



# Strategic Roads User Survey

Findings for the South West: August 2022 – July 2023

December 2023

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\* Although internally National Highways no longer distinguish between Areas 1 and 2, it remains valuable to consider if user experience differs between the two geographies

# 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  
**1,035** for roads in the South West

# Key findings: SRN experience in the South West

**78%** of SRN journeys in the South West are felt to be satisfactory, outperforming all other regions by some distance, on this and all key measures



However, satisfaction has decreased on average in 2023, following a high in early 2022, both nationally and in the South West, where this aligns with patterns in perceived congestion, affecting journey times



Indeed, while dissatisfactory journeys are a minority in the South West, when they do occur congestion is the key factor, followed by roadworks, other delays and the quality of road surfaces

More specifically:

- **Reducing perceived congestion is the key priority for improvement on motorways, and therefore in Area 2** (Somerset and Devon, plus Gloucestershire)
- With lighter traffic **the priority in Devon and Cornwall is managing the impact of roadworks and other issues**. The same is true on major A roads in general across the region.
- In particular, users on these roads report **delays resulting from the combination of narrow lanes or single carriageway roads, with slow vehicles and/or accidents, and poorer lighting than elsewhere**



**Roadworks appear to be experienced somewhat differently in the South West than elsewhere**

- The impact of roadworks is less marked overall in the South West than elsewhere, when looking at results for the region overall. This is largely due to comparatively less frequent journeys on average, more of a leisure mindset on average, and lighter traffic. As such, despite prior awareness of roadworks being lower, roadworks management is better rated here than in other regions
- However, individual drivers can of course be affected just as keenly as elsewhere, and ultimately only half of those affected by roadworks are satisfied with their management. Therefore the general principles for improving on roadworks apply equally in the South West they do in other regions (*see following page*)

**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, the way roads are managed can be felt to provoke poor driving behaviour.



Attitudes still mixed about smart motorways, with strong negative opinions for some. Smart measures having less impact on South West motorways where disruption is having less impact more generally.



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



# Overall findings: key metrics



# 78% of journeys in the South West are satisfactory: above national average across this and other key measures, especially perception of roadworks management

Key metrics  
Aug 2022 – Jul 2023



**South West**

Overall satisfaction

**78%**

Very satisfied 37%  
Fairly satisfied 41%

Journey time

**77%**

Very satisfied 39%  
Fairly satisfied 38%

Management of roadworks

**56%**

Very satisfied 19%  
Fairly satisfied 36%

Feeling safe

**86%**

Very safe 34%  
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%

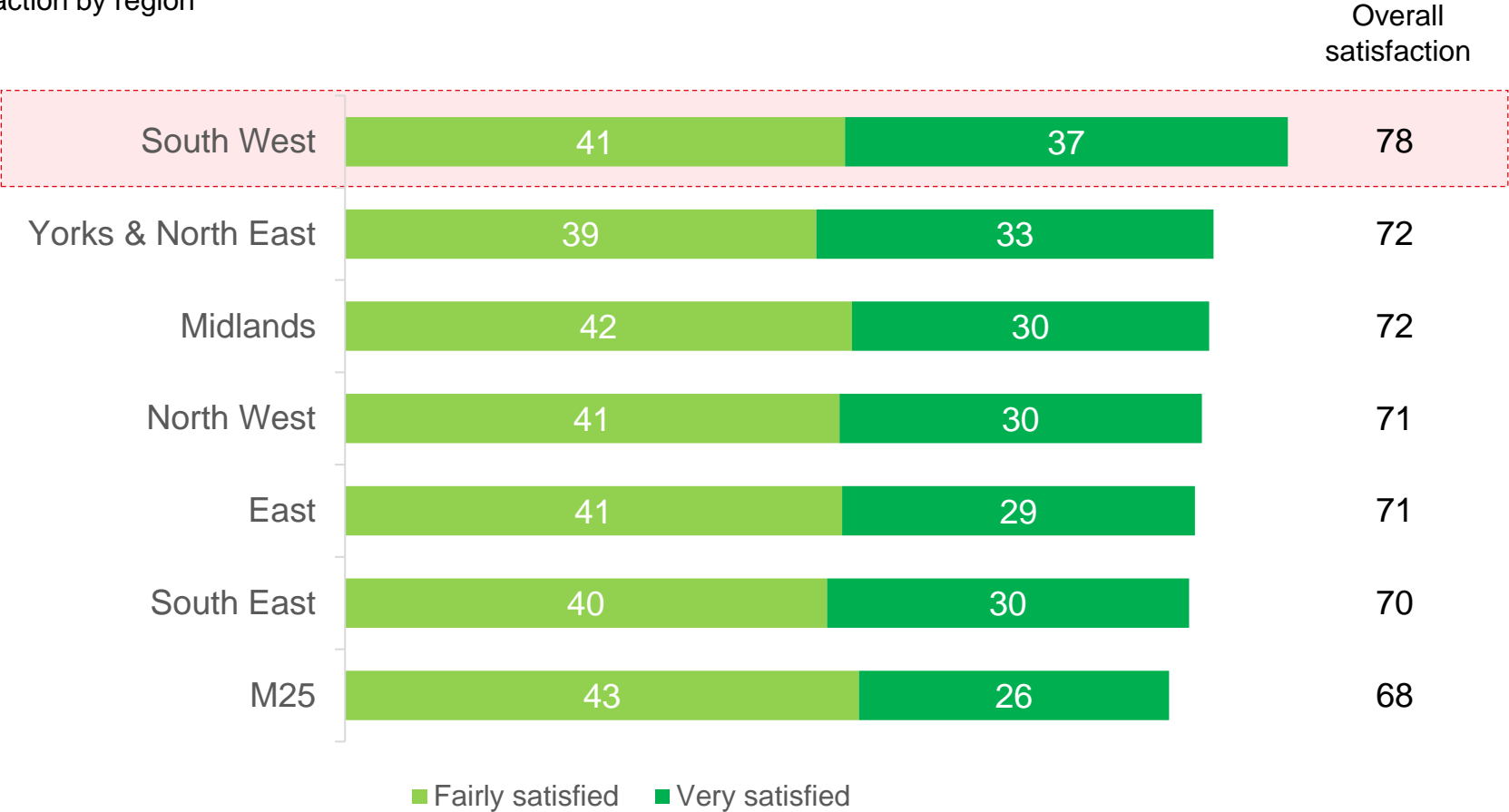
**82%**

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)  
South West: overall satisfaction (1,033), journey time (1,031), roadworks management (202), feeling safe (1,030)

# Most regions performing similarly across this period as a whole, but South West standing out as delivering more positive journeys

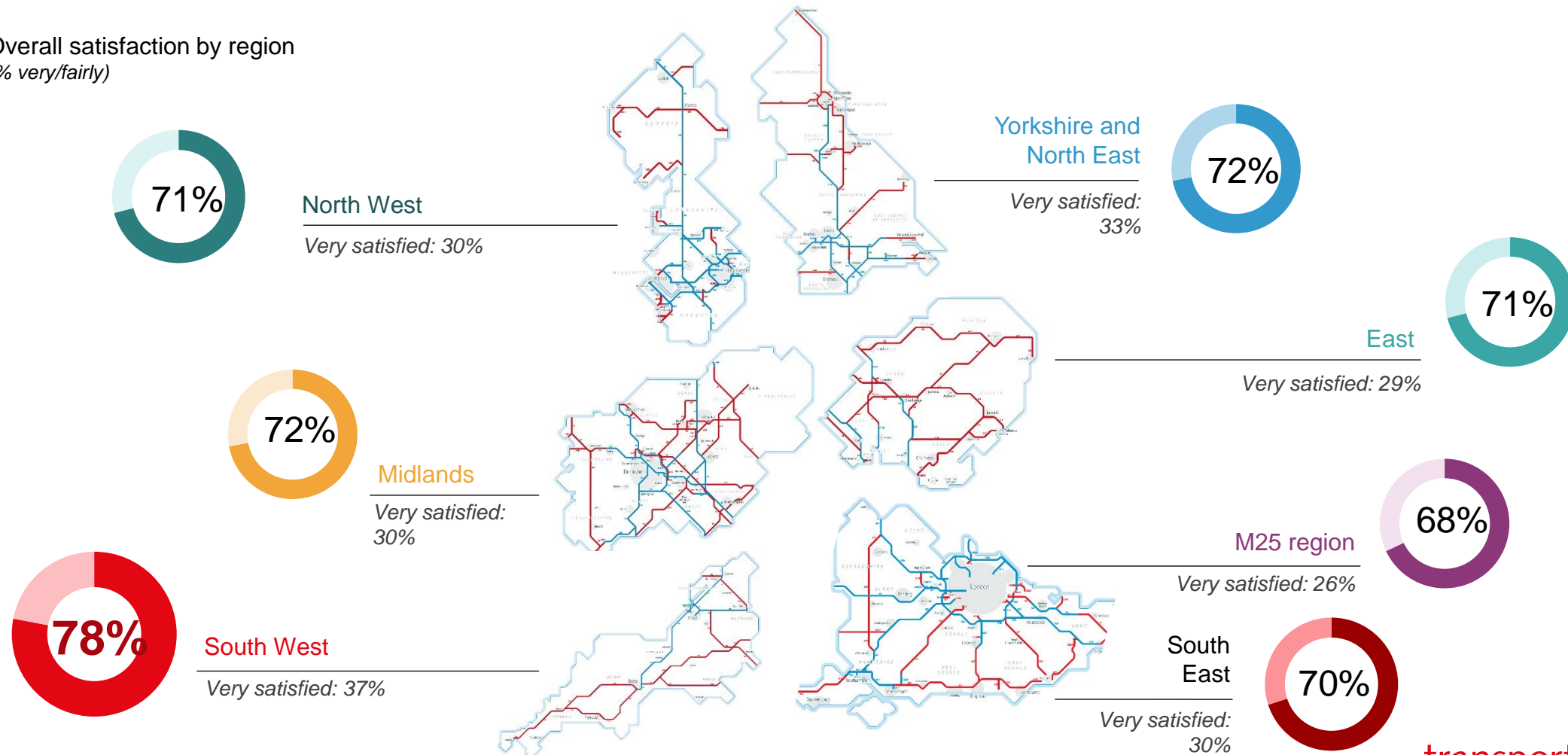
Overall satisfaction by region  
(% very/fairly)



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, but South West standing out as delivering more positive journeys

Overall satisfaction by region  
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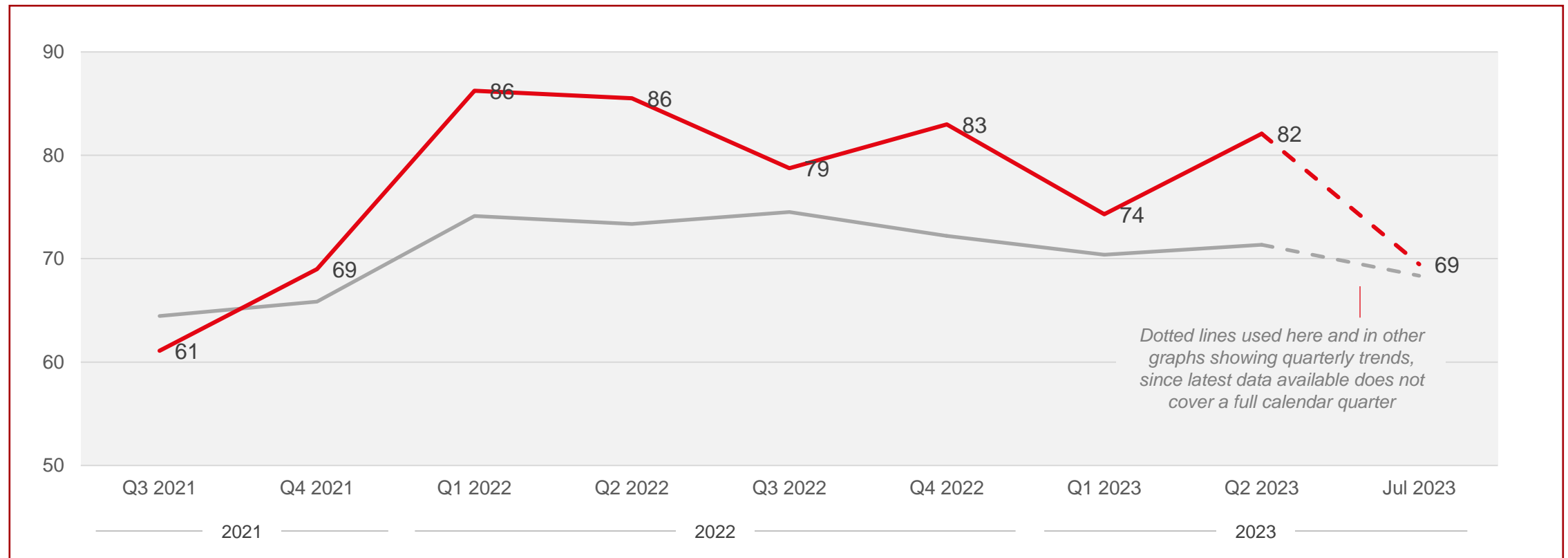


Base: all SRN users surveyed, Aug '22 – Jul '23 (9,055)  
South West (1,033), Yorkshire and NE (1,442), Midlands (1,985), North West (1,382), East (1,299), South East (1,712), M25 region (1,355)



Despite comparatively strong result overall, **South West journeys are a little less satisfactory on average so far in 2023 than through 2022**; echoing the national trend

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

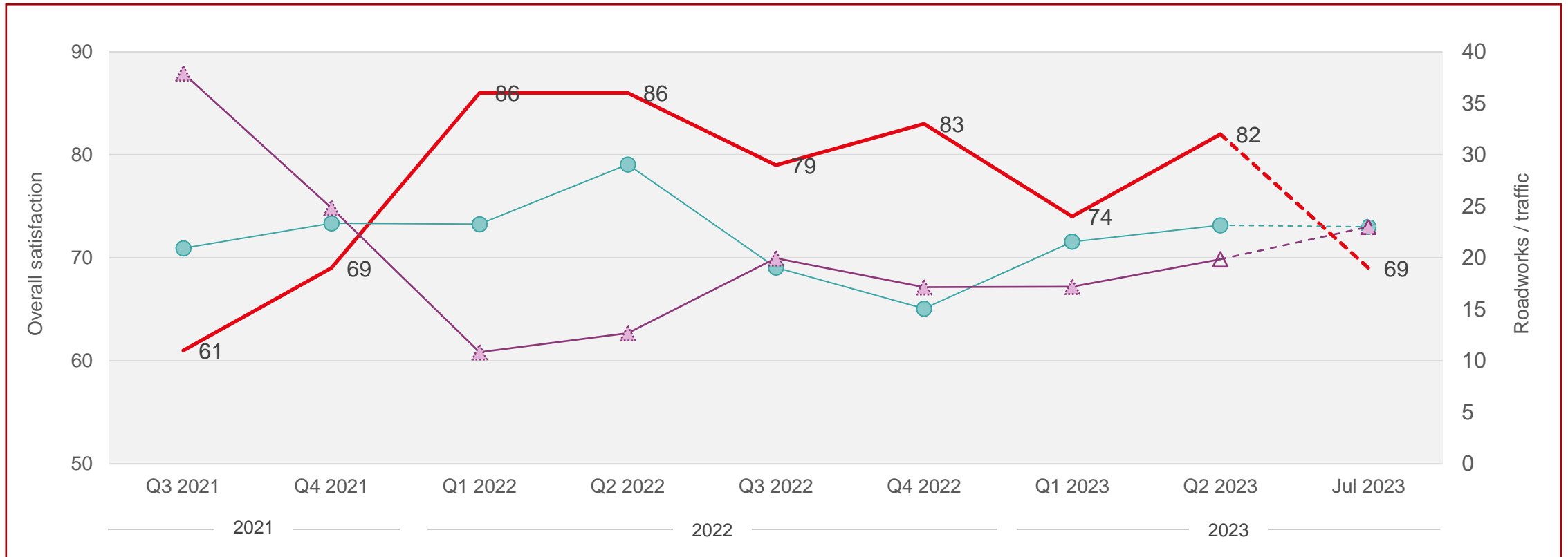


— South West  
— All regions

Base: all SRN users surveyed, Jul '21 – Jul '23 (average 1,928 per quarter; 779 in Jul '23)  
South West: (average 229 per quarter; 99 in Jul '23)

This trend in journey satisfaction is linked to congestion perception, which dropped briefly in the first half of 2022. (Unusually, there is a less clear link with perception of roadworks)

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

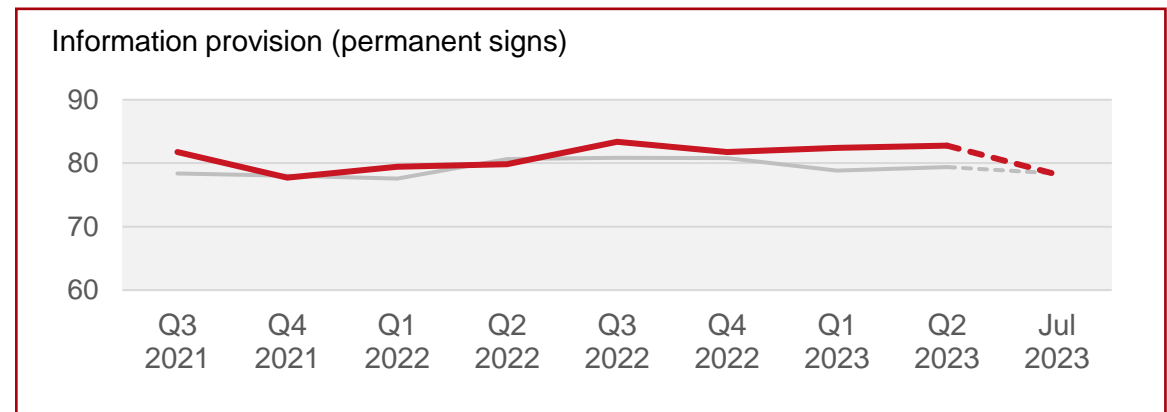
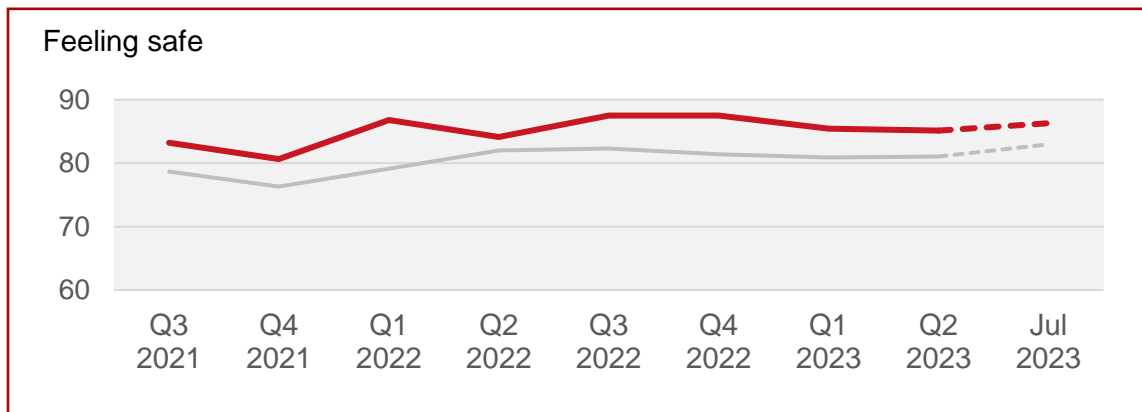
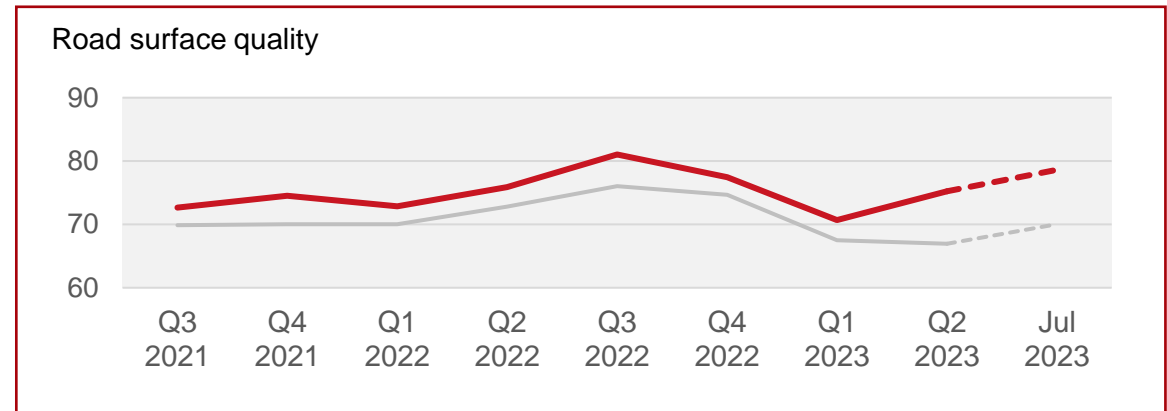
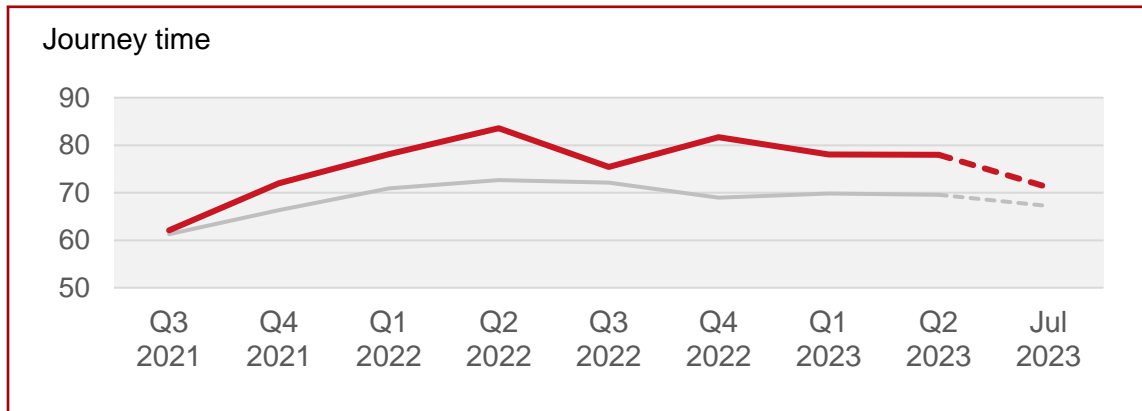


- Overall satisfaction
- Passed through roadworks
- △— Heavy / congested traffic

Base: all SRN users surveyed, Jul '21 – Jul '23  
 South West: (average 229 per quarter; 99 in Jul '23)

# Satisfaction with **journey times and road surfaces** are key areas in which **SRN experience has diminished** following highs in 2022, reflected in part in South West

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



— South West  
— All regions

Base: all SRN users surveyed, Jul '21 – Jul '23 (average 1,825-1,926 per quarter; 742-782 in Jul '23)  
South West: (average 220-229 per quarter; 91-100 in Jul '23)

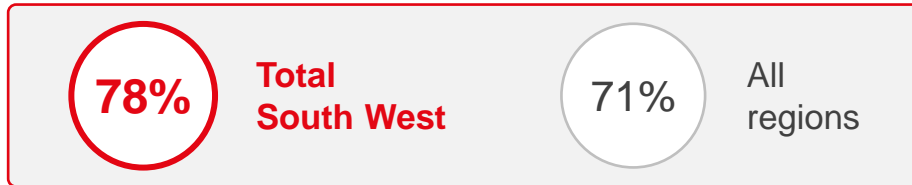
*\*Other 'key metrics', which are relevant to a sub-set of the total survey sample, are covered in more detail later in this report. These are the ratings of roadworks management, and of information provision via electronic signs*

# Further patterns by area\* within the South West and some of its busier roads

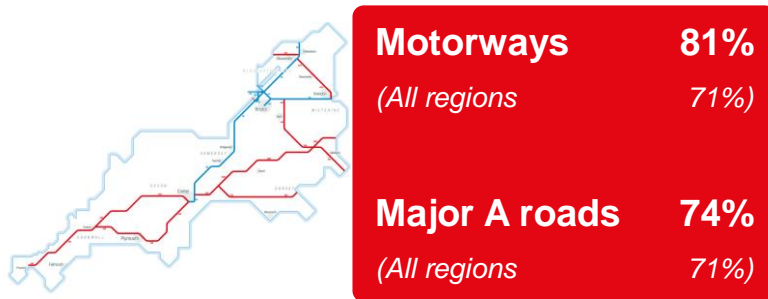


\* Although internally National Highways no longer distinguish between Areas 1 and 2, it remains valuable to consider if user experience differs between the two geographies

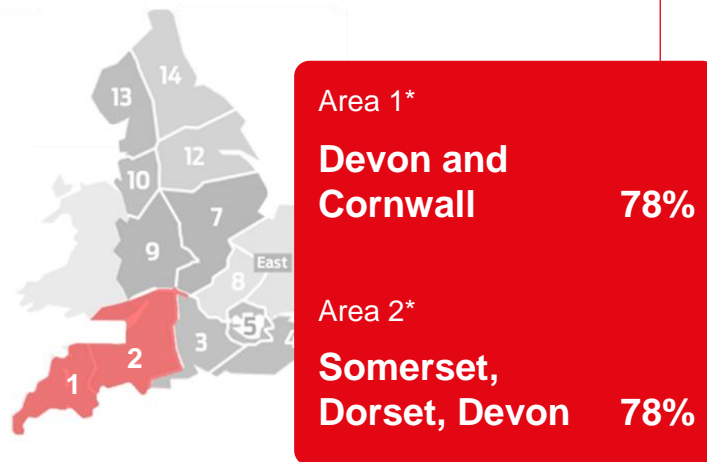
**Motorways (M4/M5) in the South West are rated particularly well; major A roads more mixed, with some slightly less enjoyable A road journeys in Somerset, Dorset, Devon\***  
*(although these still compare well with the national average)*



Overall satisfaction by road type/area/road: South West



55% responses for South West are for motorway journeys, vs. 62% on average across all regions.



74% of responses for the South West relate to Area 2 (Somerset, Dorset, Devon)

Area 1:  
Devon and Cornwall

A38	77
A30	76

Area 2:  
Somerset, Dorset, Devon

M5	81
M4	81
M32	79
A303	74
A36	71

(Area 32):

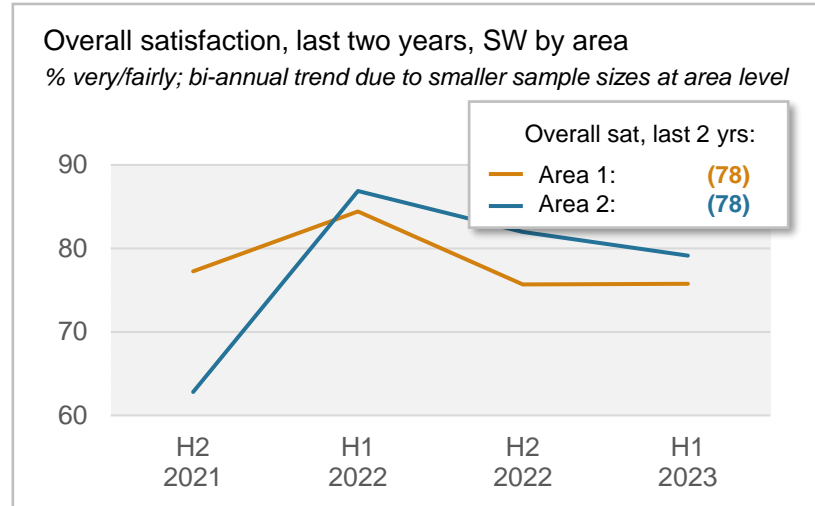
A35	78
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\* Although internally National Highways no longer distinguish between Areas 1 and 2, it remains valuable to consider if user experience differs between the two geographies  
 Results shown for individual roads where sample size is ≥75. All data at road level based on two years: Aug '21 – Jul '23.

All Motorways: All regions (4,846), South West (440). All A Roads: All regions (4,209), South West (593)  
 Area 1 in South West (including both motorways and major A roads) (445), Area 2 (including both motorways and major A roads) (1,269)

# Superficially, survey outcomes are similar across the two South West sub areas, but each will have slightly different priorities in seeking to improve/maintain high satisfaction

The decrease in satisfaction after early 2022 has been seen in both areas within the South West



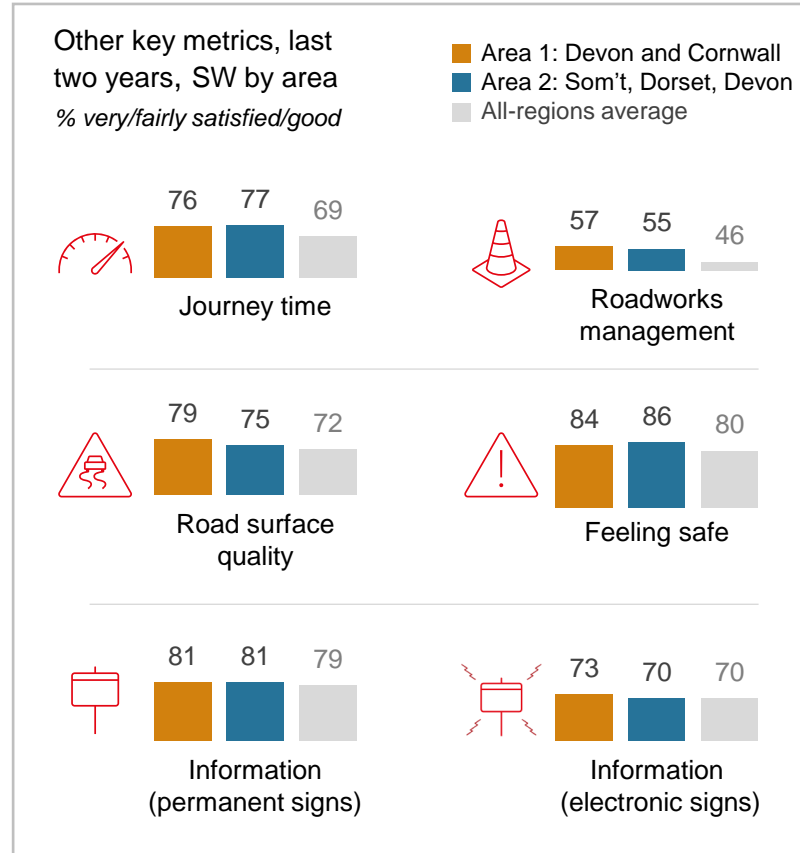
The early 2022 high point in both areas is linked with a brief reduction in perceived congestion in both\*, which returned – though not to the height seen previously – through the remainder of 2022 and 2023.

(Reports of roadworks more consistent throughout, in both areas)

Base: all SRN users surveyed, Jul '21 – Jul '23; South West Area 1 (average 108 per half year), Area 2 (average 307 per half year)

\*(despite Covid restrictions being largely lifted and travel resuming, with road usage at c. 90% of pre-Covid levels by this point)  
Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/transport-use-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-pandemic/domestic-transport-usage-by-mode>

Both areas above average on all key measures and broadly similar to each other



Base: all SRN users surveyed, Aug '21 – Jul '23; South East Area 1 (445), Area 2 (1,269)

Other factors and drivers' own-words comments highlight issues by area

Within the ratings shown to the left, Devon and Cornwall typically sees a high proportion of “very” rather than “fairly” satisfied motorists, than Somerset, Dorset, Devon. As such, on the whole, **driving on the SRN is somewhat more enjoyable in Devon and Cornwall than further north east within the region.**

This is undoubtedly due to traffic generally being much lighter in Devon and Cornwall (albeit with variations over time).

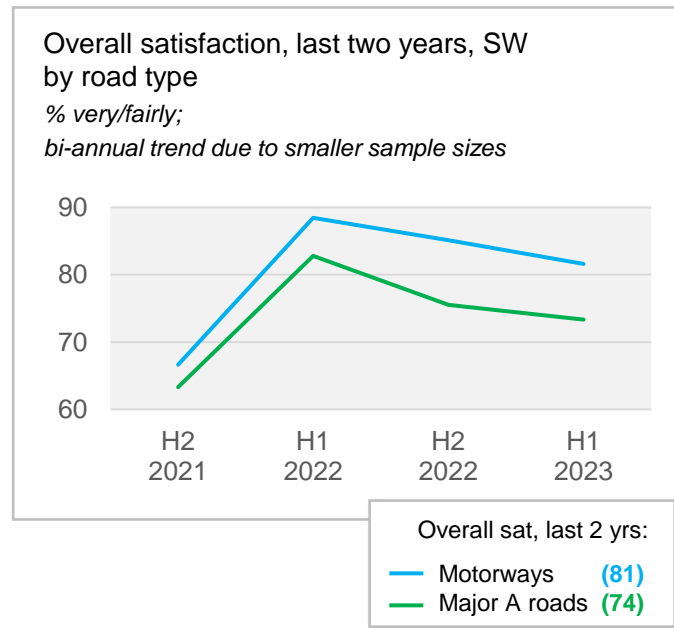
It is also likely linked to road types (mainly major A roads in Devon and Cornwall) and possibly greater familiarity with the journeys being made in this area (as indicated by greater prior knowledge and previous experience of any roadworks or other disruption where it exists in Cornwall and Devon, than in Somerset, Dorset, Devon).

Drivers' comments to explain their survey responses clearly indicate that **the key priority for roads in Somerset, Dorset, Devon is reducing perceived congestion** (and reducing perception of roadworks volume is also important).

In contrast, with lighter traffic **in Devon and Cornwall, reducing roadworks and their impact is the key issue** for drivers here.

# Both road types deliver well. Reflecting priorities by area, tackling perceptions of congestion (motorways) and of roadworks and lighting (major A roads) is key

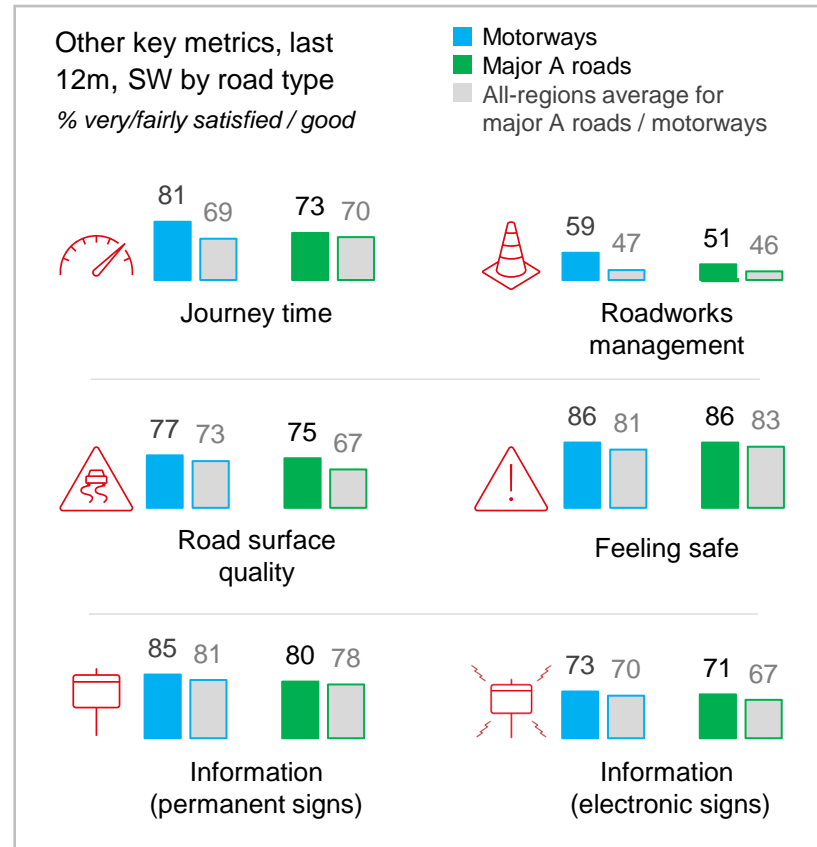
Reflecting the trend by area within the South West, the early 2022 spike followed by **decreasing satisfaction is evident on both motorways and major A roads in this region**



Again, on both types of road, the pattern over time in overall satisfaction follows a similar pattern in perceived level of congestion and related delays (but not necessarily linked to perception of roadworks).

Base: all SRN users surveyed, Jul '21 – Jul '23; South West Motorways (average 192 per half year), major A roads (average 266 per half year)

...though overall both types of road perform well compared to other similar roads nationally. **Journey times a particular strength for the South West's motorways**



Base: all SRN users, Aug '22–Jul '23; South West Motorways (440), major A roads (593)

## Other notable factors

Despite variations over time, reported **congestion is low on both motorways and major A roads in the South West**, and particularly light on its major A roads. Roadworks also tend to affect fewer journeys on both types of road, than in other regions.

Despite this, when they are noticed, congestion and roadworks are the biggest reasons for dissatisfaction when motorists give feedback in their own words (as they are in all regions). Reflecting patterns by area, **where it occurs, perceived congestion is the main issue on motorways in the South West, and roadworks on its major A roads.**

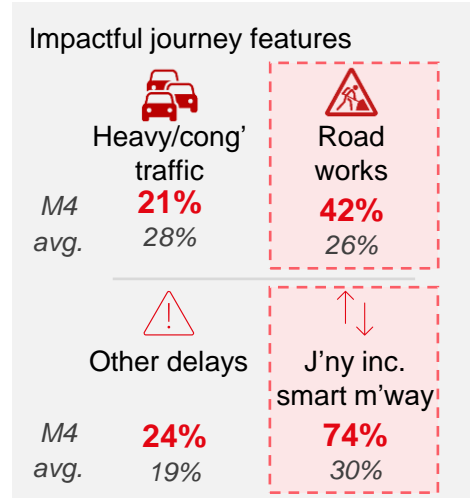
Other issues commented on in the South West are **queues linked to large, slow vehicles** (HGVs, tractors, caravans) and **single or narrow lanes, especially around hills, on major A roads.**

Other measures not shown on the right, including road markings, presence of litter, joining and leaving the roads, and so on, are all rated higher in the South West than in other regions.

**One exception to this is lighting**, where neither motorways nor major A roads in the South West are felt to be better than elsewhere, and **lighting on major A roads is a little below the national average, with only 54% of major A road users who travelled after dark here being satisfied.**

# Somerset and Devon's main motorways both rated well, though issues do exist: further reducing perception of congestion and its impact on the M5 is the highest priority overall; reducing roadworks prevalence on M4 would improve experience (further) here too

**M4** Roadworks common, and most journeys use smart sections (usually less popular), but a leisure mindset for many, along with less frequent exposure to these factors, likely mitigates their impact

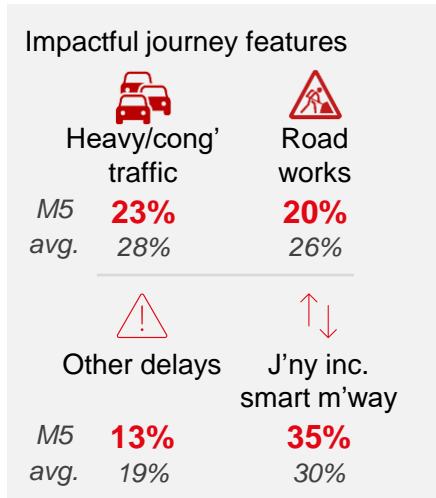
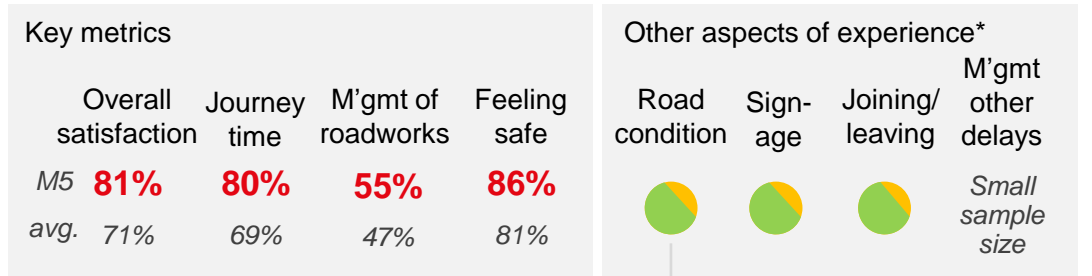


**Other contextual factors:**

Some features of survey responses point to a **high proportion of journeys on the South West M4 being part of holiday traffic**, with individuals' trips being fairly irregular:

- Half of South West M4 journeys in the survey were made by people who use this road less than once a month (vs. 31% on average for motorways).
- Just over half of trips involved the outward and return journey taking place on different days (vs. 31% on average for motorways)

**M5** Compared to other motorways across England, M5 in South West is a little less affected by disruption, though known pockets of perceived congestion cause frustration where they occur



Satisfaction with roads being litter-free is (unusually) in line with m'way average (69%), rather than above

For the small proportion of M5 users who are dissatisfied, common themes in their own words are:

- **Congestion hot spots** (often with reference to this as a perennial issue)
- **And others' driving standards.**

*Split level around Avon mouth always traffic congestion for no reason*

*Too many drivers with no lights in very poor conditions*

*Traffic jams almost all the way!*

*Stopped at service station, couldn't cater for the amount of cars!!*



# A36 an example of where journeys are less enjoyable, but no major concerns or priorities that differ from other major A roads across England

## Journey times and overall experience on A36 are in line with the national average




Key metrics (Aug '21-Jul '23)	A36	All-region major A road avg.
Overall satisfaction	71%	71%
Journey time	72%	70%
M'gmt of roadworks	Small sample size	46%
Feeling safe	87%	83%

### Other aspects of experience\*

Road condition	Sign-age	Joining/leaving	M'gmt other delays
●	●	●	Sample size too small

## Disruptions are comparatively lower on A36 than elsewhere

### Impactful journey features

	A36	All-region major A road avg.
 Heavy/ cong' traffic	18%	21%
 Roadworks	17%	23%
 Other delays	14%	16%

## Key areas for improvement, which create dissatisfaction where it occurs currently, are therefore typical for major A roads everywhere:

The main emphasis in drivers' own comments was on congestion – indeed there is **some expectation of congestion at certain pinch points**, among more frequent users

*The A36 through Salisbury was gridlocked. Took 30 mins to get out of Salisbury*

*Due to the time of day, there was a low volume of traffic on the road in Salisbury.*

*The roads were busy, and a lot of traffic, but it kept moving*

*Not too busy around Salisbury on this occasion*

*The A36 Churchwill Way South and the Southampton Road were both quiet at that time of the evening. However this is not always the case and both roads are regularly congested during daytime hours.*

*The route was not particularly busy, I made good time getting to work, there were no queues at the usual "chokepoints" on the approach to my destination.*

# Feedback on specific major A roads in Devon and Cornwall typify the experience across this area within the South West

**A30**

Another example of roads in the South West where roadworks are noticed but have less impact overall than elsewhere, aided by light traffic and a well-maintained roadway

Key metrics

	Overall satisfaction	Journey time	M'gmt of roadworks	Feeling safe
A30	<b>76%</b>	<b>77%</b>	Small sample size	<b>90%</b>
avg.	71%	70%		83%

Other aspects of experience\*

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

Impactful journey features

	A30	avg.
	<b>11%</b>	21%
	<b>32%</b>	23%
	<b>13%</b>	16%

**A30 users' comments reflect the results here:**

Some drivers comment on there being little disruption "despite" roadworks, and some express appreciation for recent work.

Nevertheless, roadworks are the dominant reason for dissatisfaction, with particular mentions of roadworks around Chiverton during Spring '23).

Other issues among those who are not wholly satisfied are:

- Road surfaces (praised in places, but pot holes and water on surfaces are common concerns on sections of the road)
- Single carriageways, contributing to congestion

**A38**

Very low level of disruption; some tactical areas for improvement including litter, signage, and managing the impact of (albeit rare) unplanned incidents

Key metrics

	Overall satisfaction	Journey time	M'gmt of roadworks	Feeling safe
A38	<b>77%</b>	<b>74%</b>	Small sample size	<b>80%</b>
avg.	71%	70%		83%

Other aspects of experience\*

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

Impactful journey features

	A38	avg.
	<b>11%</b>	21%
	<b>14%</b>	23%
	<b>8%</b>	16%

Satisfaction with roads being litter-free is (unusually) in line with A-road average (59%), rather than above

Many respondents comment on the free-flowing traffic on A36, with few reported disruptions.

Of course, where they do occur, delays and congestion are the key reasons for dissatisfaction, along with individual bugbears at certain junctions.

When journeys are delayed, feedback suggests that accidents, breakdowns, and full road closures are perceived as the most common reasons.

Toll for use of Tamar Bridge is also an inevitable dislike for some.

SRN users in the South West on A30 (238), A38 (241), 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 ratings for 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

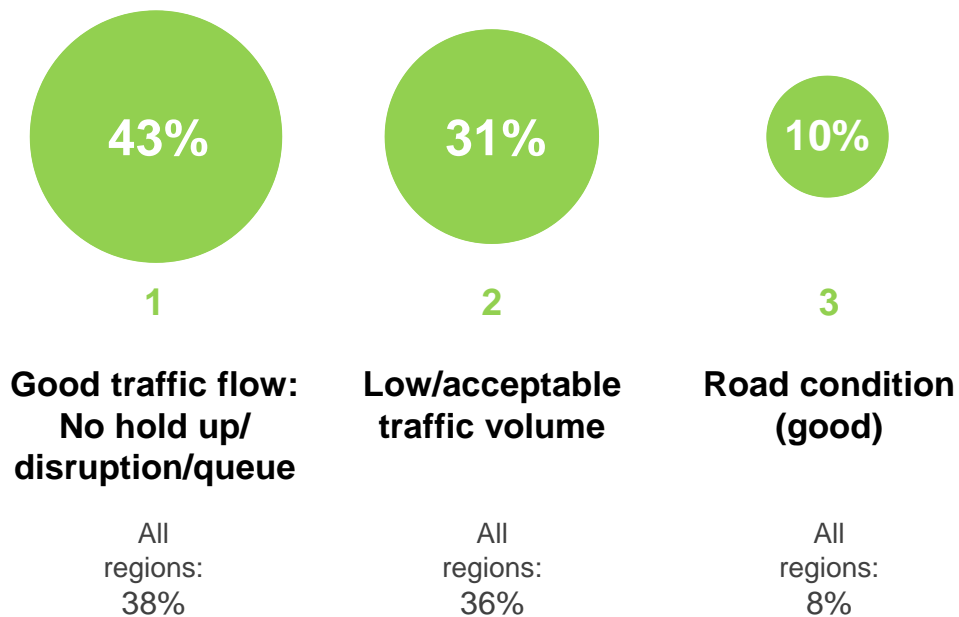
# Understanding overall satisfaction in more detail



# There are two main themes in the reasons users give for satisfactory journeys in the South West

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, South West)  
% mentioning topic



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

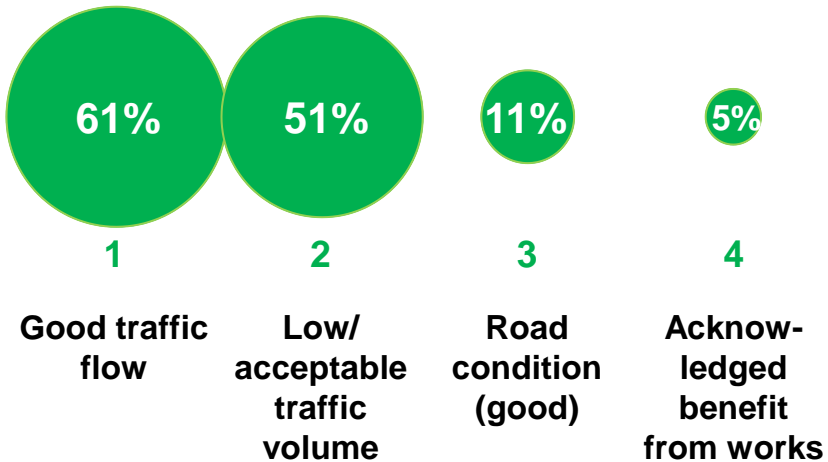
Good flow 'despite' roadworks

Good provision/management of lanes

...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, i.e. allowing continuous momentum, makes for **fully satisfactory** rather than simply ‘ok’ journeys

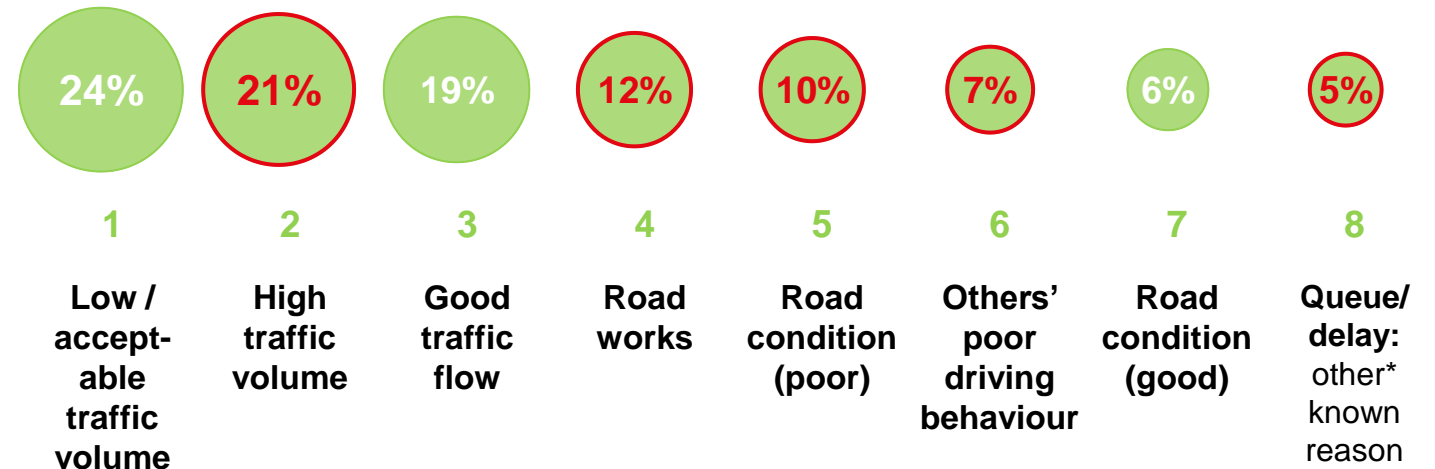
**Very satisfied:** top reasons  
% mentioning topic



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 South West, could National Highways aim to increase the proportion who are very satisfied. This is high in the South West, but could it go even further?

Findings on this page are at national level 

Base: random sample of those giving a rationale for overall satisfaction rating Aug 22-Jul 23 – very satisfied (135), fairly satisfied (165)

\* 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

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 (South West)

- “ No hold ups or road works ”
- “ Quiet, nice road condition, weather not too bad ”
- “ Traffic was moderate. There were no delays. Traffic kept moving freely ”
- “ Straight forward journey, little traffic, no roadworks or delays. ”
- “ The driving was easy, the traffic light and the roads well maintained ”
- “ Light traffic moving well ”
- “ The traffic was moving well even where the M5 merged to 3 lanes from 4 ”
- “ The traffic was light, there was no place where we had to go below the normal speed limit ”
- “ I would say low traffic so easy to drive and on time within expectation, I think generally nice wide corners and good visibility ahead of where you're driving make it easier. Nice road surface, no pot holes, etc. ”
- “ Since upgrading A30 across Bodmin the journey time to Falmouth is much improved. I notice that the remainder is under construction, which I estimate will reduce my travelling time to Falmouth by at least 30 minutes. Please keep in the excellent work. ”

**Fairly satisfied:** Example comments (South West)

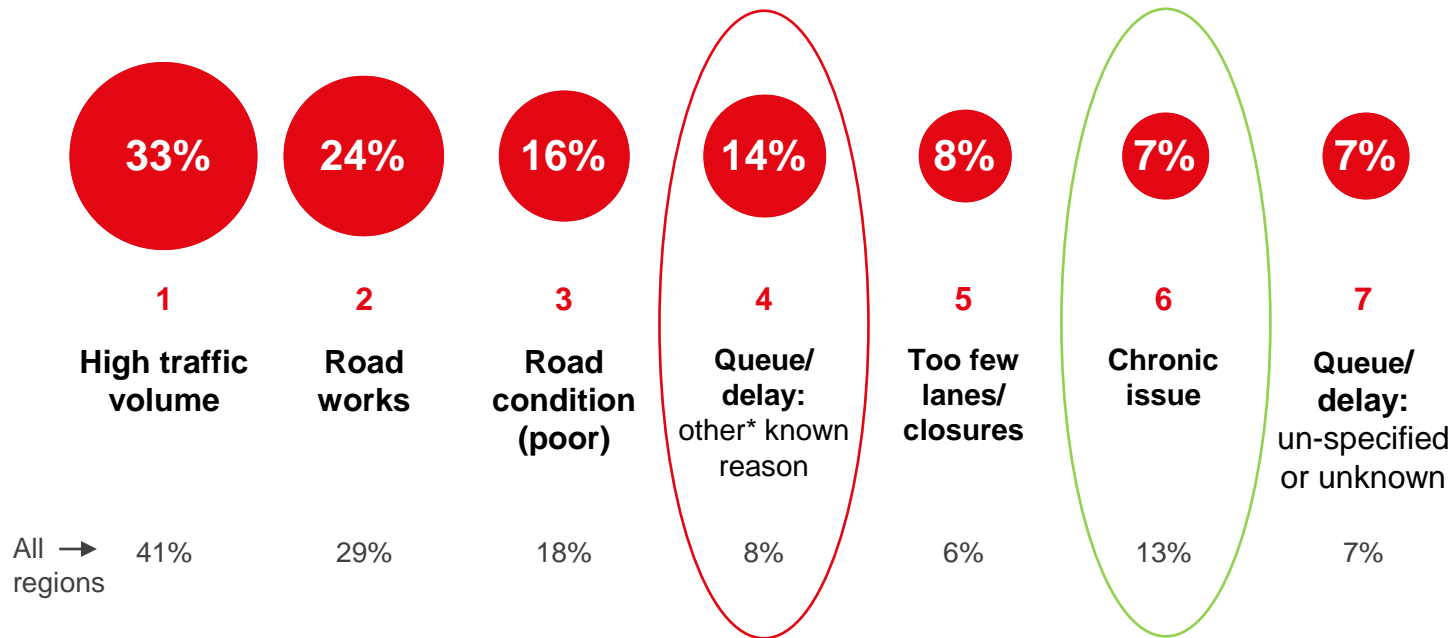
- “ Some oncoming slip roads are very short for building up speed to join the A303 ”
- “ Traffic was not too bad, it can become very congested travelling northbound between J22 and J20. ”
- “ I took the A46 at a quiet time, other times can be very different ”
- “ Some people were adopting poor lane discipline, creating bottlenecks in flow of vehicles ”
- “ Traffic was slow moving at times ”
- “ Fairly busy but only on the motorway for a short distance ”
- “ Roads were well maintained however there was significant traffic and I believe a temporary reduction in speed limit of part of the road ”
- “ I managed to get along the M32 fairly easily, but it's not a pleasant road to travel on with the graffiti and roadworks ”
- “ Some parts of the motorway were quite rough ”
- “ Traffic was free flowing with no hold ups until I got nearer home. ”
- “ Straightforward in joining motorway. Not very clear whether inside lane in use for exiting M5 ”

# Perception of heavy traffic and roadworks the commonest reasons for dissatisfaction in the South West; road condition and other delays (including for accidents and slow vehicles) also important. Some other typical frustrations less prevalent here, however

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, South West) % mentioning topic



## Dissatisfaction: other reasons

(very / fairly dissatisfied)

% mentioning topic

	South West	All regions
Poor weather	6%	2%
Too many/criticism of specific vehicle type	6%	3%
Others' poor driving behaviour	6%	6%
Temporary/variable speed restrictions	5%	12%
Feel unsafe	5%	5%
Other	16%	20%

Base: random sample of those giving a rationale for overall satisfaction rating Aug 22-Jul 23 – dissatisfied, South West (86), 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

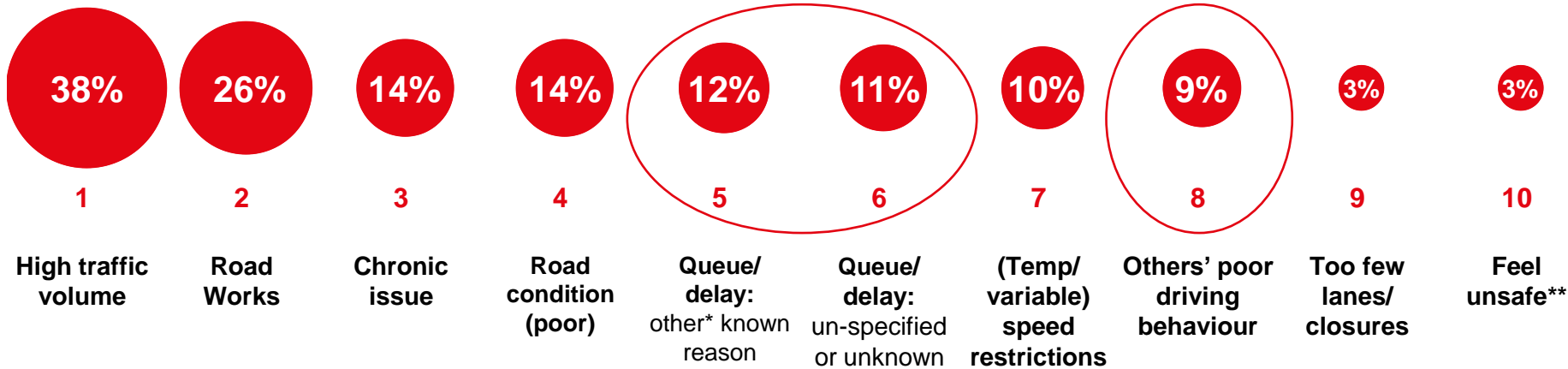
While perceived heavy traffic and **roadworks** are the most common reasons for poor journeys, **when other delays happen, they are associated with more pronounced dissatisfaction**, along with some other differences between fairly and very poor journeys

Findings on this page are at national level



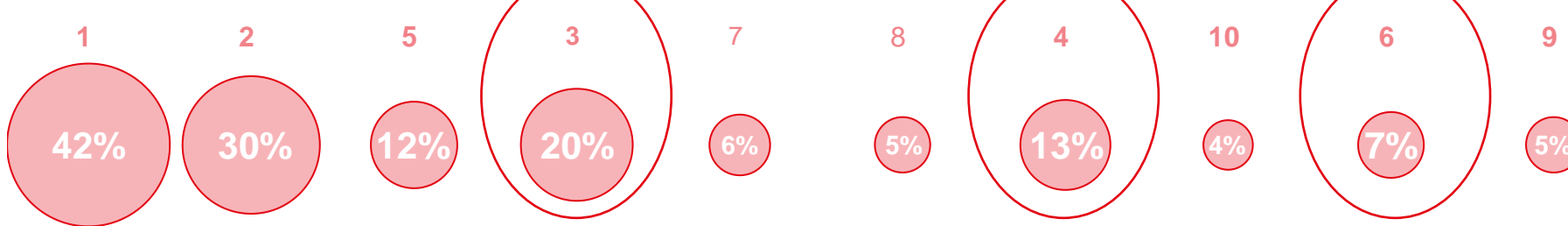
**Very dissatisfied:** top reasons

% 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 the way the highways are run

**Very dissatisfied:** Example comments (South West)

“ Accident on M5 north spilled diesel at 2am. Forcing all Northbound traffic along my route for the rest of the day. Extremely busy taking some 5 hours. for a 90 min max journey ”

“ It was closed as it is most evenings. I make this journey late at night often and I'm always re-routed to Newton Abbot ”

“ Despite setting out so early, which I do to avoid busy/heavier traffic, I was shocked to hit such a high and very slow volume of traffic on A30 that early in the morning! I'd say this constant stop starting added an extra hour or so to my journey ”

“ Very slow due to weather and lots of traffic ...A journey that should have taken about 2.5 hours from start to finish took 4.75. I was not under any time pressure but it was a long drive ... ”

“ Most dangerous stretch of motorway in Bristol. Unsurprisingly another accident that day and traffic not moving. Roadworks etc. clearly aren't working to avoid fatalities or incidents ”

“ Too many drivers with no lights in very poor conditions ”

**Fairly dissatisfied:** Example comments (South West)

“ Split level around Avon mouth always traffic congestion for no reason ”

“ Very congested and poor quality road surfaces ”

“ Traffic jams almost all the way! Stopped at service station, couldn't cater for the amount of cars!! ”

“ People stay in the overtaking lane and don't overtake meaning I can't overtake ”

“ Its always too busy, known traffic hold ups, poor surface conditions. ”

“ Worn roads - pot holes and broken surface. ”

“ Because a farm vehicle spilled its load and had partially closed one lane ”

“ Queueing traffic at Cold Ashton, narrow bends, flooded road at roundabout. ”

“ A38 is a fairly unsafe road with short slip entrance roads so isn't the most pleasant to drive however good police presence help curb speeding ”

“ Lack of lighting and lack of dual carriageways/safe opportunities to overtake (lots of slow HGVs/Tractors on route) ”

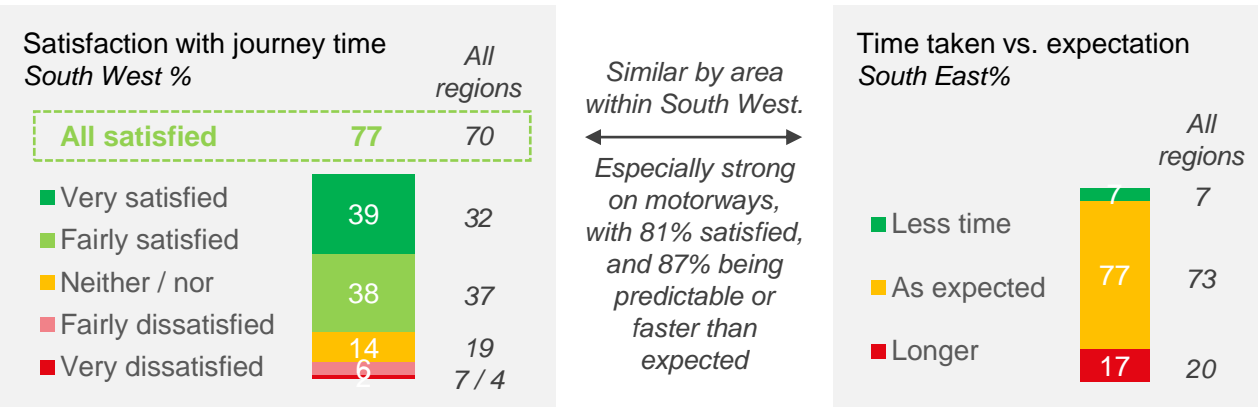
“ Road works and tourists. ”

# Journey time

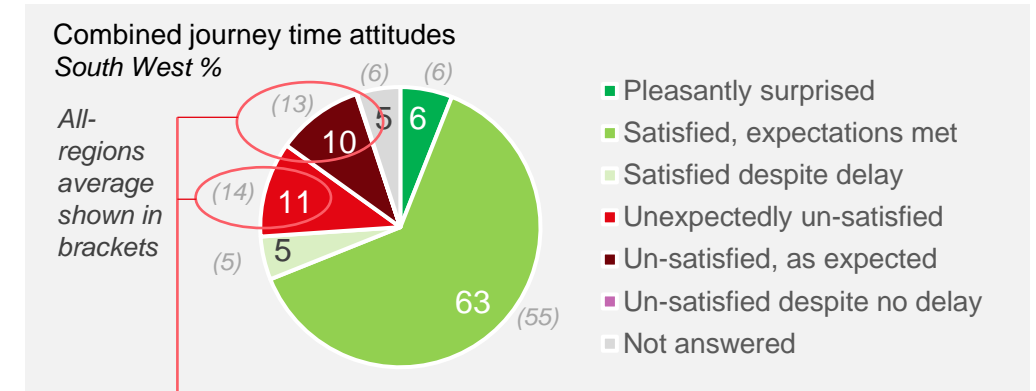


# Users' experience of journey times on the SRN in the South West

Satisfaction with journey times comparatively high in the South West, albeit with a very slight drop through 2023 so far, and just under a fifth of journeys are still longer than expected



Taking journey time satisfaction and expectation together highlights that, for the few who are not satisfied, this is sometimes unexpected, but can involve longer term frustration with roads or their management



**!** Punctuality is overtly important for **52%** South West journeys (vs. 56% for all regions, and lower than all other regions)

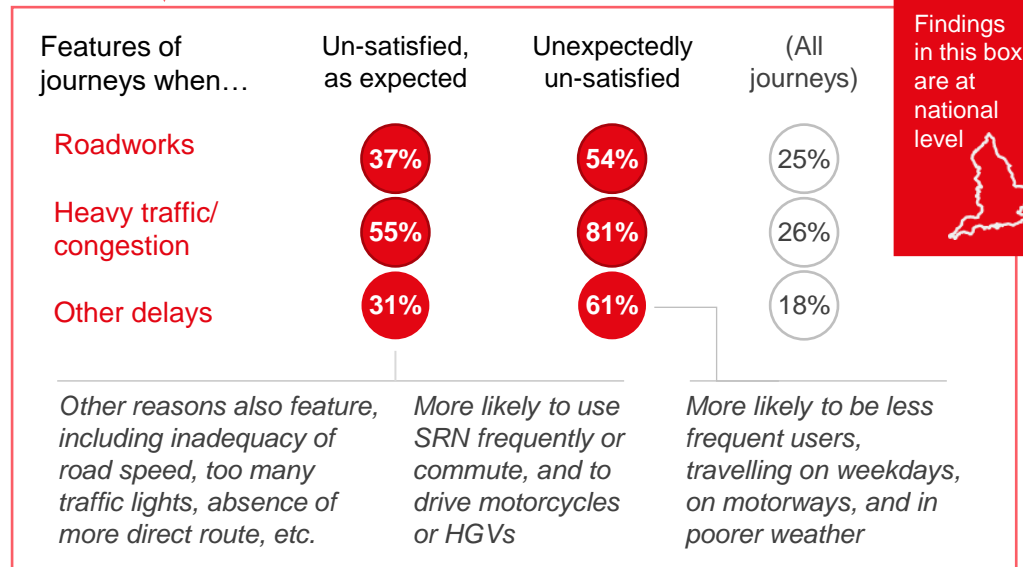
**🕒** **53%** set off early for these journeys (vs. 58% on average and lower than all other regions)

Where punctuality really matters, this is typically for work journeys, especially outward, morning peak journeys, and more so for professional drivers.

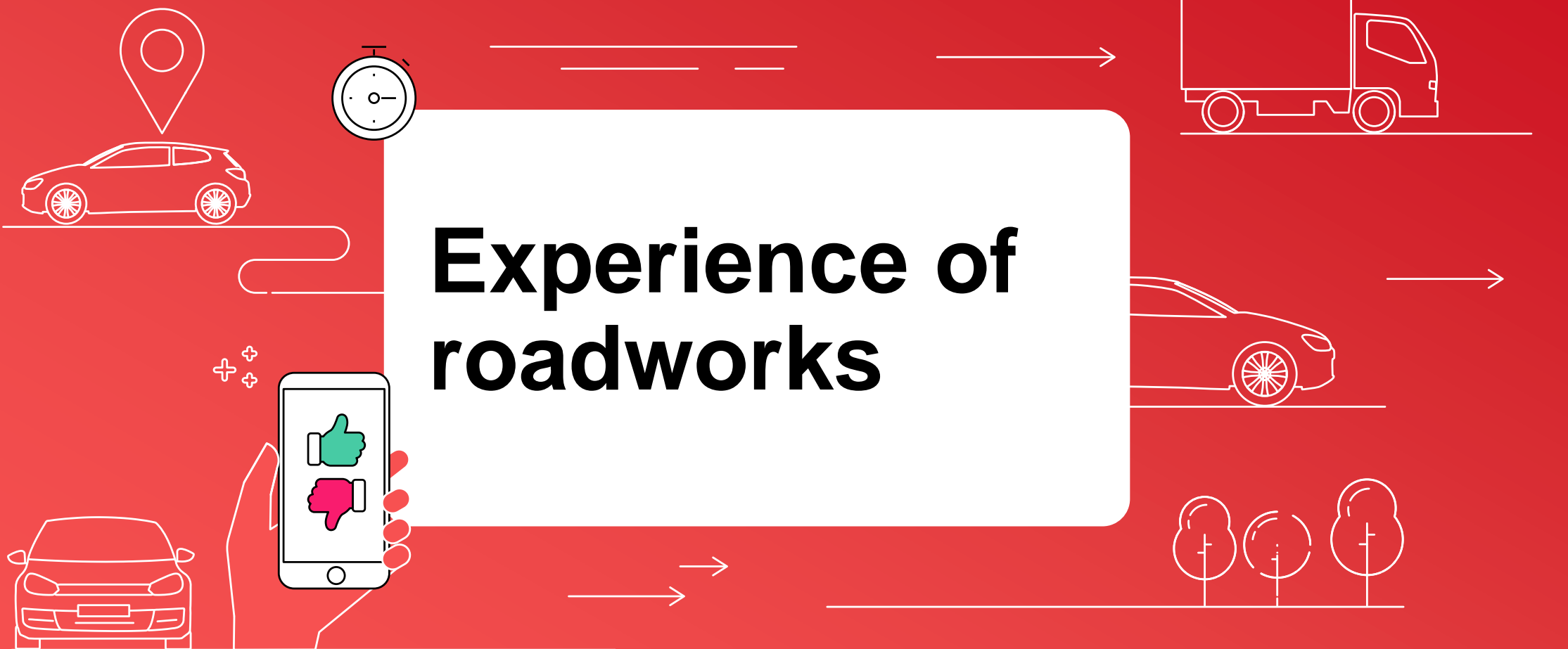
But while people typically set off early for morning peak commuting journeys, this isn't necessarily the case for professional drivers – perhaps where allowing contingency is less possible.

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 and time vs expectations: all answering, Aug '22 – Jul '23, South West, (1,035), all regions (9,056)  
 Time vs expectations: all answering, Aug '22 – Jul '23, South West, (976), all regions (8,530)  
 Combined attitudes: all SRN users surveyed, Aug '22 – Jul '23, South West, (1,035), all regions (9,091)

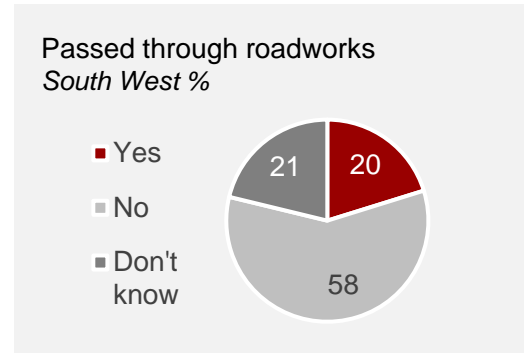


# Experience of roadworks



# SRN users' experience of roadworks in the South West

Roadworks are perceived to affect a fifth of journeys, a little below the national average

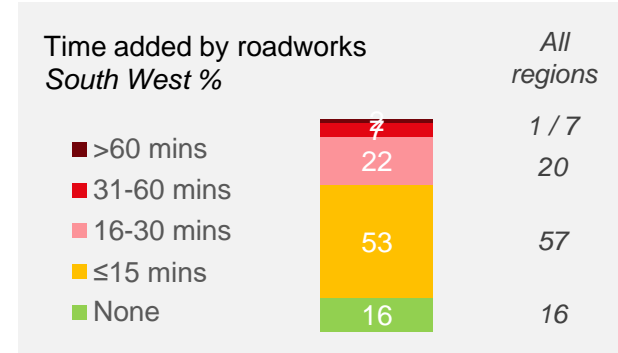


Compares to all-regions average of 25% that passed through roadworks

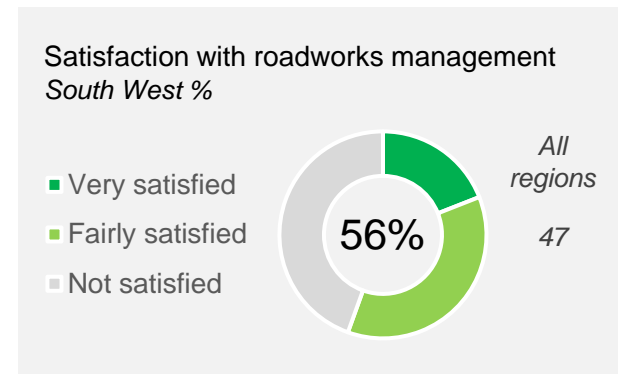
Steady again through 2023 so far following some changes in perceived roadworks presence during 2022, and a similar story in both areas within the South West.

Slightly higher perceived presence of roadworks on motorways in the South West, but below the average on both types of roads.

When works are encountered, on average they add very slightly less time to journeys than in other regions



...and while only just over half are satisfied with roadworks management, the South West outperforms other regions



Advance warning increases satisfaction with how roadworks are managed, and the earlier the better

Findings in this box are at national level

Satisfaction with roadworks management, among those who were.... (%)	Unaware	Aware after setting off (not before)	Aware before setting off
Satisfied	39	48	49
(Very satisfied)	(7)	(13)	(16)

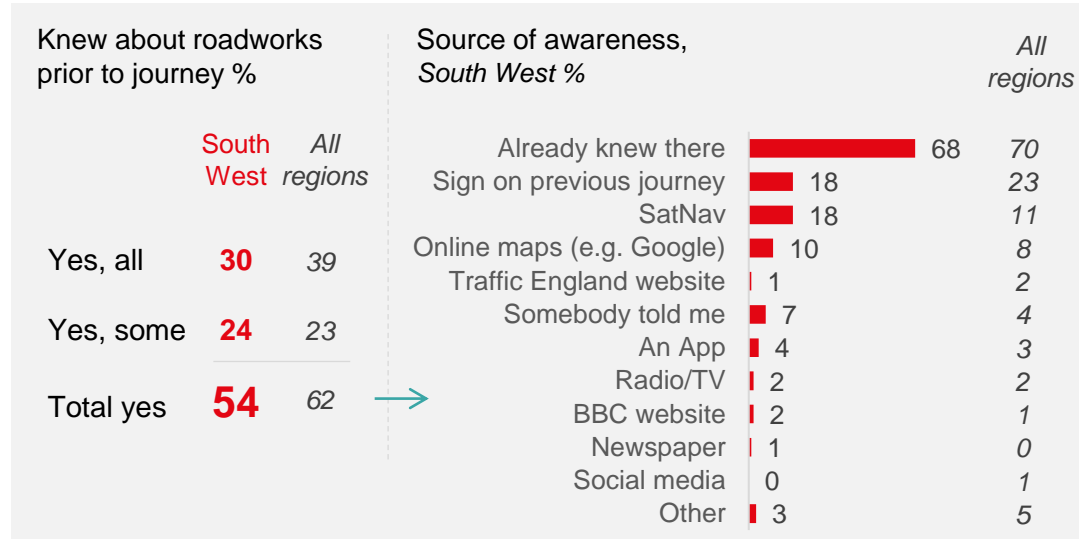
Inevitably it is difficult to truly satisfy users when their journey is disrupted, but other factors in the way works are managed can exacerbate this experience.

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

- Perception of unreasonable impact:
  - Excessive number of encounters with 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 South West

Only just over half of those affected were aware of roadworks ahead of the journey; previous exposure the main source of awareness



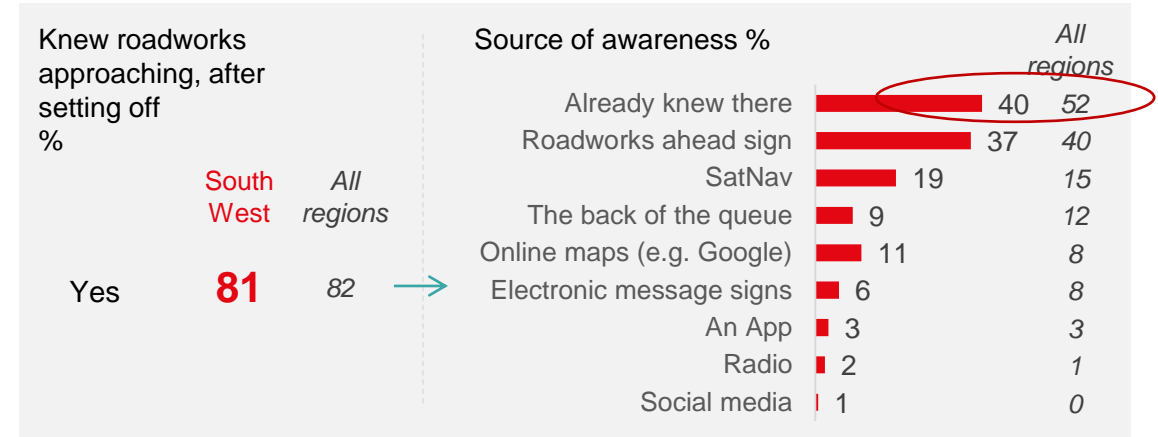
Prior awareness is lower in the South West than all other regions except M25 region, with higher contribution from sat nav and online information than elsewhere. This differs by area, with knowledge high (73%) in Devon and Cornwall but **much lower (48%) in Somerset, Dorset and Devon.**

**This is likely linked to tourism traffic:** reflecting reliance on previous exposure, advance knowledge of roadworks is associated with more frequent usage. Less frequent, leisure drivers, travelling off peak and at weekends, are less informed.

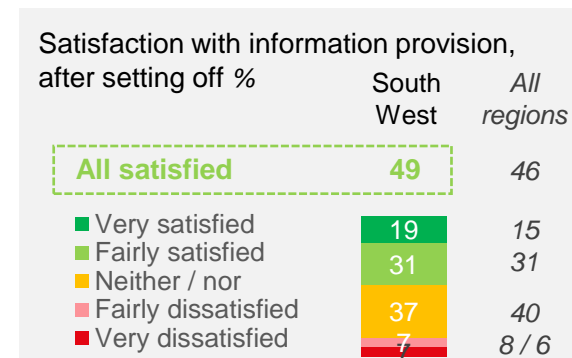
**With particular focus in Area 4, can more be done in periods of higher leisure travel to reach less-informed groups, and around road-side signage visibility, especially in the dark?**

Base: All affected by roadworks in the South West, Aug '22 – Jul '23 (204), all regions (2,190)

Most aware of roadworks as they approach: signs aiding just over a third, with own experience important but contributing less than elsewhere



**In this context, in-journey information is satisfactory to fewer than half of those aware of roadworks ahead**



Again, these patterns are sharper in Somerset, Dorset and Devon, where in-journey awareness is lower, and information little less satisfactory – though this is an issue in both areas and indeed all regions.

Information from any source – before joining the queue – aids satisfaction. Nevertheless, as highlighted on the previous page, experience of the roadworks themselves is only partly influenced by being informed; further reasons are given on the next page.

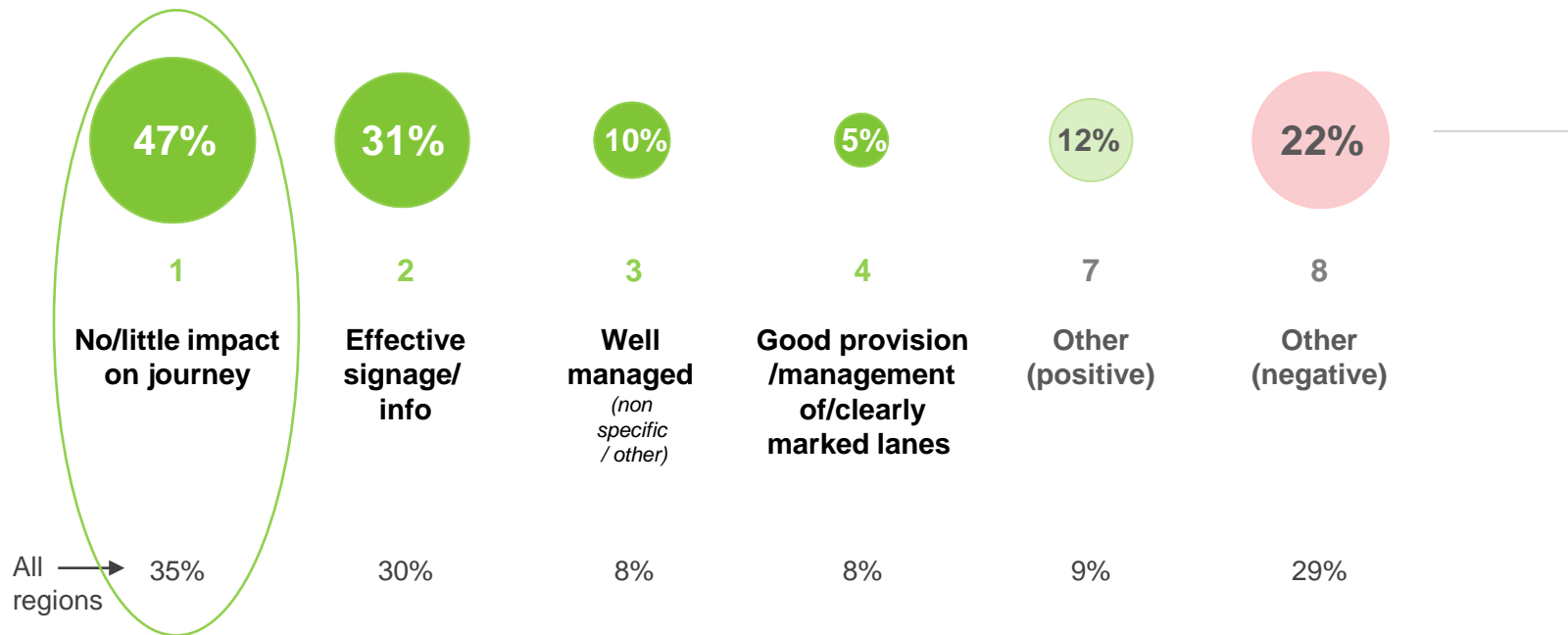
# When SRN users in the South West are satisfied with roadworks management, it's usually due to little material impact (which is the case here more often than elsewhere), and/or that they feel informed

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)

South West, % mentioning topic



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

In particular South West drivers (like those in most other regions) mention...

- That the duration or length of affected road feels **excessive**
- Their perception that **no/little work is taking place**

Base: random sample of those giving a rationale for satisfaction with roadworks Aug '22 – Jul '23  
South West (58), 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>
--	---	--

### 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 roadworks 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*

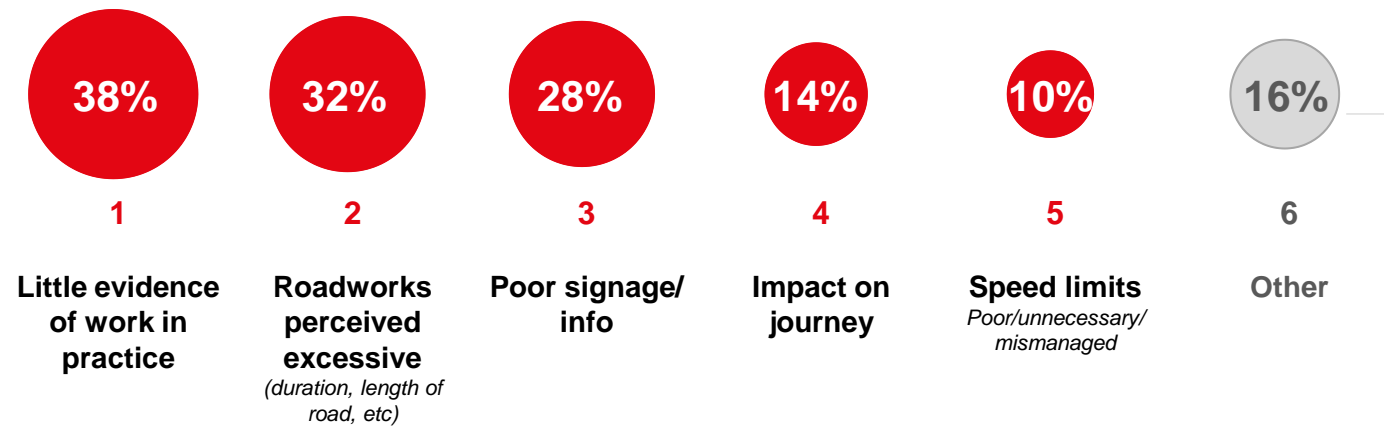
*Reduced speed limit at night for no reason to 40mph as there is not a lot of traffic*

# Dissatisfaction with roadworks management usually driven by apparent absence of actual work, 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



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

The number of survey respondents who were dissatisfied with roadworks management is too small to produce this analysis for the South West specifically. However, qualitatively:

**Reasons for dissatisfaction are similar in the South West to those above, but with poor signage (unusually) standing out as the biggest factor.**

Base: random sample of those giving a rationale for dissatisfaction with roadworks, Aug '22-Jul '23  
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.*

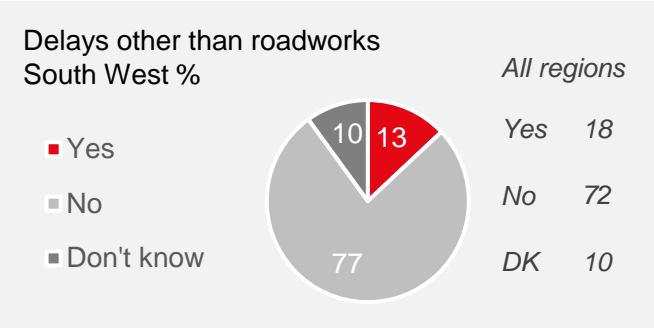
*Also rubbish from construction on road made a driver stop and caused congestion.*

# Experience of other journey delays



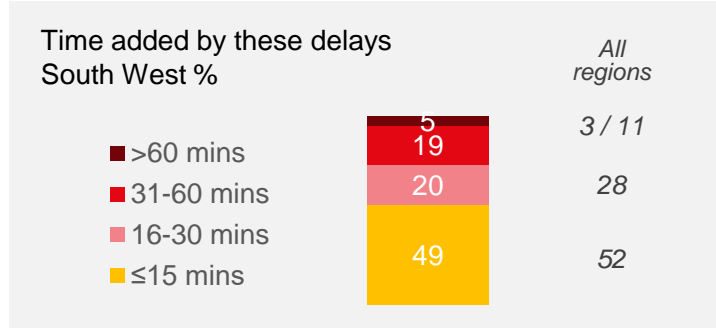
# Users' experience of other journey disruption in the South West

## Few journeys reported as affected by other (non-roadworks) delays



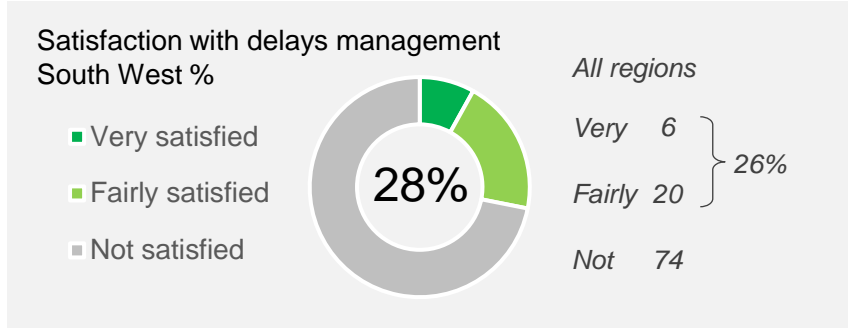
Delays are a little more common in Somerset, Dorset, Devon, than in Devon and Cornwall, but still below the national average. They are equally unlikely on both motorways and major A roads.

## ...but when delays happen, they are more impactful in the South West than elsewhere

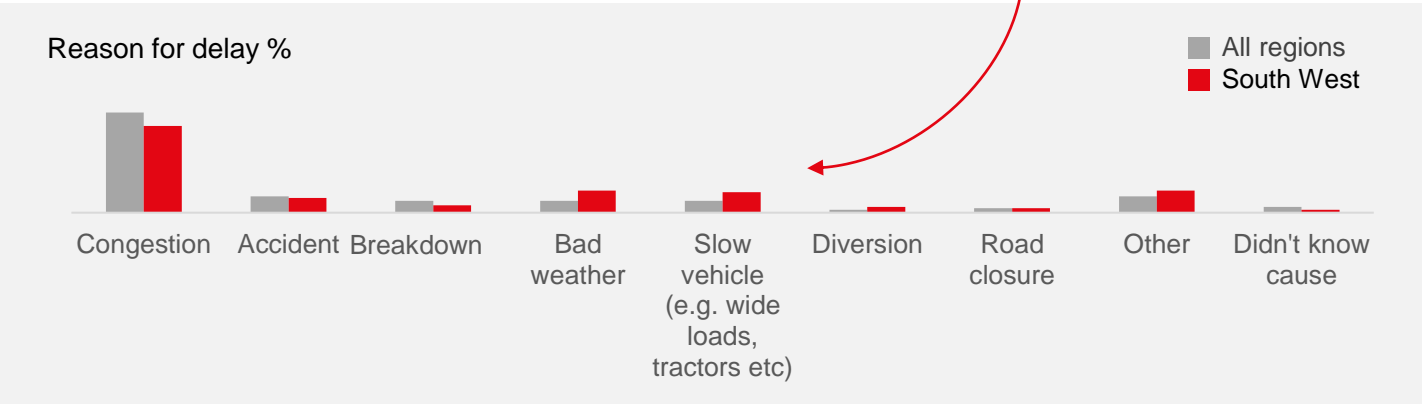


Delays are very marginally more impactful in Somerset, Dorset, Devon, and on South West motorways generally. (But slow vehicles plus lack of overtaking opportunity also affect some journeys on major A roads here).

## ...and only just over a quarter of those affected are satisfied with their management



Delays are felt to be better managed on motorways in the South West (39% satisfied vs. motorway average 28% – though still low overall), than on major A roads. Delays management on major A roads is rated especially poorly (16% vs 22% average).



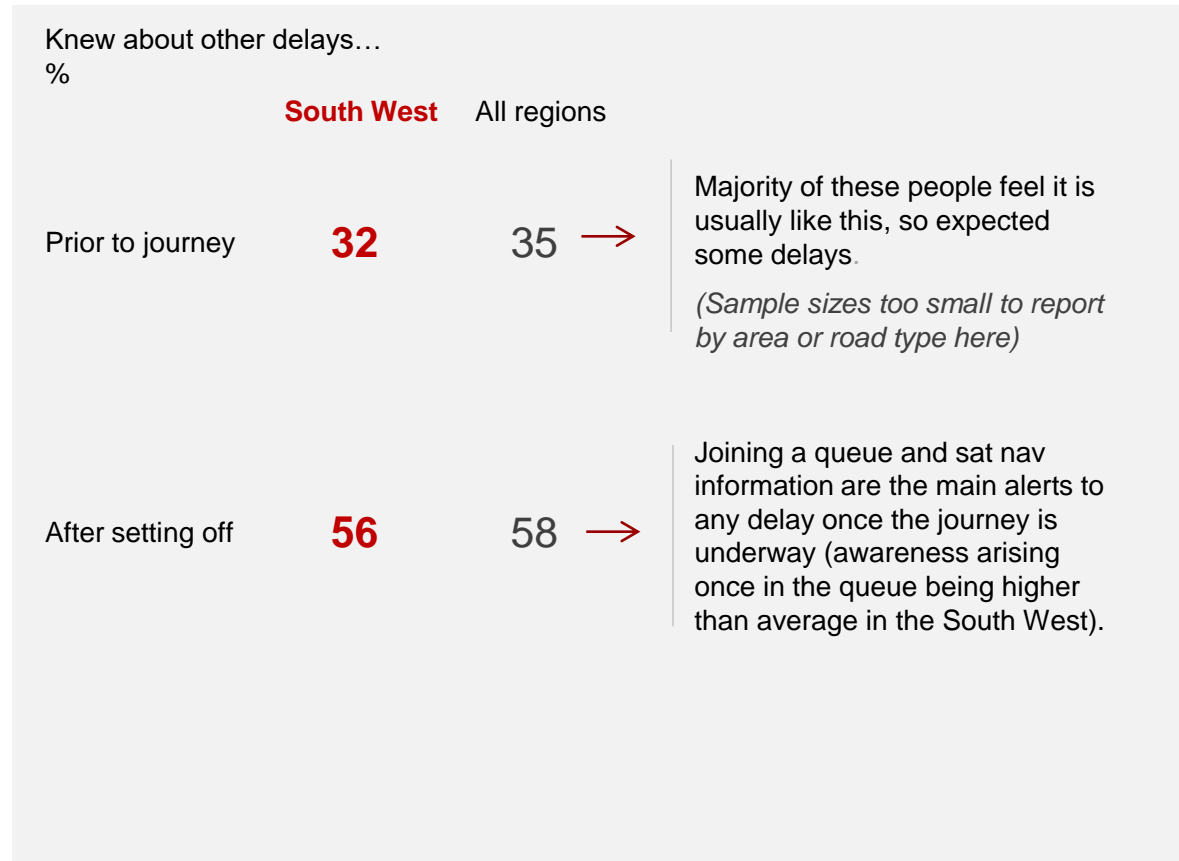
“ Not enough dual carriageway options for overtaking tractors or slow moving lorries. ”

“ The road goes from dual to single lane then dual again. The single lane is on a hill slow for HGV's with a roundabout which causes long queues. ”

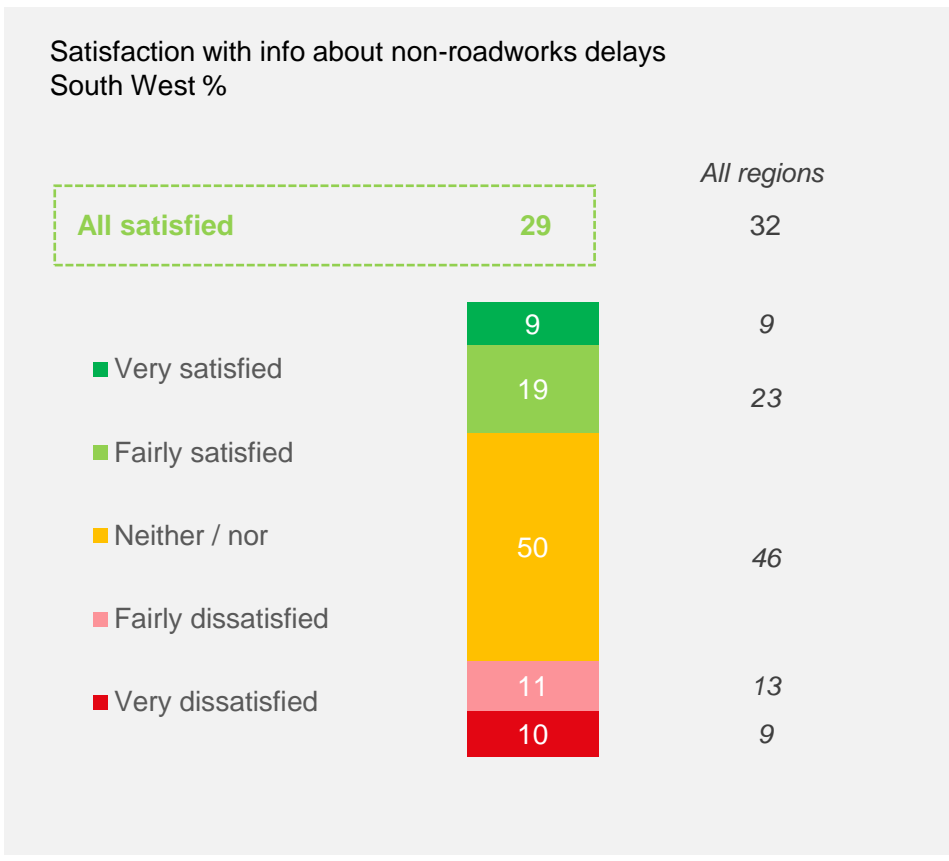
“ I was worried about aquaplaning because there was so much water on the road, and in some places it's like a river across the road ”

# Finding out about other types of delay in the South West

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



...all leading to low levels of satisfaction with delay-related information, including around a fifth being dissatisfied



Base: All affected by delays other than roadworks in the South West, Aug '22 – Jul '23 (136)

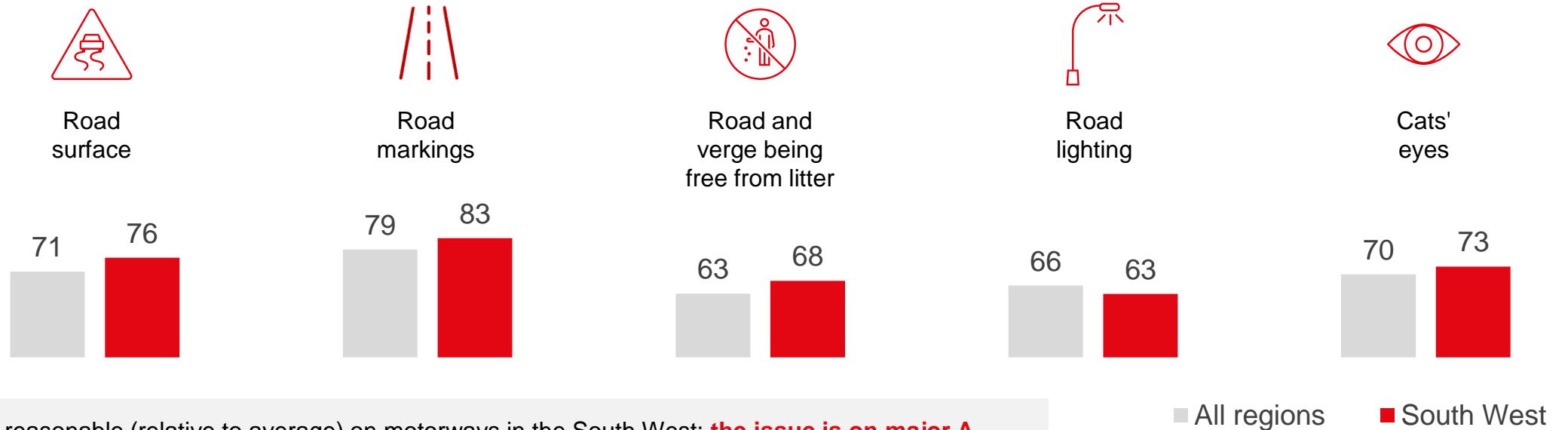
# Day to day functioning of SRN





# Presentation and condition of South West roads rated comparatively well – with lighting a notable exception. Additionally, litter appears to need attention in all regions.

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



Lighting is reasonable (relative to average) on motorways in the South West; **the issue is on major A roads in this region, with only 54% of those driving after dark being satisfied** (vs. 59% average). As such this affects Devon and Cornwall more overall than Somerset, Dorset, Devon.

Base: Road surface/markings/litter, Aug '22 – Jul '23, all regions (7,694-8,967), South West (869-1,021)  
 Lighting/cats eyes, among those travelling after dark, Aug '22 – Jul '23, all regions (1,542-1,699), South West (154-163)

# 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 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 in the dark, especially at the end of the journey when I am not familiar with the roads ”

“ Lack of overhead lighting makes a very difficult drive ”

“ It was very dark and therefore a bit stressful in the rain ”

**Most common complaint is simply insufficient lighting**

“ The lack of lighting after dark on the A47 is dangerous as there are deep ditches either side of the road ”

“ Lighting poor. Road markings poor. Road drainage poor. Cats eyes non-existent ”

“ The roads were dark, street lights were there but the lights were not on after night... ”

“ The A3 goes from brightly lit at Wisley to no lighting at all further on. ”

“ Some sections unlit, would feel safer with lighting ”

“ ...motorway is very dark far away from international standards ”

**But some other themes also arise in users' comments:**

Poor lighting is **especially noticeable or impactful in context of roadworks** (including being too bright)

“ Traffic, narrow lanes, poor lighting, slow speed limit ”

“ Road work light blinding vision ”

“ ... there was a lot of spray, lorries, road works and some of the way was in darkness, no lights on motorway ”

**...or poor weather**

“ In the rain and dark it's difficult to see ”

“ Bad weather. Lighting could be more consistent ”

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

“ ...that section of road is appalling. It is unlit and there are hardly any lane markings ... It seems road repairs have been completed, but the safety features (cats eyes and dotted lines) have not been replaced, making driving in inclement weather dangerous. ”

“ Direction signs not always obvious and lighting not great ”



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

**14%** were dissatisfied with litter along the road and verge in the South West



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. ”

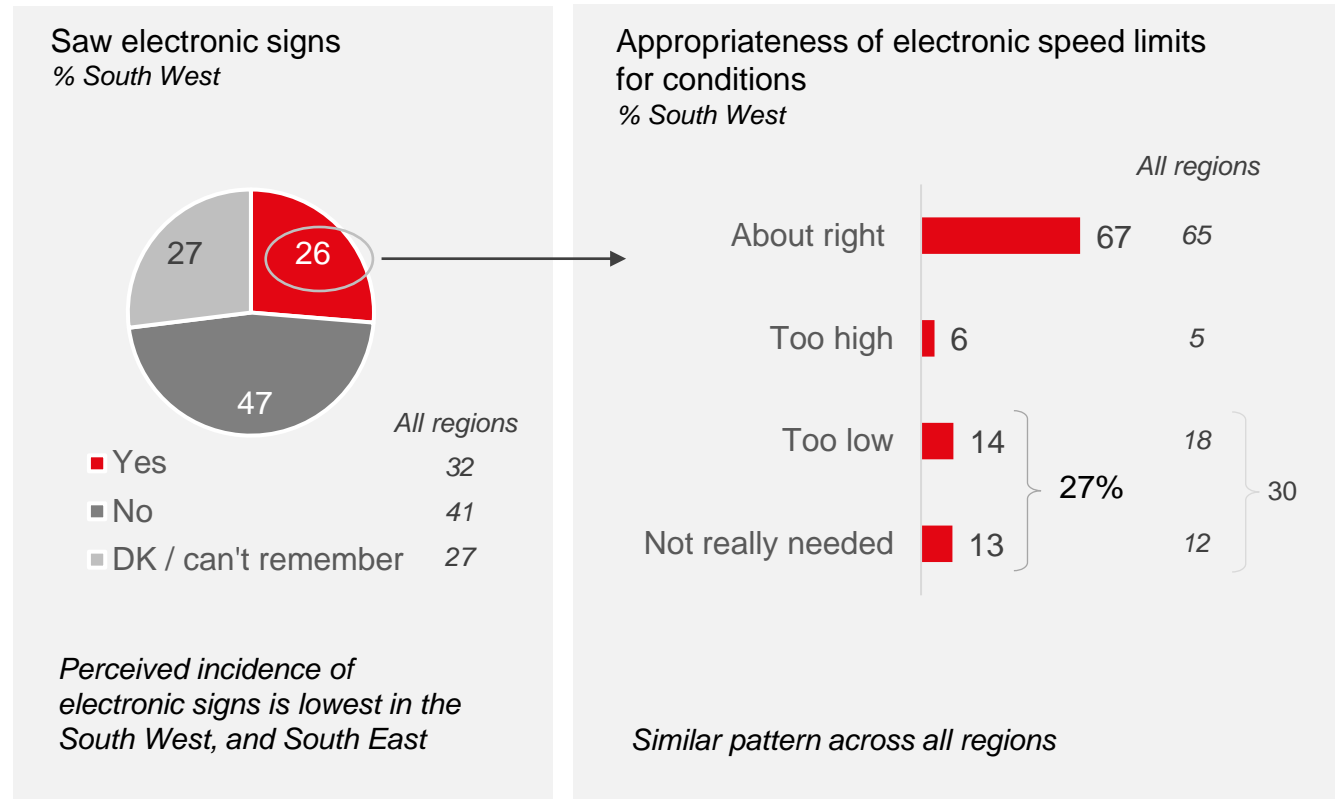
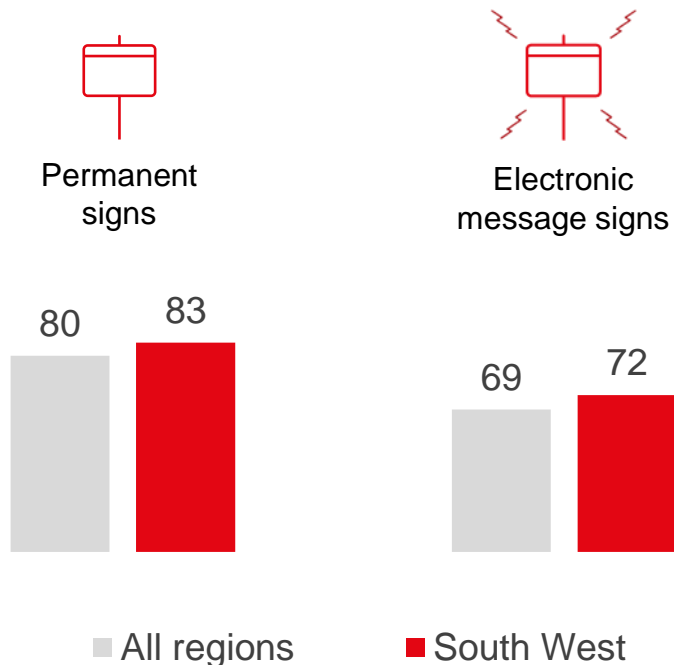
“ There is also a significant amount of litter at both junctions that never seems to be cleared. ”

“ 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 ”

# Overall, signage in the South West performs a little better than the national average *(though note some issues identified on previous pages for the minority who are disrupted)*

## Rating of signage

% very/fairly satisfied, South West vs all-region average

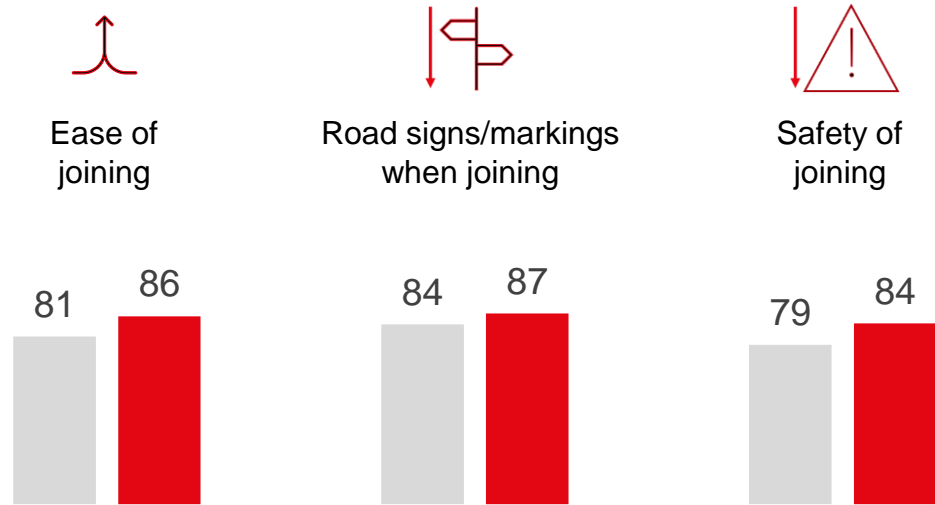


Base: Permanent signs (8,585), Aug '22 – Jul '23, South West (993)  
 Electronic signs, among those having seen them, Aug '22 – Jul '23, all regions (6,195), South West (625)

# Most users satisfied with joining/leaving SRN in the South West; leaving a marginally smoother process

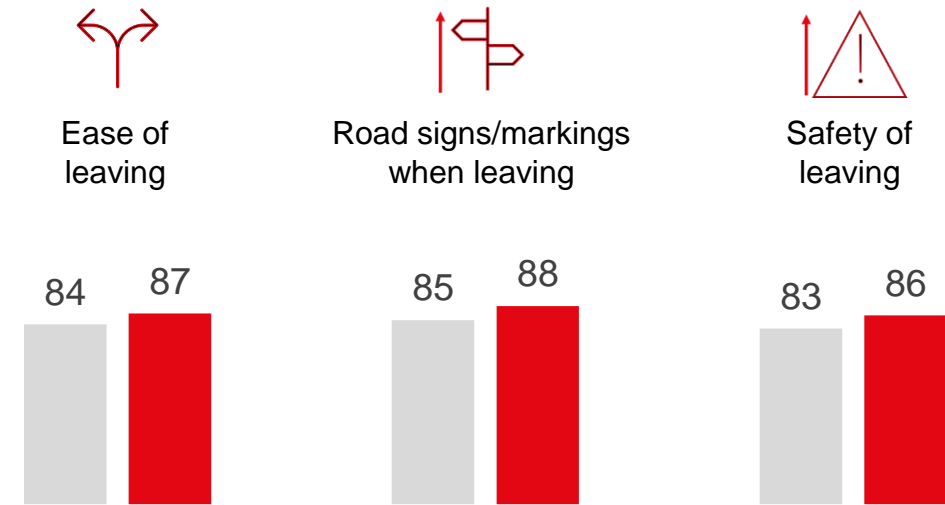
## Rating of joining

% very/fairly satisfied, South West vs all-regions average



## Rating of leaving

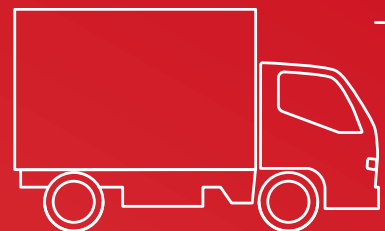
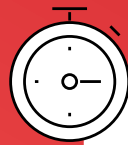
% very/fairly satisfied, South West vs all-regions average



■ All regions

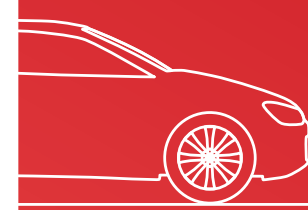
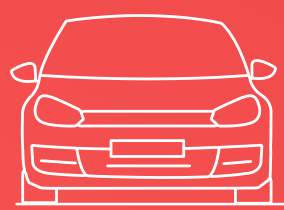
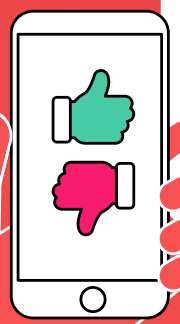
■ South West

Base: all regions (8,908-9,010), South West (1,009-1,024), Aug '22 – Jul '23



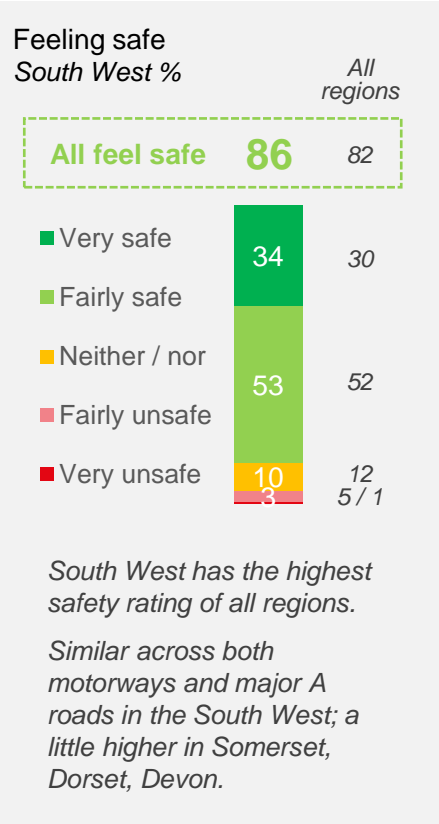
# Focus on other topics

Using and sharing the road comfortably  
SRN users and smart motorways  
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 help to alleviate stress.

## Most motorists feel safe in the South West



Base: All answering, Aug '22 – Jul '23, South West (1,030), 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.*

*...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*
- Other factors linked to smart motorways**

*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**

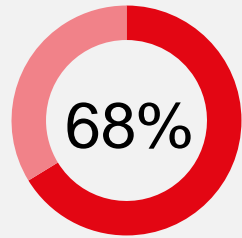
*...I don't like that draining asphalt isn't used yet in a country where rainy days are the norm... can lead to ...accidents*
- Poor lighting/markings**

*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, South West %

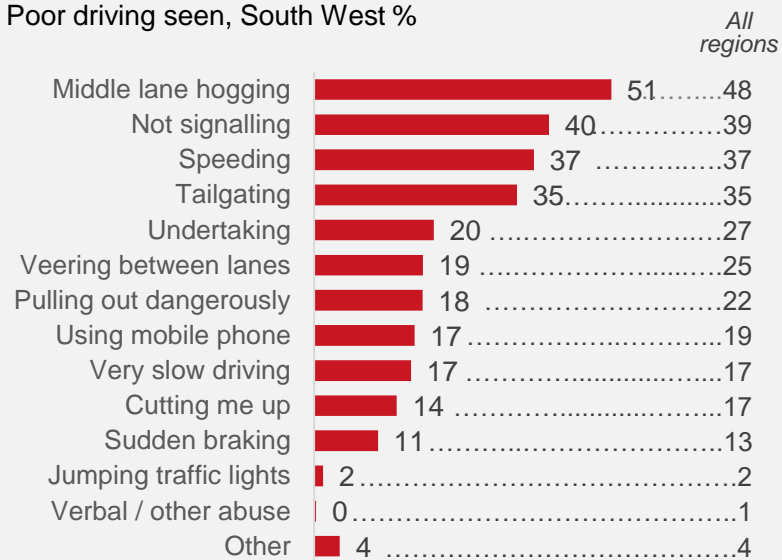


All-regions average: 70%

More common in Somerset, Dorset, Devon (71%, vs. 61% in Devon and Cornwall).

This is linked to the fact that, in all regions, poor driving is more common on motorways (76%, vs. 62% on A roads).

## Poor driving seen, South West %



Base: all SRN users surveyed Aug '22 – Jul '23 (9,091), South West (1,035). Experienced others' poor driving behaviour (6,153), South West (654)

## Most blame other drivers themselves:

*People driving in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> 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

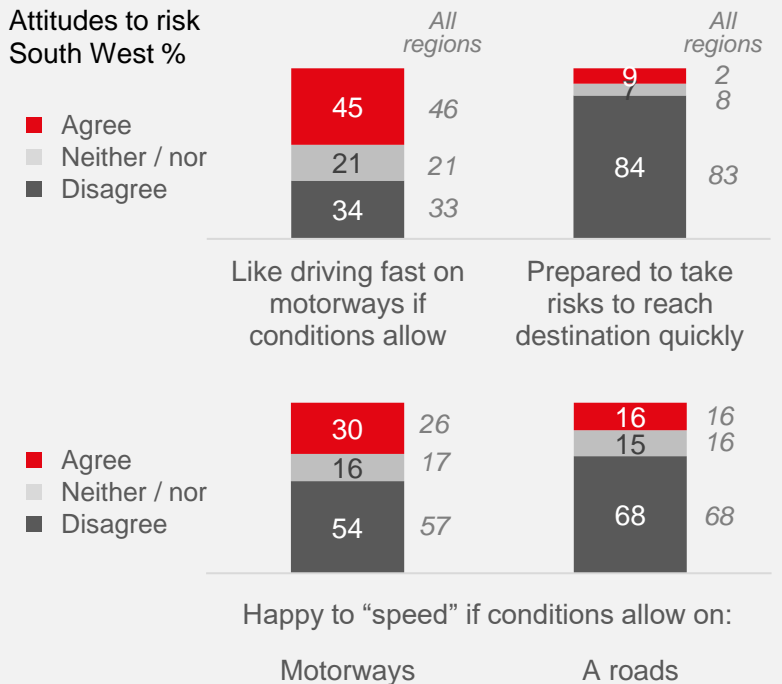
*...fine apart from the idiots who 'hog' the centre lane... this issue needs to be lawfully addressed!*

*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 South West %



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.

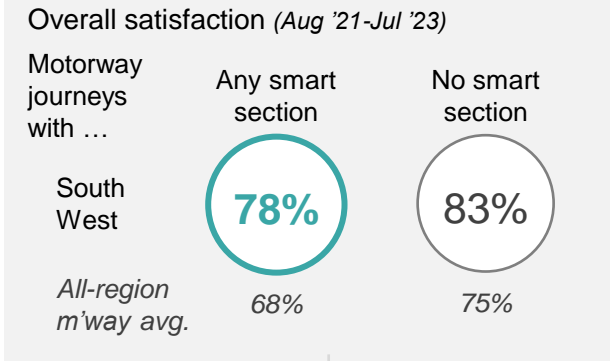
Findings outside of grey boxes are at national level

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



# Smart motorway journeys are less positive than others: **in practice** slowed by reported congestion, and poor safety **perceptions** exacerbate negative experience for some (though this is less of a concern in the South West)

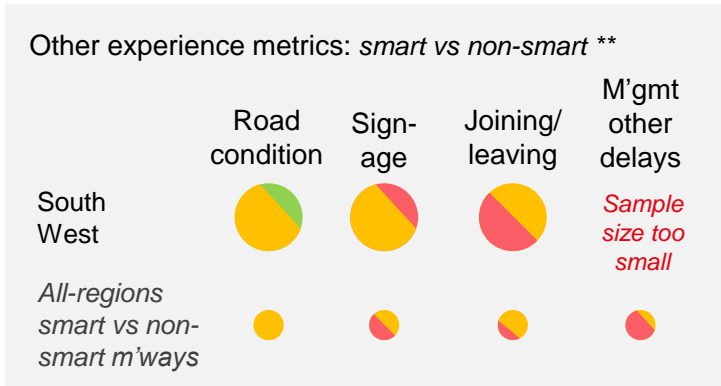
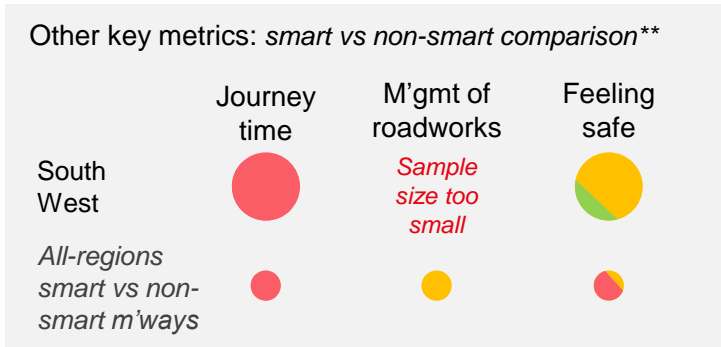
Although less prevalent, and rated better, in South West than elsewhere, **smart motorway journeys often less satisfactory than on other motorways**



**The key issue is journey time, both nationally and in the South West.**

Road condition is also typically rated more favourably on smart motorways – which are often more modern – and this is also true in the South West.

(And the same for roadworks management)



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.**

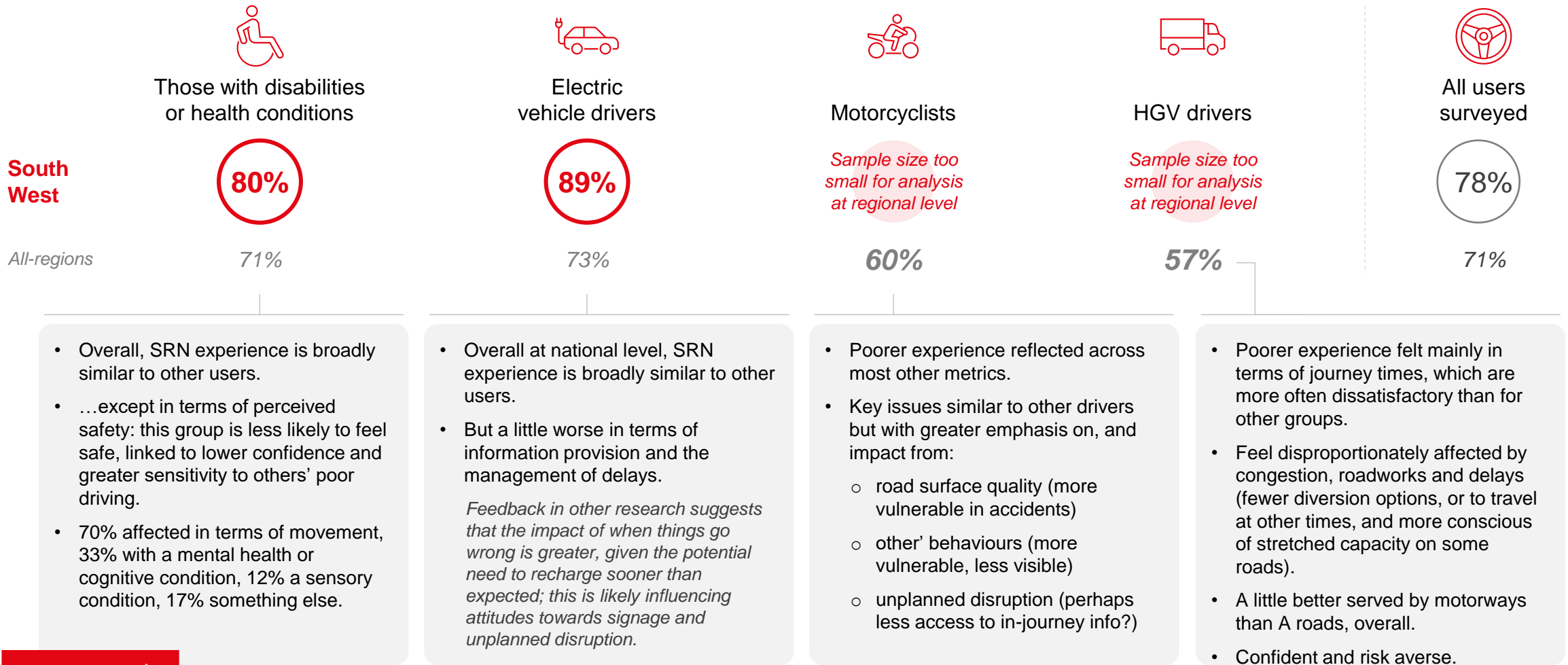
Base: random sample of all who used a smart motorway for any part of journey, Aug '22 – Jul '23, satisfied (104), dissatisfied (106)

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%

# 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). SW disabled drivers (89), EV drivers (63) – CAUTION: SMALL SAMPLE SIZE, all (1,033)  
 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

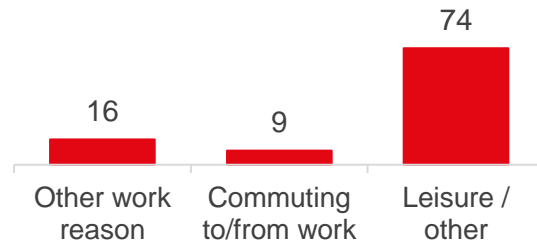
# Context for the results and reporting conventions



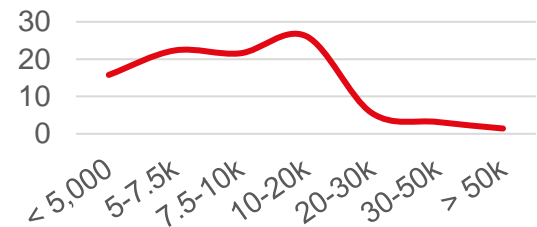
# Users, and how they use the SRN in the South West

## Driving context

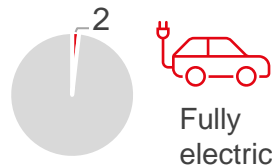
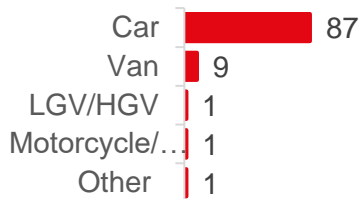
Journey purpose



Annual mileage (total)

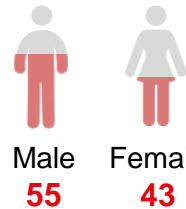


Vehicle type

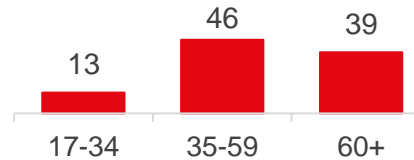


## The traveller(s)

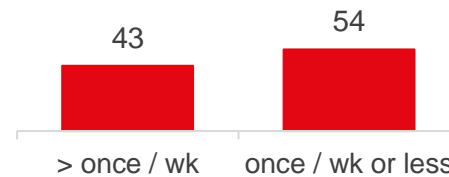
Gender



Age



Frequency on SRN



Any disability

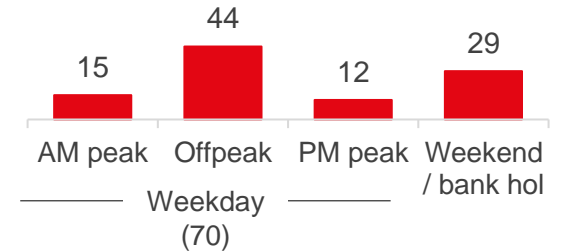


Travelling party



## Environment

Journey time



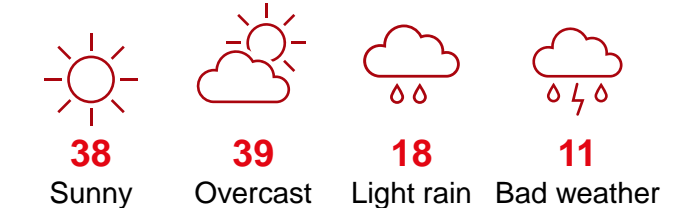
17% journeys took place (partly) after dark

17% journeys took place (partly) after dark

45% took place on major A roads

took place on major A roads (among the regions with highest A road proportion)

Weather



Figures shown are for the South West; patterns are very similar at all-regions level with the exception of age, where the proportion of **older travellers** on the SRN here is marginally higher, **frequency** which is very slightly lower for travellers in the South West, and the proportion of **journeys made on major A roads** which is higher than average here.

Base: all SRN users surveyed, South West, Aug '22 – Jul '23 (1,035)

# 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