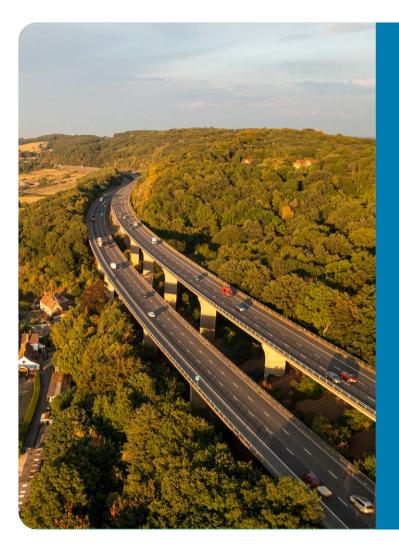
Strategic Roads User Survey

ansportfocus 🕅

2024/25 annual report



Foreword

Foreword

Understanding how users feel about their journeys on England's motorways and major A-roads is a vital part of driving improvements. The Strategic Roads User Survey measures satisfaction and highlights where problems lie and where initiatives are having a positive impact.

The latest results come at the end of Road Period Two (2020-2025) and will form part of the Office of Rail and Road's formal assessment of National Highways' performance. This is a pivotal point, with an intense focus on maximising the value of spending across the public sector and with Road Investment Strategy Three, covering 2026-2031, expected to focus on maintaining existing roads rather than building lots of new ones.

The headline results from the survey for 2024/25 are disappointing, with overall journey satisfaction at 69 per cent. This continues the downward trend seen last year, from 73 per cent in 2022/23.

In response to falling satisfaction National Highways developed an action plan with the aim of making a



difference in a short space of time. We've supported this work, encouraging a focus on what matters most to road users and undertaking audits to provide user-focussed feedback on the experience of driving through roadworks.

Our analysis indicates a key part of the decrease in overall satisfaction has been the roadworks to deliver the National Emergency Area Retrofit (NEAR) programme. This involved significant stretches of roadworks across all lane running (ALR) motorways to enable the building of 151 new emergency areas in response to concerns about finding a safe space to stop in an emergency. Vital work but road users have felt the impact. The survey shows a steep increase in the proportion of drivers passing through roadworks on ALR motorways and almost as steep a decrease in satisfaction with journeys affected by roadworks on these roads. While the M1, the road with the most NEAR roadworks, is the lowest scoring motorway.

National Highways completed the NEAR roadworks in March 2025 and there are early signs that satisfaction is beginning to recover. However, roadworks will remain a fact of life, whether because of a need to repair and maintain the network or because of welcome investment to improve journeys. The way roadworks are managed can make a big difference to how disruptive they feel. The survey provides insight into user views on themes ranging from the volume and length of stretches of roadworks to a lack of visible work at the roadside.

The decrease in overall satisfaction in 2024/25 reinforces the importance of learning lessons and prioritising the user experience during roadworks. This includes consistently running roadworks at the highest safe speed to minimise delay, warning people in advance so they can avoid roadworks altogether if possible, minimising the length of stretches of roadworks and the time they are in place and providing better signage at the roadside to explain what is going on.

We're pleased to be working with National Highways to help them improve roadworks management. This includes improving the diversion experience when roads are closed, with trials in the East region expected later this year aimed at boosting awareness on approach to a closure and confidence using the diversion route.

Looking to the longer-term, we're encouraged by National Highways' efforts to innovate and drive a more customer focussed culture. This report includes case studies which highlight examples of projects where National Highways has trialled doing things differently to improve journeys. It is our role to continue to help National Highways understand and act on their customers' priorities. We look forward to continuing our work together to improve road user satisfaction.

Louise Collins

Director

National Highways commentary

The needs of our customers are central to everything we do. Every journey, every decision, and every improvement we make is shaped by the voices of those who are affected by our work. One of the most important ways we listen is through the SRUS, which gives us a clear view of how customers feel about their journeys.

Our 2024/25 customer satisfaction score is 2.4 per cent lower than the same period last year. This reflects the impact of major improvement works across the network - especially the National Emergency Area Retrofit programme - which have temporarily disrupted journeys. We've also seen continued traffic growth and rising average delay, both of which we know are key drivers of customer satisfaction. We remain committed to putting customers first - using their feedback to guide improvements and deliver a better, more reliable journey experience. This year, initiatives we delivered in our annual customer service plan included:

- Making roadworks easier to navigate: we rolled out clearer, more customer-friendly guidance and introduced a new stakeholder assurance framework to make sure roadworks meet customer expectations.
- Better information, earlier: our seven day in advance roadworks updates are now more accurate - three per cent better than last year and over 30 per cent better than in 2020 - helping customers plan ahead with more confidence.
- Clearer signs during incidents: we've improved how we set signs and signals when there's a problem on the road - reducing last-minute lane changes and increasing compliance with speed limits and red Xs.

Foreword

When SRUS results showed a decline in satisfaction earlier in the year, we responded by refocusing and stepping up our efforts. We brought together a crosscompany project team to drive meaningful change. This included:

- Customer workshops on major roadwork schemes to better understand and address customer concerns
- Joint audits of roadworks and diversion routes with Transport Focus to identify areas for improvement
- Regional dashboards showing key customer metrics to support data-driven decisions
- Roadworks training introduced as core to role, supporting the consistent planning and delivery of roadworks with customers in mind.

These actions - alongside the completion of major enhancement schemes - have contributed to a steady improvement in SRUS scores since December 2024. Average delay is also beginning to fall, helping us deliver smoother, more reliable journeys for our customers.

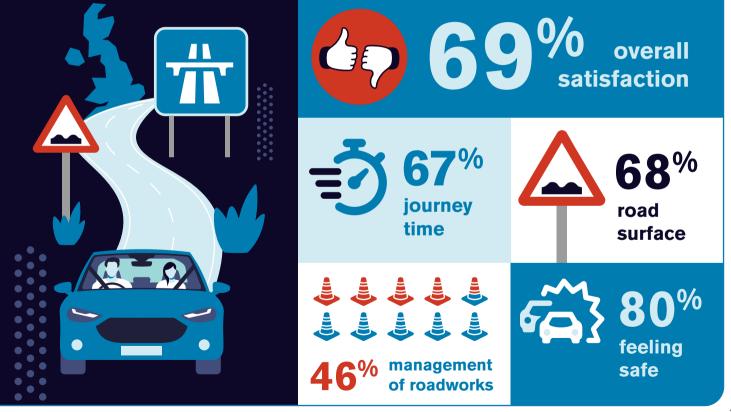


We're looking forward to continuing our partnership with Transport Focus throughout 2025-26, as we prepare for the third road period. By working together on the initiatives in our Customer Service Plan we'll keep driving progress for road users.

Pete Martin

Customer Experience Director

Journey satisfaction on England's motorways and major 'A' roads





The Strategic Roads User Survey (SRUS) measures the consumer experience of driving on England's motorways and major 'A' roads, the Strategic Road Network managed by National Highways on behalf of the government. The survey gets feedback from a representative sample of more than 9000 road users each year on their most recent journey on England's motorways and major 'A' roads.



Summary of findings - April 2024 - March 2025

Overall, 69 per cent of road users were satisfied with their last motorway or major 'A' road journey, a drop from last year's 71 per cent, with the main driver of the decline being satisfaction with journeys on motorways. A key factor is the National Emergency Area Retrofit (NEAR) programme of roadworks, which added 151 additional emergency areas to existing all lane running (ALR) stretches of smart motorway and those that were still under construction.

Overall satisfaction with journeys that included ALR stretches of smart motorway with roadworks dropped steeply from 61 per cent in 2023/24 to 48 per cent in 2024/25. Whereas satisfaction on ALR stretches without roadworks, non-smart motorways (with or without roadworks) and 'A' roads (with or without roadworks) has been broadly stable. More detail about the impact of the NEAR roadworks can be found later in this report.

Journey time is the most influential driver of overall

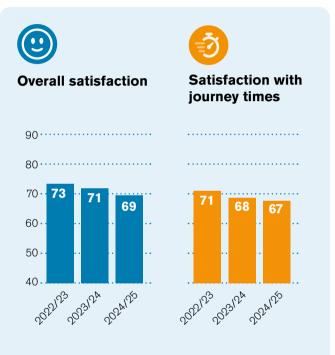
satisfaction, so unsurprisingly shows a similar trend to overall satisfaction. Road user satisfaction with journey time at 67 per cent is similar to last year's 68 per cent, although down from the 71 per cent seen in 2022/23.

Satisfaction with the road surface – another key user priority – has stabilised this year, remaining at 68 per cent, after a substantial drop from 73 per cent the previous year. However, there are still high numbers of mentions of potholes when drivers are asked about their reasons for their overall satisfaction score.

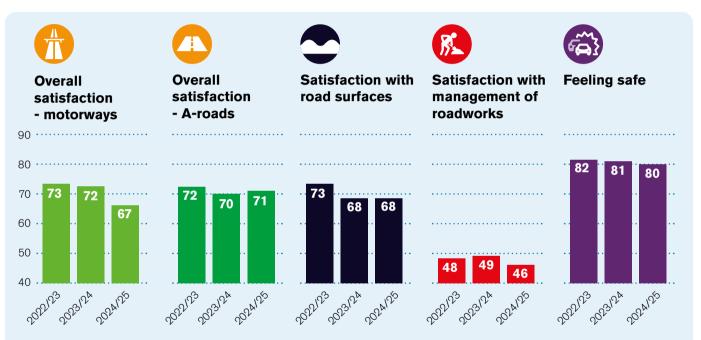
Management of roadworks continues to be one of the weaker performing areas, with 46 per cent of those passing through roadworks on their journey satisfied with their management, a drop from 49 per cent last year.

Feelings of safety have shown a small drop over the last two years, from 82 per cent in 2022/23 to 80 per cent this year.

Trends since 2022/23 can be seen for these key metrics in the charts opposite and on the next page.



% very/fairly satisfied



% very/fairly satisfied

Base sizes for 7 mini charts (all rolling annual):

Overall sat / journey time / safety / road surface (all based on all respondents giving a rating): range from 8959 to 9380 Overall sat for motorway journeys (all respondents giving a rating of a motorway journey): range from 4762 to 5030 Overall sat for A-road journeys (all respondents giving a rating of an A-road journey): range from 4210 to 4350 Management of roadworks (all passing through roadworks and giving a rating): range from 2033 to 2638

National Highways regions

The South West region has maintained its position as the region with the highest overall satisfaction at 75 per cent. Other regions score between 63 and 71 per cent for overall satisfaction, with the M25 region scoring lowest at 63 per cent. The top and bottom ranked regions are the same for satisfaction with journey time, the key driver of overall satisfaction, with the South West at 72 per cent and M25 region at 60 per cent.

The North West has retained its second place in the rankings for overall satisfaction, despite a decrease to 71 per cent, with high rankings for most other metrics. The North West is the only region not to show a significant decrease in satisfaction with motorway journeys.

The East remains the lowest ranked region for satisfaction with road surface at 64 per cent, despite a small increase since last year. This is driven by the poorly performing A12 and A47.

Yorkshire and the North East, Midlands, South East and

East region

On the A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet scheme innovative signs, with a digital illuminated display, were trialled to provide customers with a realtime estimate of the journey time on the diversion route. To ensure reliability of the estimates, they used data from Google, TomTom, Here and Waze. Customer sentiment analysis and in-person engagement sessions with customers were used to get feedback and make improvements. Monitoring showed the signs increased use of the signed diversion route indicating the signs increased customer confidence.

Key findings

Case study

M25 region have all seen significant declines in overall satisfaction compared to last year, although they have maintained similar positions in the rankings. The greater declines in satisfaction for these regions is likely to be connected to the amount of NEAR roadworks, although Yorkshire and the North East also shows a significant decrease in satisfaction with road surface, down to 71 per cent from 78 per cent last year.

See page 16 for the key results for all National Highways regions.



Case study

North Yorkshire

On the A64 between Bramham and Headley Bar new road surfacing technology was trialled during a weekend closure. The old asphalt was removed and the road surface profile reshaped before paving the new asphalt across the entire road surface rather than in individual lanes. This increases surface smoothness and removes most joints, improving ride quality. It also results in a more durable road with an expected 20 per cent increase in longevity compared to conventional surfacing methods.

Results for individual roads

Key findings

The A30 in the South West achieves the highest level of overall satisfaction with 85 per cent, followed by last year's table topper, the A19, in Yorkshire and the North East at 81 per cent.

The M40, between London and Birmingham, retains its crown as the highest rated motorway with 75 per cent satisfied.

Bottom slot in the table is now held by the A47, in the East, scoring 56 per cent overall satisfaction. It scores poorly on journey time too, but is weakest on road surface.

The poorest performing motorway this year is the M1, linking London and Leeds, scoring 57 per cent overall satisfaction, down from 69 per cent last year. The M1 had multiple long stretches of NEAR roadworks, that will have impacted satisfaction.

"Had a clear run with no congestion." A19, very satisfied

Journey time results

The A30 also tops the table for satisfaction with journey time with 80 per cent; the M40 remains the highest rated motorway at 73 per cent. The M25 has the lowest level of satisfaction with journey time, with 56 per cent, followed closely by the M1 and A47 with 57 per cent.

"Traffic moving all the time. No hold ups." M40, very satisfied

"The part of the A12 we were using has recently been repaired and resurfaced, a project that took some two years." A12, very satisfied

"Roadworks on most of the motorway. Then stopped traffic for more than 40 minutes. Closed lanes. 30mph speed limits." M1, very dissatisfied

Road surface results

The M61 takes top spot for road surface with 79 per cent satisfied. However, the M4, linking London and South Wales, which has performed well in recent years, has slipped down the table for road surface, at 68 per cent this year.

The A12, in the East, is no longer the worst ranked road, with its overall satisfaction rating having risen from 55 per cent last year to 63 per cent this year. This follows investment in resurfacing, which is reflected in a large rise in satisfaction with the road surface, from a poor 34 per cent last year to 56 per cent this year. The A47 is now the worst rated road overall and the lowest rated for road surface, scoring just 49 per cent.

See page 32 for the full breakdown of individual road results.

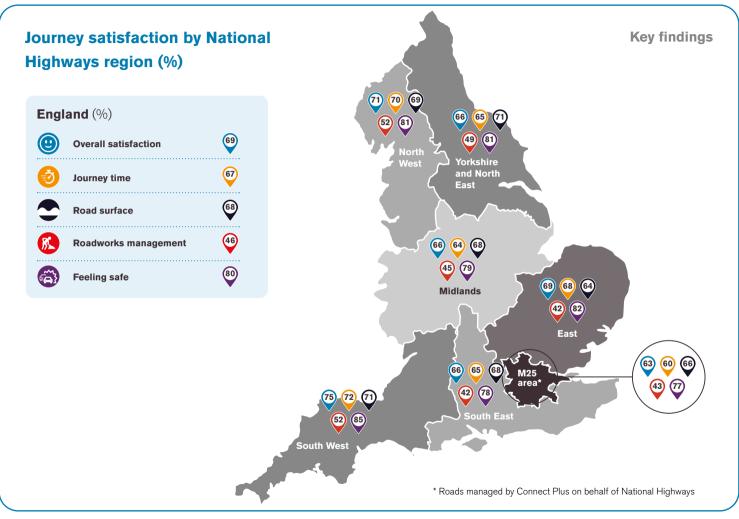
Smart motorways

As in previous years, drivers were less satisfied when their journey included travelling on smart motorways – typically among the busiest and most congested parts of the road network – in comparison to journeys that did not include a smart section. Road user satisfaction with smart motorways has declined from 68 per cent last year to 60 per cent, with the NEAR programme of roadworks an important factor.

Journeys involving a smart motorway section continue to be rated lower for feeling safe (smart 75 per cent; not smart 83 per cent), although there remains little difference between the three types of smart motorway in terms of feeling safe.

The impact of NEAR programme roadworks is covered in more detail on page 22.

"The state of the roads is so dangerous for motorbikes. Potholes and cracks opening, sudden dropping of the roads either side." A47, very dissatisfied



Overall satisfaction in more detail (%)

	Overall satisfaction	69		
	Motorway	67		
	Major 'A' road	71		
	Motorway journey - included a 'smart' section	60		
	All-lane running	59		
	Dynamic hard shoulder	58		
	Controlled	57		
	Motorway journey - no 'smart' section	74		
Î	Male	67		
	Female	72		

6	Age 17 - 34	67
0	Age 35 - 59	68
0	Age 60+	70
Ġ.	Disabled people	69
	Non-disabled people	69
	Prefer not to say	56
R	Passed through roadworks	54
	Did not pass through roadworks	78
	Commuter	62
	Any work reason	63
×	Leisure	71

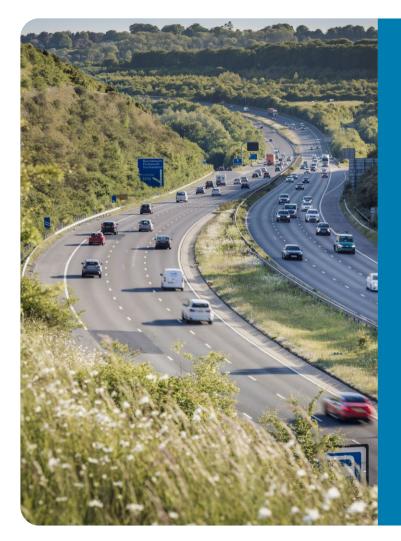
Overall satisfaction in more detail continued (%)

	Car	70
	Vans	62
	LGV/HGV (3.5 tonnes or more)	55
G	Battery electric cars	69
\bigcirc	Weekday AM peak	65
(Weekday PM peak	63
(1)	Weekday off-peak	69
	Weekend/bank holiday	72

Satisfaction = very satisfied and fairly satisfied combined.

"Major roadworks and 50 mile an hour speed limit for most of the journey on the motorway." M1, very dissatisfied

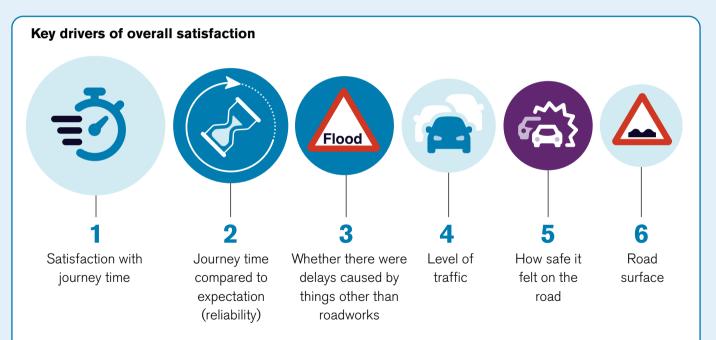




What influences road user satisfaction?

What influences road user satisfaction?

Analysis of SRUS data shows the following aspects of the journey have the greatest influence on road users' overall satisfaction with their journey.



The larger the icon size the greater the influence on overall satisfaction.

What influences road user satisfaction?

As in previous years, satisfaction with journey time is the aspect that has the greatest impact on overall satisfaction. 91 per cent of those satisfied with journey time were satisfied with the journey overall, whereas among those dissatisfied with journey time only 10 per cent were satisfied overall.

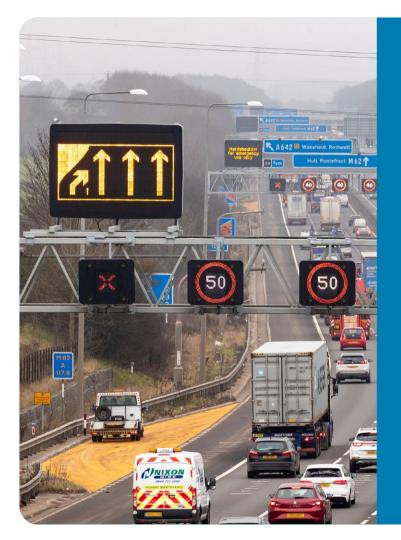
Among those drivers who passed through roadworks during their journey, satisfaction with the management of those roadworks is also a key driver of overall satisfaction. 78 per cent of those satisfied with management of roadworks were satisfied overall, compared with only 21 per cent among those dissatisfied with their management.

Similarly, among drivers experiencing other forms of delay during their journey, satisfaction with the management of those delays is a key driver of overall satisfaction. 72 per cent of those satisfied with management of other delays were satisfied overall, compared with just 18 per cent among those dissatisfied with their management. Drivers of satisfaction are broadly consistent across regions. The results of this analysis are consistent with previous years, although satisfaction with road surface has climbed into sixth place.

Case study

Electronic signs and signals

Improving how electronic signs and signals, such as red Xs and temporary speed limits, are set nationally. Customer feedback and insight showed road users sometimes question the accuracy of these signs and signals especially approaching incidents. As a result National Highways trialled reducing the distance from the scene of an incident that signs and signals were set. Following successful trials, this has been rolled out nationally, so that only two sets of signs and signals are set in the lead up to an incident instead of up to five. This has resulted in less late lane changing, improved compliance with signals and improved journey times.

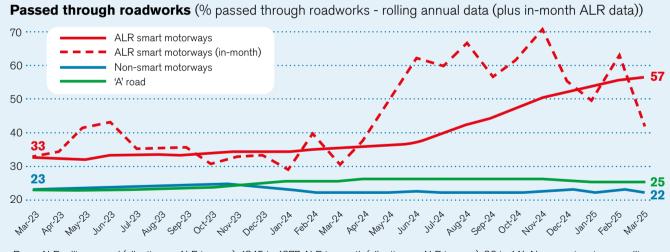


In 2022 following concerns about being able to find a safe place to stop in an emergency on all lane running (ALR) smart motorways, and in response to a Transport Select Committee report, the Government committed to roll out an emergency area retrofit programme. National Highways has since delivered a programme to build 151 additional emergency areas on sections of ALR motorway across the country. The roadworks were completed by the end of March 2025.

In order to examine the impact of the roadworks on overall satisfaction we have looked at different road types, split by whether drivers experienced roadworks. Within SRUS data, ALR smart motorways are the best proxy for the roads affected by the National Emergency Area Retrofit (NEAR) programme.

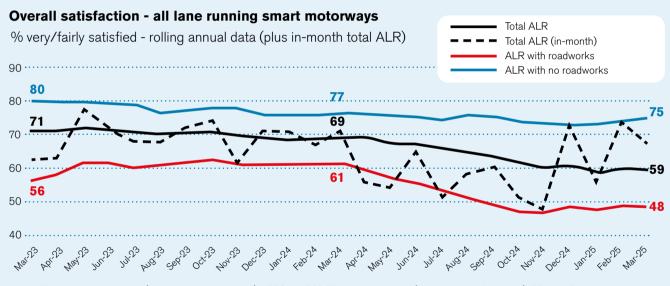


The chart below shows the proportion of drivers passing through roadworks on each type of road. This was broadly consistent over the last two years for non-smart motorways and 'A' roads. However, the proportion of drivers passing through roadworks on ALR smart motorways, which was already at a higher level, increased sharply from spring 2024, continuing through to the end of the NEAR programme, with the levels generally declining as stretches of roadworks were completed.



Base: ALR rolling annual (all rating an ALR journey): 1245 to 1377. ALR in-month (all rating an ALR journey): 86 to 141. Non-smart motorway rolling annual (all rating a non-smart motorway journey): 2788 to 2985. 'A' road rolling annual (all rating an 'A' road journey): 4202 to 4450.

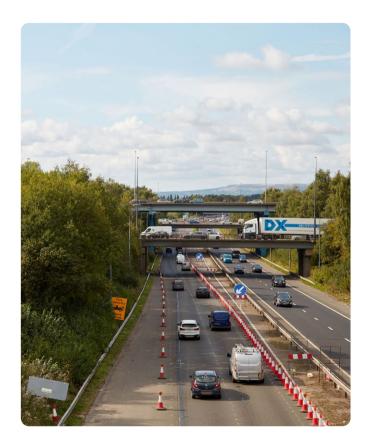
Overall satisfaction on ALR smart motorways where drivers passed through roadworks declined steeply from 61 per cent in 2023/24 to 48 per cent in 2024/25. This coincides with the ramp up of NEAR roadworks. As the programme neared completion, the decline stopped and there are early signs that scores are likely to recover.



Base: Total ALR rolling annual (all rating an ALR journey): 1238 to 1369. Total ALR in-month (all rating an ALR journey): 86 to 140. ALR with roadworks rolling annual (all rating an ALR journey who have passed through roadworks): 381 to 671. ALR with no roadworks rolling annual (all rating an ALR journey who have passed through roadworks): 381 to 671. ALR with no roadworks rolling annual (all rating an ALR journey): 1238 to 1369. Total ALR in-month (all rating an ALR journey): 86 to 140. ALR with no roadworks rolling annual (all rating an ALR journey): 1238 to 1369. Total ALR in-month (all rating an ALR journey): 86 to 140. ALR with no roadworks rolling annual (all rating an ALR journey): 1238 to 1369. Total ALR in-month (all rating an ALR journey): 86 to 140. ALR with no roadworks rolling annual (all rating an ALR journey): 1238 to 614

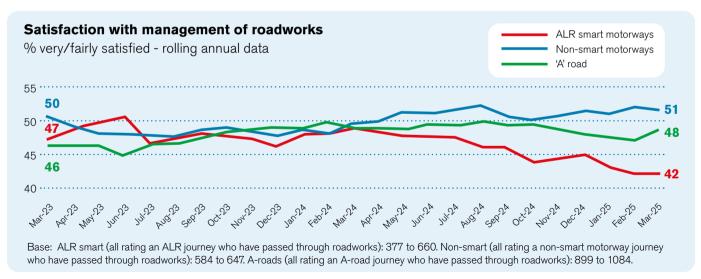
Other types of road do not show the same substantial decline in satisfaction as the ALR smart motorways impacted by the NEAR programme of roadworks. For example, overall satisfaction with journeys on 'A' roads has remained relatively stable across the last two years, regardless of whether drivers passed through roadworks. Non-smart motorways saw a small decline in overall satisfaction among drivers passing through roadworks (59 per cent in 2024/25, down from 62 per cent in 2023/24), while scores were broadly flat where no roadworks were present (80 per cent in 2024/25 compared with 81 per cent in 2023/24).

While only 10 per cent of responses in the survey during 2024/25 concerned journeys passing through roadworks on motorways with ALR stretches, satisfaction with these journeys decreased by 13 percentage points. So, while only impacting a minority of journeys the substantial decline in satisfaction on these journeys appears to account for a large proportion of the decline in overall satisfaction from 71 to 69 per cent.



Management of NEAR roadworks

It is not just the presence of the NEAR roadworks that has impacted overall satisfaction, but perceptions of the management of the roadworks too. In the months leading up to the main work on the NEAR programme, satisfaction with the management of roadworks was very similar for ALR smart motorways, non-smart motorways and 'A' roads (for 2023/24 this was 49 per cent for both ALR and non-smart motorways and 48 per cent for A-roads). However, while the new emergency areas were being built, satisfaction with the management of roadworks declined significantly to 42 per cent on ALR smart motorways across 2024/25, while non-smart motorways rose slightly to 51 per cent and A-roads remained stable at 48 per cent.

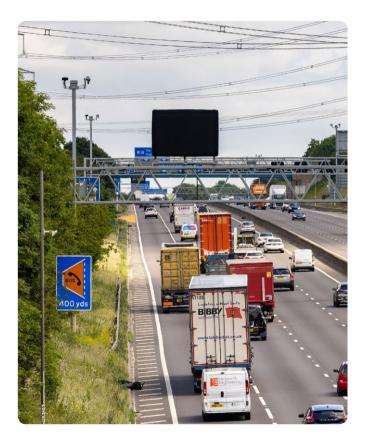


A number of drivers commented specifically on the management of the NEAR roadworks. The main issues raised related to the works lasting a long time and affecting long stretches of road, not seeing work being done or that they didn't actually know what was being done.

Some who knew what work was being done were still dissatisfied. For example, one driver on the M3 said: "Speed restrictions on 15-mile section of road for refuge area work. This causes massive delays as traffic queues for the M25. Why close off such a long section of road when it's going to take months to complete."

Another, who had driven on the M27 said: "There was not a single worker on site at all during the journey. The completion could be accelerated massively if they worked around the clock."

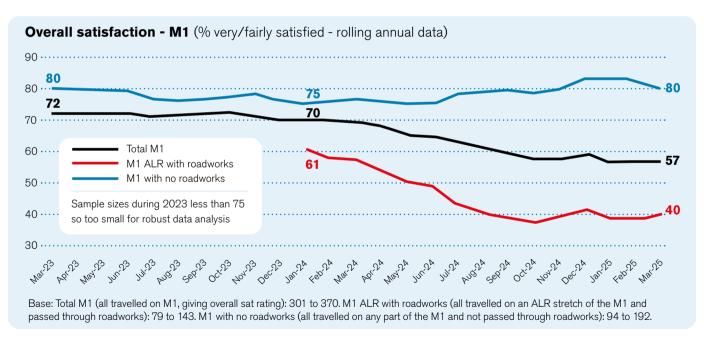
Others were critical of these emergency areas being installed retrospectively. For example, a driver on the M1 said: *"These should have been put in when the motorway was made into a smart motorway".*

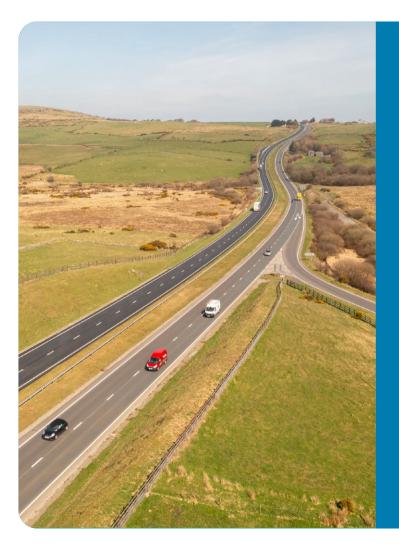


NEAR roadworks and the M1

The M1 has long stretches of ALR smart motorway and therefore long sections of retrofit roadworks. In fact, 73 of the 151 new emergency areas are on the M1. In 2024 journeys on the ALR stretches with roadworks saw a

steep decline in overall satisfaction during the NEAR programme roadworks, whereas there was no decline in satisfaction on journeys on the M1 without roadworks.





Rankings

Rankings

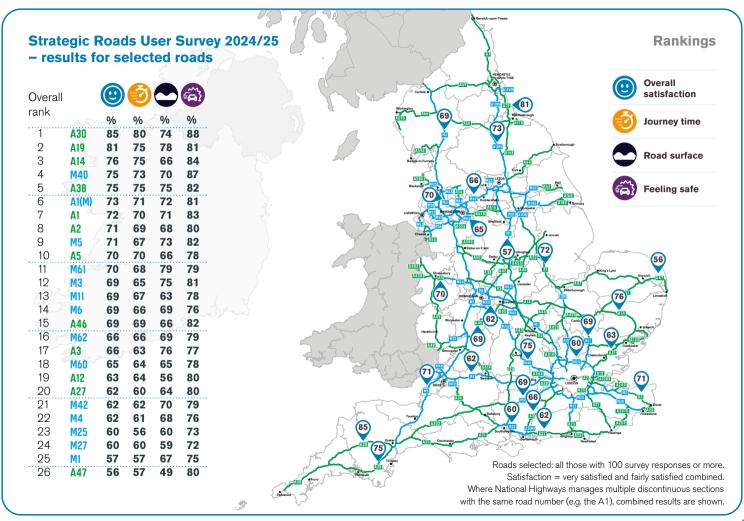
National Highways regions - ranking and satisfaction

Ranking and per cent satisfied

		satisfaction										ß		6	
Overall rank	Region					Overall satisfaction with motorways		Overall satisfaction with A-roads		Journey time		Road surface		Management of roadworks	
1	South West	1	75 (76)	1	71 (79) 🗸	1	79 (73) 🔨	1	72 (74)	1	71 (71)	1	52 (59)	1	85 (84)
2	North West	2	71 (73)	1	71 (73)	2	73 (70)	2	70 (72)	3	69 (72)	1	52 (50)	3	81 (81)
3	East	3	69 (71)	3	69 (75) 🗸	4	69 (66)	3	68 (68)	7	64 (62)	6	42 (47)	2	82 (81)
4	Yorkshire and North East	4	66 (71) 🗸	5	64 (69) 🗸	3	70 (73)	4	65 (67)	1	71 (78) 🗸	3	49 (48)	3	81 (82)
4	Midlands	4	66 (70) 🗸	6	63 (69) 🗸	4	69 (72)	6	64 (66)	4	68 (68)	4	45 (47)	5	79 (80)
4	South East	4	66 (70) 🗸	4	65 (73) 🗸	7	67 (67)	4	65 (69) 🗸	4	68 (68)	6	42 (51) 🗸	6	78 (79)
7	M25	7	63 (68) 🗸	7	62 (70) 🗸	6	68 (60) 🛧	7	60 (64) 🗸	6	66 (66)	5	43 (48)	7	77 (78)
	All regions		69 (71)↓		67 (72) ↓	-	71(70)		67 (68)		68 (68)		46 (49)	-	80(81)

↑ Denotes a significant increase in score (at a 95 per cent level) versus 2023 – 2024 score in brackets.

↓ Denotes a significant decrease in score (at a 95 per cent level) versus 2023 – 2024 score in brackets.



About the survey

- This report contains data from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 and is based on 9419 interviews with road users.
- SRUS uses a 'push to web' method where households within a representative sample of the driving population in England are sent a letter inviting them to complete the survey, which they then do online.
- The survey asks about various aspects of journey experience.
- An interactive map is integrated into the questionnaire and 'understands' which part of a journey is on the Strategic Road Network.
- Results are weighted to ensure they are representative of vehicle mileage across the Strategic Road Network.
- Due to a change of research method in April 2021, results up to March 2020 are not directly comparable with those from April 2021.
- The factors influencing satisfaction are determined

using a Gamma coefficient technique, a nonparametric bivariate test that quantifies the strength of relationship between the results for each individual SRUS question and overall satisfaction.

- Since April 2021 the delivery of the survey has been supported by the research agency BMG Research.
- Satisfaction = very satisfied and fairly satisfied combined.

More information, including drivers' comments, can be viewed in the Transport Focus data hub – new data is added each month.



Contact Transport Focus

Any enquiries about this report should be addressed to: Jordan Sargeant Senior Engagement Manager Jordan.sargeant@transportfocus.org.uk

Transport Focus Piccadilly Gate Store Street Manchester M1 2WD www.transportfocus.org.uk

Transport Focus is the operating name of the Passengers' Council

Transport Focus The voice of Britain's transport users

We listen to the public and find out their experience of using, or trying to use, Britain's railways and England's buses, coaches, trams and motorways and major 'A' roads.

We protect the interests and champion the needs of all transport users today and ensure they're at the centre of tomorrow's policy decisions and future investment.



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