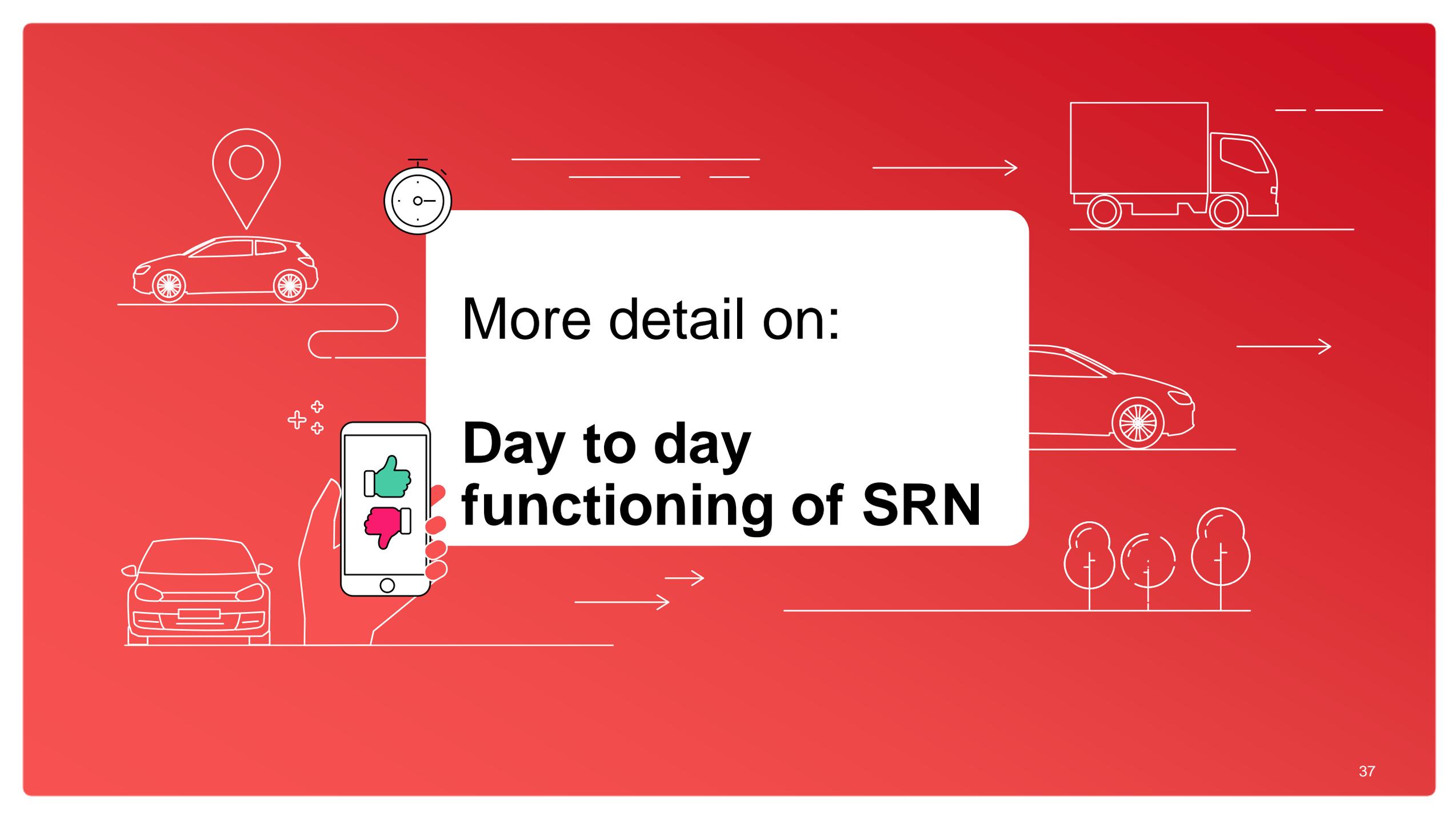
Satisfaction with info about non-roadworks delays %



With this additional, live channel, information on motorways is typically more satisfactory than on major A roads (35% satisfied with delay information on Midlands motorways, 24% satisfied on Midlands major A roads).

This pattern is similar across most regions.

Base: All affected by delays other than roadworks in the Midlands (277)



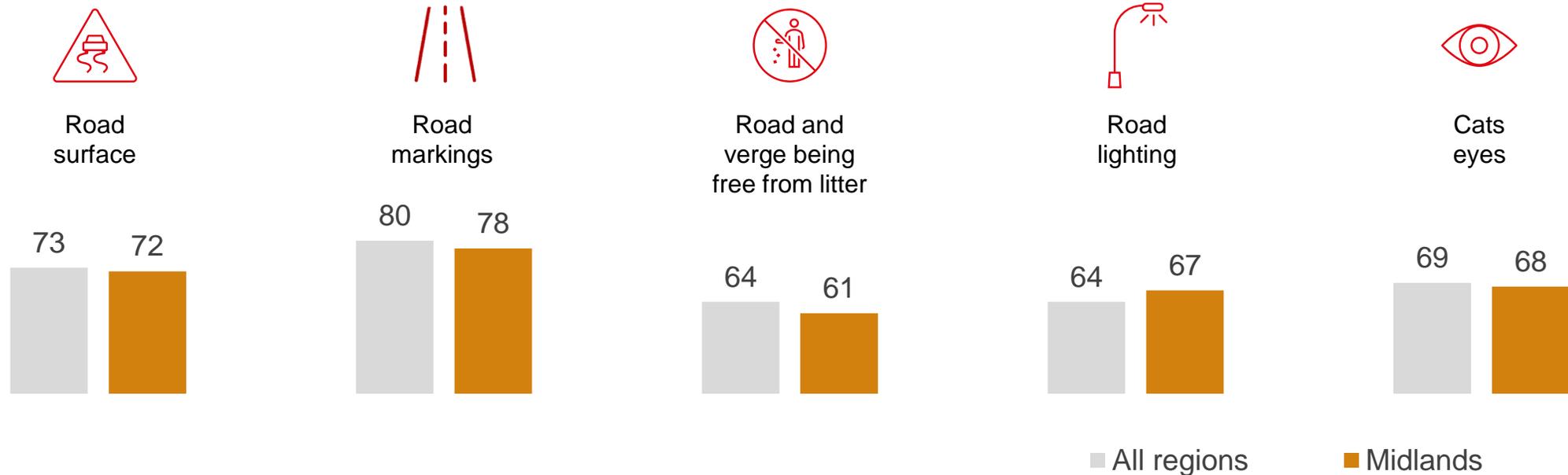
More detail on:

**Day to day
functioning of SRN**

Most are satisfied with road markings, but typically less so on other aspects of road condition and lighting. Midlands is rated similarly to elsewhere, but management of litter – particularly on its motorways – is poorer than elsewhere.

Rating of road condition

% very / fairly satisfied, Midlands vs all-region average



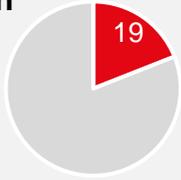
Both motorways and major A roads in the Midlands perform similarly to the national average for equivalent road types, except for:

- Lighting, where both motorways and especially major A roads outperform national averages
- Freedom from litter, where Midlands motorways are performing a little below the national average

Base: Road surface / marking / litter, all regions (6,212-7,234), Midlands (1,386-1,613)
 Lighting / cats eyes, among those travelling after dark, all regions (1,058-1,158), Midlands (249-276)

Little spontaneous comment on litter from users, but it can affect broader impressions of safety and maintenance

19% were dissatisfied with litter along the road and verge in this region



16% average across all regions



The majority of those commenting on litter / debris were **fairly** satisfied or dissatisfied with their journey overall – rather than having conviction either way

Comments from these people indicate key themes in what the presence of litter means to users →

Unightly, if not materially affecting journey time and therefore the overall journey

“ The road side edges are a bit of a mess now - sad as it is a relatively new road ”

“ ..Plus, the ugly sight of the horrendous littering on the A1, all the way!!! ”

“ No delays but huge litter on the slip roads. Please remove all the litter ”

Vegetation also contributes to untidy appearance

“ Weeds too high on the banks and barriers ”

Growing environmental consciousness may also heighten awareness and concern for impact of litter?

“ Litter everywhere especially plastics on the hard shoulder and central reservation ”

...although people do sometimes experience – or fear – more tangible effect

“ ...such a shame is the amount of rubbish on the sides of the roads ...[which] has got much worse. They used to pick up rubbish - what has happened? It is dangerous if it gets on the road and also it is a fire hazard. ”

“ The hard shoulder always has rubbish and debris which worries me if I need to pull over ”

Findings on this page are at national level unless stated 

Implication that roads are not maintained in other ways

“ The rubbish on the side of the road is disgusting. Admittedly people shouldn't drop litter but it appears that you do very little to maintain the road. It's embarrassing. ”

And possibly draws more attention to other evidence of poor maintenance?

“ Several badly repaired potholes and litter on the edges of the road. ”

What are the issues with lighting?

Findings on this page are at national level 

Recap: when we asked for comments in users' own words,

Lighting, cats eyes and road markings were mentioned as a reason for

dissatisfactory journeys, by 2% of those who were fairly or very dissatisfied overall:

Not one of the bigger issues, but important to some

At the very least, drivers often feel uneasy in these scenarios:

“ I don't like driving home when it is dark, but there were so many lorries on the road, which I had to pass and quite a few potholes, which I couldn't see or, tried to navigate ...The road was very dark and therefore difficult to manoeuvre. ”

Most common complaint is simply insufficient lighting

“ The [road] is not lit in this section which makes driving harder ”

“ ...the road... is VERY badly marked with the cats eyes and road markings being non-existent ... It is dangerous, especially in the dark or half light. ”

“ This road has enough traffic to warrant motorway standards. It is frankly dangerous as it has too many bends, poor junction layouts and no lighting. ”

“ Much of the initial journey from York was on unlit roads where it was difficult to travel at speed without high beams on, unfortunately this was not possible with oncoming traffic. Even without sufficient lighting there were sections of road with no cats' eyes (or they were[n't] very reflective). ”

But some other themes also arise in users' comments:

Poor lighting is **especially noticeable or impactful when affected by roadworks or other disruption – which are both experienced more frequently on Midlands motorways than elsewhere**

“ ...There was also roadworks which caused unexpected detours via some very dark single-track lanes. ”

“ Roadworks complicated the journey - watching out for road signs on a dark, wet night with slight traffic congestion ”

....or poor weather

“ Clear of traffic but low lighting so hard to see in the rain ”

“ No motorway lights in heavy rain makes it very dangerous to drive especially when there is traffic all the time ”

Lighting is often felt to be **important – and noticed as poor – when combined with other examples of poor maintenance**

“ Poor lighting over grown road signs making it almost impossible to see directions ”

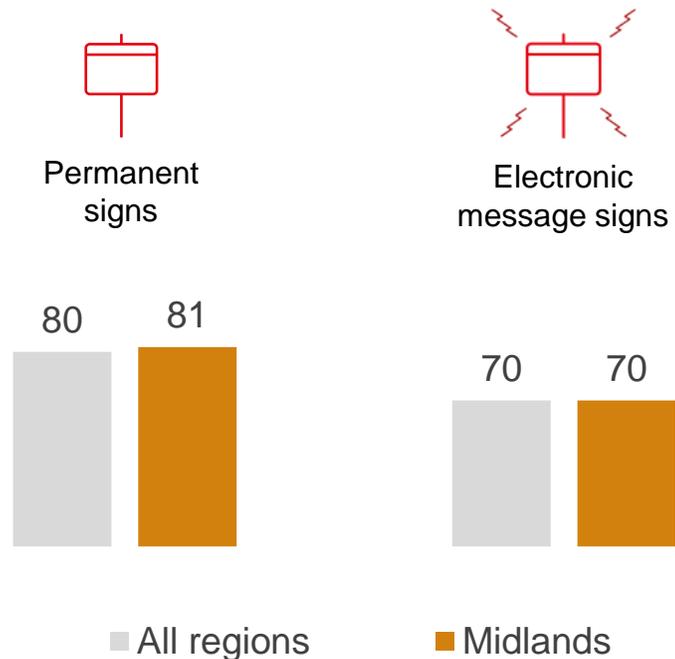
“ Poorly lit with unclear nearside verges ”

“ Long time spent driving on reduced carriageway in poor light with poor marking and uneven road surface ”

Midlands performs similarly to the national average for signage

Rating of signage

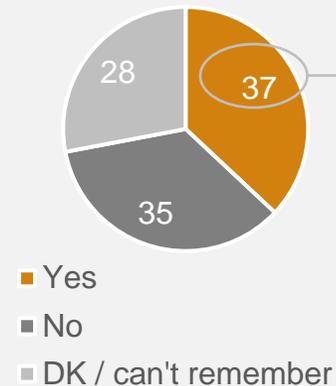
% very / fairly satisfied, Midlands vs all-region average



Both motorways and major A roads in this region perform on average for equivalent road types, on these measures

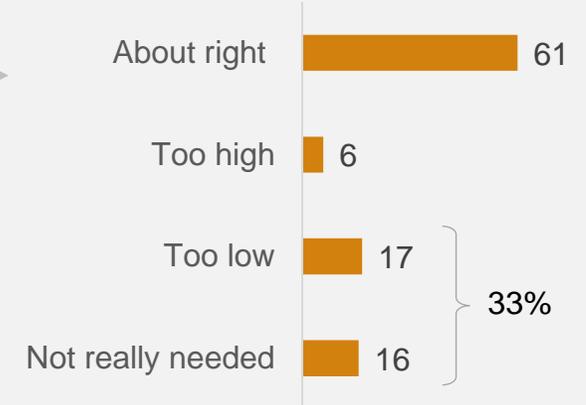
Base: Permanent signs (6,937), Midlands (1,550)
Electronic signs, among those having seen them, all regions (4,906), Midlands (1,106)

Saw electronic signs % Midlands



Similar pattern across all regions though Midlands has among the highest usage and visibility of this signage type

Appropriateness of electronic speed limits for conditions % Midlands



Similar pattern across all regions

More on users' experiences with electronic signage

Findings on this page are at national level



15%

Temporary or variable speed limits was the fourth most common reason given for dissatisfactory journeys in the Midlands, mentioned by 15% of all those giving a reason

....but SRN users who were dissatisfied with electronic signage mentioned other issues including...

- **Variability** of speed limits within journey
- **Contradicting information** with other sources
- Wider **dislike of smart motorways**
- **Lack of (reasonably expected) information** (diversions, closures)
- **Compliance with speed limits** and other instructions (often linked to perceived needlessness)

Apparently needless speed limits are the most frequent complaint

“ ...there were no obstructions at all, the only thing that caused the congestion were the speed limits themselves ”

“ ...limited to 50mph ...and there's no work actually taking place ”

“ Signs indicated reduced speeds due to pedestrians on the motorway, but this was not the case. ”

“ ...Try as we might we couldn't see this stranded vehicle or any other reason for closing 2 lanes and reducing the speed limit. Obviously someone had forgotten to reset the signs for the hundreds of motorists on the road. ”

“ The speed limits are always reduced when there is no issue on the roads. If there had been an incident then they hadn't removed the speed [limit] quick[ly] enough ”

“ There was also an incident ...so we had to divert ...but only because we were able to check the online map en route and make the decision ourselves rather than there being any information provided on the overhead boards ”

“ ...This issue with leaving signs on is a regular occurrence on [this road] and makes you start to ignore them, a bit of a boy who cried wolf scenario ”

“ ...the various speed limits imposed... wasting more fuel! ”

“ Because of the continuous speed reductions, the traffic kept slowing down and bunching up across all lanes. The short spaces where there were no speed restrictions the road started to clear ”

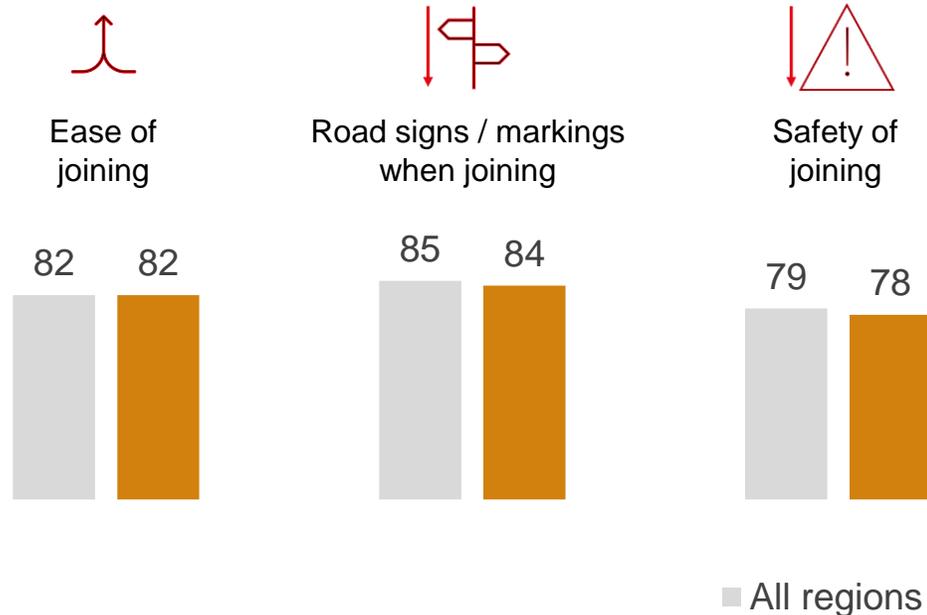
“ The dangerous variable speed limits and lack of hard shoulder ”

“ I was tail-gated by another car whilst travelling at 50mph through the roadwork section ”

Most users satisfied with joining / leaving SRN; leaving a marginally smoother process. Little regional variation.

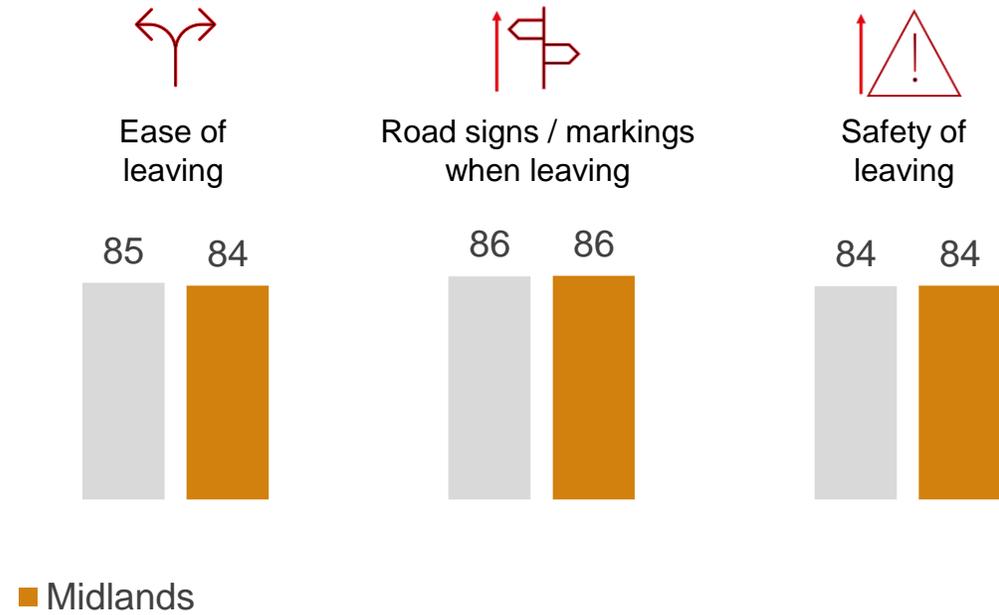
Rating of joining

% very / fairly satisfied, Midlands vs all-regions average



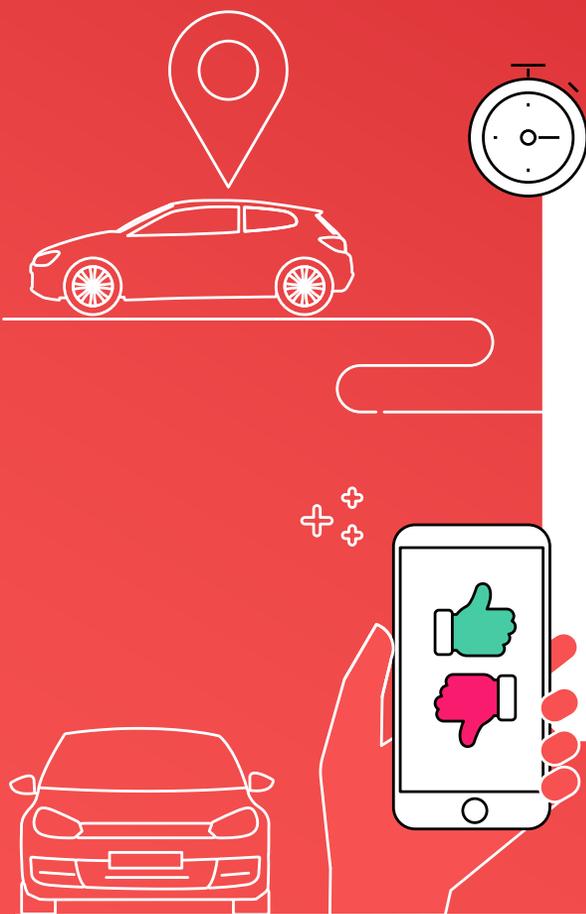
Rating of leaving

% very / fairly satisfied, Midlands vs all-regions average



Both motorways and major A roads in this region perform similarly to the national average for equivalent road types, on these measures

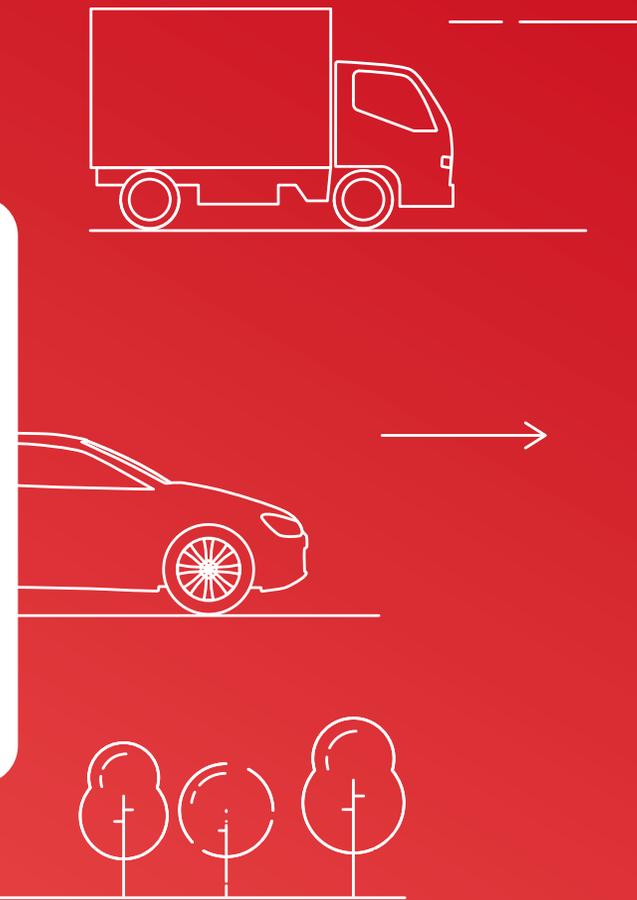
Base: all regions (7,182-7,264), Midlands (1,596-1,616)



Focus on other topics

Using and sharing the road comfortably
Some smaller driver groups
SRN users and smart motorways

Learnings relevant to all regions

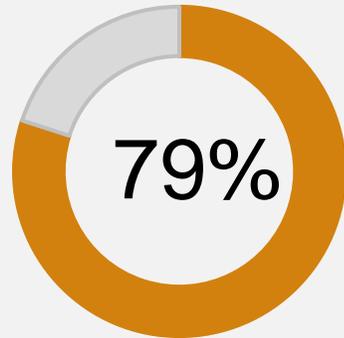


Safety perception and confidence high overall, but some groups feel less at ease: **nervous, infrequent drivers, smaller commercial/goods drivers, motorcyclists**

Most users felt safe on the roads

Felt safe when travelling (very/fairly safe)

80% on average across all regions.

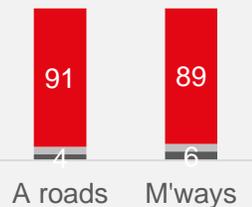


While levels of feeling safe are similar for both major A roads and motorways at national level, **safety perception is lower (77%) for Midlands' motorways.**

Across all regions, we see lower feelings of safety for three key groups →

Confidence %

- Confident
- Neither/nor
- Not confident



Motorway fluency %

- Experienced m'way driver
- Avoid m'ways



Inevitably, feeling safe is linked to pre-existing confidence:

Nervous drivers

	Not confident on...
Felt safe %	A roads 61, M'ways 62

These less confident SRN users are more likely to be:

- Older (60+)
- Women – particularly for confidence on motorways
- Less frequent and lower mileage users of SRN

...But conditions and contexts for individual journeys can also make for safety concerns even among confident drivers and/or those who are familiar with SRN roads

Lighter commercial vehicles*

	Confident: A roads	Confident: M'ways	Felt safe
	93	93	76

*Vans <3.5t
L/HGVs ≤12t

Key factors include:

- Heightened risk sensitivity via profession

“ This is a smart motorway...for my job in the fire service I have been called to serious accidents caused by smart motorways ”

- Conditions in specific vehicle context

“ ..very noisy, lots of mini potholes. Too aggressive for the van ” “ ...nothing done to counteract the cross winds...no signage ”

- ...and some temporary, unfamiliar users

“ Never driven on a motorway in a van ”

- This group also more likely to travel in weekday peaks; and LGVs more likely to travel in poor weather and after dark – all factors contributing to safety.

Motorcyclists

Confident: A roads	94
Confident: M'ways	84
Felt safe	62

Key issues are:

- Other road users' behaviour, especially in giving enough space
- Road surfaces

See more on motorcyclists' experiences later in this report.

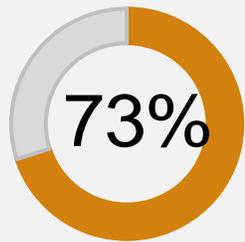
Findings on this page are at national level unless stated



Safety: All (7,313), Nervous on A roads (94), Nervous on m'ways (131), Light commercial (421), Motorcyclists (138). Confidence: All (5,375), Light commercial (421), Motorcyclists (88-90)

Poor driving is perceived as common, but while many are comfortable with speed (esp. on motorways), few see their own speeding as a risky behaviour

Experienced poor driving behaviour



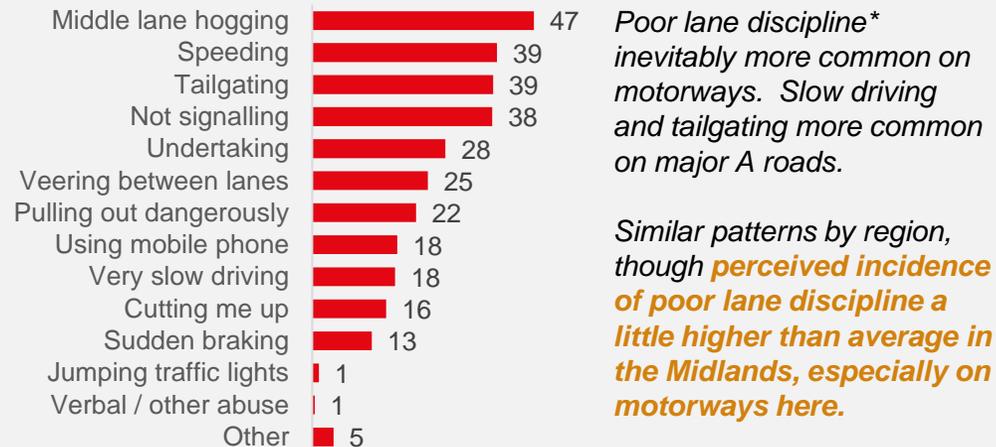
70% on average across all regions
(Midlands is second only to M25 for the perceived prevalence of poor driving)

Poor driving by others is more common/noticeable on motorways, at 74%, vs. 63% on major A roads. This pattern is similar across regions with a few variations – but with **perceived poor driving on Midlands motorways (80%)** and major A roads in the M25 area in particular

Attitudes to risk and speed %



Types of poor driving seen %



Those willing to drive fast, exceed speed limits and take risks are more likely to be:

- Male
- Under 60
- More frequent drivers

...and are a little more likely to drive cars (rather than vans, lorries, buses), and newer, especially diesel vehicles.

These attitudes are also typically more common in the South East and M25 area

Among those not prepared to take risks:

- 24% are still happy to speed on motorways (vs. 56% of those expressly prepared to take risks)
- 13% speed on major A roads (vs. 43% of acknowledged risk-takers)

Findings on this page are at national level unless stated



Base: all SRN users surveyed Oct '21 – Sep '22 (7,342), Midlands (1,637). Experienced others' poor driving behaviour (4,981), Midlands (1,152)

* Middle lane hogging, undertaking and veering between lanes

Although not in all cases, many attribute others' poor driving behaviour to features or management of the roads themselves

“ Experienced some bad driving, a few cars undertaking ”

“ It is always so busy. Congested. People drive too close to each other and there are road works so the lanes are smaller. ”

“ Very busy. This causes some idiotic driving by impatient drivers. This is not a safe road. ”

“ There were numerous drivers driving in lane 2 when lane 1 was free forcing everything out around them. Poor adherence to variable speed limits ”

“ Loads of people speeding, tailgating, brake checking, all in the fog, dangerous. ”

“ It's too busy, the roundabouts at A5 and Towcester are **confusing for many people and they cut you up because they are in the wrong lane**. There are too many roundabouts ”

“ Hate being tailgated at 50mph with the smart M27 motorway work. Hate how **drivers go manic when they get past 50mph restrictions. When the 'smart' M27 motorway opens I'll use the A27**. Having been shunted in Nov 21 during slow rush hour traffic **would hate to get shunted at speed with removal of hard shoulder**. ”

“ Road works and standard of driving tend to make journeys harder, vehicles under speed and lane hogging, **no one knows how to drive in roadworks** ”

“ The traffic was very slow due to congestion, **where the dual carriage ways came back to one lane, people used the fast lane to push into the queue of waiting traffic... So people drove down the middle section to try and stop this**, as they were just being pushed further back in the queue. ”

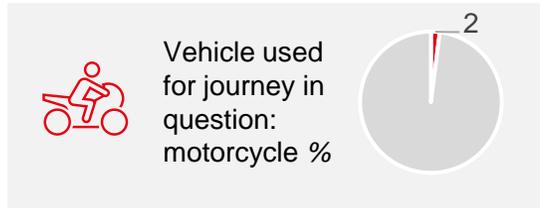
Findings on this page are at national level



The experience of motorcyclists on the SRN

Findings on this page are at national level 

Motorcyclists are a relatively small group within the survey

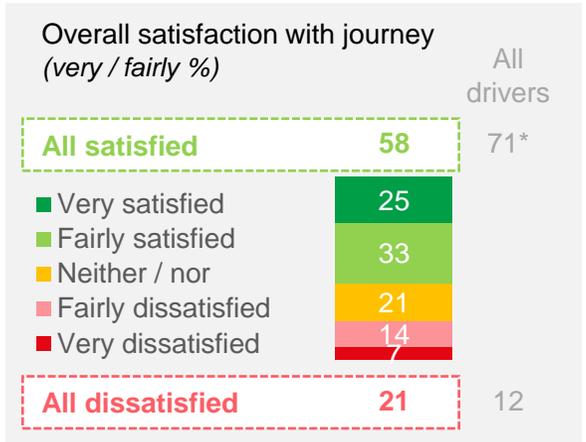


Confident on SRN, and attitude to speed may indicate particular expectation to travel swiftly

	Agree %	Disagree %
Confident: Major A roads	94	4
Confident: Motorways	84	10
Even slightly exceeding speed limit is less safe	51	34

...and experiencing similar levels of congestion and roadworks to others, but a little more affected by other delays

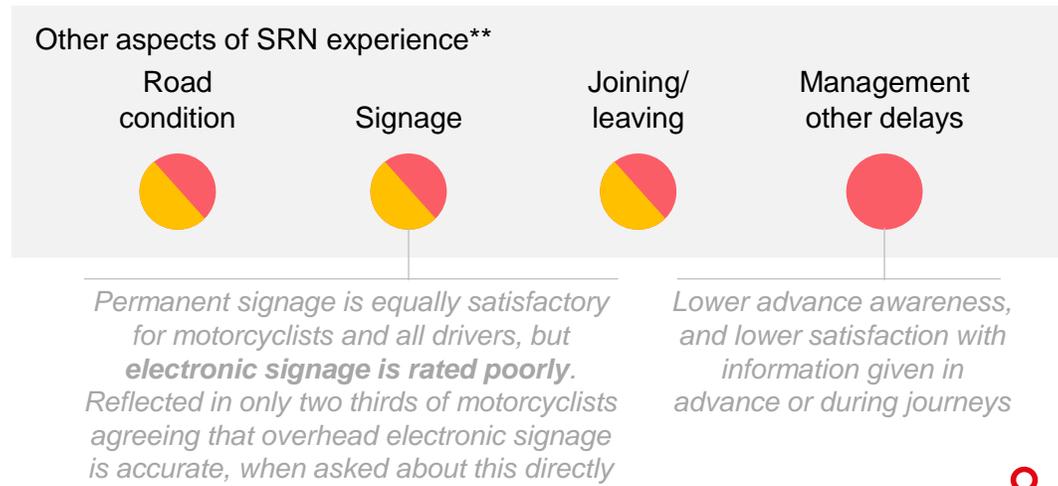
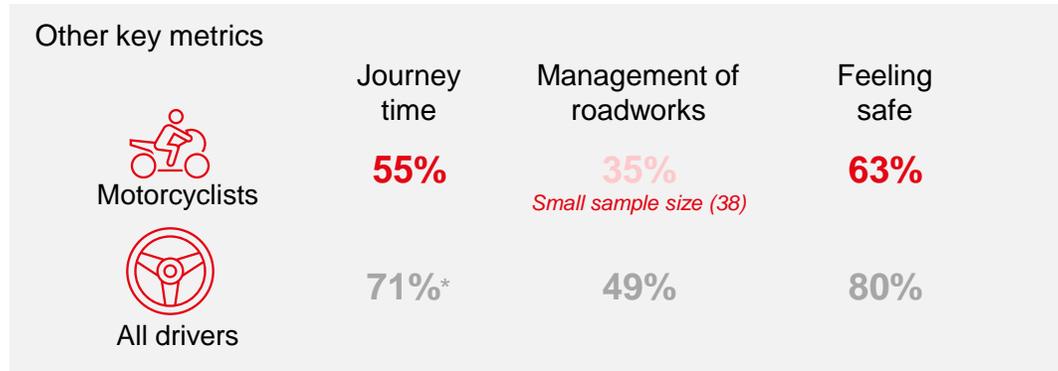
Notable for having some of the poorest SRN experiences



...and are a unique group in that their experience on major A roads is better than on motorways (reflecting their relatively lower confidence on motorways)



...which extends across most aspects of their journeys



Motorcyclists Apr '21 – Sep '22 (185), using m'ways (79), A roads (106). *Note: time period used on this page is 18 months to Sep '22, in order to increase sample sizes for motorcyclists.

"All drivers" results shown here use the same period, so are slightly different from annual figures given earlier in this report.

** "Traffic lights" used here indicate how motorcyclists rate the range of measures within each of these topics (e.g. "Road condition" covers surface, lighting, markings, cats eyes, litter), compared to ratings from all drivers. Sample sizes are typically smaller on some of these measures individually, so we are presenting an overview of experience (which also takes into account qualitative feedback via free-text comments in the survey, rather than fully quantified results.) See pg 55 for more detail.

Key reasons for motorcyclists' poorer overall experience: other drivers' presence and behaviour, and feeling a greater impact when things go wrong

Top reasons given for dissatisfaction:

Key themes in motorcyclists' free-text rationale for overall dissatisfaction

Volume of traffic

Poor road maintenance

Others' poor driving

Too few lanes

HGVs / slow vehicles blocking the way

Road condition/ maintenance and other road users have relatively higher importance here than for other groups

“ Road wasn't too busy, which from a safety point of view is important on a motorbike ”

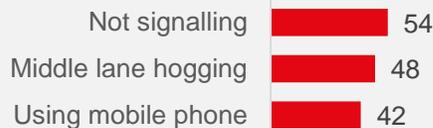
Virtually all journeys feature concern about other drivers

Experienced poor driving behaviour



Compared to 70% of all drivers

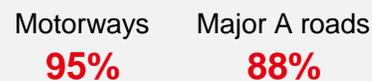
Types of poor driving seen: (top 3, %)



In particular, not signalling and using mobiles are bigger issues for motorcyclists vs. other drivers

...particularly on motorways

Other road users are my biggest worry on... (% agree)



This is often due to people being **inconsiderate**, but can be a **consequence of road management measures or conditions outside of individual drivers' control**

“ I feel other vehicles do not give proper space to a motorcycle ”

“ The amount of heavy, commercial vehicles, made me feel very wary of my vulnerability ”

The impact can feel greater when journeys do not run smoothly



When road surfaces are poor, it really matters

“ Slippery substance on roundabout resulting in me crashing and causing much damage to my new bike ”

“ There are a lot of uneven repairs causing ridges and pot holes ...a hazard to motorcycles ”



Management of delays (especially when non-roadworks related) is felt to be poorer by motorcyclists*:

- Less advance knowledge and fewer sources providing information (less access to radio/sat nav than others?)
- Dissatisfaction with any information received, including on electronic signs



And when movement is restricted by traffic controlling measures:

- Frustration felt by all drivers may be amplified in this group with its relatively higher expectation of speed and manoeuvrability
- ...and reduced agency can increase the sense of vulnerability

“ ...no correlation between the speed restriction and conditions at the time...It's even had me doing 40 mph on my scooter at 05:00 when the motorway has been clear and it feels really dangerous. To be stuck doing 40 mph, in the 3rd lane of a 4 lane motorway... at night and with HGV's behind, is really scary and quite often has forced me to leave the motorway. ”

The experience of HGV drivers on the SRN: overview

Findings on this page are at national level



Another relatively small group within the survey

Vehicle used for journey in question: HGV/ LGV >3.5t %



Almost universally confident on SRN (96%)

Describe themselves as risk averse and unlikely to exceed speed limits.

More likely than other groups to be affected by congestion, roadworks and other delays (likely being unable to find suitable diversions as easily, or travel at another time), and for this to add more time.

These issues are reported more often on major A roads than motorways, among this group.

Only two thirds of journeys are felt to be satisfactory

Overall satisfaction with journey (very / fairly %)



All drivers

71*

Similar on motorways and major A roads, though overall a little more positive about driving on motorways

Most journeys feature poor driving by others

Experienced poor driving behaviour



Particularly felt by drivers of larger HGVs

Types of poor driving seen: (top 3, %)



In particular, not signalling and being cut up are bigger issues here vs. other drivers. Others' mobile phone use also often noted by HGV drivers

Satisfaction with journey time in particular is below average

Other key metrics



HGV / LGV



All drivers

Journey time

63%

71%*

Management of roadworks

42%

Small sample size (49)

49%

Feeling safe

81%

80%

Relatively low journey time satisfaction, in the context that arrival time is important in 3/4 these journeys (vs. 53% for all drivers), but that this group is no more likely (or able?) to set off early in mitigation.

Journey times rated notably poorer on major A roads

Key metrics typically lower for lighter (3.5-12t) lorry drivers than >12t HGV drivers – most notably on feeling safe

Other aspects of SRN experience*

Road condition



Signage



Joining/leaving



Management other delays



Higher advance awareness – due to previous experience – than other driver groups

HGV/LGV drivers Apr '21 – Sep '22 (158), using motorways (84), A roads (74). *Note: time period used on this page is 18 months to Sep '22, in order to increase sample sizes for HGV drivers.

"All drivers" results shown here use the same period, so are slightly different from annual figures given earlier in this report.

* "Traffic lights" used here indicate how HGV/LGV drivers rate the range of measures within each of these topics (e.g. "Road condition" covers surface, lighting, markings, cats eyes, litter), compared to ratings from all drivers. Sample sizes are typically smaller on some of these measures individually, so we are presenting an overview of experience (which also takes into account qualitative feedback via free-text comments in the survey, rather than fully quantified results.) See pg 55 for more

Traffic volume, insufficient capacity, and difficulty sharing the road in this context, are common themes when HGV drivers feed back in their own words

Top reasons given for dissatisfaction:

Key themes in HGV drivers' free-text rationale for overall dissatisfaction

Volume of traffic

Too few lanes / closures, or narrow lanes

Roadworks

Others' poor driving

Road maintenance

Plus some specific issues such as lack of services or stopping places

And more than any other group, HGV drivers observe these issues to be ongoing

“ Traffic is very heavy for that stretch of single carriageway. ”

“ I try to hold lane one where possible to allow other road users to pass, however, there are parts of the [road] that are extremely poor surface quality with hundreds of potholes! This makes steering an HGV tricky! ”

“ Roadworks limiting to one lane for no obvious reason and very slow speed limits which change regularly again with no reason ”

“ ...dangerous as many road users do not know how to use [smart motorways] correctly...I find myself having to either undertake a vehicle in lane 1 which is going a lot slower or going over to lane 3 just to overtake 1 vehicle which is normally a car not driving to the road layout ”

“ Every Friday same story J10 to J8 crawling for no reason ”

“ Usual A14.... ”

Non-HGV drivers also observe some of the same issues from their different perspective

“ HGVs hitting their limiter trying overtake HGVs also hitting the limiter ”

“ A significant number of lorries were overtaking, despite there being clear “no overtaking” signs, which should have been adhered to in the time I was travelling. This led to tailbacks in the fast lane as the lorries take significant time to overtake. This added time to my journey. ”

“ A HGV did not move out of the inside lane to let me on the A34 so I had to slow down even though it could have moved into the outside lane. ”

“ Traffic heavy with HGVs only two-lane motorway and slow progress ”

“ For an A road there were an awful lot of lorries slowing everyone down on the single lanes. ”

“ Only 2 lane carriageway, should be at least 3 lanes, too many lorries. ”

“ Fairly satisfied, other than lorries driving too close to me. ”

Findings on this page are at national level





The experience of some other smaller SRN user groups



Drivers with a disability or long term health condition

A relatively small group:

- 68% affected in movement
- 28% have mental health / cognitive condition



More likely than others to...

- Make infrequent, shorter journeys
- Travel off-peak for non-work reasons
- Be retired, and female
- Be a little **less confident on m'ways**



Electric car** drivers

Another small group overall



More likely than others to...

- Be of working age (and in work), and male
- Travel in weekday peaks, for commuting or business
- ...with **higher frequency and mileage** than others
- Be **confident**: more willing to drive fast, and typically experienced on motorways (though a minority avoid them, more than petrol or diesel drivers)

SRN experience is broadly similar to other users – except perceived safety

Other key metrics

	Overall satisfaction	Journey time	R'works mngmt	Feeling safe
Disabled	71%	70%	46%	76%
All drivers*	71%	71%	49%	80%

Poorer perception of safety likely linked to lower confidence. This group is also more sensitive to others' driving behaviour, which contrasts with their own risk-averseness.

Note: this group is typically less forewarned of roadworks: likely due to lower frequency given their knowledge of works (like others) usually comes from previous journeys

Other aspects of SRN experience**

Road condition	Signage	Joining/leaving	Management other delays

While most aspects of SRN experience are similar to other users, EV drivers rate information (both permanent and variable) poorly.

Other key metrics

	Overall satisfaction	Journey time	R'works mngmt	Feeling safe
EV car drivers	73%	68%	<i>Sample size too small</i>	79%
All car drivers**	72%	70%	49%	81%

Feedback in other research suggests that the impact of when things go wrong is greater, given the potential need to recharge sooner than expected; this is likely influencing attitudes towards signage

Other aspects of SRN experience**

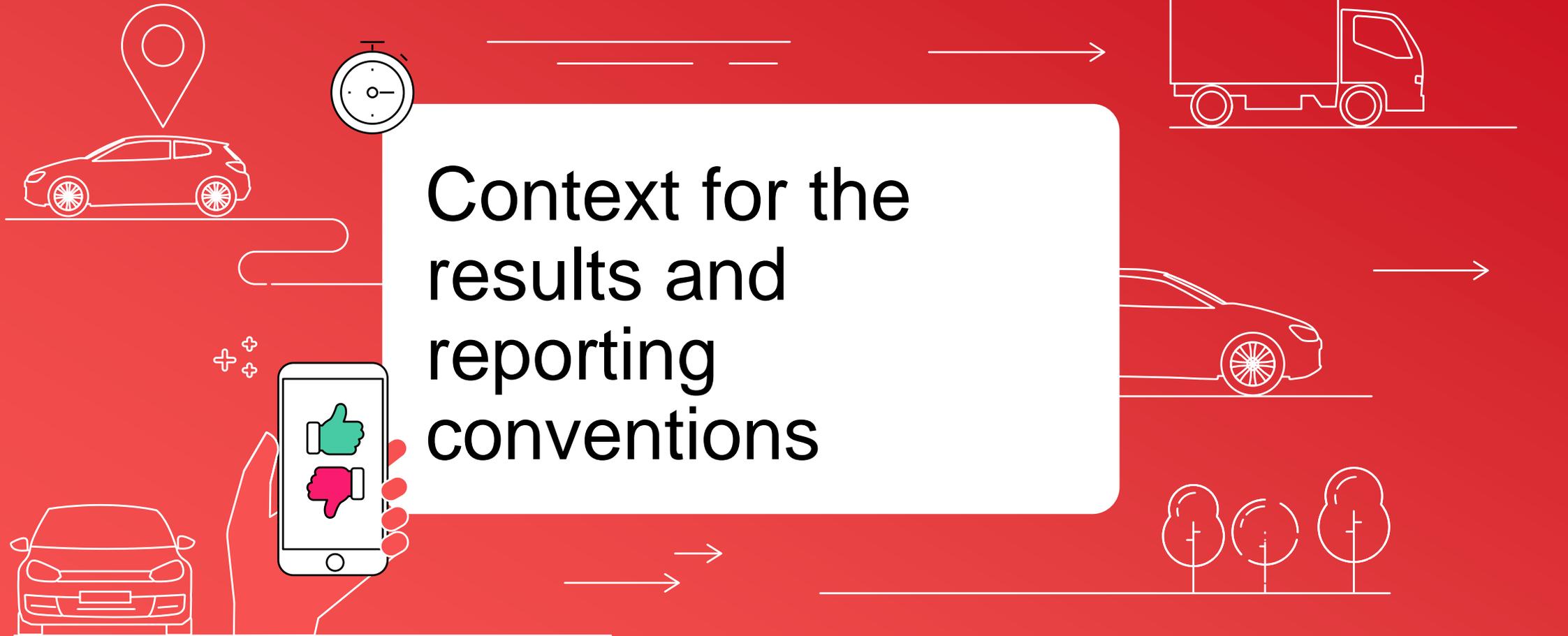
Road condition	Signage	Joining/leaving	Management other delays
			<i>Sample size too small</i>

Drivers with disability (449); EV drivers (175). "Traffic lights" used here indicate how these groups rate the range of measures within each of these topics, vs. average. See pg 55 for more detail.

*Time period used on this page is 18 months to Sep '22, in order to increase sample sizes for these groups; "All drivers" results shown here use the same period, so are slightly different from annual figures given earlier in this report.

**Fuel type was only asked of car drivers. "All drivers" results here are relevant to all car drivers only for direct comparison with EV car drivers.

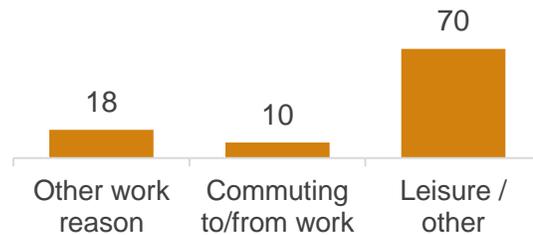
Context for the results and reporting conventions



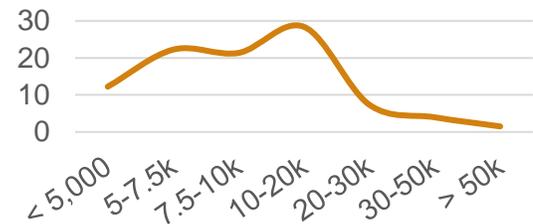
Users, and how they use the SRN in the Midlands

Driving context

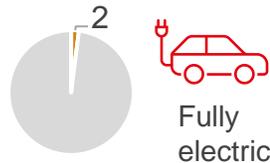
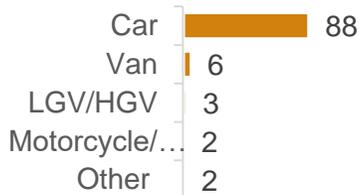
Journey purpose



Annual mileage (total)

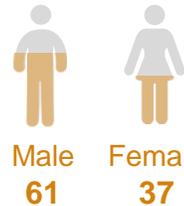


Vehicle type

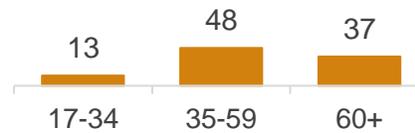


The traveller(s)

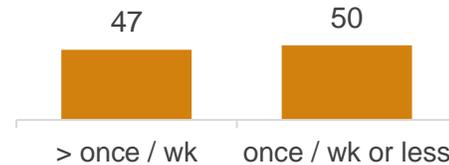
Gender



Age



Frequency on SRN



Any disability

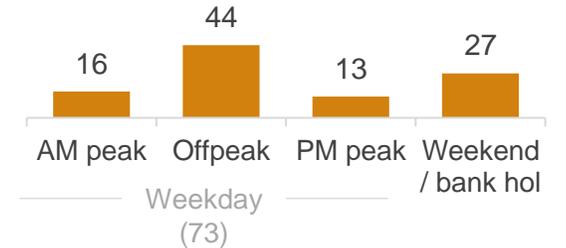


Travelling party



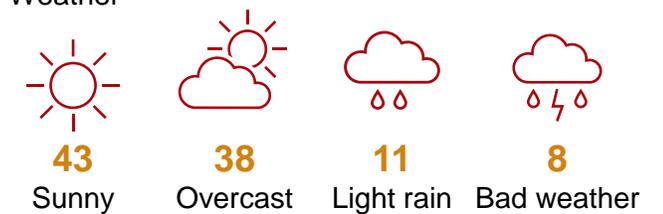
Environment

Journey time



18% journeys took place (partly) after dark

Weather



Figures shown are for the Midlands; patterns are very similar at all-regions level

Base: all SRN users surveyed, Midlands, Oct '21 – Sep '22 (1,644)

Some principles in the reporting



Time periods for reporting

Throughout this report, the majority of results show the feedback for journeys which took place between October 2021 to September 2022.

This time period differs in some isolated places, either where a question was not included on the survey for all of this time, or where a longer period has been included in order to increase the sample size for reporting. These instances are marked on the relevant pages.

National and regional-level data

Some pages in this report show data at national (England) level, summarising a particular topic where the findings are relevant to all regions.

Findings on this page are at national level



These pages are indicated with this symbol.

In other cases, results are at regional level.



Satisfaction and other ratings

Where figures are shown for “good”, “poor”, “satisfied” ratings, etc., this is the percentage of users who gave an opinion. I.e. this excludes people for whom it was not relevant at all, and those who answered “don’t know”.



“Traffic lights”

Some pages in this report use “traffic lights” to summarise how well or poorly journeys on the SRN are rated among a particular group of users, on a particular topic, compared to average.

In some cases this gives an overview of the topic from across several specific measures within a theme, together with qualitative feedback from users on the same themes, in response to open-ended questions. (e.g. “Road condition” covers surface, lighting, markings, cats eyes, litter).

Colours used in these traffic lights therefore take an overview perspective, and constitute a judgement as informed by the survey data. Colours used can be interpreted as follows:

-  Well above average across all relevant measures (and this finding may be supported by notable positive qualitative feedback)
-  Above average across most relevant measures (and may be supported by some positive qualitative feedback)
-  A little above average across some relevant measures (but not all)
-  Largely in line with average (this includes where sample sizes are too small to be confident that the result is genuinely different from average)
-  A little below average across some relevant measures (but not all)
-  Below average across most relevant measures (and may be supported by some negative qualitative feedback)
-  Well below average across all relevant measures (and may be supported by notable negative qualitative feedback)

Contact

Any enquiries about this report should be addressed to:

Guy Dangerfield – Head of Strategy

Guy.Dangerfield@transportfocus.org.uk

Transport Focus

Albany House, 94-98 Petty France, London, SW1H 9EA

www.transportfocus.org.uk

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