



Strategic Roads User Survey

Findings for the Midlands: August 2022 – July 2023

December 2023

Introduction



Strategic Roads User Survey

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:
August 2022 – July 2023



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.



9,091 responses received in total over this period
1,992 for roads in the Midlands

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Key findings: SRN experience in the Midlands

72% of SRN journeys in the Midlands are felt to be satisfactory, similar to the national average



Users' rating of journey times has dropped since a peak in late 2022, meaning the Midlands now lags the national average on this important measure, **with only two thirds satisfied**.



Satisfaction overall and with journey times is **lower in the West Midlands than the East Midlands, especially on its motorways, with more frequent reports of roadworks, congestion and other delays than in most other regions**.

Measures to control for these, especially **temporary and variable speed restrictions and other smart motorway features, are often perceived to exacerbate these issues** (note that this survey cannot identify how well they may be working in practice).



Indeed, as in all regions, **heavy traffic and roadworks are key factors for dissatisfactory journeys, and additional speed restrictions are particularly begrudged in the Midlands**.



Perception of road surface quality and overall presentation in the Midlands has also deteriorated in 2023.

- This reflects a national trend, but is lower than average in the West Midlands specifically – notably on M6, M42 and M54 – as well as some A roads in the East Midlands
- Litter in particular requires attention in all regions, rated especially poorly in the Midlands

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



Safety perceptions generally high, but some groups feel less at ease.

Better weather mitigation and driver behaviour, and more consistent traffic momentum, could all alleviate stress.



Poor driving perceived as common – and while drivers are accountable, some SRN users feel that the way roads are managed can also provoke this.



Attitudes still mixed about smart motorways, with negative opinions and experiences vs other motorways, for some.

Their prevalence in the Midlands means these attitudes and experiences are influential to overall feedback here.



Motorcyclists and HGV drivers less satisfied overall, experiencing the same issues as others when they occur, but to a sharper degree.



72% of journeys in the Midlands are felt to be satisfactory: in line with the national average across most key measures, except journey time satisfaction

Key metrics
Aug 2022 – Jul 2023



Overall satisfaction

72%

Very satisfied 30%
Fairly satisfied 42%

Journey time

67%

Very satisfied 30%
Fairly satisfied 37%

Management of roadworks

46%

Very satisfied 12%
Fairly satisfied 34%

Feeling safe

82%

Very safe 29%
Fairly safe 53%

England-wide

71%

Very satisfied 31%
Fairly satisfied 41%

70%

Very satisfied 32%
Fairly satisfied 37%

47%

Very satisfied 14%
Fairly satisfied 32%

82%

Very safe 30%
Fairly safe 52%

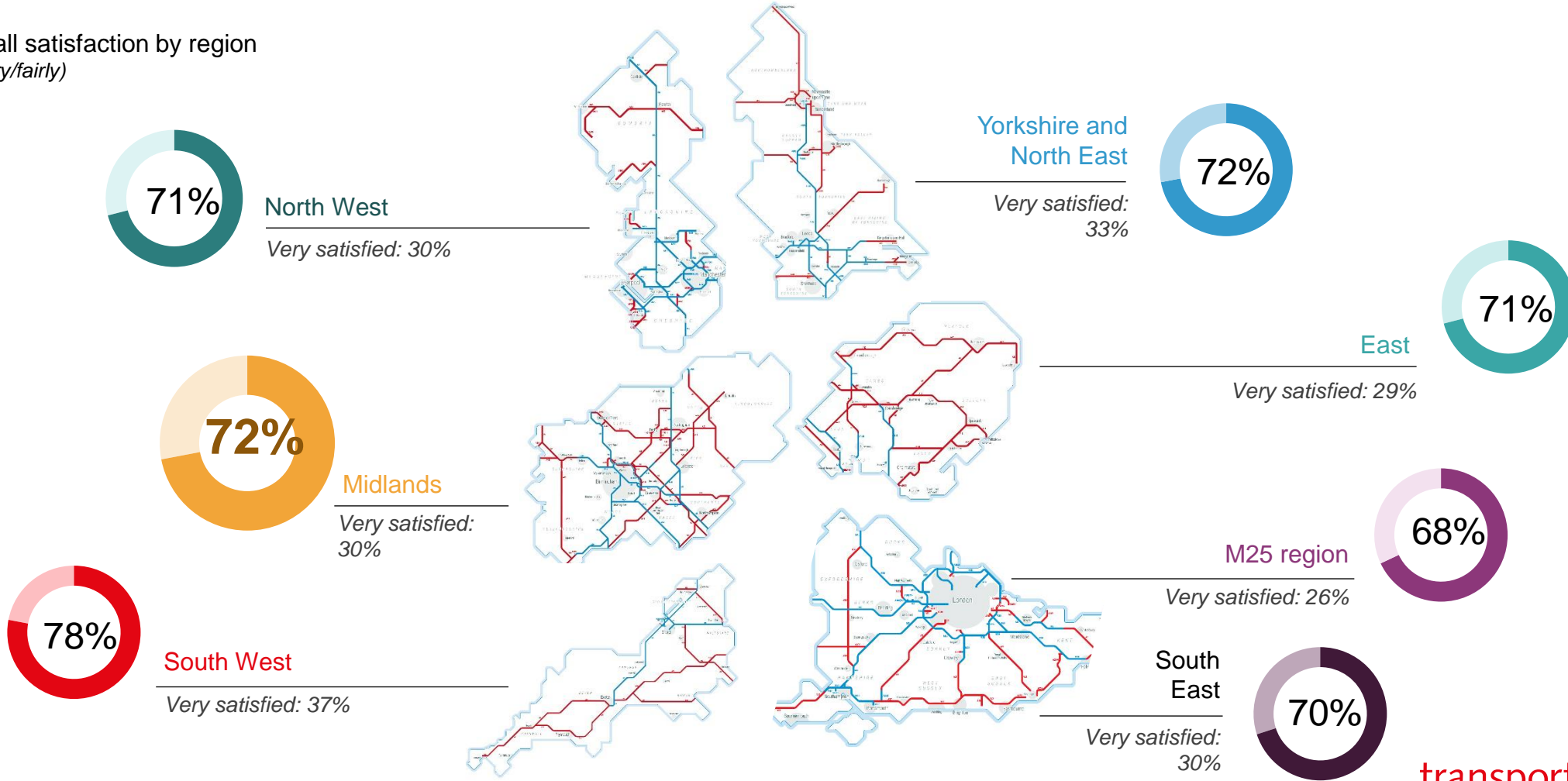
Base: all SRN users surveyed, Aug '22 – Jul '23
All: overall satisfaction (9,055), journey time (9,056), roadworks management (2,137), feeling safe (9,054)
Midlands: overall satisfaction (1,985), journey time (1,983), roadworks management (513), feeling safe (1,981)

Overall findings: key metrics



Most regions performing similarly across this period as a whole, South West leads and M25 region is lowest

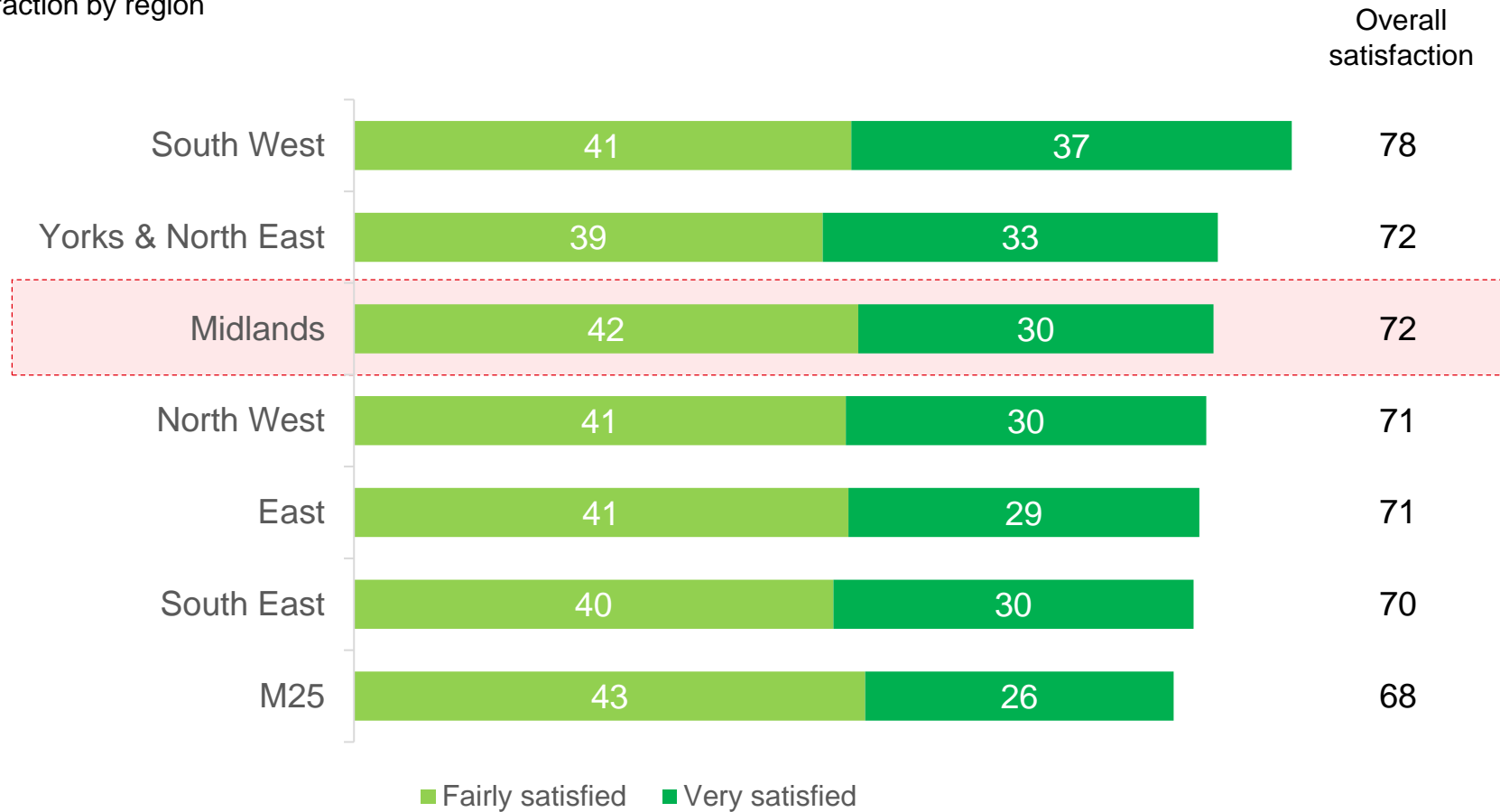
Overall satisfaction by region
(% very/fairly)



Base: all SRN users surveyed, Aug '22 – Jul '23 (9,055)
South West (1,033), Yorkshire and NE (1,442), Midlands (1,985), North West (1,382), East (1,299), South East (1,712), M25 region (1,355)

Most regions performing similarly across this period as a whole, South West leads and M25 region is lowest

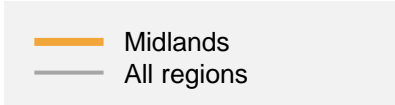
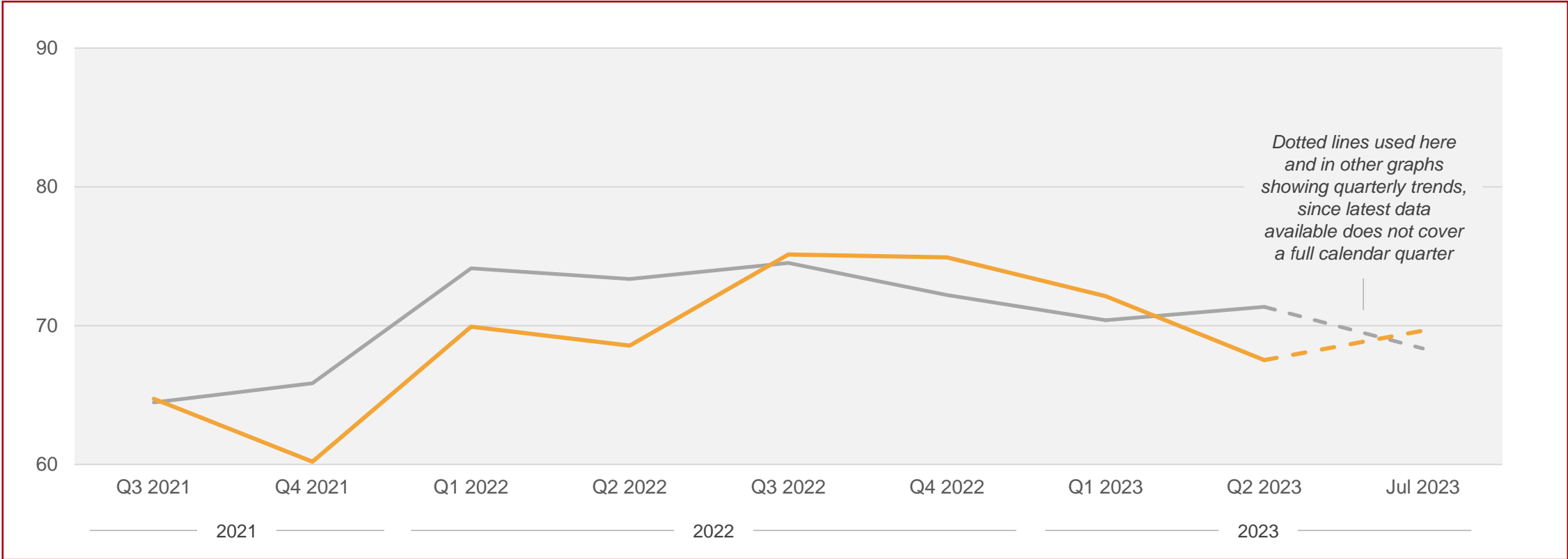
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Nationally, so far in 2023 journeys are slightly less satisfactory on average than through 2022; **satisfaction also peaked at the end of 2022 in the Midlands**

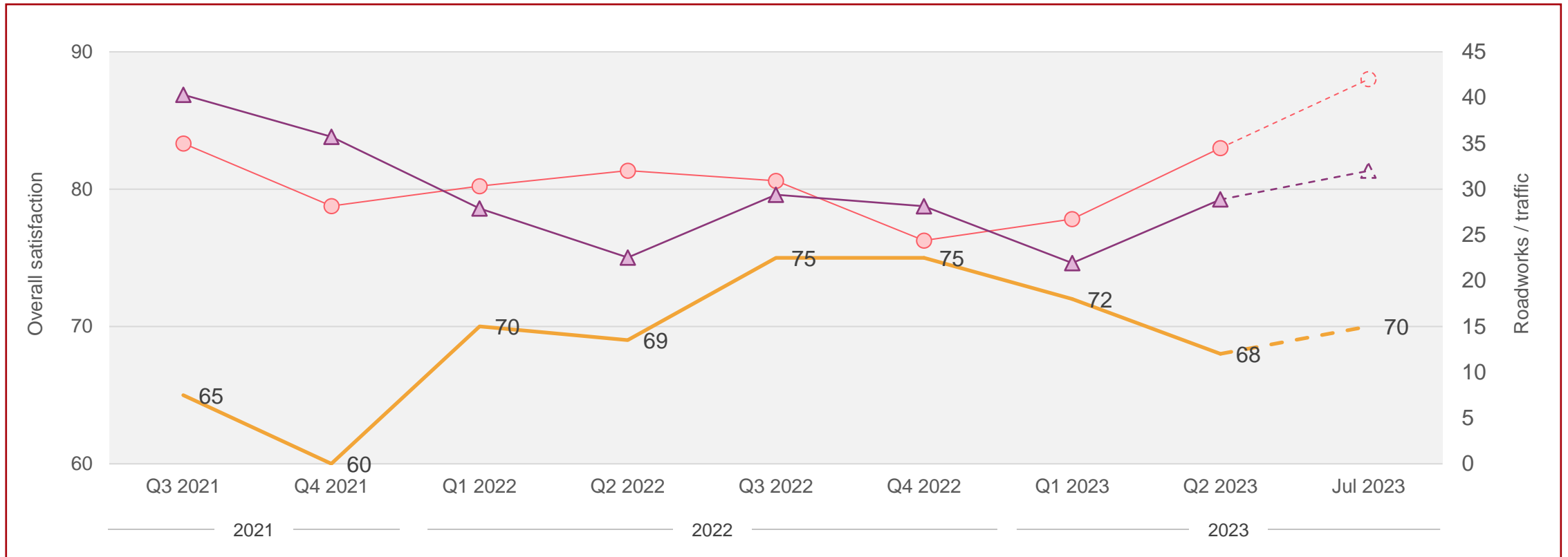
Overall satisfaction, over last two years (% very/fairly, quarterly)



Base: all SRN users surveyed, Jul '21 – Jul '23 (average 1,928 per quarter; 779 in Jul '23)
Midlands: (average 427 per quarter; 163 in Jul '23)

The trend in journey satisfaction in the Midlands is undoubtedly linked to the perceived prevalence of roadworks and congestion at any given time

Overall satisfaction vs perceived roadworks and level of traffic, over last two years (% very/fairly, quarterly, Midlands)

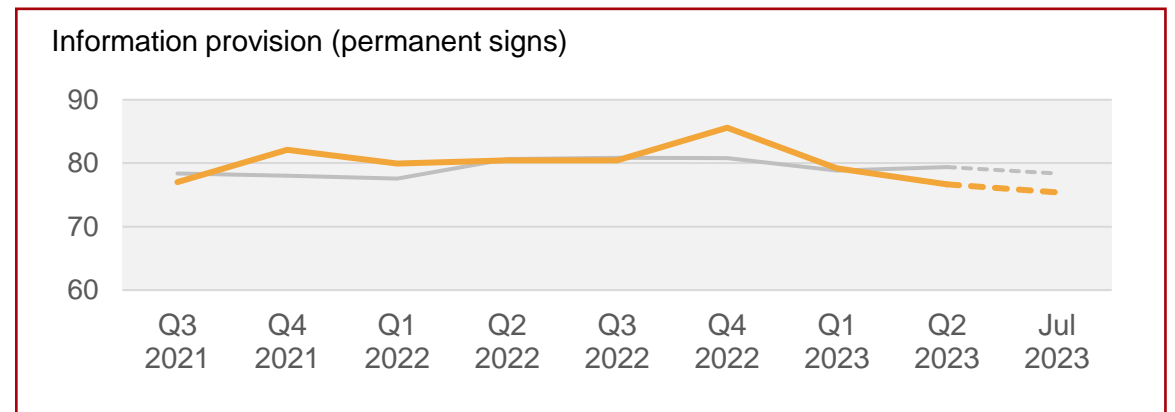
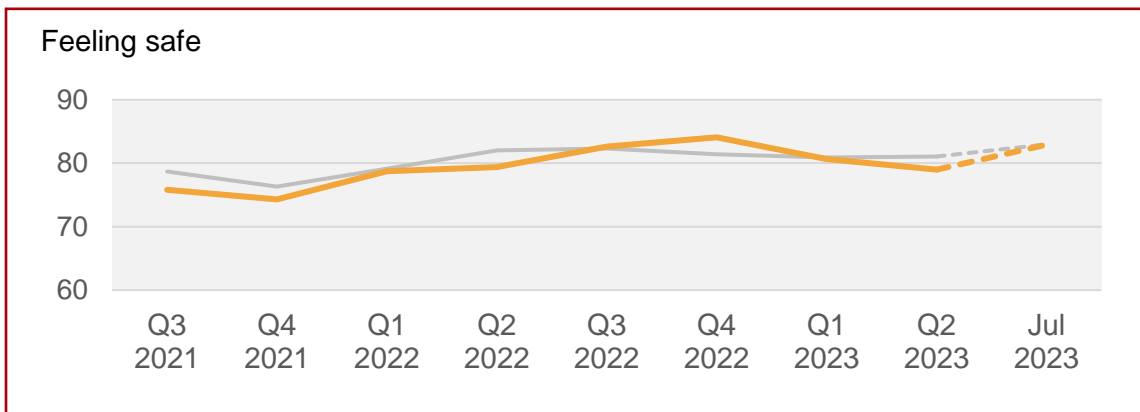
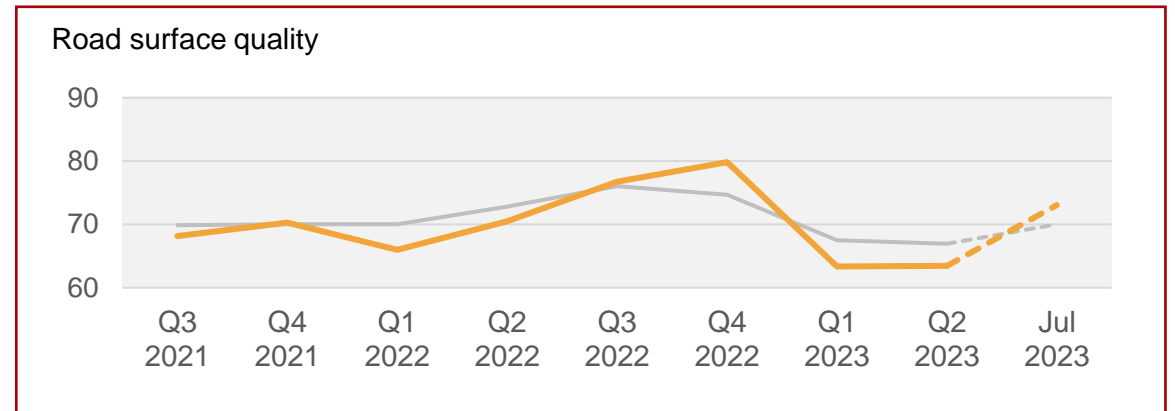
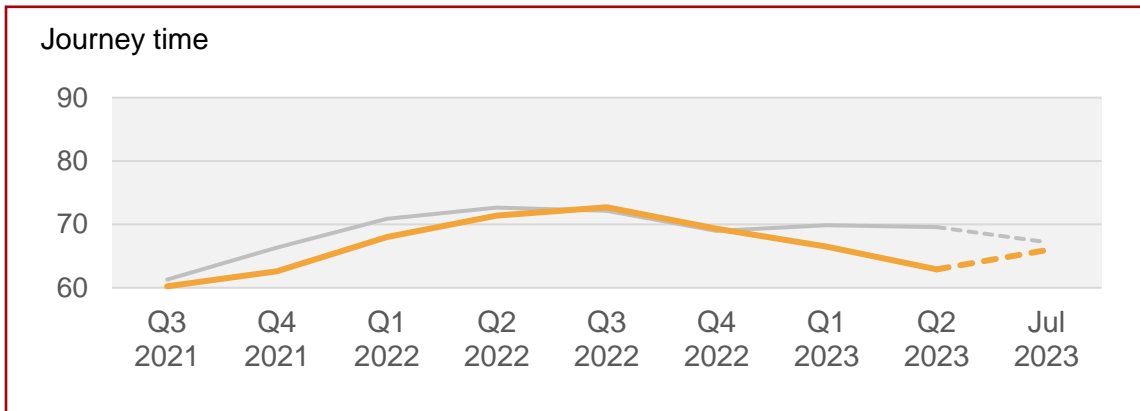


- Overall satisfaction
- Passed through roadworks
- Heavy / congested traffic

Base: all SRN users surveyed, Jul '21 – Jul '23
 Midlands: (average 427 per quarter; 163 in Jul '23)

Correspondingly, **journey time satisfaction has dropped since a peak towards end of 2022**; Midlands also echoing national trend for **worsened perception of road surfaces**

Key metrics over last two years (% very/fairly, quarterly; all key metrics which are answered by all survey respondents*)



— Midlands
— All regions

Base: all SRN users surveyed, Jul '21 – Jul '23 (average 1,825-1,926 per quarter; 742-782 in Jul '23)
Midlands: (average 402-427 per quarter; 158-163 in Jul '23)

*Other "key metrics", which are relevant to a sub-set of the total survey sample, are covered in more detail later in this report. These are the ratings of roadworks management, and of information provision via electronic signs

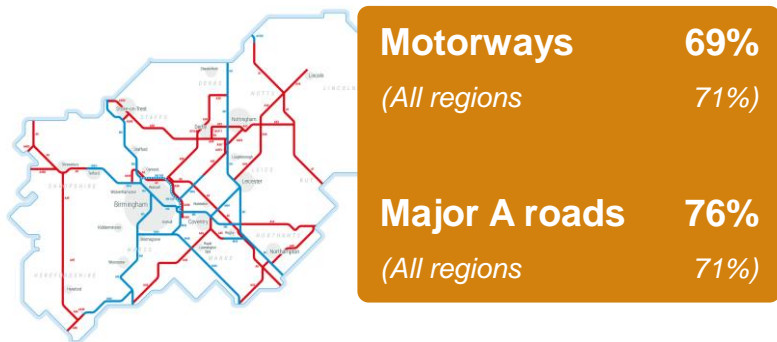


**Further patterns by
area within the
Midlands and some
of its busier roads**

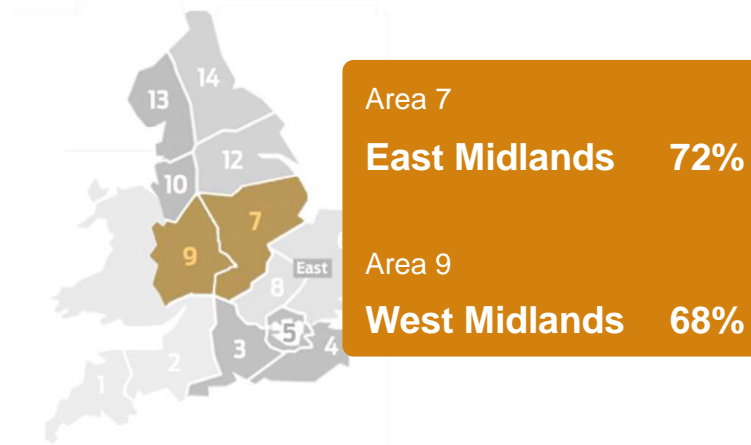
Major A roads in the Midlands perform well on average, motorways a little less so; partly linked to this, satisfaction is a little higher overall in the East Midlands



Overall satisfaction by road type/area/road: Midlands



60% responses for the Midlands are for motorway journeys, vs 62% on average across all regions



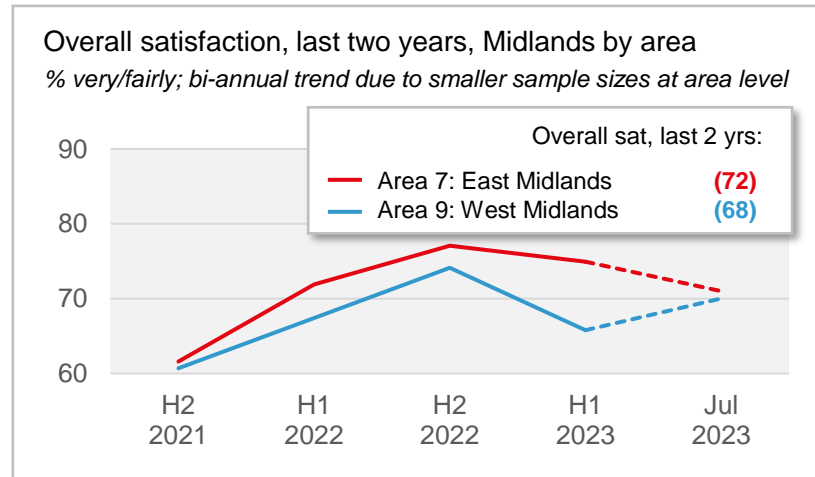
61% of responses for the Midlands relate to Area 9 (West Midlands)

Area 7: East Midlands		Roads running through both areas	
A52	84	M69	81
A14	76	A50	77
A1	74	A46	75
M1	68	A38	73
		A45	72
		A5	67
		M6	59
Area 9: West Midlands			
M54	84		
M40	83		
A500	80		
M5	74		
M42	65		

*Results shown for individual roads where sample size is ≥75. All data at road level based on two years: Aug '21 – Jul '23.
 All Motorways: All regions (4,846), Midlands (932). All major A Roads: All regions (4,209), Midlands (1,053).
 Area 7 in Midlands (including both motorways and major A roads) (1,548), Area 9 (including both motorways and major A roads) (2,134)

Higher reported disruption, congestion and traffic controls stem journey time satisfaction in West Midlands; safety a slight concern in East Midlands (as are road surfaces, in places)

Journey satisfaction patterns for the region are followed in both Midlands areas, sharper drop in the West in 2023



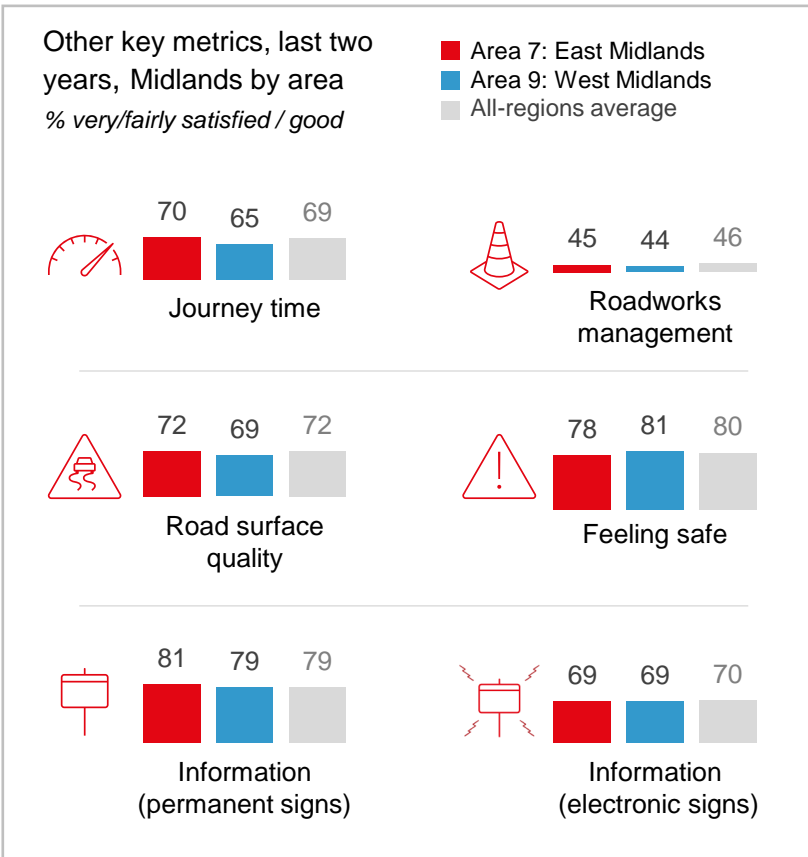
The trend in journey satisfaction in the East Midlands corresponds to patterns in reported roadworks and congestion.

Similarly, high perceived level of congestion in early 2021 is likely to have held back satisfaction in the West Midlands, and has eased a little since (though is still high vs. other regions). However, reports of roadworks then rose in 2023 so far, which looks to have contributed to the more recent drop in satisfaction.

Other measures follow similar patterns in both areas – most notably perceived road surface quality which has worsened in 2023 so far, so disruption factors are likely only a part of the picture.

Base: all SRN users surveyed, Jul '21 – Jul '23; Midlands Area 7 (average 371 per half year), Area 9 (average 524 per half year)

The West Midlands lags the East on some (if not all) metrics, notably journey time satisfaction



Base: all SRN users surveyed, Aug '21 – Jul '23; Area 7 in Midlands (1,548), Area 9 (2,134)

Other contextual factors

Perceived congestion, roadworks and other delays are consistently higher in the West Midlands than the East Midlands (though still a little above the national average in both areas).

Indeed this, and other patterns shown on the left, are reflected in drivers' own words when explaining their satisfaction or dissatisfaction:

- In the West Midlands, congestion, roadworks and temporary speed limits are key themes driving dissatisfaction
- East Midlands drivers put less emphasis on roadworks and traffic control measures, and more on road surface quality and safety

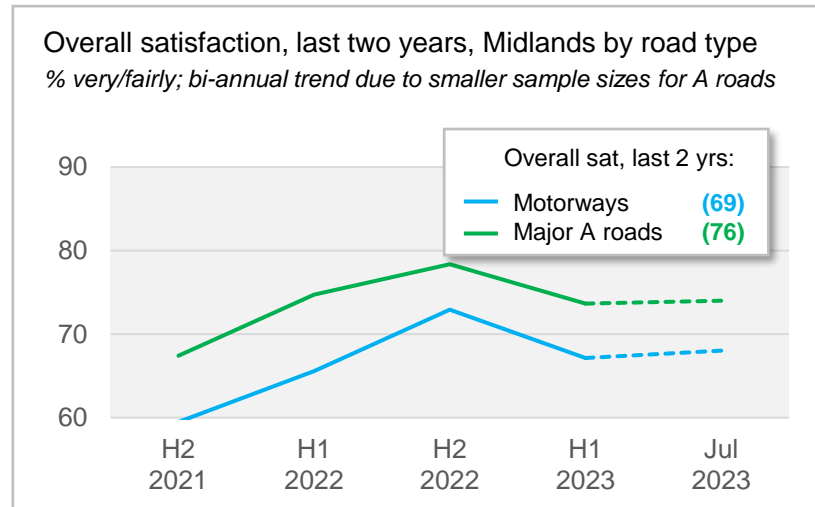
Around half of all responses for the West Midlands relate to smart motorway journeys.

With a higher proportion of journeys being made on major A roads in the East Midlands, only around a quarter of Area 7 journeys in the survey were made on smart motorways.

Higher presence of smart measures is also a likely factor in lower satisfaction in the West Midlands compared to the East Midlands, since smart motorways are generally less popular with motorists (albeit that they may be effective in controlling traffic flow).

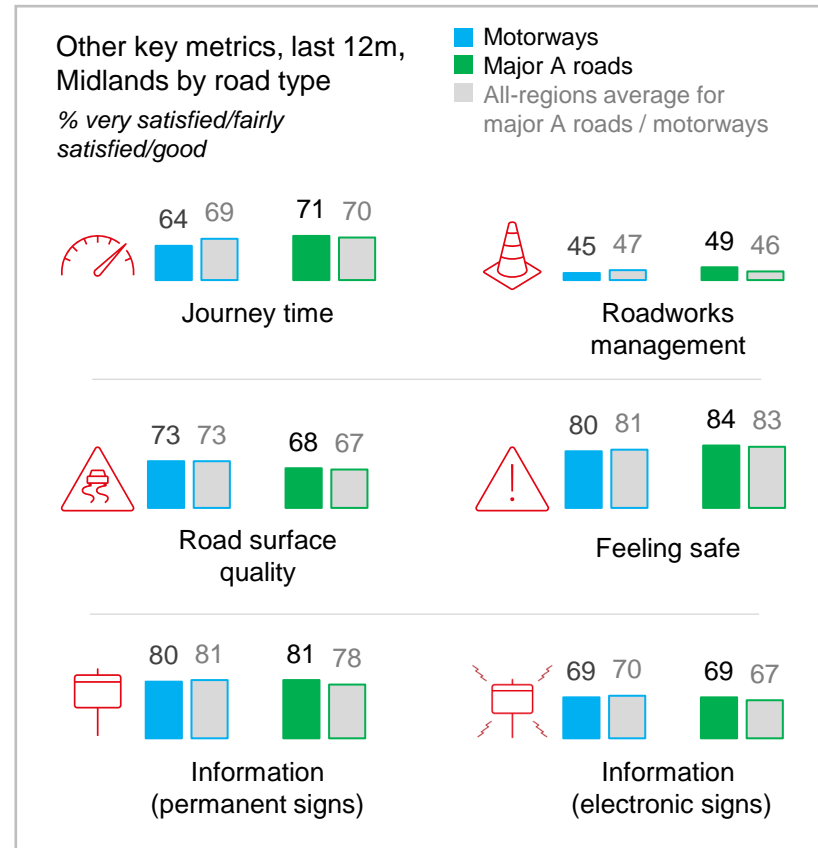
Motorways more generally (i.e., across areas) within the Midlands perform poorly relative to the national average for journey times; major A roads rated better

The overall regional trend is reflected on both motorways and major A roads in the Midlands, at a lower level on motorways



Base: all SRN users surveyed, Jul '21 – Jul '23; Midlands Motorways (average 408 per half year), Major A roads (average 447 per half year)

...and while Midlands major A roads compare well to those in other regions, its motorways are consistently a little below par, especially on journey times



Base: all SRN users, Aug '22–Jul '23; Midlands motorways (932), major A roads (1,053)

Other notable factors

Perceived congestion is higher on Midlands motorways than in all other regions except the M25 region, and motorways in the Midlands have among the highest levels of reported roadworks and delays for other reasons.

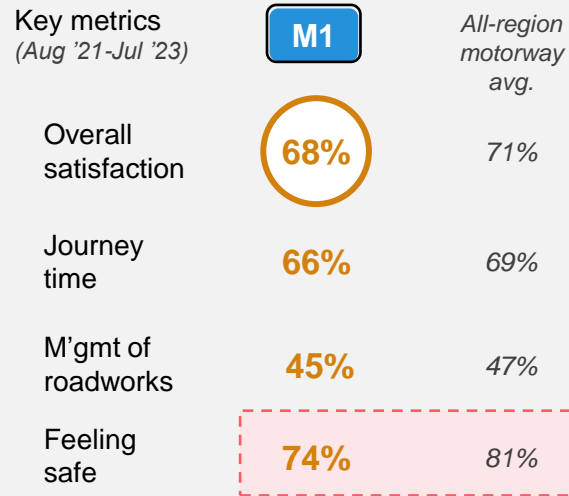
(Major A roads in the Midlands are in line with the relevant average)

Smart stretches are present on 70% motorway journeys in the Midlands, compared to the national average of 47%. As noted on the previous page this may be influencing perceptions of safety and experience of journey times here.

While satisfaction with road surface quality has dropped in the first half of 2023, other aspects of road presentation are rated better in the Midlands, particularly lighting, and especially on major A roads here.

The M1 typifies feedback for the Midlands' motorways, with journeys reported to be affected by roadworks and congestion, further influenced by features of smart motorways and some areas of poorer road condition

Journey times and notably safety perceptions are below national average

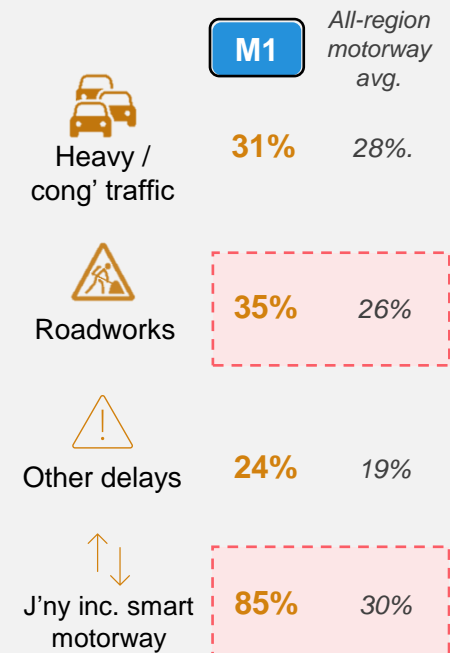


Other aspects of experience*



Disruptions comparatively high, especially roadworks, and most journeys involve smart stretches

Impactful journey features



Drivers' comments to explain their level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction focus on congestion and the use of smart measures to help manage traffic flow; these measures may also be contributing to lower safety perceptions

Lots of delays due to works and variable speed restrictions.

On the parts of the smart motorway sections the "1st lane" ...could've been closed off to make it into a hard shoulder again for safety and then reopened when... needed. The traffic wasn't busy enough to warrant having all 4 lanes active.

There was a congestion warning and delay after I had joined the M1 with no advance warning or reasons given. I could have taken an alternative route if I had been informed of the delays.

...because of the smart motorway system, which is not helpful, signs left on for no reason, speed limits for no reason, also no signs to say speed limit has ended.

...and despite overall reasonable (compared to average) rating of road condition, some pockets of poor surface are noted

The inside lane of the M1 between junctions 29A and 28 is very uneven and small potholes are appearing. So most people in cars and small vans seem to not use the lane.

There are still noticeable potholes especially on the most left hand lane where all the lorries drive.

Poor road conditions including pot holes, dirty road signs and low central reservation causing glare from on coming vehicles.

Feedback on the M6 and M42 is typical of that for the West Midlands more specifically: perception of congestion, and often negative perceptions of how it is managed, are notable features influencing the results

M6 Very high levels of reported disruption (especially roadworks) and congestion, and poor experience across all main areas of feedback

Key metrics				Other aspects of experience**				
	Overall satisfaction	Journey time	M'gmt of roadworks	Feeling safe	Road condition	Sign-age	Joining/leaving	M'gmt other delays
M6	59%	57%	39%	74%				
avg.	71%	69%	47%	81%				

Impactful journey features	M6	avg.
Congestion	43%	28%
Roadworks	51%	26%
Other delays	27%	19%
Smart m'way	95%	30%

M6 users' comments focus heavily on **congestion**, and often have the **perception that measures to control it are not effective**

Immense amount of traffic and very slow moving for at least half of the journey.
M6 very congested between ...M5 and M54, even though I had tried to avoid rush-hour.

Traffic is always very bad, varying speed limit slows the road down.
Heavy traffic and the congestion lane wasn't open (hard shoulder).

Drivers cutting in and out ...slamming brakes on..., especially around ...when 50 turned to national speed limit then back to 50 ...[and] national speed limit for no apparent reason.

M42 Journey times the key issue, affected by high level of perceived congestion

Key metrics				Other aspects of experience**				
	Overall satisfaction	Journey time	M'gmt of roadworks	Feeling safe	Road condition	Sign-age	Joining/leaving	M'gmt other delays
M42	65%	61%	Small sample size	78%				Small sample size
avg.	71%	69%		81%				

Impactful journey features	M42	avg.
Congestion	36%	28%
Roadworks	22%	26%
Other delays	22%	19%
Smart m'way	81%	30%

Congestion and roadworks again highlighted in drivers' comments, with **lots of criticism for smart measures and signage generally** on this road

Roadworks. Congestion. Poor signage. Too much traffic and constant speed changes making drivers break before the cameras causing possible accidents and tail backs.

The ...variable speed signs appeared faulty, causing confusion.
...signing difficult to absorb at times, too much with short time to read.

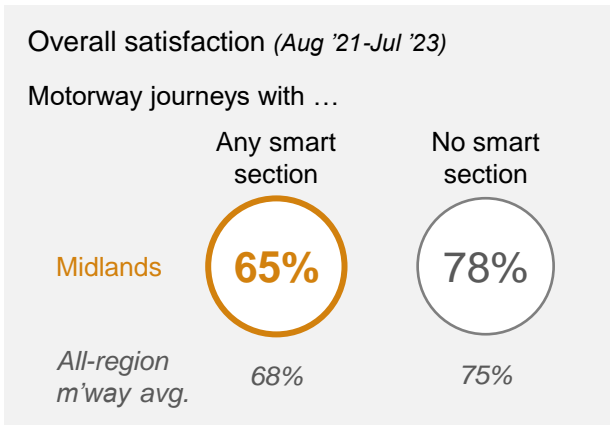
Lack of logic in the overhead speed indications.
Hard shoulder was being used by traffic... Dangerous suicide lane.

SRN users in the Midlands on M6 (446), M42 (317), Apr '21 – Sep '22. Averages shown are the all-region motorway average.

** "Traffic lights" used here indicate how these users rate the range of measures within each of these topics (e.g. "Road condition" covers surface, lighting, markings, cats eyes, litter), compared to all motorways. Some sample sizes are smaller on some of these measures individually (e.g. lighting is only rated by those driving after dark), so we are presenting an overview of experience (which also takes into account free-text comments.). See pg 53 for detail

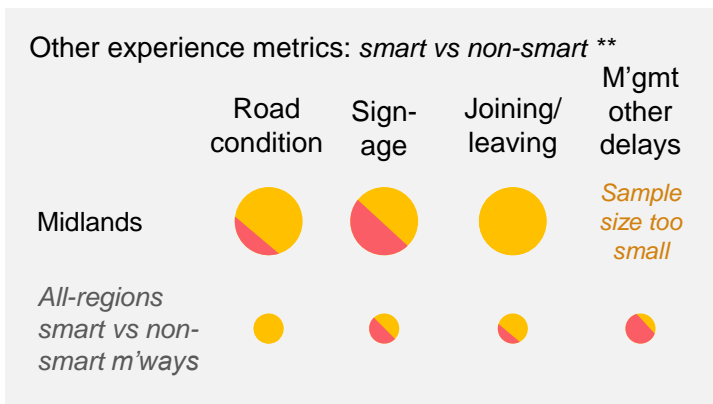
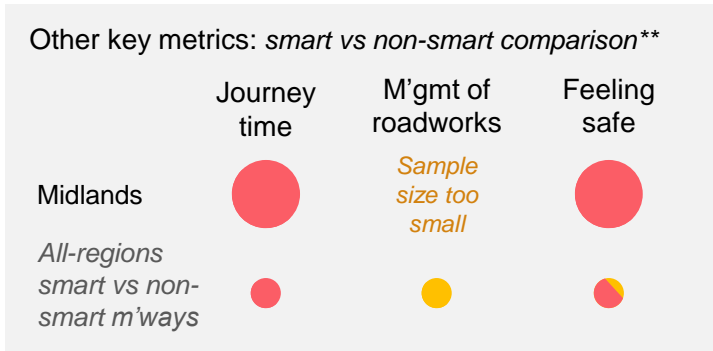
A broader snapshot of smart motorway feedback echoes this: journeys are usually less positive, often **perceived as less safe**, and experienced as **congested in practice**

Journeys on smart motorways are typically less satisfactory than on other motorways; a particularly big contrast in the Midlands



The key issue is journey time, though many aspects of journeys are less positive than on other motorways.

...except roadworks management and road condition: two areas where smart motorways typically do no worse than elsewhere (though M6 in particular has a poor rating here).



Drivers' comments show that, as for all roads, journey **satisfaction on smart motorways occurs when there is free-flowing momentum** and little or no need to reduce speed.

Reasons for dissatisfaction also reflect what is typical for all roads, but **the impact of heavy traffic and temporary/variable speed limits are even more common on smart motorways.**

Congestion may be inherent to these heavier-usage roads, rather than an effect of their management features (and it may of course be worse without them) – but some users comment that temporary speed limits are not removed quickly enough, or appear to be in place with no reason, slowing traffic unnecessarily in places.

Road surface condition and presentation is a little less common as a driver of dissatisfaction on smart motorways compared to other roads.

Of all comments from dissatisfied users of smart motorways, around **8% explicitly referenced 'smart' as being an issue, with safety and removal of hard shoulder the key concern.**

Base: random sample of all who used a smart motorway for any part of journey, Aug '22 – Jul '23, satisfied (104), dissatisfied (106)

Smart motorways journeys also consistently rated lower than for other roads, over time: the quarterly trend follows at approx. 5% points behind the same pattern for all roads.

And journey satisfaction varies within this for the type of smart operation:

All lane running	70%
Controlled	66%
Dynamic hard shoulder	63%

A very different experience on the M40 and M54, though these motorways are not without their own issues and areas for improvement

M40

A particularly safe feeling motorway, if not entirely free of some disruption, congestion at times and other issues

Key metrics

	Overall satisfaction	Journey time	M'gmt of roadworks	Feeling safe
M40	83%	75%	Small sample size	92%
avg.	71%	69%	Small sample size	81%

Other aspects of experience**

	Road condition	Sign-age	Joining/leaving	M'gmt other delays
M40				Small sample size

Above average, except on litter

Impactful journey features

	M40	avg.
Congestion	18%	28%
Roadworks	19%	26%
Other delays	16%	19%
Smart m'way	0%	30%

Comments from drivers reflect the largely **free-flowing traffic**, with **isolated frustrations which are typical of all motorways**

- Traffic flowing well.
- Even though [there was an] average speed [control], the road was flowing and no problems.
- No hold ups but a lot of middle lane drivers causing issues.
- Left at an ok time to avoid morning traffic which gets busy on the m42 link.
- Motorway was quite quiet but all the roadworks that are going on to install average speed cameras are frustrating and there is no hard shoulder.

M54

Disruption reported rarely and traffic feels light on nearly all journeys, though perceptions of poor road surface and litter stand out

Key metrics

	Overall satisfaction	Journey time	M'gmt of roadworks	Feeling safe
M54	84%	81%	Small sample size	82%
avg.	71%	69%	Small sample size	81%

Other aspects of experience**

	Road condition	Sign-age	Joining/leaving	M'gmt other delays
M54				Small sample size

Impactful journey features

	M54	avg.
Congestion	7%	28%
Roadworks	4%	26%
Other delays	7%	19%
Smart m'way	0%	30%

Similar **appreciation for free traffic flow on M54**, but many drivers comment on the **appearance and condition of parts of the road**

- M54 is a nice motorway that isn't often overly busy so the journey is quite straightforward.
- The traffic was light with no delays. The views of the countryside are enjoyable too.
- Other than road noise - driving conditions were good.
- Road surface... is extremely uneven. This type of unevenness puts a lot of stress on the car suspension. Feels like it is gradually getting worse.
- Saw lots of debris on hard shoulder very dangerous.

SRN users in the Midlands on M40 (128), M54 (112), Apr '21 – Sep '22. Averages shown are the all-region motorway average.

** "Traffic lights" used here indicate how these users rate the range of measures within each of these topics (e.g. "Road condition" covers surface, lighting, markings, cats eyes, litter), compared to all motorways. Some sample sizes are smaller on some of these measures individually (e.g. lighting is only rated by those driving after dark), so we are presenting an overview of experience (which also takes into account free-text comments.). See pg 53 for detail

The A1 and A14: examples of typical major A road experiences in the East Midlands

A1

Fairly high reported levels of congestion and roadworks, and road condition diminishes journey experience for some, but most journeys are straightforward

Key metrics

	Overall satisfaction	Journey time	M'gmt of roadworks	Feeling safe
A1	74%	71%	Small sample size	83%
avg.	71%	70%		83%

Other aspects of experience*

Road condition	Sign-age	Joining/leaving	M'gmt other delays
			Small sample size

Impactful journey features

	A1	avg.
Heavy / cong' traffic	31%	21%
Road works	29%	23%
Other delays	17%	16%

Comments from users of the A1 in the Midlands reflect these results

Traffic not bad, road condition ok.

Only moderate traffic.

Line markings worn, not very clear. Signage dirty, not very reflective. Multiple small potholes. Repair ...that damaged the car earlier in the year was done poorly.

The A1 was very busy, as usual, but there weren't any holdups.

Traffic wasn't too busy... There's a couple of places where the road surface us really rough but generally it's a comfortable drive.

A14

Heavy traffic is felt to affect about a third of journeys, but relatively few perceived roadworks or other delays mean journey times are good here. Again, road condition is an area for improvement

Key metrics

	Overall satisfaction	Journey time	M'gmt of roadworks	Feeling safe
A14	76%	75%	Small sample size	83%
avg.	71%	70%		83%

Other aspects of experience*

Road condition	Sign-age	Joining/leaving	M'gmt other delays
			Small sample size

Impactful journey features

	A14	avg.
Heavy / cong' traffic	29%	21%
Road works	14%	23%
Other delays	11%	16%

Drivers' comments also highlight reasonable flow despite traffic volume, and road condition

Despite being a busy road I was able to join safely... The traffic was moving well and I had no trouble getting off the A14 at Rothwell.

Potholes, heavy traffic.

Lane markings in the damp conditions were difficult to see in places

The road was moving well with a reasonable amount of traffic.

The road is very busy ...numerous potholes ...lethal for motorcyclists and... risky for motorists. There is no hard shoulder and some lay-bys have very short lead in/out, which is... dangerous.

SRN users in the Midlands on A1 (138), A14 (145), Apr '21 – Sep '22. Averages shown are the all-region major A roads average.

* "Traffic lights" used here indicate how these users rate the range of measures within each of these topics (e.g. "Road condition" covers surface, lighting, markings, cats eyes, litter), compared to all major A roads. Some sample sizes are smaller on some of these measures individually (e.g. lighting is only rated by those driving after dark), so we are presenting an overview of experience (which also takes into account free-text comments.). See pg 53 for detail

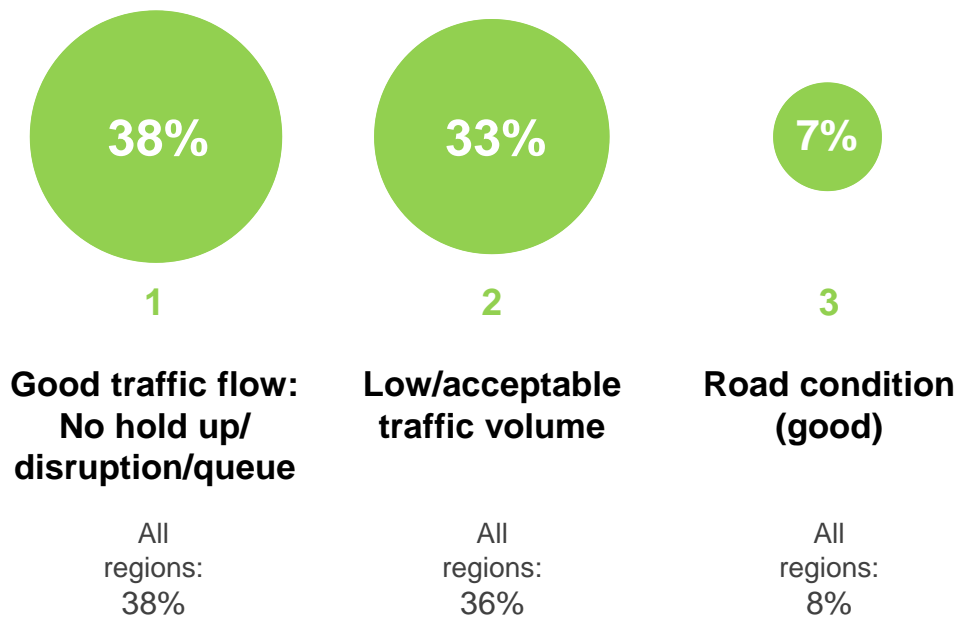
Understanding overall satisfaction in more detail



There are two 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 using a random sample of responses.

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



Other factors also impact on satisfaction for a minority, including:

Acknowledged benefit from improvement works

Good flow 'despite' roadworks

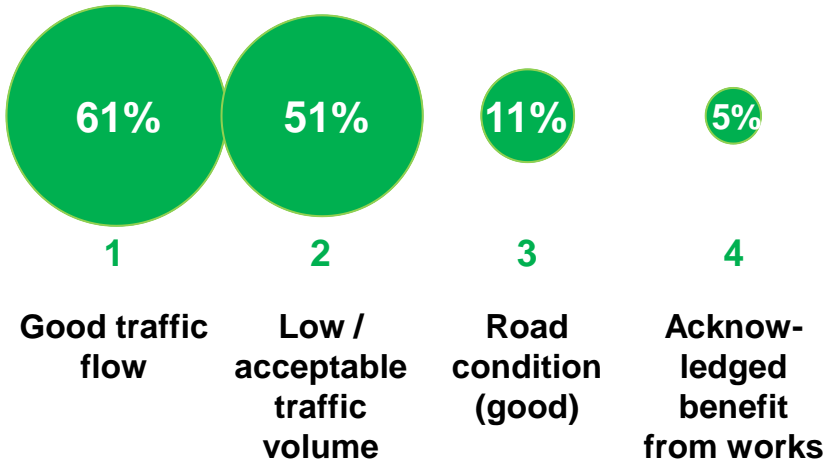
Good/effective signage

Good/effective lighting

...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.

Ultimately the absence of disruptions, or allowing continuous momentum, makes for **fully satisfactory** rather than simply 'ok' journeys

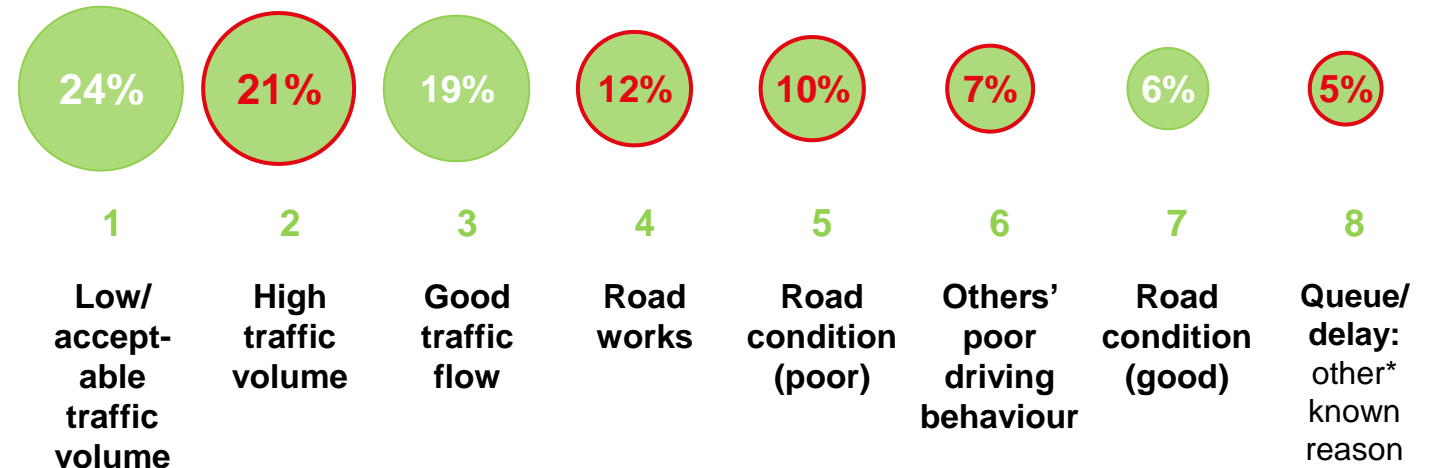
Very satisfied: top reasons
% mentioning topic



Plus:


- ✓ a **range of other factors relating to good management and features** of roads
- ✓ a **near-total absence of reported issues** like roadworks, congestion, poor upkeep/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 most users are satisfied overall in the Midlands, could National Highways aim to increase the proportion who are very satisfied (currently around a third here, similar to most regions)?

Findings on this page are at national level 

In addition to absence of disruptions, very satisfactory journeys sometimes involve **appreciation for improvement works**; those who are only 'fairly' satisfied often have both **positive and negative aspects** to their journey, or feel it is **atypically good**

Very satisfied: Example comments (Midlands)

- “ Traffic was light and free flowing. Lane closure in place with speed restriction but it didn't unduly impact my journey and didn't cause queuing/delays. Good to see a safe environment maintained for those working in the roadworks. ”
- “ Road was well maintained, drivers respectful and predictable and signs were clear and easy to read. ”
- “ Traffic flowed well. Signage worked. ”
- “ Empty smooth road, no delays, road was gritted well, no ice, very safe, well lit ”
- “ [I like the] Coventry by-pass improvements - new flyover ”
- “ Road was smooth. No queues or slow moving traffic. ”
- “ Lovely road to travel on now [it's] been completed ”
- “ Road was clear and despite weather conditions easy driving ”
- “ Not much traffic. No holdups. Motorway is well maintained ”
- “ The road surface was great throughout ”
- “ Just out for a leisure ride, there were no issues on the M1 ”

Fairly satisfied: Example comments (Midlands)

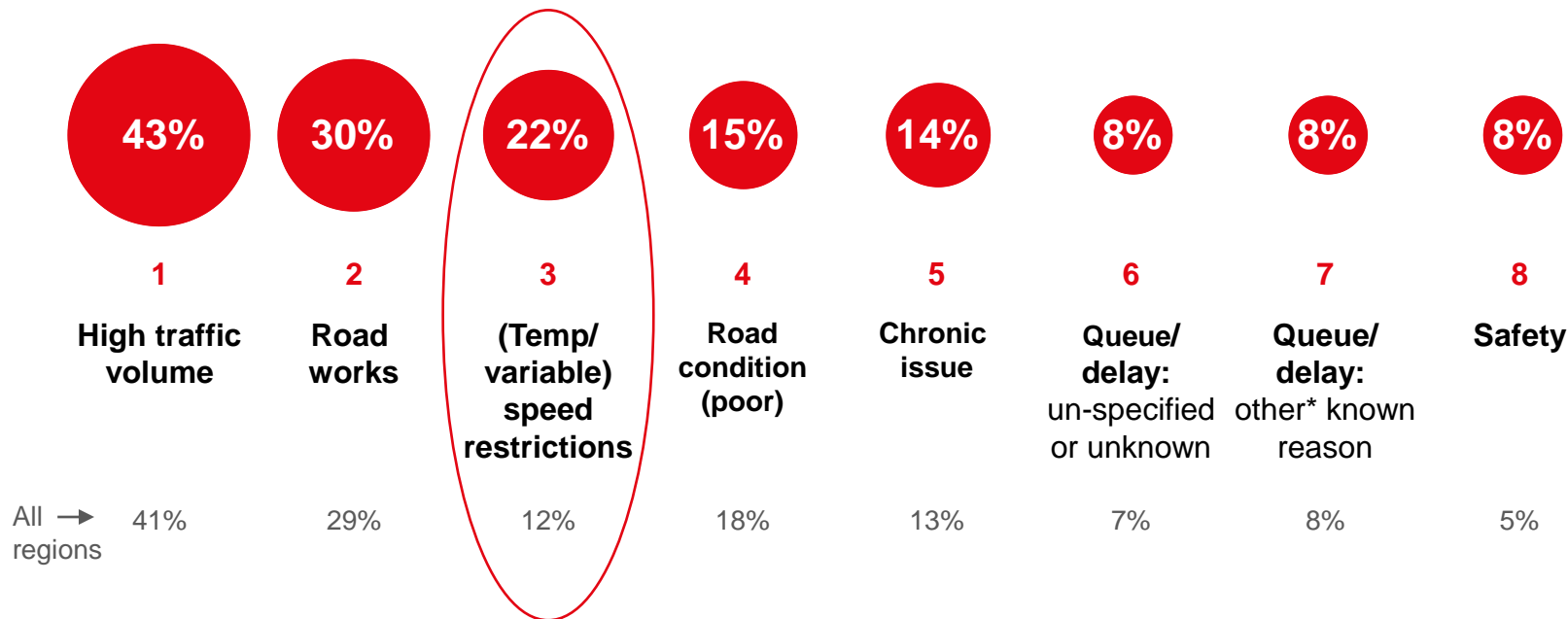
- “ The road side edges are a bit of a mess now - sad as it is a relatively new road. ”
- “ Part of the road included a one lane section which caused a bit of a delay. ”
- “ Road not smooth enough for a seamless drive ”
- “ Clear road but roadworks at the exit ”
- “ Confusing speed signs on A52 up to Queens hospital ”
- “ Traffic wasn't too busy. The majority of the roads are good. There's a couple of places where the road surface us really rough but generally it's a comfortable drive ”
- “ Some parts of the road, especially around junctions are queued. For the most part it is a very good road. ”
- “ The road is such an easy route to take. There are a few roadworks that are taking a long time that added a fair bit onto the journey, plus some junctions really halt the traffic where people don't merge properly, but overall it was fairly easy and was very straightforward. ”
- “ I believe that smart motorways are dangerous and even though the M5 was fairly quiet ...I can't help but worry ...as there isnt a hard shoulder for some of the M5 ”

Perception of heavy traffic and roadworks are the most common reasons for dissatisfaction in the Midlands; temporary speed restrictions and other aspects of smart motorways also driving dissatisfaction here more than in other regions

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



Dissatisfaction: other reasons

(very/fairly dissatisfied)
% mentioning topic

	Midlands	All regions
Dislike/negative comment smart motorway	8%	3%
Poor/misleading signage	5%	4%
Too few lanes/closures	4%	6%
Issues merging/changing lanes, or joining/leaving	4%	3%
Other	15%	19%

Base: random sample of those giving a rationale for overall satisfaction rating Aug 22-Jul 23 – dissatisfied, Midlands (103), all regions (303)

* 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

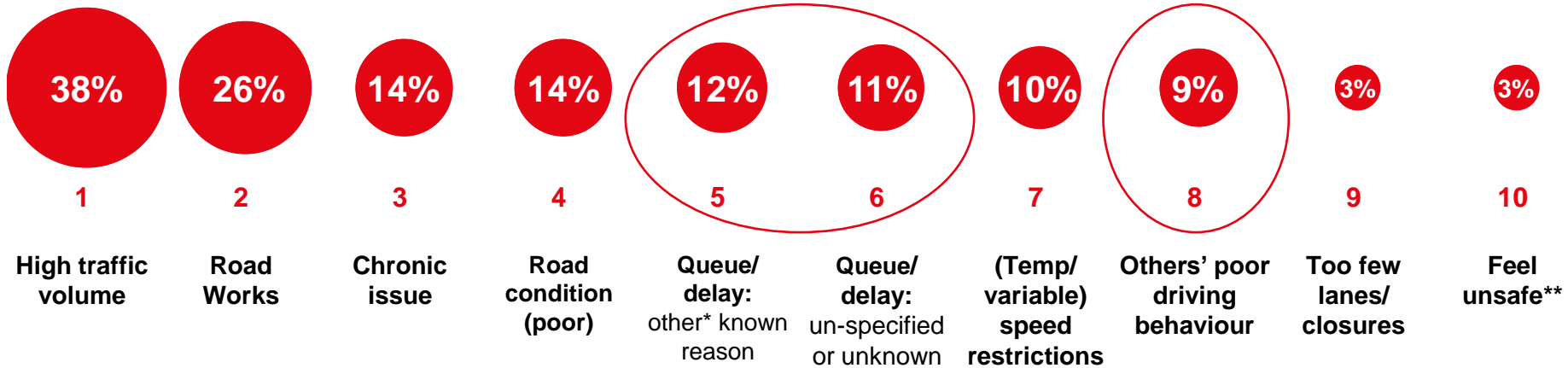
While perception of heavy traffic and **roadworks** are most common reasons for poor journeys, **when other delays happen, they are associated with more pronounced dissatisfaction**, along with some other differences between fairly and very poor journeys

Findings on this page are at national level



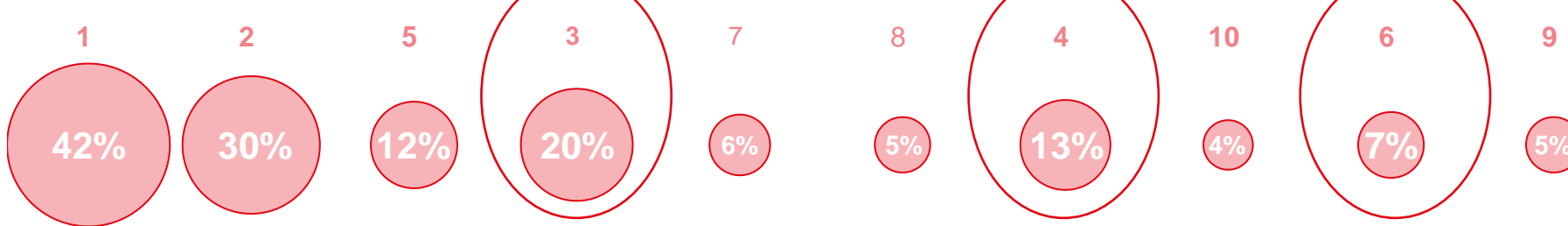
Very dissatisfied: top reasons

% mentioning topic



Fairly dissatisfied: top reasons

% mentioning topic



Other measures within the survey confirm that disruption for other reasons, when they happen, can be more **impactful** than that caused by roadworks:

For journeys reported to be affected by roadworks, 24% are dissatisfactory, compared to 33% with congestion, and 34% delayed for other reasons – especially accidents and breakdowns.

All of this suggests that planned disruptions which can be managed and informed about (like roadworks) can be somewhat tolerated, but congestion and delays, including for unknown or (perceived) avoidable reasons, can feel unacceptable. Information doesn't solve, but can help to mitigate, these scenarios.

Base: random sample of those giving a rationale for overall satisfaction rating Aug 22-Jul 23, all regions – very dissatisfied (90), fairly dissatisfied (212)

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

** where feeling safe is explicitly mentioned; however, safety is also likely to be implied when dissatisfaction is caused by other factors

The strength of feeling evident in 'very' dissatisfied motorists' comments is likely indicative of the negative impact poor journeys can have on a person's day. Such experiences can also aggravate broader negative opinions about society and the way public services are run.

Very dissatisfied: Example comments (Midlands)

- “ The road is not fit for purpose. Only two lanes and always stop start and rarely above 50mph. Actually quite dangerous ”
- “ Immense amount of traffic and very slow moving for at least half of the journey. ”
- “ Traffic is always awful on that stretch of road where the junction with the A6200 is - sometimes takes 15 / 20 minutes to get from that junction to the western boulevard roundabout and this day was no different ”
- “ Road surface, particularly near side lane between J3 to J2, is extremely uneven. This type of unevenness puts a lot of stress on the car suspension. Feels like it is gradually getting worse. ”
- “ Significant delays. General driving standards of other road users was appalling - tailgating/undertaking across all carriageways with as always zero police presence once past the holdup ”
- “ Extremely busy with traffic, lots of heavy goods. Unpleasant experience. ”
- “ Enforced speed restrictions during quiet travel super frustrating ”
- “ Lorries just pull out as and when they feel like on this road more than any other ”
- “ A5 road surface littered with potholes where the top surface has disintegrated. ”

Fairly dissatisfied: Example comments (Midlands)

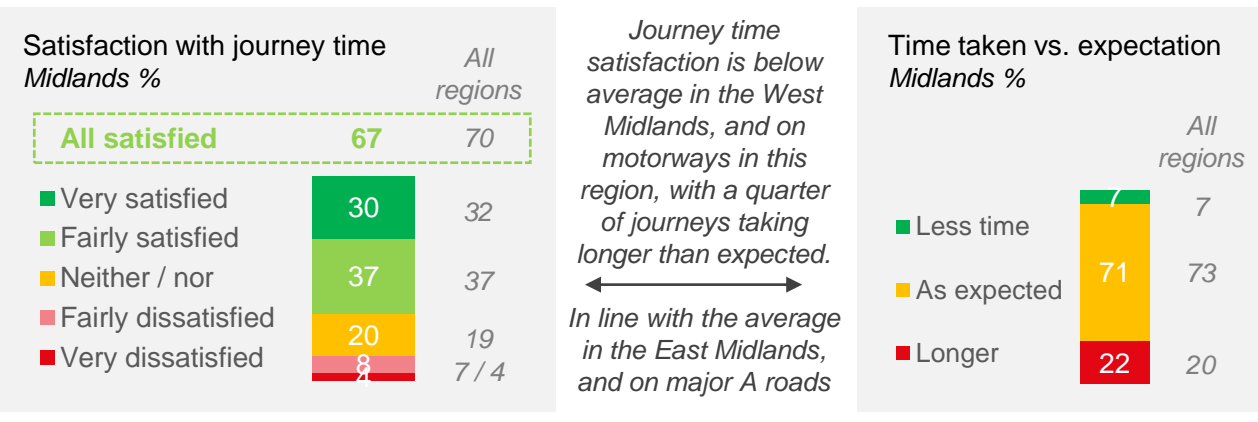
- “ If you get to the M1 to join the M69 any time from 7.15am, you hit stand still. I already leave early to ensure I'm in the office before rush hour but it seems to be getting earlier all the time. the exit from M1 to M69 is horrendous! ”
- “ 40 mph limit over excessive distance with nothing happening. Some restriction may well be needed but not over that distance. ”
- “ There has been road works on this road for over two years now and still not completed ”
- “ Lack of logic in the overhead speed indications ”
- “ Awful road surface ”
- “ Resurfacing roadworks south of Whitchurch with REALLY AWFUL diversions indicated ”
- “ Road surface very poor, road markings heavily worn, traffic signals phased poorly causing lots of stop start for a heavily laden HGV which is bad for fuel consumption and pollution ”
- “ Too much traffic and constant speed changes making drivers break before the cameras causing possible accidents and tail backs ”

Journey time

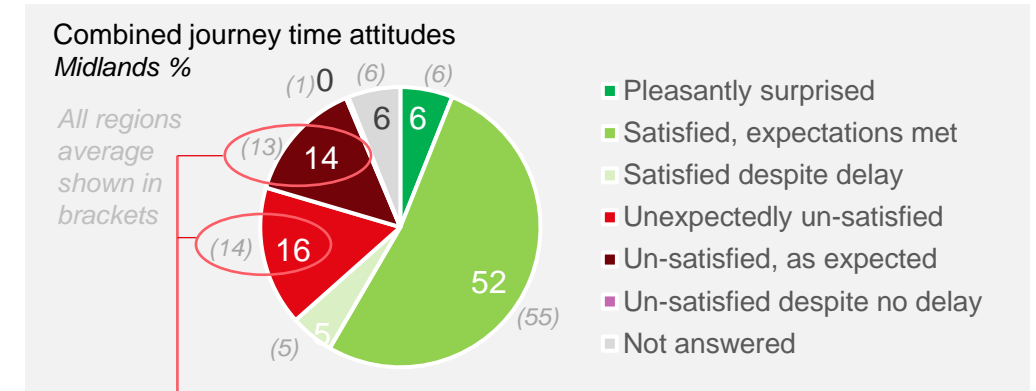


Users' experience of journey times on the SRN in the Midlands

Journey times a little less satisfactory than the average; a fifth of journeys in the Midlands take longer than expected



Taking journey time satisfaction and expectation together highlights that not being satisfied is sometimes unexpected, but is sometimes linked to longer term frustration with road provision or management



Punctuality is overtly important for 57% Midlands journeys (vs. 56% for all regions)

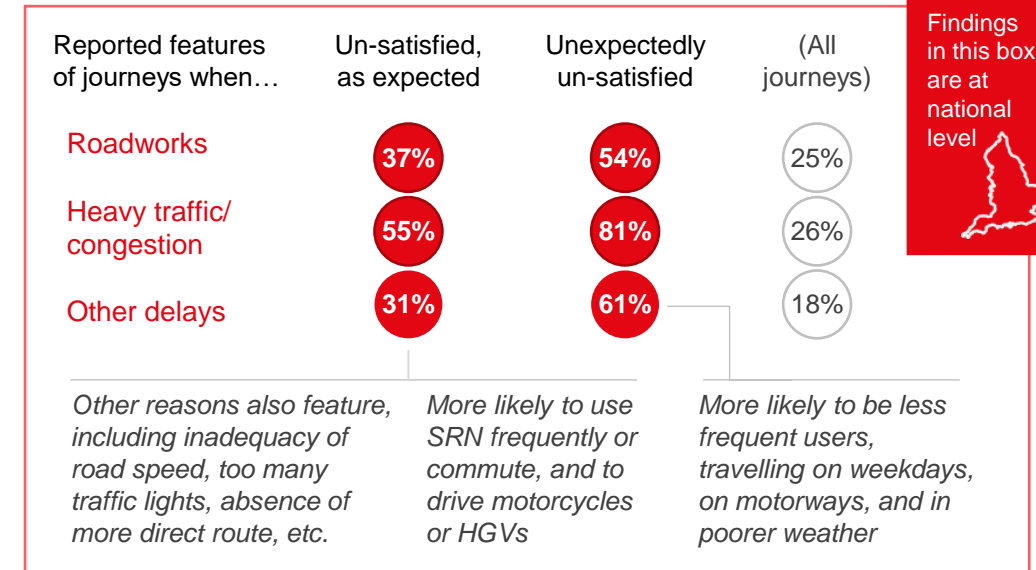
60% set off early for these journeys (vs. 58% on average)

No real differences here by area within the Midlands, though those using motorways in the Midlands much more likely to set off early, compared both to major A road users, and to motorway users elsewhere.

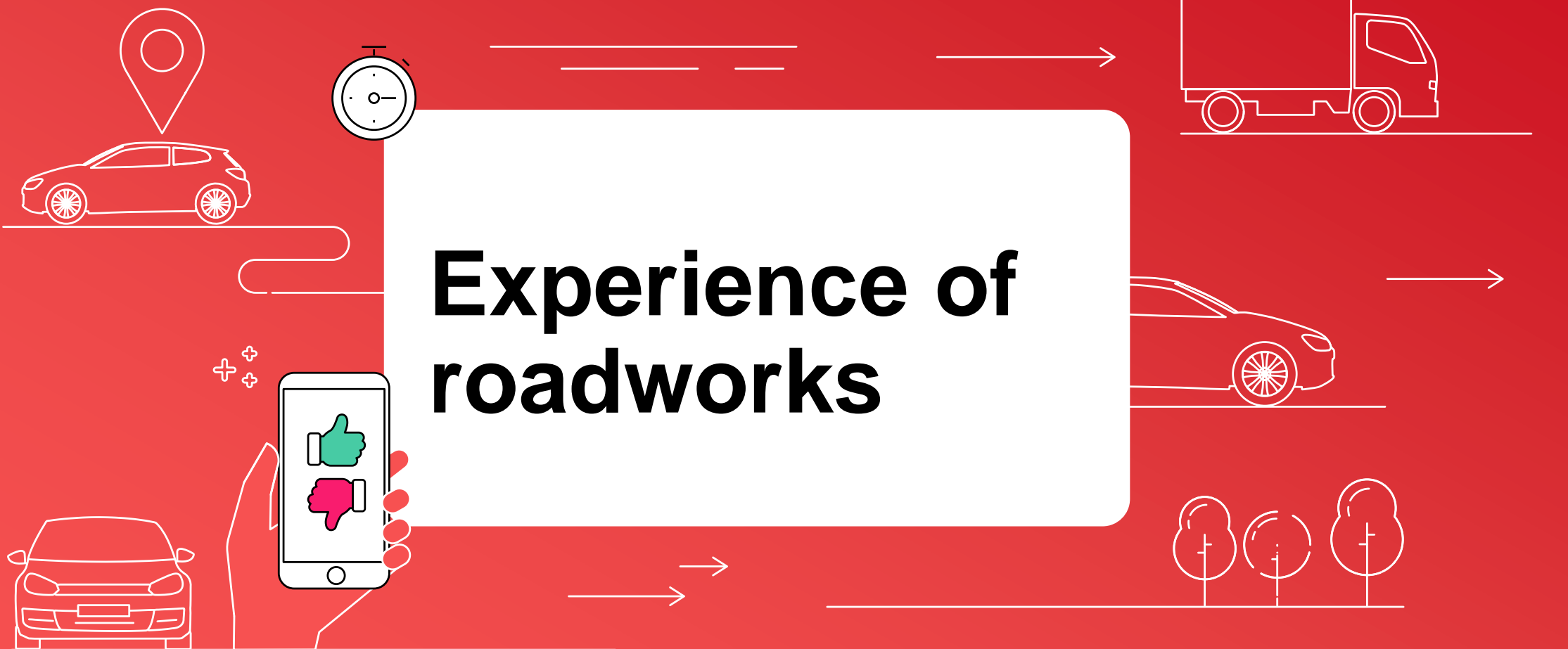
Punctuality typically matters most for work journeys, especially outward, morning peak journeys, and more so for professional drivers. But while people typically set off early for morning peak commuting journeys, this isn't necessarily the case for professional drivers – perhaps where allowing contingency is less possible.

Advance information on delays is vital to empower those who can, to set off earlier. Additionally, work to improve and protect journey times – for both planned and unplanned disruption, and more systemic delays – will benefit all, including those who do not have this option

Base: Journey time satisfaction: all answering, Aug '22 – Jul '23, Midlands, (1,992), all regions (9,056)
 Time vs expectations: all answering, Aug '22 – Jul '23, Midlands, (1,862), all regions (8,530)
 Combined attitudes: all SRN users surveyed, Aug '22 – Jul '23, Midlands, (1,992), all regions (9,091)

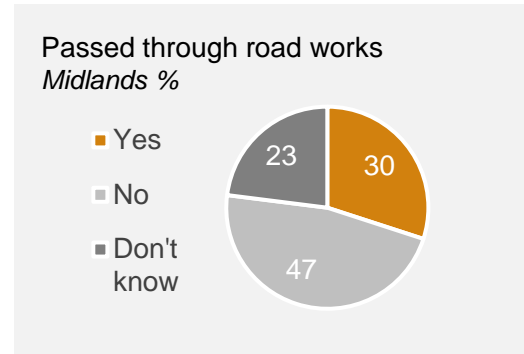


Experience of roadworks



SRN users' experience of roadworks in the Midlands

Perceived prevalence of roadworks is high in the Midlands, with a third of journeys affected

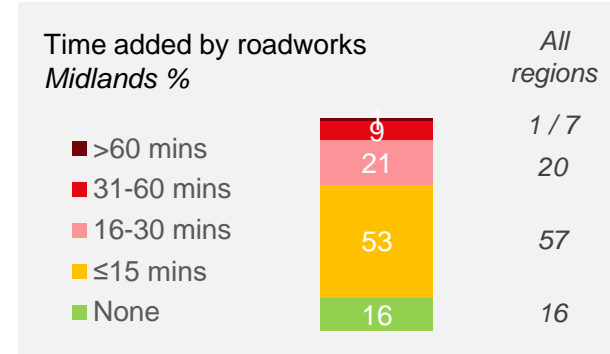


Compares to all-regions average of 25% that passed through roadworks

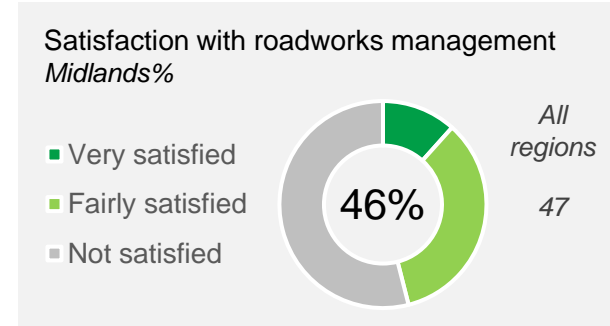
In particular, roadworks are felt to be very prevalent in the Midlands...

- **On motorways – 36%** motorway journeys passed through works (vs. 26% all-region motorway average), and a little more time was added to motorway journeys than on major A roads
- **In the West Midlands, where 35%** journeys passed through works (vs. 25% all-region average)

On average they typically add a similar extra time to journeys as in most other regions



Less than half of those affected are satisfied with roadworks management
(Similar by area within the Midlands, but very slightly better on major A roads than motorways, but still low overall)



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.... (%)	Aware after setting off (not before)		
	Unaware	Aware after setting off (not before)	Aware before setting off
Satisfied	39	48	49
(Very satisfied)	(7)	(13)	(16)

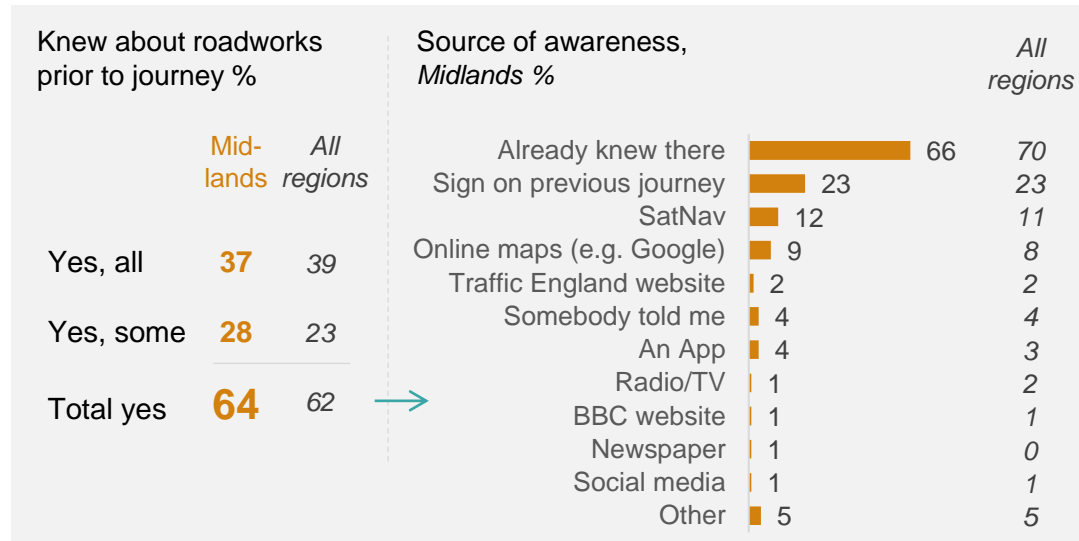
Inevitably it is difficult to truly satisfy users when their journey is disrupted, but other factors in the way works are managed can exacerbate this experience.

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

- Perception of unreasonable impact:
 - Excessive number of encounters with roadworks
 - 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



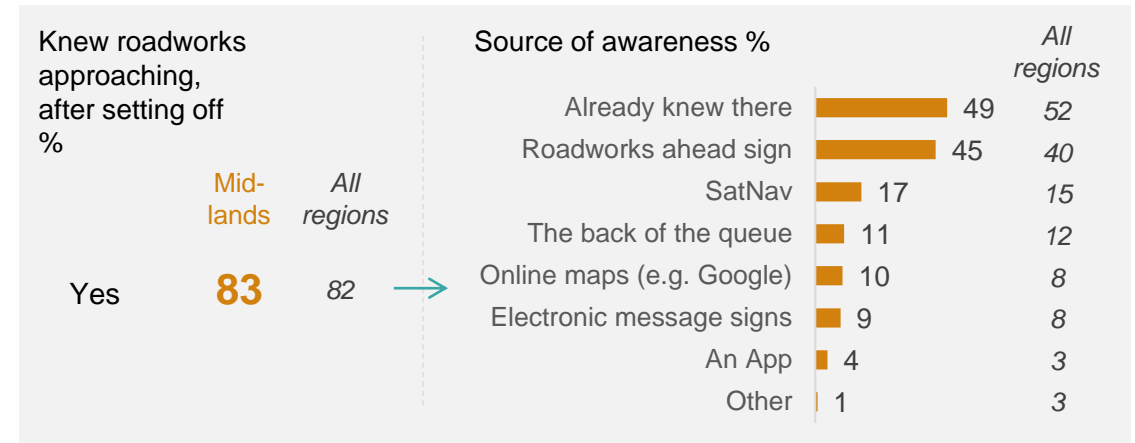
Reflecting this reliance on previous exposure, advance knowledge of roadworks is associated with more frequent usage, especially commuters and professional drivers. **Those making less frequent journeys, typically for leisure, are less informed.**

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 users less likely to know about the roadworks?

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, along with road signage



And in this context, in-journey information is satisfactory to fewer than half of those who were aware of approaching roadworks



Awareness of roadworks higher overall in the West Midlands than the East, based on prior knowledge. In-journey information rated similarly by area.

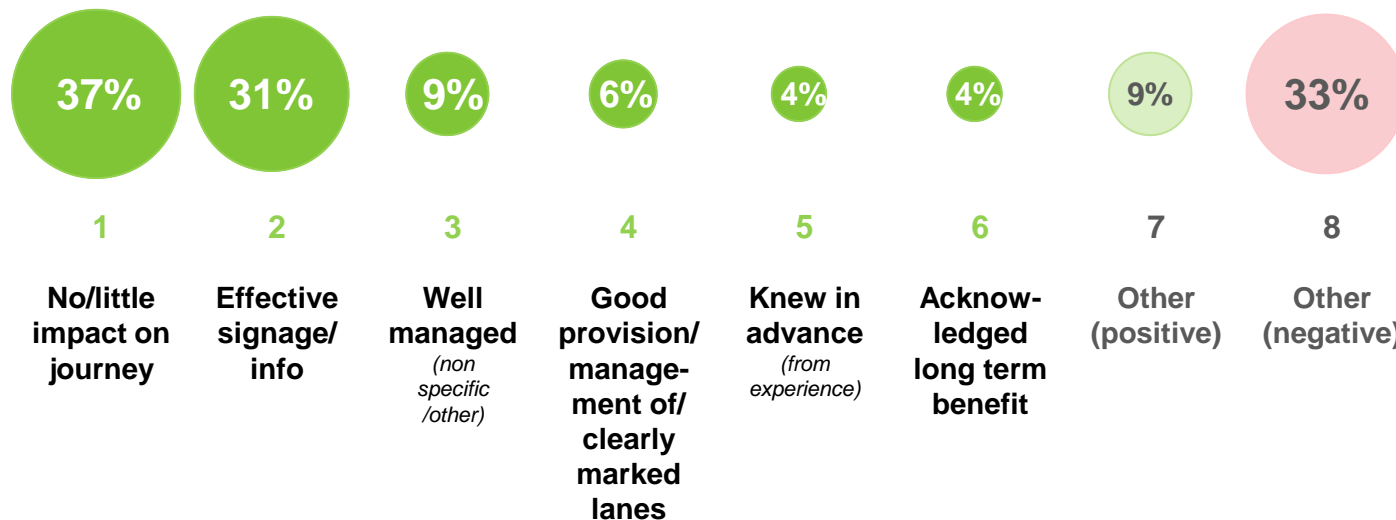
Any information before reaching the back of the queue aids satisfaction. Nevertheless, as highlighted on the previous page, experience of the roadworks themselves is only partly influenced by having prior or in-journey information; further reasons are given on the next page.

When SRN users in the Midlands 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.

Satisfaction with roadworks management: top reasons

(very/fairly satisfied)
Midlands, % mentioning topic



More negative features of roadworks management are typically associated with being fairly, rather than very, satisfied with it.

In particular Midland's drivers mention...

- That **signage and/or advance warning was insufficient or poor quality**
- Perception that **no/little work is taking place**, and restrictions/consequential delays feel unjustified
- The duration or geographical spread feels **excessive**

All → regions: 35% 30% 8% 8% 4% 3% 9% 29%

Base: random sample of those giving a rationale for satisfaction with roadworks Aug '22 – Jul '23
Midlands (104), all regions (203)



More on what makes roadworks communication effective

Feeling informed certainly makes a difference

I was able to factor the possible delay ...with the aid of Google maps. This allowed me set aside enough time ...By leaving early enough I was prepared for possible delays on route

They're taking longer than the completion date originally advertised, but I knew that so 'fairly satisfied'

Feeling informed is mentioned as a reason for good roadworks experience by about half of those who are very satisfied (and features for around a quarter of those who are fairly satisfied)

Key features of communications where drivers have felt effectively informed, include

(in order of importance, based on the relative frequency at which they are mentioned):



Timing

Sufficient notice

Well sign posted, plenty of time to change lanes

Given lots of notice roadwork were coming up [and] cars flowed well

By reducing the speeds a mile out it helped calm the traffic



Content

Detail and volume of information

Lots of signs about the roadworks, what they are doing, and when they aim to be finished. ...[with] plenty of warning so everyone didn't slam on the brakes and create more traffic

There [were] start and finish dates on signs

...balanced with clarity *[The roadworks] were easy to understand*

...and accuracy
(though note that several comments about accuracy are made with an implication that this isn't always the case)

Signage was clear and updated regularly

Delay time shown on electronic signs was pretty accurate



Channel

Multiple touchpoints/repeated notices can be useful

Messages on gantries plus cones and signs

There was advanced warning on overhead signs on M4 before approaching and the speed reduction signals helped to prevent accidents.

Including via wrap-around comms via other channels (for example, local news)

Clear signage and informed prior to work's beginning

...providing they are consistent
(see following)



...and some of the ways information can be improved further

Even among those who were satisfied overall with management of roadworks, several pointers were highlighted around how to communicate more effectively, more often:

Detail of information/content

Timings, duration, distance affected

<i>No indication how long the roadworks will continue for.</i>	<i>It would have been helpful to know the distance the roadworks lasted for</i>	<i>There were signs saying the A14 was closed, yet we were able to access the road. A time as to when the A14 is actually closed would be preferred.</i>
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How to drive through the roadworks

Where (lanes/exits), speed, etc.

<i>Speed limit changes from 50mph to 40mph to 30mph in a short space of time/distance and no obvious information about why we were asked to reduce speed</i>	<i>The signs were a bit limited and the warning for the junction I wanted could have been clearer</i>
--	---

Purpose/benefit

Note that some drivers have a strong interest in and scrutinise road improvement initiatives – and they may or may not agree with them – information about the purpose of works can alleviate frustration, but making information easily available about the rationale can also be useful to explain reasons fairly and clearly

...it should improve things longer term which is completely needed

...they also don't tell you what the roadworks are for

Sufficient notice and volume of information throughout and around journeys

Would appreciate notification further back so could ...detour if they were a long delay

I didn't see enough warnings on the road. Google maps told me more

I joined from one of the roads so had no warning about how long they would last for / delays would take...

No radio coverage

Better / earlier signage – we could have avoided the roadworks

...but need to balance detail and volume against potential for clutter and confusion

Lots of signs and cones along with new road markings were a lot to take in at once

Road signs ...but bollards were still being put out so unclear as to what was happening.

...positioning, size and lighting of signage could help more

Signs not well lit and difficult to absorb all information

Text on boards could be larger

...as can plain English

Often roadworks state a junction number or name, and I would find it easier if they specified the city / town / village so I know where they are

→ Consistency: of content, of provision of the information

Heard on the radio that the road had been closed, but it was open on our side with just one lane running. It was a bit confusing throughout our journey if our side was closed or not.

...there is always room for improvement. I.e. electronic information signs – some give information then one or two don't.

Sometimes too many signs in one area. Then inconsistency.



Some other examples of how roadworks might be delivered most effectively for SRN users



Consider communicating in a way that suggests dialogue and mutual understanding

Drivers are often rational and understand, rationally, that roadworks need to happen... can signage and other comms/information tap into this with appropriate language, and explanation of purpose?

I understand roads need fixing or improving sometimes, this is inevitable.

...important work required, good to see it being done

...while acknowledging the impact of disruption on drivers

Understandably road works need to happen, I do feel however that they seem to take too long to finish.

...they are something that needs to be done but they seem to be taking too long - over 13 years...

...and humanising the workers themselves

...workers doing their best to finish on time

...they seem to be working efficiently out in all weather

...sensible speed reduction ... Gives a safe working environment.



Can more be done to improve compliance?

Other drivers were the problem, not pulling into the correct lane when they were given notification, which there was adequate signage [for]

Lane jumpers who race down the wrong lane then barge their way in.

Note that poor driver behaviour is often mentioned in context of restrictions being in place where roadworks are not visibly underway

Because no one seems to be working and despite the speed limits lorries continually bully car drivers to go faster



As well as controlling information clutter for live roadworks, can unnecessary signage and road markings be minimised, wherever they exist?

Old road markings still visible - difficulty ensuring we were in the up to date lane

Very congested area ...Used to the layout now but not very clear with the use of cones everywhere



Consider variation in the way restrictions are imposed

For example, rules for certain vehicles, variation in traffic control measures by time of day

Given drivers are coming to expect variations on smart roads might it be reasonable that they should also expect more nuanced, reactive and conditions-based management of disruption more generally, including through roadworks?

While no one is working on that side of the road, at the moment, all the lanes have been opened and the 50mph speed limit lifted.

Roadworks are just a fact of life, but they could restrict which vehicles use which lanes, particularly on the long climb up hill

Reduced speed limit at night for no reason to 40mph as there is not a lot of traffic

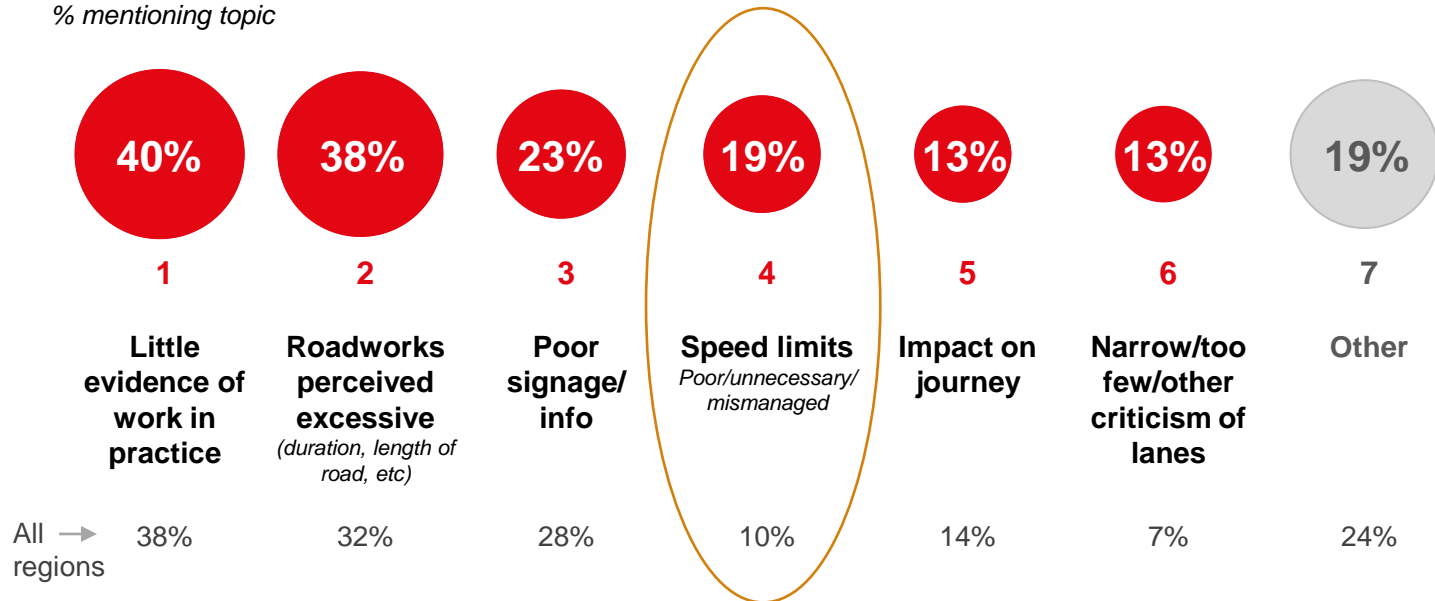
Dissatisfaction with roadworks management usually driven by apparent absence of actual work, a general perception of there being too much, for too long, and signage issues

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 in this box are at national level 

Dissatisfaction with roadworks management: top reasons

(very/fairly dissatisfied)
% mentioning topic



Frustration with low and frequently changing speed limits also a little more common as a reason for dissatisfaction with roadworks management in the Midlands

Even greater perception of **excessiveness** and **'other' issues** are the key differentiators between being **very** rather than **fairly dissatisfied** with roadwork management

Including:

- Traffic management measures not fit for purpose given weather conditions
- Cones/signs knocked over, misplaced, obstructed
- Construction debris on road
- Navigation confusing
- Unhappy with strategic decision making
- Inappropriate timing/time of year
- Cynicism that restrictions are really about fine collection/traffic calming
- Poor value for tax-payer money

Base: random sample of those giving a rationale for dissatisfaction with roadworks, Aug '22-Jul '23 Midlands (78), all regions (213), all regions very dissatisfied (112), fairly dissatisfied (125)



Some of the frustration of roadworks in motorists' own words:

Works apparently not taking place

There seem to be traffic lights being put up and left for days for no apparent reason, or for a mornings work

Roadworks for repairs that have been in place for more than 12 months with no progress made

Large sections of the A1 reduced to 40 mph. No visible work taking place, and replacing old crash barriers with the same new barriers, seems a complete waste.

Roadworks supposedly, although nothing to be seen.

Perception of excessiveness

Takes an hour ...due to ...repairs going on on central reservation. Going on for 3 or 4 years now.

15 miles of lane closure for 200yds of actual working carried out.

...major works from last 4 years never finishes...

...poorly designed roadworks that trap drivers in endless cone restrictions - due for central barrier upgrades - that could be done with a 500m 'rolling - unit - with special equipment designed for the job.

Poor information provision

Roadworks coming off A1(M) [did not have] clear signage and [I] nearly missed turn off. Also work entrances looked like a turn off

Some of the information signs were physically knocked over...

Didn't know for sure where it shut, or if it was shut. The signs are normally wrong anyway

The road works said there was to be closures between 9pm and 6am which was wrong

Road closures notified too late to take alternative route

Personal/unreasonable impact

...frustrating with the number of ...traffic hold ups where you see work is not even actively being done - Highways control doesn't seem to care that drivers are inconvenienced with road blocks

Roadworks meant down to one lane for part of journey, it meant that I arrived later than wanted for work

...the bollards and lights are challenging. It makes me anxious...

Sometimes they don't even ...tell us road work is ongoing. ...you get to your exit and it's blocked so you have to drive all the way to the next exit and return back.

Frustration with speed limits

60mph for no reason at Reading roadworks

Low speed limit (20mph) which elsewhere would have been 40-50mph instead for similar work

Too many speed restrictions for roadworks that seemed finished.

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

...there are still speed restrictions of 60mph. The roadworks have gone, yet we still have these restrictions

Other

The works ...the lanes are extremely narrow, some vehicles drift in and out of the lanes next to them despite the 50mph restriction.

Badly planned roadworks, reducing the dual carriageway to a single track at the exact point that an exit backs on so that carriage[way] backs up...

Unsafe to drive through with the lanes being too narrow.

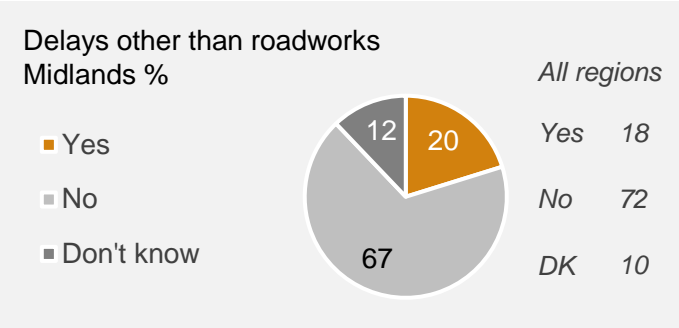
Also rubbish from construction on road made a driver stop and caused congestion.

Experience of other journey delays



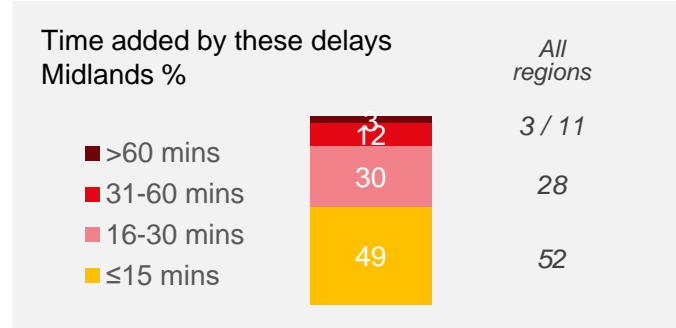
Users' experience of other journey disruption in the Midlands

Relatively fewer journeys were delayed for other (non-roadworks) reasons



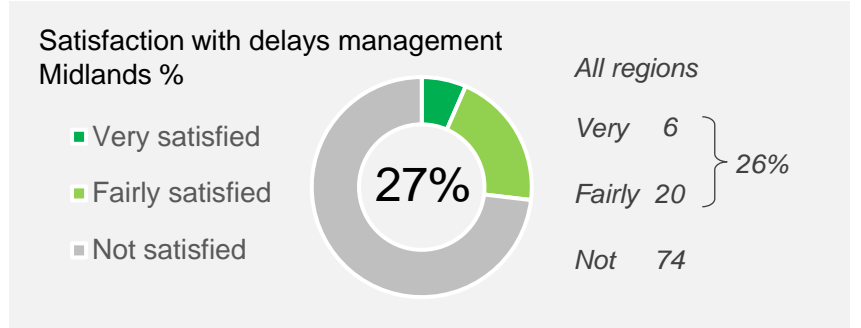
Similar pattern in West and East Midlands overall, but delays reported more often on Midlands motorways (23% vs. 19% all-region motorway average), than on major A roads (17% vs 16% relevant average).

But these delays are longer than for roadworks, and above average in the Midlands

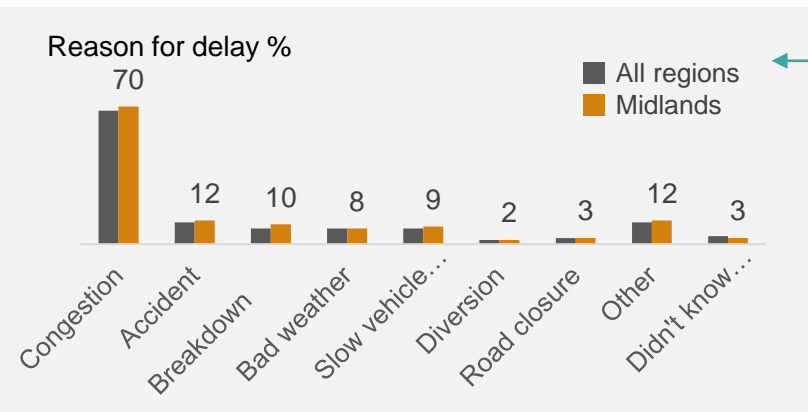


Delays add a little longer to journeys in the East Midlands, and (as nationally), on motorways compared to major A roads.

...and less than a third of those affected are satisfied with their management



Despite slightly longer delays, satisfaction with their management is slightly better in the East Midlands (31%) than the West (24%), though still low overall. As nationally, satisfaction with delay handling is typically stronger on motorways than major A roads.



The reasons for delays follow a similar pattern to the all-region average.

Congestion is reported to be experienced a little more often as a reason for delays in the West Midlands in particular.

...indeed, the Midlands is one of the regions with the highest reported congestion (particularly the West Midlands)

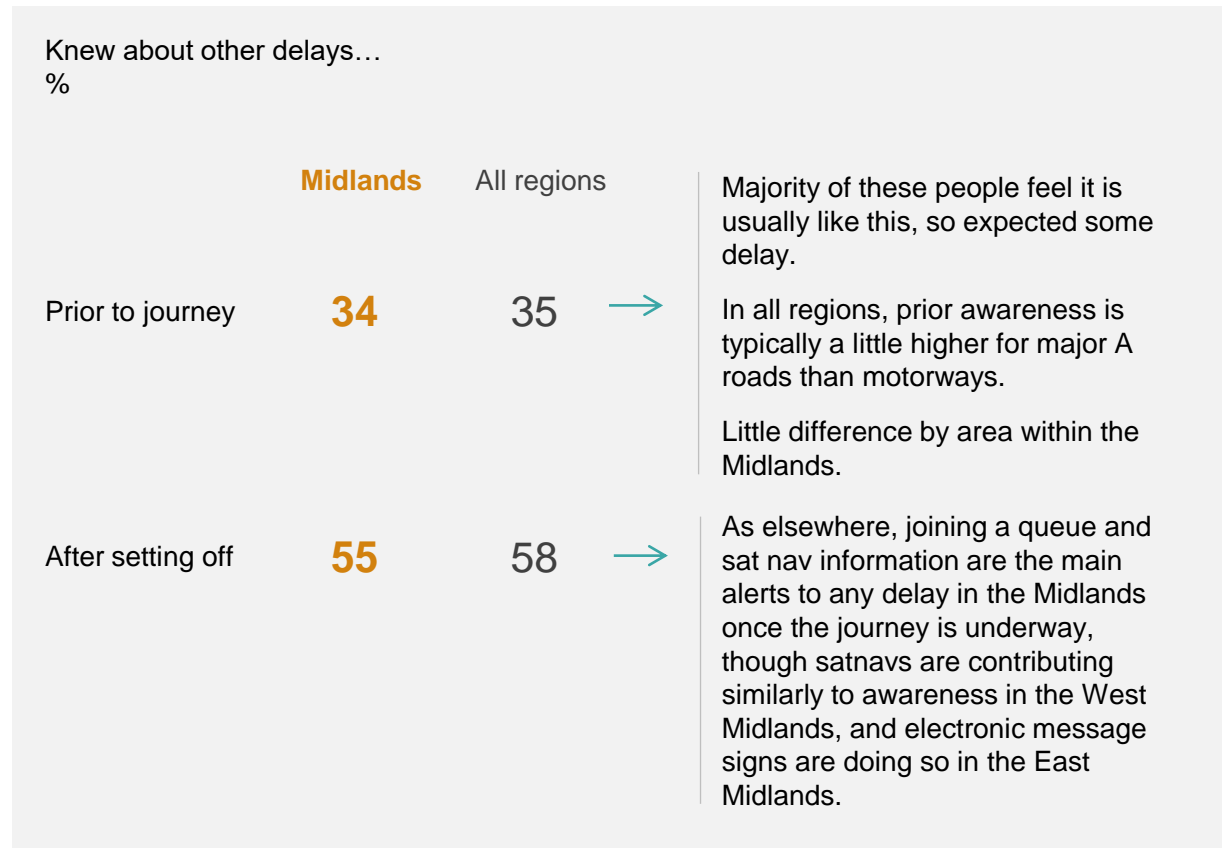
Level of traffic during journey was felt to be heavy/congested



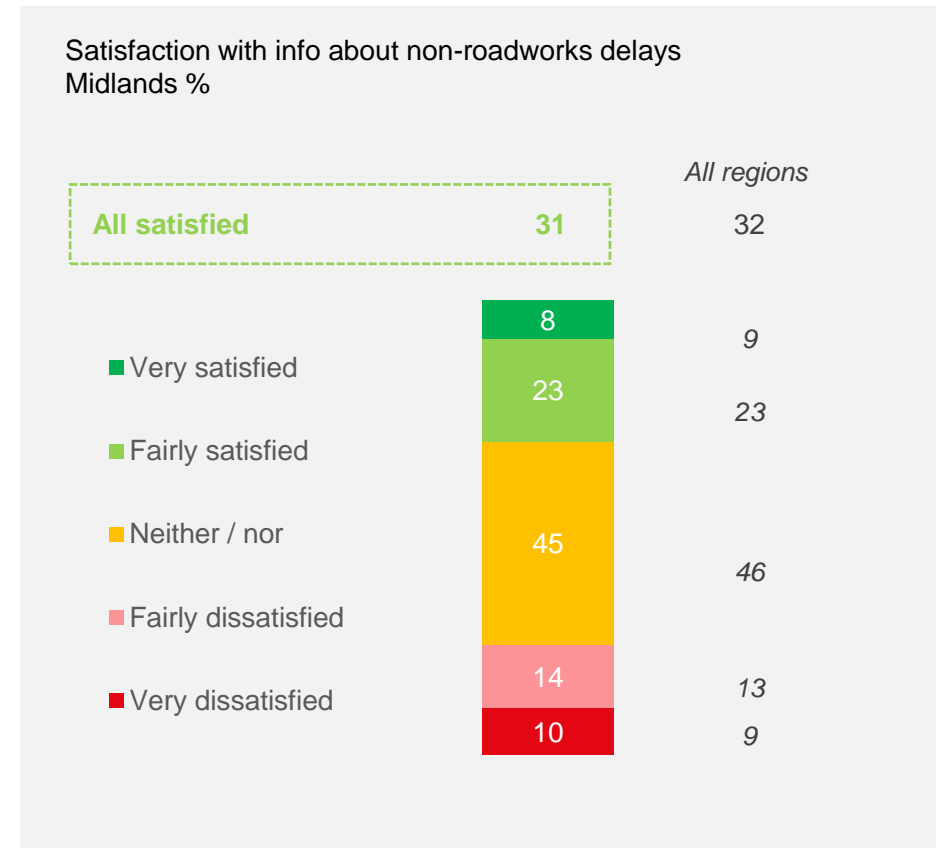
vs 25% on average, and along with the North West and M25 region as the three regions reported as most congested

Finding out about other types of delay in the Midlands

Just over a third of those affected by other delays (non-roadworks) were aware ahead of the journey, and around two thirds after setting off

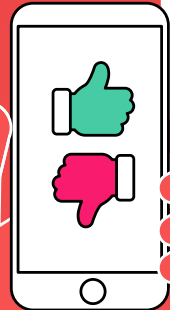
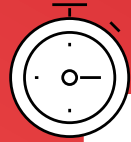


...all leading to low levels of satisfaction with delay-related information



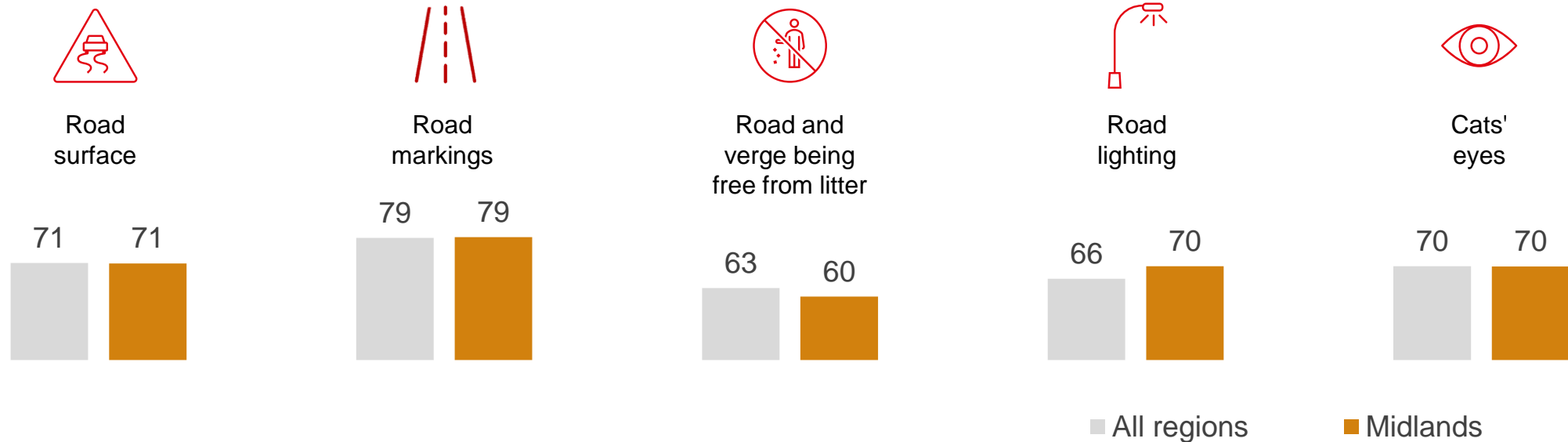
Base: All affected by delays other than roadworks in the Midlands, Aug '22 – Jul '23 (354)

Day to day functioning of SRN



Most are satisfied with road markings, but typically less so with other aspects of road condition. Litter appears to need attention in all regions.

Rating of road condition
% very/fairly satisfied, Midlands vs all-region average



Lighting is rated similarly on both motorways and major A roads in the Midlands, with 71% and 68% road users satisfied, respectively. This level of satisfaction is in line with the average for motorways (69%), but is above the relevant average for major A roads (59%), making **lighting a relative strength for A roads in this region.**

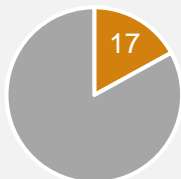
All of these measures are similarly rated in both the East and West Midlands, with the exception of cats eyes, with which 73% are satisfied in the East Midlands, vs 65% in the West Midlands.

Base: Road surface/markings/litter, Aug '22 – Jul '23, all regions (7,694-8,967), Midlands (1,691-1,960)
Lighting/cats eyes, among those travelling after dark, Aug '22 – Jul '23, all regions (1,542-1,699), Midlands (343-384)



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 the Midlands



17% 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

“ Mostly a good road, but with some potholes and far too much litter on roadsides and lay-bys ”

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

“ Road good but terrible litter ”

“ LITTER!!! Everywhere!!!! ”

“ Also the amount of rubbish on the roadside is depressing to say the least. ”

Vehicle debris (like tyres), consumer waste (for example, food packaging) and roadworks leftovers all contribute to perceptions of litter

“ Some road work signs left lying around in laybys. Rubbish everywhere on side of road ”

“ The amount of rubbish/debris at the roadside. There seemed to be more remnants of vehicle tyres than I can recall previously. ”

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

“ Too much litter ...not only is it unsightly, it poses extra hazards if an incident occurred. ”

“ ...the amount of rubbish in the last few years 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. ”

“ Large amount of rubbish/litter on side of road, very distracting ”

“ ...that day was extremely windy... things were flying all over the roads, cones, branches, litter etc. Things that didn't need to be there...”

Implication that roads are not maintained in other ways or that accountability is not taken seriously

“ 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. Its embarrassing. ”

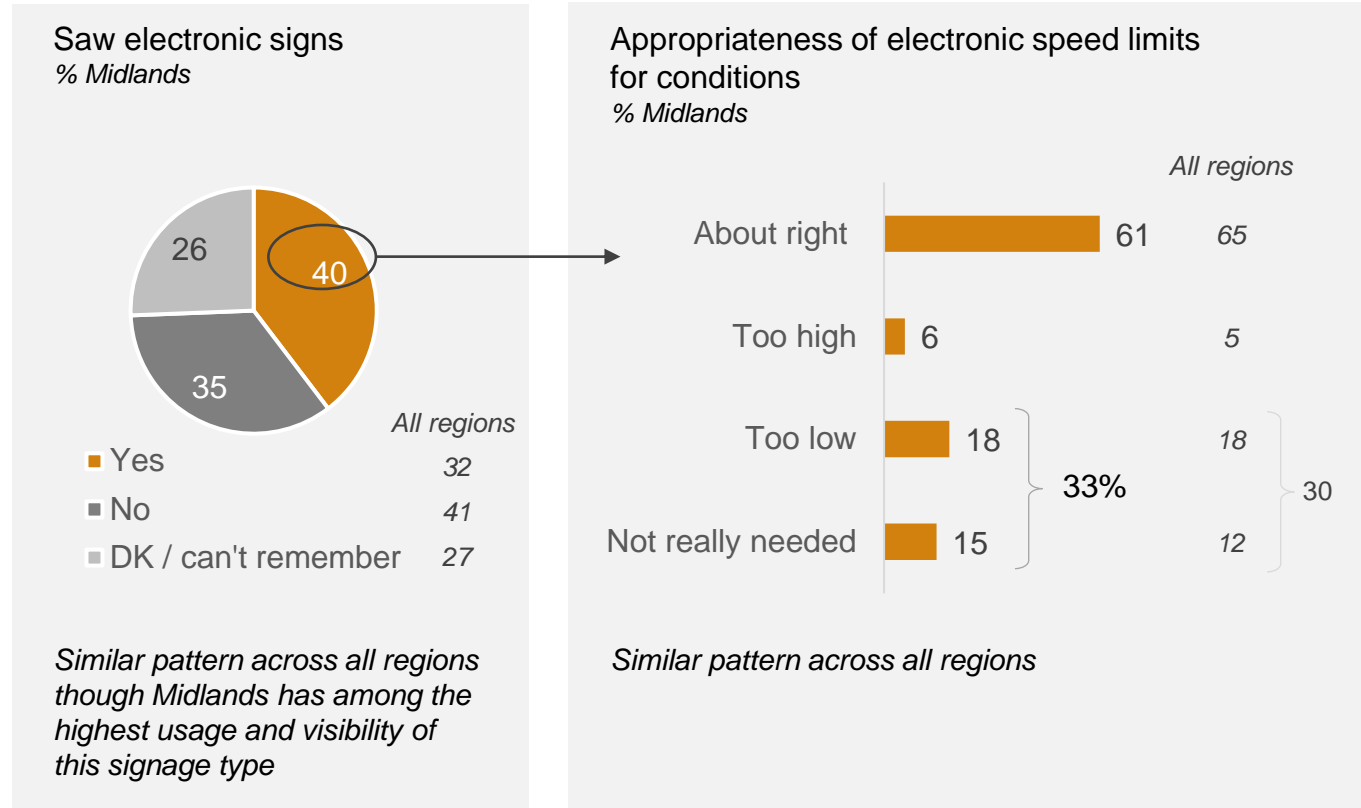
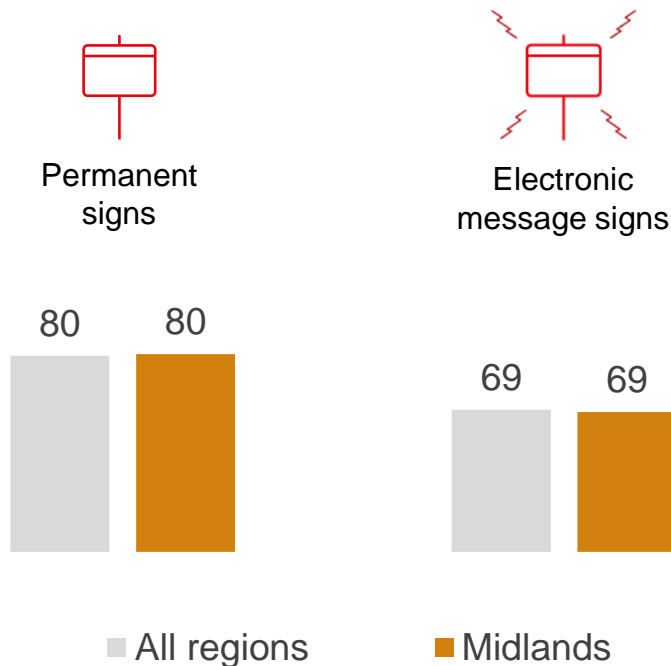
“ There is also a significant amount of litter at both junctions that never seems to be cleared. ”

“ Rubbish on the verges, it's disgusting. I tried to get through to a department to mention this but council blame Highways England and vice versa. I gave up in the end ”

The Midlands performs similarly to the national average for signage (though electronic signs perceived as more prevalent, and are a little less accepted overall)

Rating of signage

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

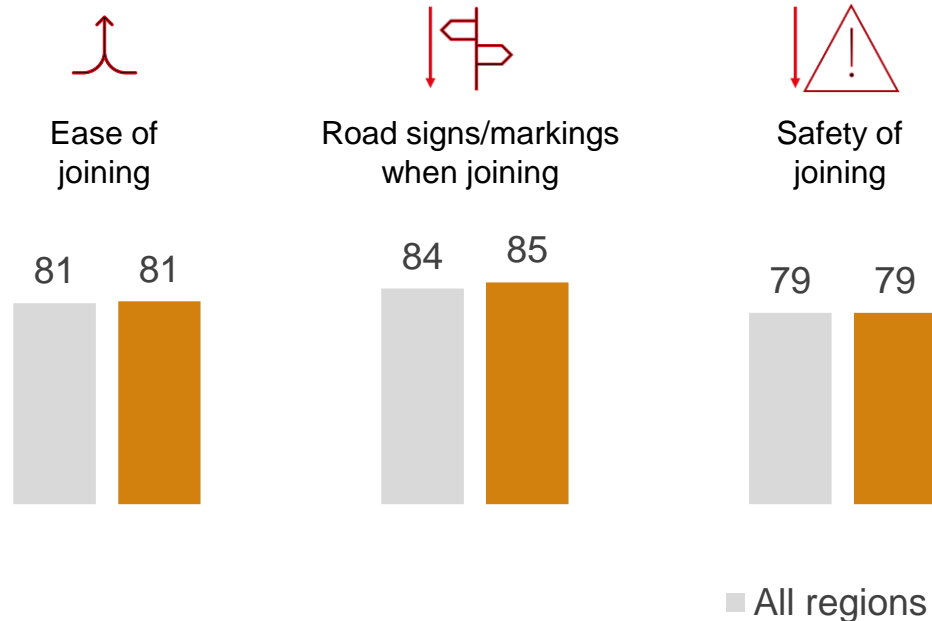


Base: Permanent signs (8,585), Aug '22 – Jul '23, Midlands (1,872)
 Electronic signs, among those having seen them, Aug '22 – Jul '23, all regions (6,195), Midlands (1,370)

Most users satisfied with joining/leaving SRN; leaving a marginally smoother process. Midlands is similar to other regions

Rating of joining

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



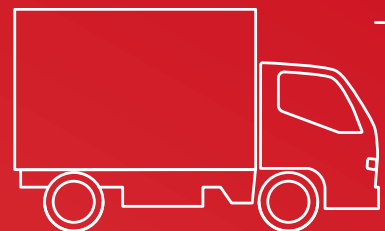
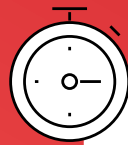
Rating of leaving

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



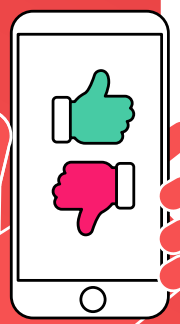
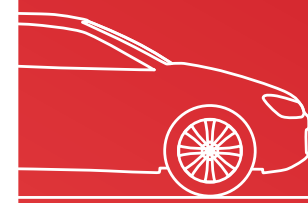
Both motorways and major A roads in this region perform similarly to the national average for equivalent road types, on these measures

Base: all regions (8,908-9,010), Midlands (1,948-1,979), Aug '22 – Jul '23



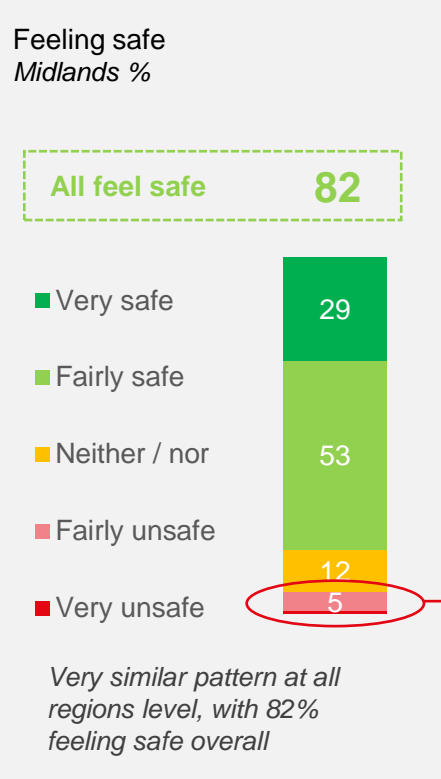
Focus on other topics

Using and sharing the road comfortably
Some smaller driver groups



Safety perception high overall, but some feel less at ease. Better weather mitigation, improved driver behaviour, and more consistency of traffic movement, could all alleviate stress.

Safety perception in Midlands is similar to the average



Base: All answering, Aug '22 – Jul '23, Midlands (1,981), all regions (9,055)

All drivers can feel unsafe at times, but this is a little more likely for those with certain...

Driver/party characteristics

- Females
- With a disability
- When travelling alone OR with young children

Journey patterns and road usage

- Driving a motorcycle or light goods vehicle
- In weekday peaks, for commuting
- On motorways – especially smart motorways
(62% of all those feeling unsafe on motorways were on a smart motorway, compared to only 45% of all motorway journeys where the driver felt safe)

External factors

- In heavy rain, or after dark
- When disrupted (delays, roadworks, heavy traffic)

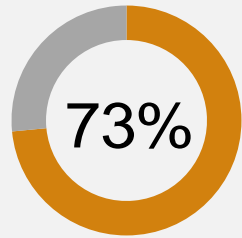
Findings in this column and box are at national level

When they felt unsafe during a journey, drivers' reasons for dissatisfaction were similar to those who felt safe (with perceived congestion and roadworks the key issues), but with heightened emphasis on:

- Variable/temporary speed limits
Drivers ...[braking] without warning, especially ...when 50 turned to national speed limit then back to 50 quickly then back to national speed limit for no apparent reason.
- Other factors linked to smart motorways
...no hard shoulder ...if you break down there is nowhere to go and [I] feel more vulnerable with the motorcycle... also the variable speed cameras ...flickering ... and one reading the wrong speed limit compared to the others
This is a smart motorway. A car was stationary in first lane but there were no warnings on the overhead signs.
- Poor maintenance/presentation
Too much litter ...it poses extra hazards ...[And] 60 to 40 to 50, back to 40, national speed limit, then 40... in the space of 4 junctions ...increases risk by drivers looking constantly at the signs, their dash and surrounding traffic.
- The weather
...I don't like that draining asphalt isn't used yet in a country where rainy days are the norm... can lead to ...accidents
- Poor lighting/markings
Large puddles ...in the overtaking lane. Extremely dangerous as no street lighting, no drainage
- ...and comments around others' accommodation of these issues
...confusing roadworks and accompanying signage ...especially when other drivers use intimidation to hurry you.

Poor driving perceived as common and many feel more could be done to address it... but equally, not all recognise their own potentially risky behaviour

Experienced poor driving behaviour, Midlands %



All-regions average: 70%
 Similar in both East and West Midlands.
 In all regions, poor driving by others is more common on motorways, at 76% vs. 62% on major A roads.

Poor driving seen, Midlands %

	Midlands %	All regions
Middle lane hogging	48	48
Not signalling	38	39
Speeding	36	37
Tailgating	35	35
Undertaking	29	27
Veering between lanes	26	25
Pulling out dangerously	24	22
Using mobile phone	19	19
Very slow driving	18	17
Cutting me up	18	17
Sudden braking	15	13
Jumping traffic lights	2	2
Verbal / other abuse	1	1
Other	4	4

Most blame other drivers themselves:

People driving in the 3rd and 4th lane, not overtaking anybody

There are always lots of lorries and it's annoying when they overtake each other

...but for many, other authorities bear some responsibility

...fine apart from the idiots who 'hog' the centre lane... this issue needs to be lawfully addressed!

Roundabout ...has two lanes but as they are unpainted traffic weaves around, causing danger

The variable speed limits changed frequently... adds danger as vehicles brake suddenly. The general standard of driving is appalling, and should be better policed.

I find the speed signs are not sensitive enough and people then ignore them as there appears to be no reason for [them]... dangerous but... common

Attitudes to risk Midlands %

- Agree
- Neither/nor
- Disagree



Those willing to drive fast and take risks are a little more likely to be:

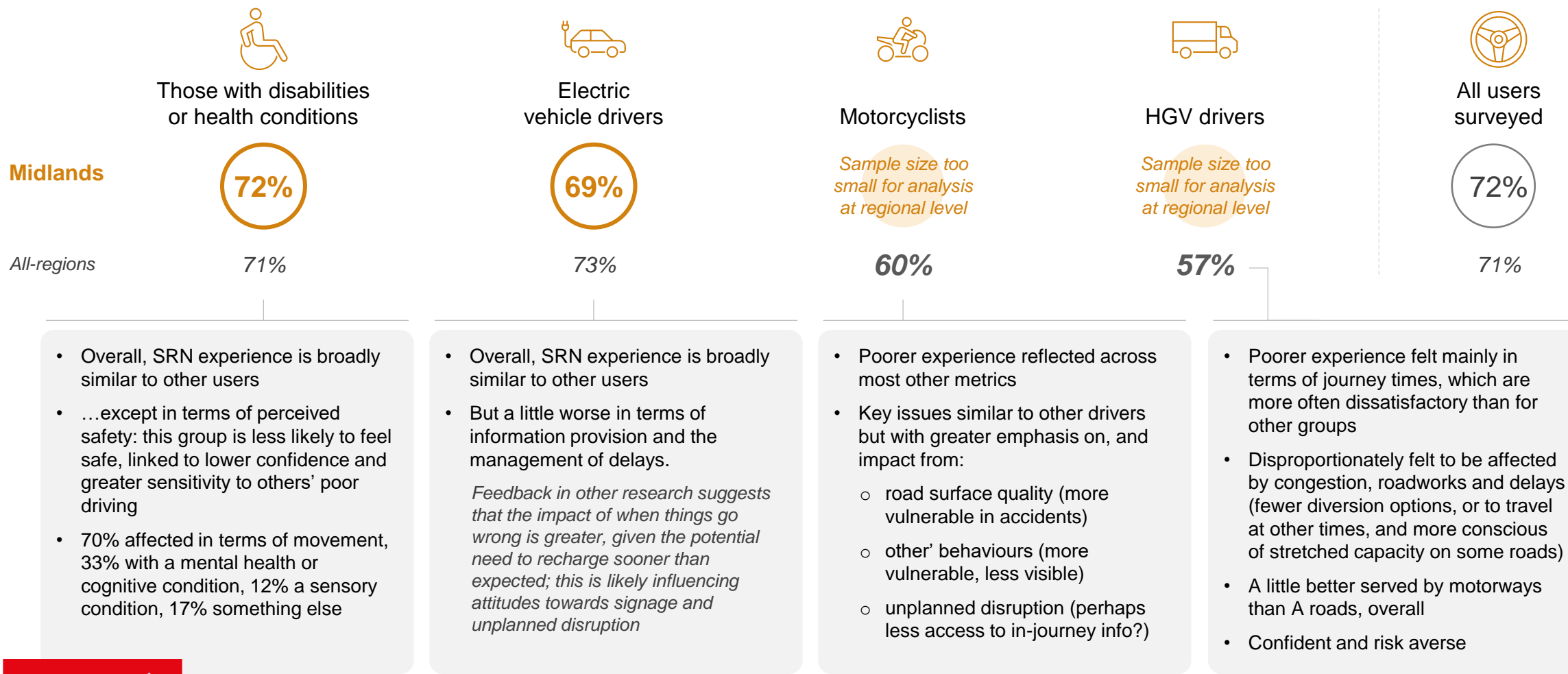
- Male, under 60
- More frequent drivers
- Car drivers (rather than vans, lorries, buses)
- In the South East and M25 region.

Findings outside of grey boxes are at national level

Among those not prepared to take what they deem as 'risks', 22% are still happy to speed on motorways, 12% on major A roads.

Base: all SRN users surveyed Aug '22 – Jul '23 (9,091), Midlands (1,992). Experienced others' poor driving behaviour (6,153), Midlands (1,342)

The experience of some smaller SRN user groups



Findings in grey boxes are at national level

Base: all answering overall satisfaction

All regions motorcyclists (285), HGVs (242), disabled drivers (728), EV drivers (628), all (9,055). Midlands disabled drivers (157), EV drivers (144), all (1,985)

Data for sub-groups based on two years (Aug '21-Jul '23). "All users" data is based on last 12 months only (Aug '22 – Jul '23), as throughout the majority of this report except where specified

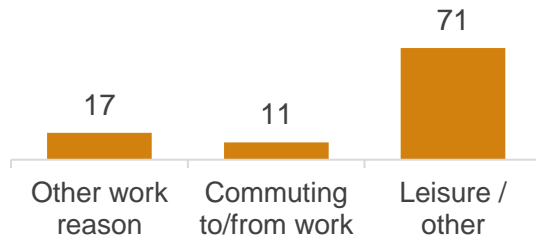
Context for the results and reporting conventions



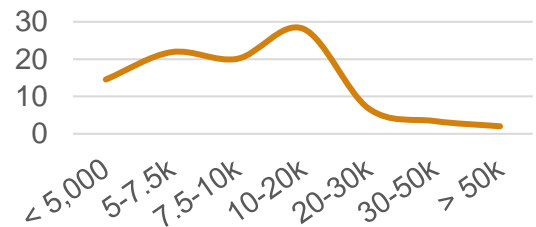
Users, and how they use the SRN in the Midlands

Driving context

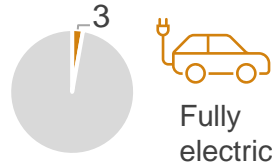
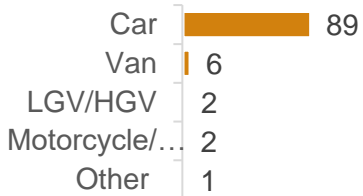
Journey purpose



Annual mileage (total)

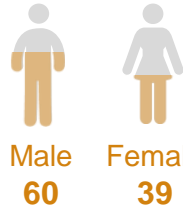


Vehicle type

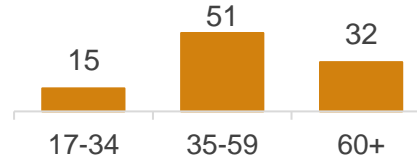


The traveller(s)

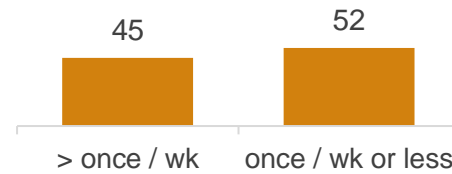
Gender



Age



Frequency on SRN



Any disability

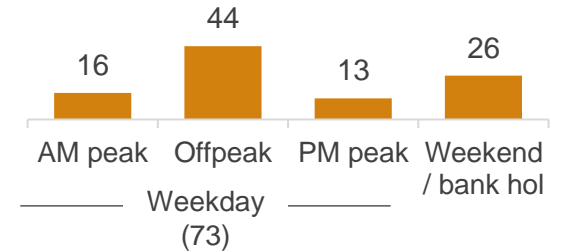


Travelling party



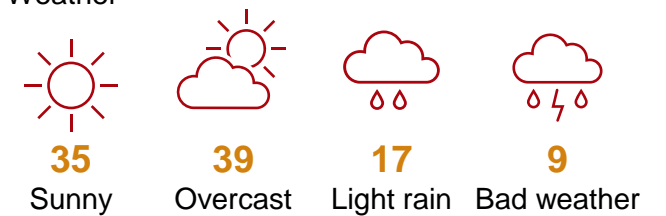
Environment

Journey time



21% 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, Aug '22 – Jul '23 (1,992)

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 August 2022 to July 2023.

In a small number of instances (marked on the relevant pages) we have supplemented data from this 12-month period with feedback from before August 2022 in order to increase the sample size for reporting purposes.

National and regional-level data

Some pages in this report show data at all-regional (within 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 (for example, '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

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Passengers' Council