Perceptions of the Trunk Road Network in Scotland

A Report for Transport Scotland
July 2023

Ipsos Scotland

Contents

SCOTTISH TRUNK ROAD USERS SURVEY 2023

Transport Scotland customer focus

Transport Scotland aims to deliver a safe, efficient, cost-effective and sustainable transport system for the benefit of the people of Scotland, playing a key role in helping to achieve the Scottish Government's Purpose of increasing sustainable economic growth with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish. In order to understand customers' expectations an annual survey of a representative cross section of road users is undertaken, to identify which aspects of the trunk road service are important to them and to ascertain the level of overall satisfaction.

The findings are used to inform our activities and performance measures so that we can strive to deliver a road network that exceeds expectations. This infographic presents a summary of the results from the key aspects of the 2023 survey and the full report (by Ipsos) is available on request.

Key facts about Scottish trunk roads

3,747
Route km (2,328 miles) of road

1,896
Bridges / Footbridges

2,390
Other structures

456,026
Individual point ancillary assets (e.g. lighting columns, signs)

44,797Km
Other assets (e.g. fencing, drains), 168Km^2 area assets

£27B
Gross Asset Value

£586M
Investment in 2022/23

£525M
being invested in 2023/24

38%
total distance travelled is on TRN

The Scottish trunk road users survey

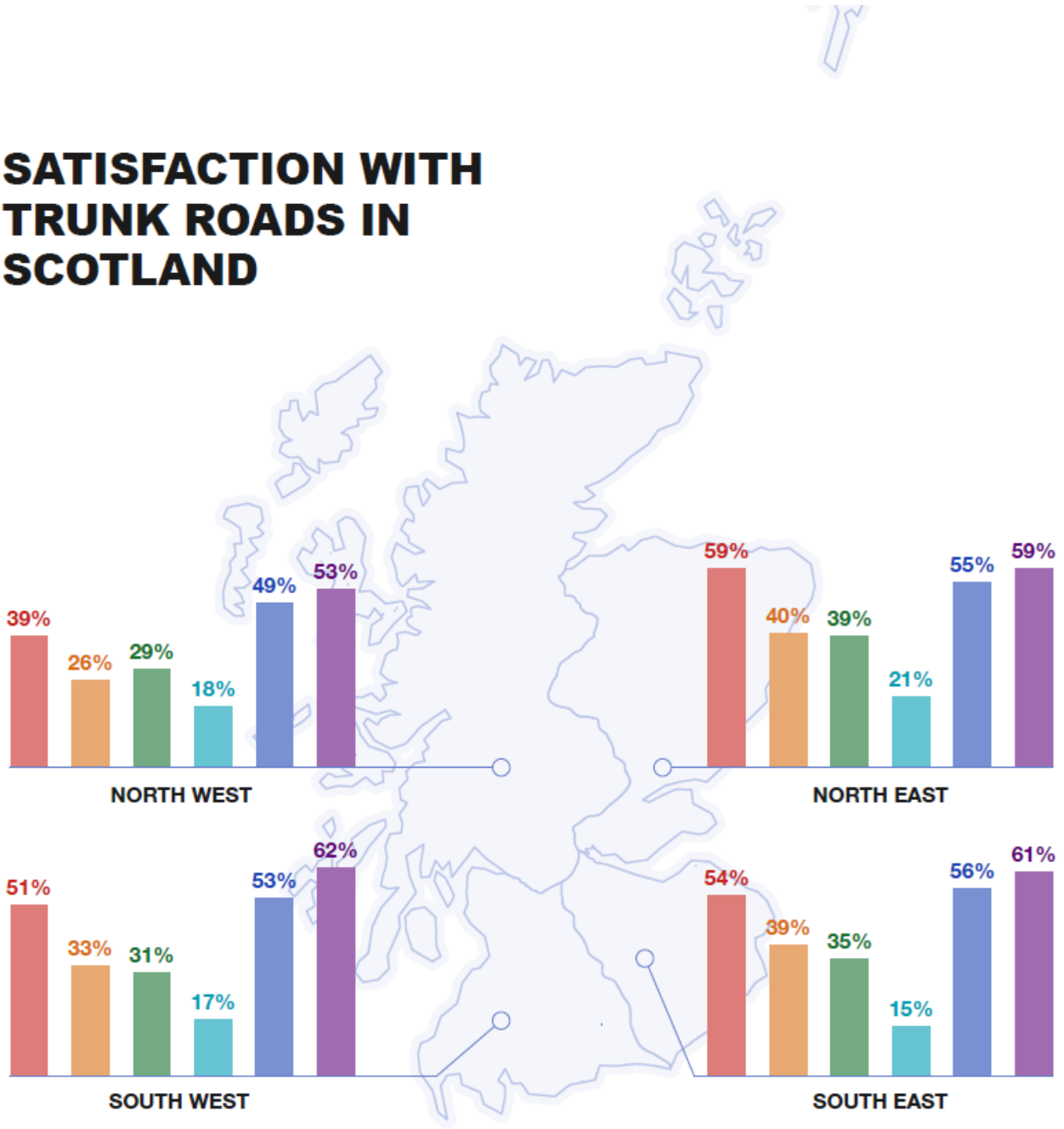
The 2023 Scottish Trunk Road Users Survey was conducted by Ipsos Scotland on behalf of Transport Scotland.

The survey had been carried out annually, by Ipsos, between 2009 and 2019 with a hiatus from 2020 in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. This is the first survey since 2019.

This year also saw a change in methodology to move the survey online, to reflect developments in the field since 2019 and to deliver a high quality survey in a cost-effective manner. Over 1,250 respondents completed the survey on Ipsos UK's online Knowledge Panel, with topics including road conditions and defects, road works, winter maintenance and disruptions from severe weather.

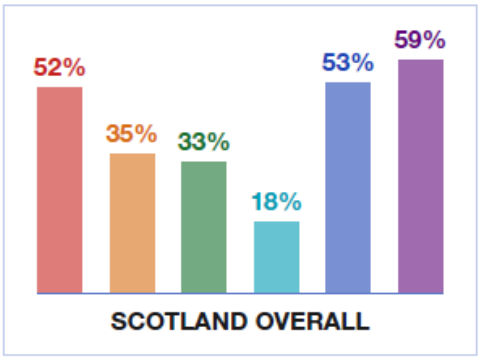
The results were weighted by age, gender, region, education, ethnicity, and Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (using the latest Office of National Statistics estimates) to ensure they are largely representative of the Scottish adult population.

SATISFACTION WITH TRUNK ROADS IN SCOTLAND



Key

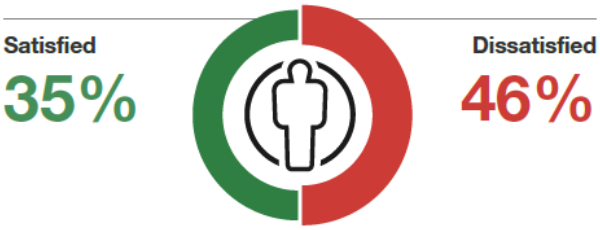
- Overall satisfaction with trunk roads
- General condition of trunk road surfaces
- Quality of repairs
- Speed with which road defects are repaired
- Promptness with which roads are cleared in winter
- Promptness with which roads are gritted in winter

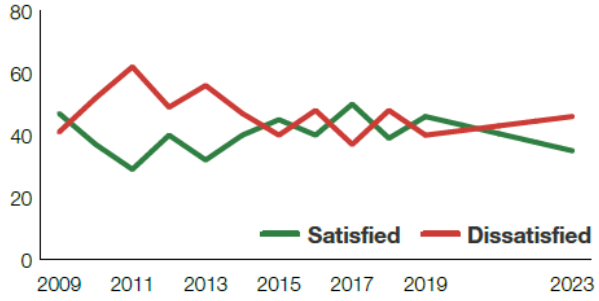


KEY FINDINGS

Perceptions of trunk roads

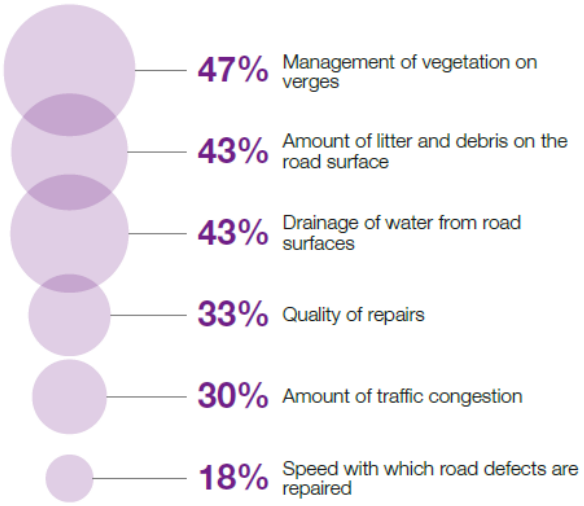
Trunk road users were more likely to be dissatisfied than satisfied with the general condition of trunk roads surfaces.





Other aspects of trunk roads

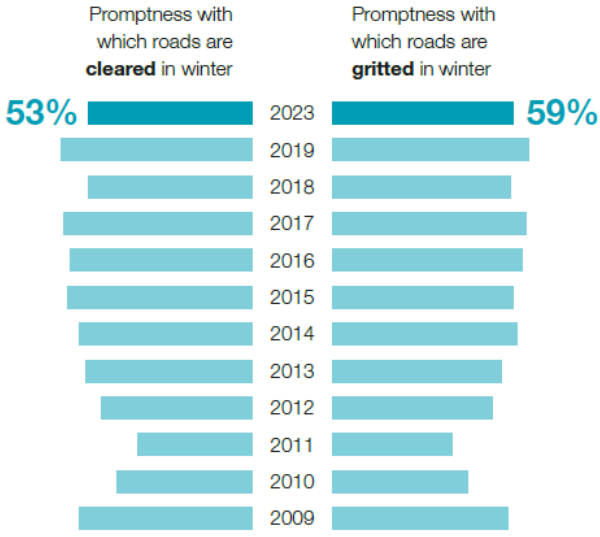
Satisfaction with other aspects of trunk road management and maintenance was mixed.



Users were least satisfied with the speed with which roads defects are repaired.

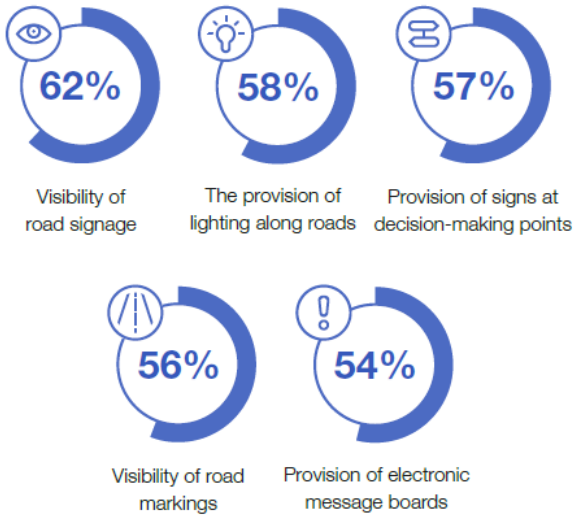
Satisfaction with winter maintenance

Levels of satisfaction with winter maintenance were similar to recent years.



Satisfaction with lighting, marking and signage

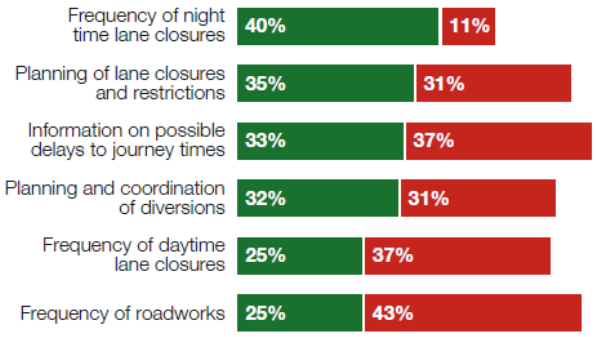
Users were largely positive about the lighting, marking and signage on trunk roads.



KEY FINDINGS

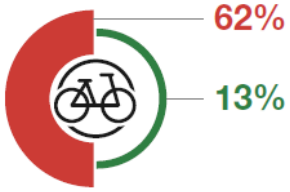
Satisfaction with roadworks

User satisfaction with the different aspects of road works on trunk roads varied.

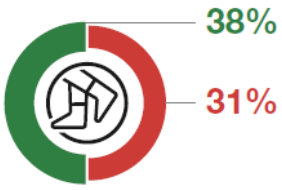


Satisfaction with cycle lanes and footways

Cycle lane users were more likely to be dissatisfied than satisfied with the general condition of cycle lane surfaces.



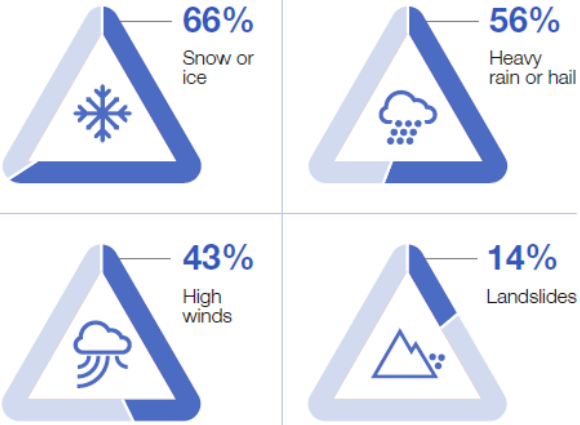
Levels of satisfaction among footway users were more mixed.



Disruption due to severe weather

81% of users had experienced disruption due to severe weather in the last 12 months.

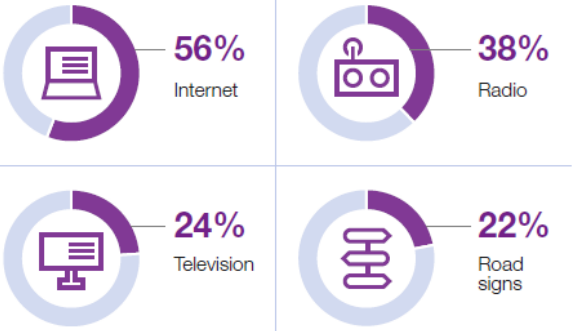
Snow or ice was the most commonly experienced disruption.



Information about Transport Scotland

87% of users had heard of Transport Scotland.

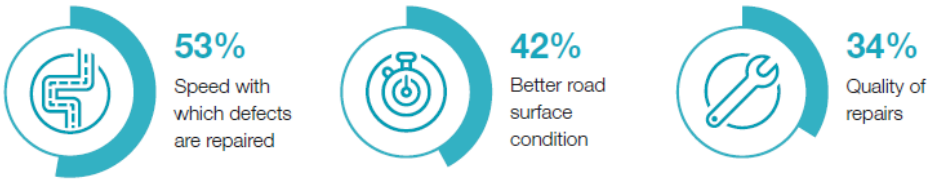
Most common sources of information on Transport Scotland were:



41% of users had used the Transport Scotland website.

Improving the trunk road network

The top 3 improvements that people would like to see were:



1 Introduction

This report presents the results of the 2023 Trunk Road Users Survey, conducted by Ipsos Scotland on behalf of Transport Scotland. The survey had been carried out annually from 2009 to 2019, with interviews conducted face-to-face in respondents' homes using Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI). However, the survey was suspended in 2020 following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2023 survey is the first since 2019, and was conducted using an online survey methodology. This change in methodology reflects developments in the field since the 2019 survey was undertaken, with high quality online options now being available.

While data from previous years is included in the report to provide context, it is important to note that direct comparisons between this and 2023 data are not possible due to the change in survey methodology.

The survey questionnaire

The questionnaire covered the same topics as the 2019 survey, with minor changes to the wording of some questions to reflect the change in survey methodology. The topics were:

- Road condition and defects
- Road works and maintenance
- Road lighting, markings and signage
- Cycle lanes and footways
- Disruption due to severe weather
- Perceptions of Traffic Scotland information
- Transport related challenges faced in local areas.

A copy of the questionnaire is available on request from info@transport.gov.scot.

Methodology

The survey was administered through the Ipsos UK Knowledge Panel, an online survey panel recruited via a random probability, unclustered address-based sampling method. (Previous waves of the survey were conducted face-to-face in respondents' homes using Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) using a representative quota sampling approach.) This means that every household in Scotland has a known chance of being selected to join the panel. Letters are sent to selected addresses in Scotland (using the Postcode Address File) inviting them to become members of the panel. Invited members can sign up to the panel by completing a short online questionnaire or by returning a paper form. Members of the public who are digitally excluded are able to register to the Knowledge Panel either by post or by telephone, and are given a tablet, an email address, and basic internet access which allows them to complete surveys online.

Fieldwork took place between 27 July and 2 August 2023. A total of 1,259 panellists in Scotland (aged 18+) completed the survey. Respondents who had not driven or travelled as a passenger on Scottish

trunk roads in the previous twelve months were excluded from participation. To establish eligibility, respondents were shown a map of trunk roads in Scotland (see Appendix A) and asked how often they had travelled on the network in the past twelve months. Those who answered “never” were screened out of further participation. Note that passengers on public transport were eligible to take part.

Data were weighted to ensure the results were as representative of the Scottish population as possible. As up to two members per household are allowed to register on the Knowledge Panel, a design weight was employed to correct for unequal probabilities of selection of household members. Calibration weights were also applied using population statistics for the local authority region. Two sets of calibration weights were applied:

- Calibration weighting was applied using the following interlocking variables: age, gender and region. All three use Office for National Statistics (ONS) 2019 mid-year population estimates as the weighting target.

- Demographic weights were then applied to correct for imbalances in the achieved sample. The data were weighted by age, gender, education, ethnicity, local authority region and Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (quintiles). Estimates from the ONS 2019 mid-year population estimates were used as the weighting target. (In the 2019 survey, data was weighted by age, gender and working status.)

The weighted profile of the 2023 sample is shown in comparison to the 2019 sample below (Tables 1.1 to 1.3). The sample profiles are broadly similar and any change between years (for example, within age and region) are likely due to differences in the sampling and/or weighting approaches between the two years.

Table 1.1: Weighted sample profile by gender (2023 and 2019)

	2023 (online)	2019 (CAPI)	+/-
Male	48.2%	48.4%	-0.2%
Female	51.8%	51.6%	+0.2%

Table 1.2: Weighted sample profile by age (2023 and 2019)

	2023 (online)	2019 (CAPI)	+/-
18-24	10.0%	11.6%	-1.6%
25-34	17.0%	15.7%	+1.3%
35-54	31.9%	35.4%	-3.5%
55-64	17.1%	14.1%	+2.9%
65+	24.0%	23.2%	+0.8%

Table 1.3: Weighted sample profile by region (2023 and 2019)

	2023 (online)	2019 (CAPI)	+/-
North West	10.3%	7.4%	+2.9%
North East	27.2%	28.9%	-1.7%
South West	33.0%	40.3%	-7.4%
South East	29.6%	23.4%	+6.2%

Presentation and interpretation of the findings

The survey findings represent the views of a sample of Scottish adults, and not the entire population of Scottish trunk road users. As such, they are subject to sampling tolerances, meaning that differences between sub-groups may not always be statistically significant.

Throughout the report, we have commented only upon differences which are statistically significant at the 5% level – i.e. where we can be reasonably certain that they are unlikely to have occurred by chance.

Throughout the report, statistically significant differences are noted only when they exceed the cutoff of the 95% confidence level – i.e., where we can be reasonably certain that they are unlikely to have occurred by chance.

Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this may be due to computer rounding, the exclusion of ‘don’t know’ categories or multiple answers. Aggregate percentages (e.g., ‘very satisfied/fairly satisfied’) are calculated from the absolute values. Therefore, aggregate percentages may differ from the sum of the individual scores due to rounding of percentage totals.

For questions where the number of respondents is fewer than 30, the number of times a response has been selected (n) rather than the percentage is given.

Impact of survey mode and comparisons to previous years

Mode effects (i.e. those arising from how the survey is conducted) can result in variations in responses between different modes. These were apparent for a number of questions in the survey, with online respondents more likely to choose neither/nor options, in comparison to CAPI responses where respondents were generally more positive/affirmative. This pattern is fairly common in mixed mode surveys (see research from 2010 and 2011).

A few examples of the type and extent of the differences are shown in Tables 1.4 to 1.6).

Table 1.4: Examples of mode effects - Overall satisfaction with trunk roads

	2023 (online)	2019 (CAPI)	+/-
Satisfied	52%	59%	-7%
Neither / nor	22%	12%	+10%
Dissatisfied	25%	29%	-4%

Table 1.5: Examples of mode effects - Satisfaction with visibility of road signage (Q11)

	2023 (online)	2019 (CAPI)	+/-
Satisfied	62%	73%	-11%
Neither / nor	22%	13%	+9%
Dissatisfied	12%	12%	-

Table 1.6: Examples of mode effects - Satisfaction with measures taken to deal with disruptions after severe weather (Q20)

	2023 (online)	2019 (CAPI)	+/-
Satisfied	32%	54%	-22%
Neither / nor	40%	26%	+14%
Dissatisfied	18%	14%	-4%

There may also be some variation between 2023 and previous years due to differences in the fieldwork period. The CAPI survey was carried out in two waves (one wave between March and May and another between July and September) to minimise the potential impact of seasonal effects – the tendency for respondents to give different answers depending on the time of the year. However, in 2023, only one wave of the survey was carried out, in July / August.

Despite the differences in survey approach, it should be noted that, in general, the overall findings are broadly similar to and in line with the trends seen over previous waves of the survey.

2 Perceptions of trunk roads

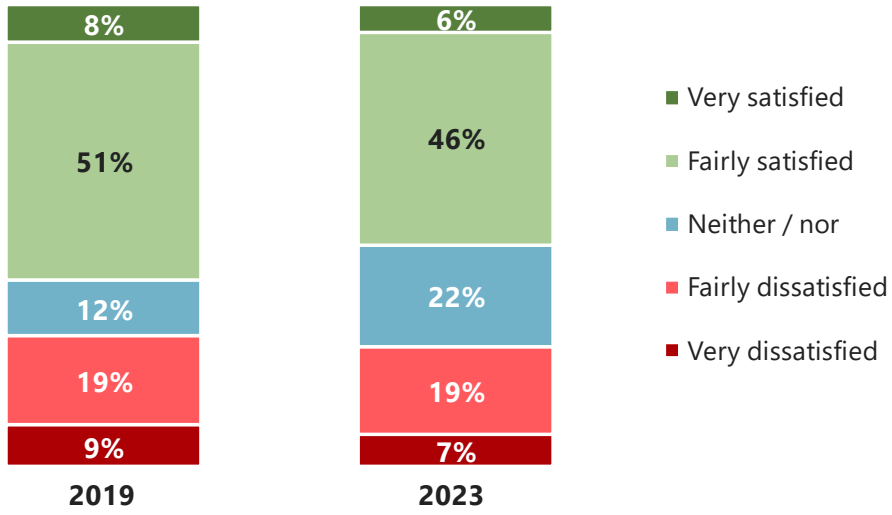
Trunk roads used most frequently and overall satisfaction

To provide context for their perceptions of trunk roads, respondents were asked which trunk roads they travelled on most frequently. The most common responses were the M8 (35%), A90 (19%), M74 (15%), A9 (13%) and M77 (12%).

Just over half of respondents (52%) said they were satisfied with the trunk roads they used most often, while a quarter (25%) were dissatisfied. There has been a slight decrease in satisfaction since 2019 (Figure 2.1). However, as noted above, this is most likely due to the change in mode, with a greater proportion selecting 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied'.

Figure 2.1: Overall satisfaction with trunk roads (2019 and 2023)

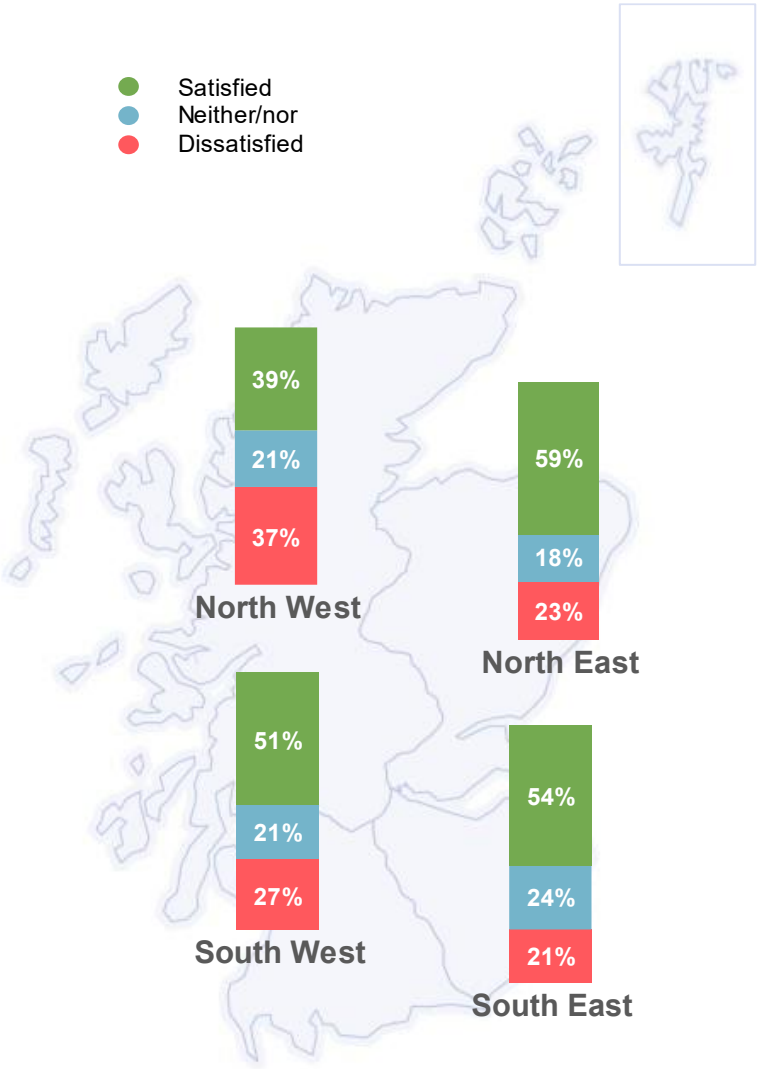
Q. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the trunk roads that you use most often?



Base: All who had used trunk roads in the past year (1,259)

Satisfaction was highest among respondents in the North East (59%, compared with 52% overall) and lowest among those in the North West (39%) – this is in line with the findings from 2019.

Figure 2.2: Overall satisfaction with trunk roads, by region



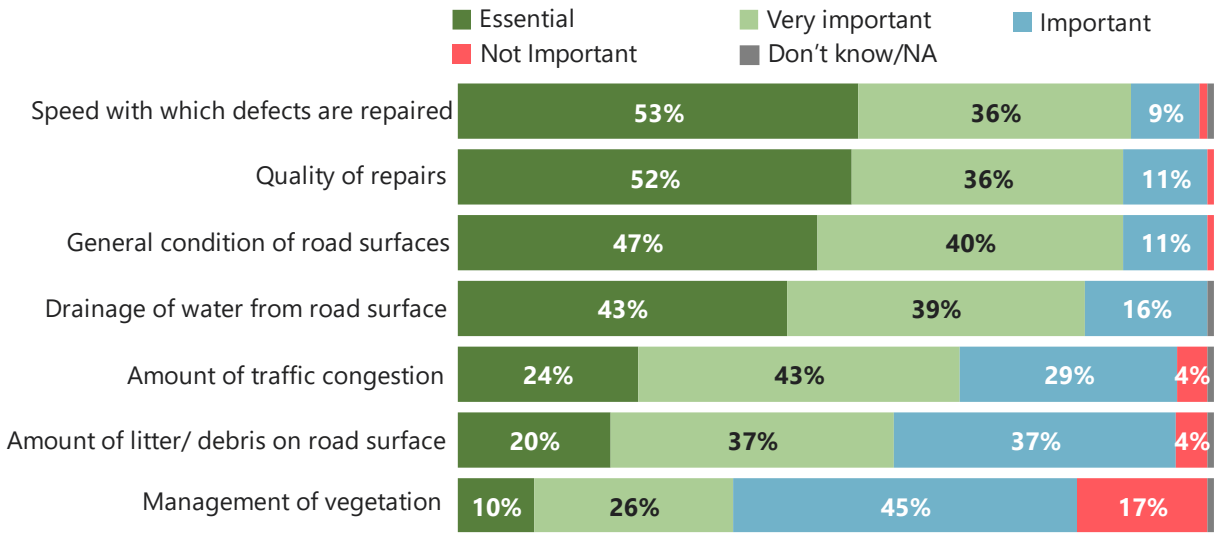
In line with previous years, dissatisfaction was lowest among younger respondents – those aged 18-24 were almost three times less likely than average to say they were dissatisfied with trunk roads (9%, compared with 25% overall).

Perceived importance of aspects of trunk road management and maintenance

Respondents were asked how important or otherwise they regarded various aspects of trunk road management and maintenance. Consistent with previous years, the four most important aspects (rated as either 'essential' or 'very important') were: the speed with which defects are repaired (89%); the quality of repairs (88%); the general condition of road surfaces (87%); and the drainage of water and flooding from surfaces (82%) (Figure 2.3).

Figure 2.3: Perceived importance of aspects of management and maintenance

Q. How important is the management and maintenance of each aspect to you?



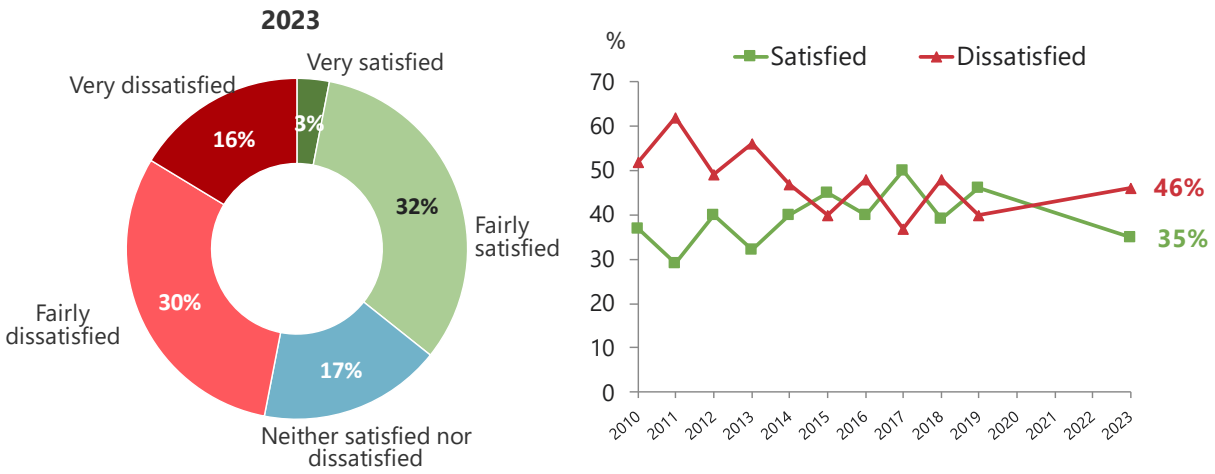
Base: All who had used trunk roads in the past year (1,259)

Satisfaction with general condition of trunk road surfaces

Almost half (46%) of respondents said they were dissatisfied with the general condition of trunk road surfaces, compared with 35% who said they were satisfied. As shown in Figure 2.4, there has been a decrease in the overall levels of satisfaction since 2019.

Figure 2.4: Satisfaction with the condition of trunk road surfaces

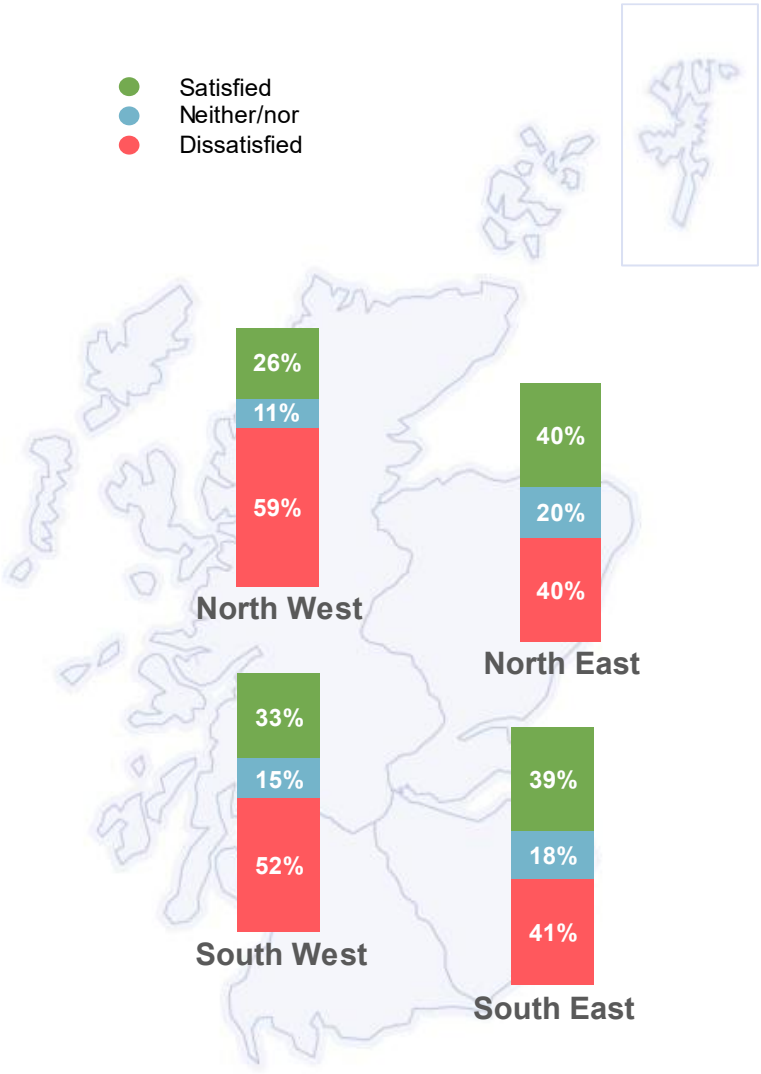
Q. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the general condition of trunk road surfaces?



Base: All who used trunk roads in the past year

Trunk road users in the North West and South West were most likely to be dissatisfied with the general condition of trunk road surfaces (59% and 52% respectively') (Figure 2.5).

Figure 2.5: Satisfaction with the condition of trunk road surfaces, by region



Older respondents, aged 55 and over, were also more likely to be dissatisfied with the condition of trunk roads (55%, compared with 41% of those aged under 55).

Users who were dissatisfied with the general condition of trunk road surfaces were asked to identify the roads they were most dissatisfied with. The most commonly identified roads were the M8 (17%), A9 (13%) and A90 (13%).

Almost all (97%) of those dissatisfied with the general condition of trunk roads surfaces said they ‘always’, ‘usually’, or ‘sometimes’ encountered defects they perceived to be unsafe, with potholes being the most commonly encountered defect (62%) (Table 2.1).

Table 2.1: Defects encountered on the trunk road network (% 'Always', 'Usually' or 'Sometimes' encountering each defect)

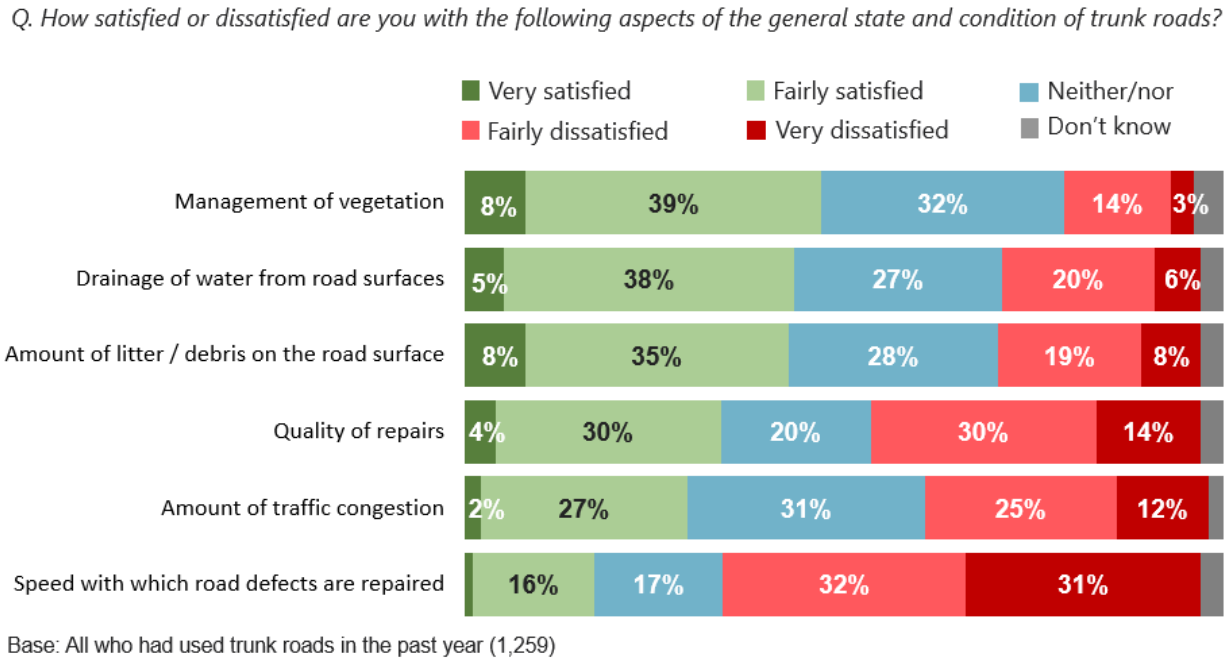
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2023
Potholes	77	75	76	72	71	71	64	73	69	62
Uneven/bumpy surfaces	8	8	7	9	9	10	12	10	12	14
Poor repairs	8	8	8	8	8	8	10	7	8	12
Slippery roads caused by ice/snow	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
Water on roads	1	1	2	2	3	2	3	2	3	2
Poor road markings	<0.5	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	2
Ironwork in need of repair	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	<0.5	2
Deterioration of road edge	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	1
Cracking	1	2	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	1
Poor skid resistance	<0.5	<0.5	1	<0.5	1	<0.5	1	<0.5	<0.5	1
Base: All who had encountered defects	*1,221*	*947*	*1,061*	*885*	*723*	*895*	*643*	*878*	*753*	*605*

Respondents who had experienced defects were asked which specific road they encountered these defects on. The most common responses were the M8 (18%), A90 (14%) and A9 (13%).

Satisfaction with other aspects of trunk road management and maintenance

In terms of the other aspects of trunk road management and maintenance, users were most satisfied with the management of vegetation on verges and central reserves (47%) and least satisfied with the speed with which road defects, such as potholes, are repaired (18%) (Figure 2.6).

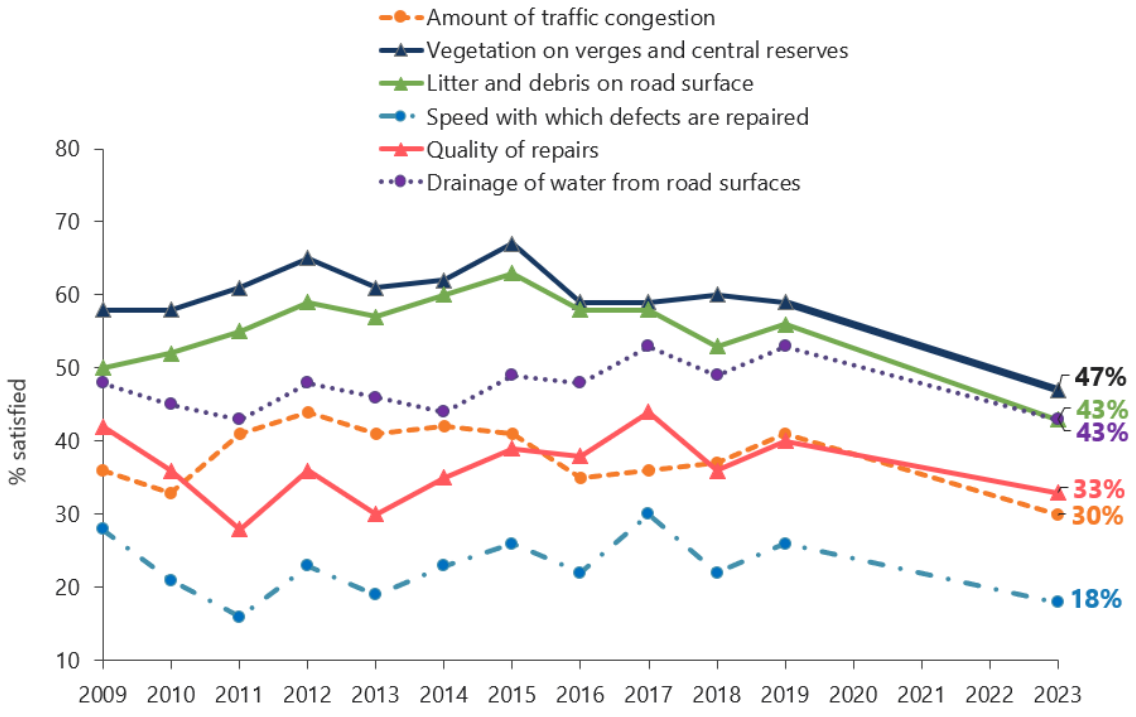
Figure 2.6: Satisfaction with other aspects of trunk road management and maintenance



Base: All who had used trunk roads in the past year (1,259)

As shown in Figure 2.7, while there has been a decrease in satisfaction with each aspect of trunk road management and maintenance since 2019, the relative importance of the different aspects has remained largely the same. For example, the speed with which defects are repaired has consistently been ranked the lowest in terms of satisfaction since 2009.

Figure 2.7: Trends in satisfaction with aspects of trunk road condition and maintenance

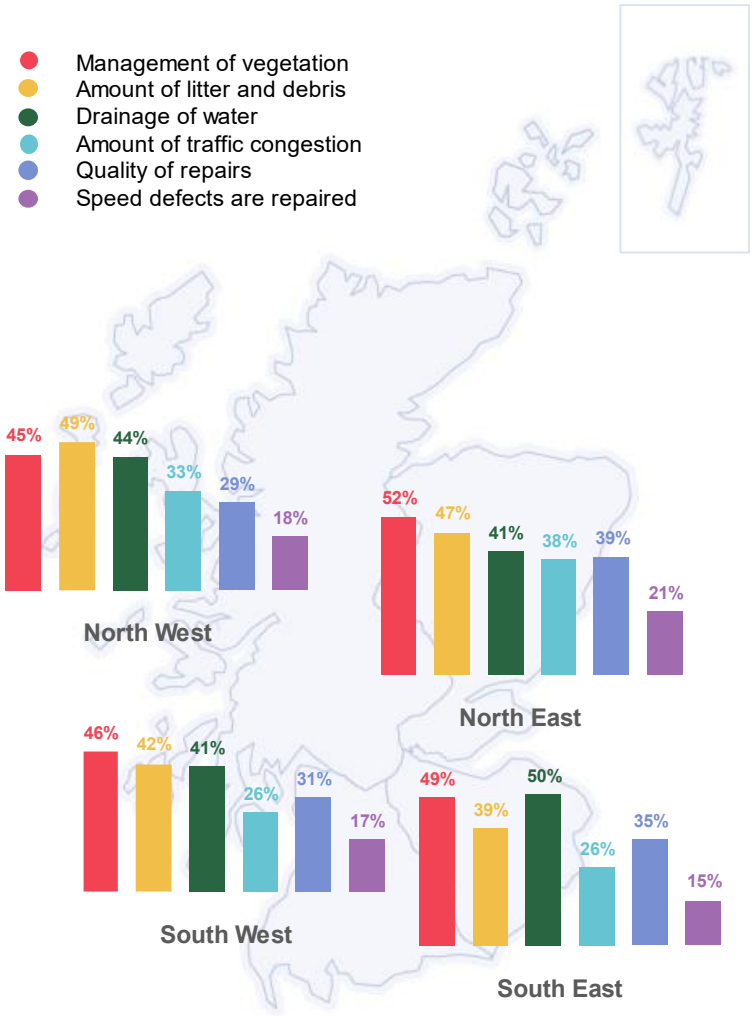


Base: All who used trunk roads in the past year (1,259)

Levels of satisfaction with the various aspects of management and maintenance across each region were largely consistent (Figure 2.8), although there was some variation – users in the South East were more likely than average to be satisfied with the drainage of water and flooding from road surfaces (50%,

compared with 43% overall), and users in the North East were more likely to be satisfied with the amount of traffic congestion (38%, compared with 30%).

Figure 2.8: Satisfaction with aspects of trunk road management and maintenance, by region

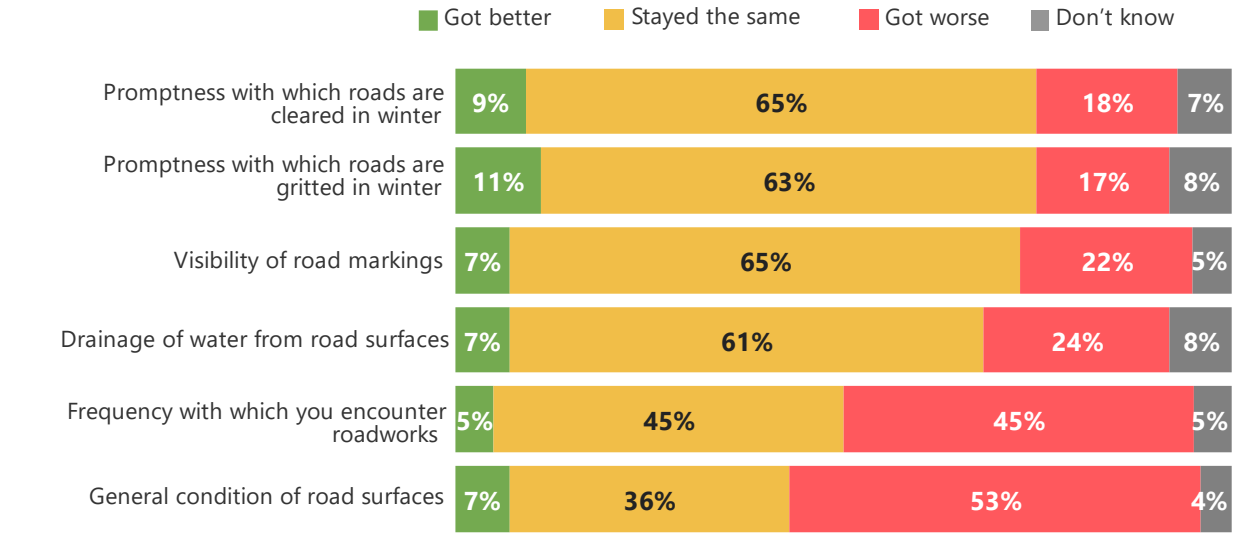


Perceived changes in the trunk road network

Respondents were asked whether they felt particular aspects of service provision on the trunk road network had ‘got better’, ‘got worse’ or ‘stayed the same’ over the past two years. Around half felt that the general condition of trunk roads (53%) and the frequency of road works (45%) had got worse. In terms of the other aspects, the majority (between 61% and 65%) felt that there had been no change (Figure 2.9). Only a small number of respondents (between 5% and 11%) thought that any of the aspects had improved.

Figure 2.9: Changes in aspects of the trunk road network over the past two years

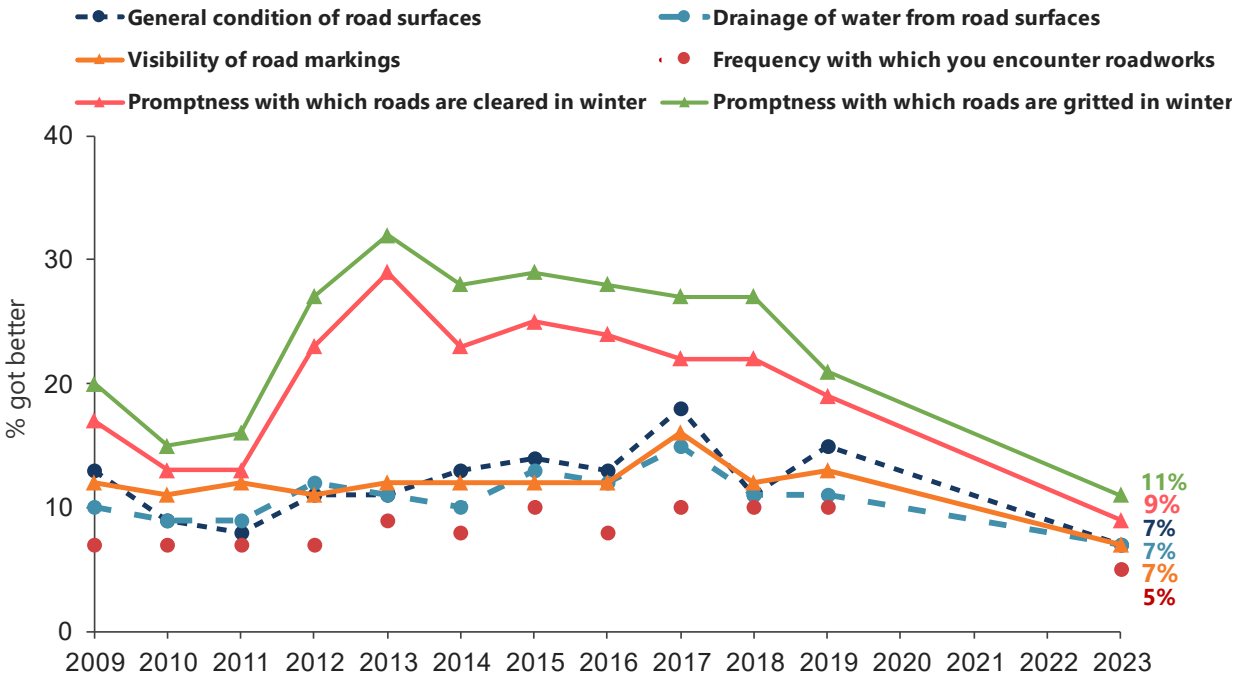
Q. Do you think that each of the following aspects of trunk roads have got better, worse, or stayed the same over the past two years?



Base: All who had used trunk roads in the past year (1,259)

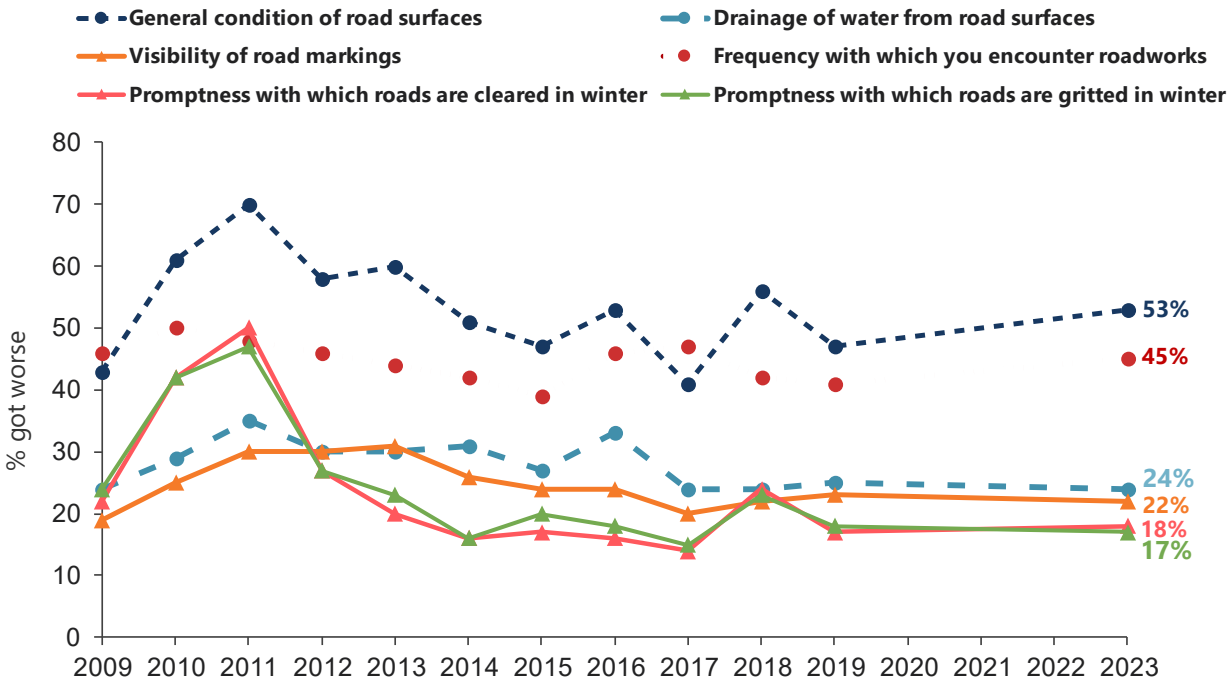
Compared with 2019, fewer respondents reported improvements to any of the different aspects of service provision while the proportions saying they had got worse was broadly the same. However, there has been a slight increase in the number of people who believe that the general condition of road surfaces (47% in 2019, to 53% in 2023) and the frequency of road works (41%, to 45%) has worsened (Figures 2.10 and 2.11).

Figure 2.10: Percentage reporting each aspect had 'got better' over the past two years, 2009 – 2023



Base: All who used trunk roads in the past year

Figure 2.11: Percentage reporting each aspect had 'got worse' over the past two years, 2009 – 2023



Base: All who used trunk roads in the past year (1,259)

Respondents in the South West were more likely than average to say that the general condition of roads had got worse over the past two years (61%, compared with 53% overall) and that the frequency of road works had increased (52%, compared with 45%). Those in the North West were more likely to mention the drainage of water from road surfaces (31%, compared with 24%).

Meanwhile, those in the North were more likely than those in the South to say that winter maintenance had deteriorated over the past two years – 27% in the North East and 24% in the North West said that the promptness with which roads are cleared in winter had got worse (compared with 14% of those in the South combined). Similarly, 23% in both the North East and North West reported a decline in the promptness of road gritting in winter (compared with 14% in the South).

Addressing trunk road defects

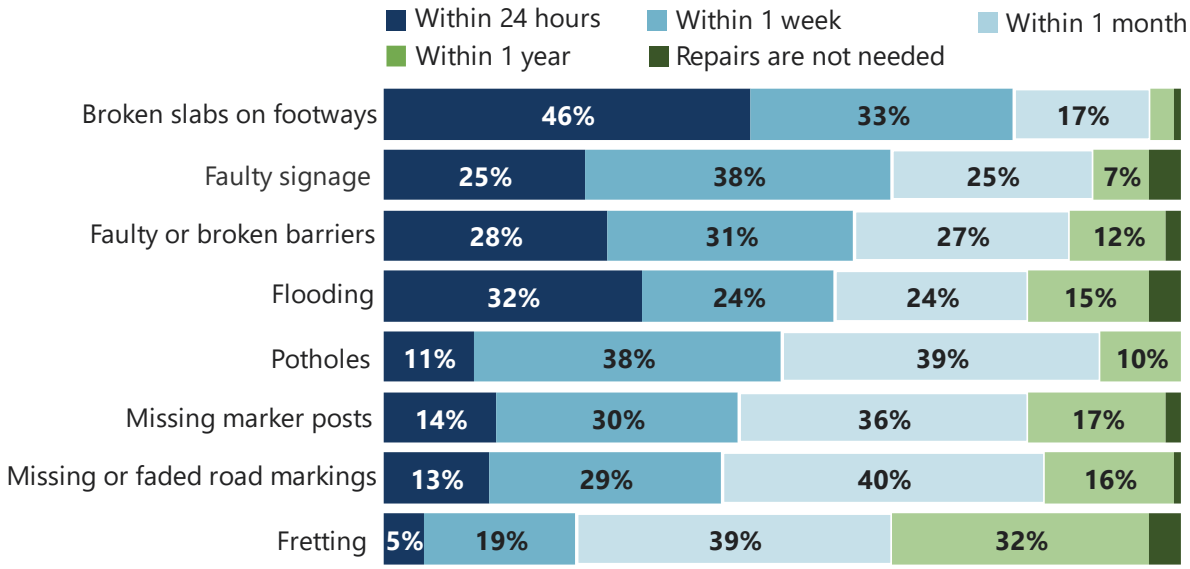
Respondents were shown images of eight different types of road defect (Figure 2.12) and asked how quickly they felt it should be repaired.

Figure 2.12: Images of defects shown to respondents

A majority of respondents said that each of the defects should be addressed within a month (Figure 2.13). Broken slabs, faulty signage, broken barriers and flooding were seen as the most important of these to repair promptly – 79%, 63%, 59% and 56% respectively thought that these should be repaired within a week.

Figure 2.13: Timeframes within which respondents felt various defects should be addressed

Q. How quickly do you feel this defect should be addressed?



Base: All who had used trunk roads in the past year (1,259)

Respondents in the South West were more likely than average to say that faulty signage (31%, compared with 25% overall) and broken barriers (34%, compared with 28%) should be addressed within 24 hours (Table 2.2).

Table 2.2: Speed with which defects should be addressed, by region (% saying “within 24 hours”)

	All	North West	North East	South West	South East
Broken slabs on footways	46	49	40	50	42
Flooding	32	36	31	34	30
Faulty or broken barriers	28	23	22	34	30
Faulty signage	25	26	18	31	26
Missing marker posts	14	17	10	13	14
Missing or faded road markings	13	14	12	12	13
Potholes	11	15	10	12	10
Fretting	5	5	5	5	4
Base: All who had used trunk roads at some point in the last year	*1,259*	*126*	*333*	*404*	*362*

In line with previous waves, older respondents were more likely than average to say that defects should be repaired promptly. Those aged over 65 were more likely to say that all of the defects, with the exception of broken barriers and missing marker posts, should be repaired within, at most, a week.

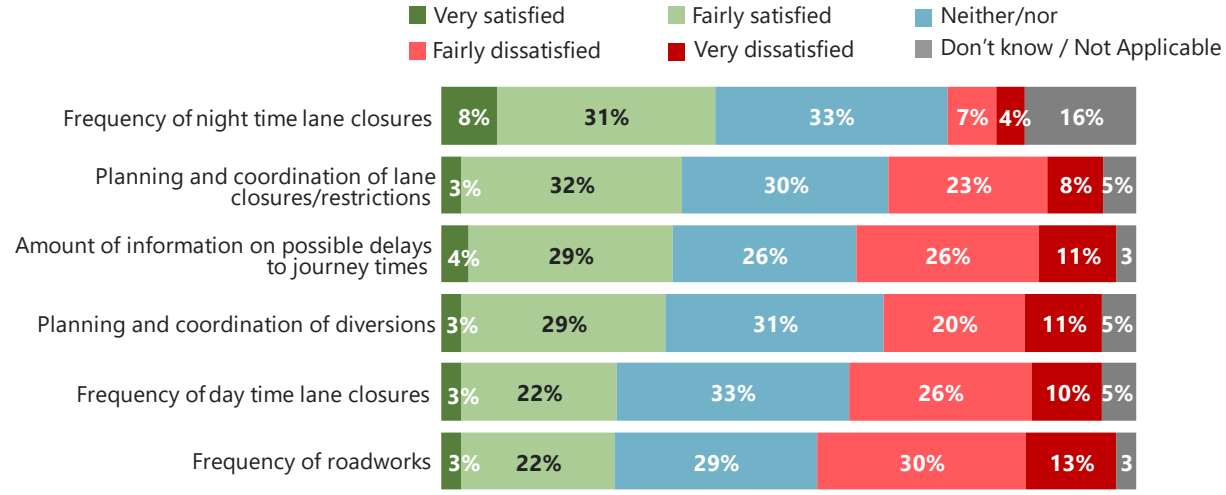
3 Road works and winter maintenance

Satisfaction with road works

Levels of satisfaction with different aspects of road works varied, with respondents being most positive about the frequency of night time lane closures (40% were satisfied) (Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1: Satisfaction with different aspects of road works and trunk road maintenance

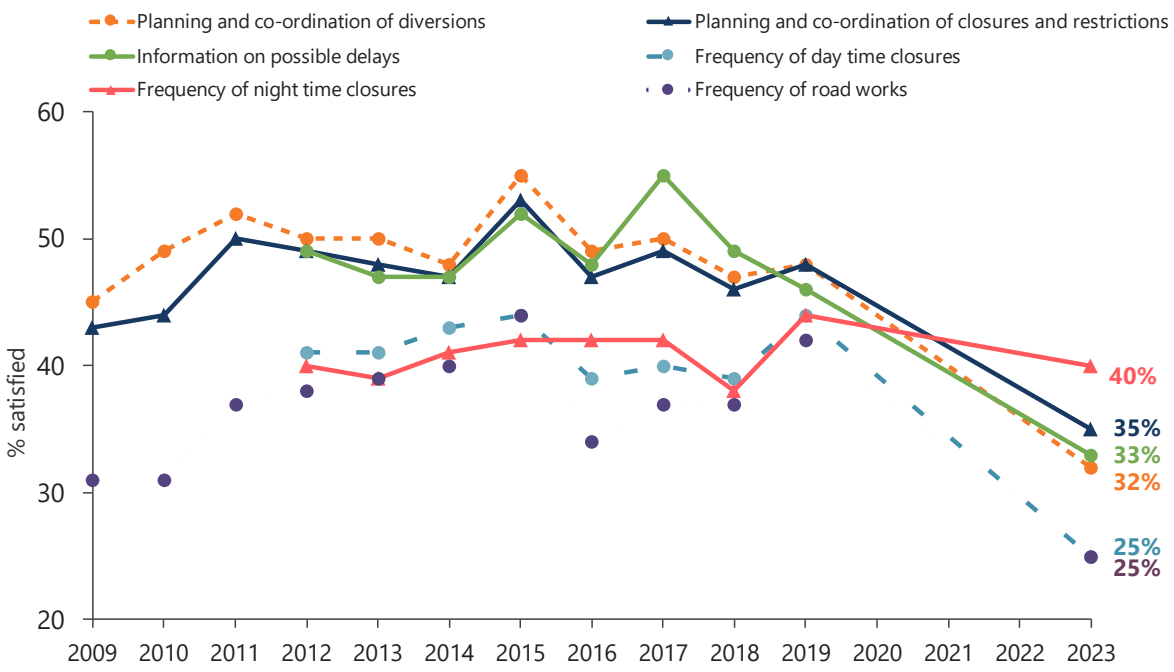
Q. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following aspects of road works and the maintenance of trunk roads?



Base: All who had used trunk roads in the past year (1,259)

Across all aspects of road works, there has been a decrease in satisfaction between 2019 and 2023. Frequency of road works and frequency of day time lane closures have consistently recorded the lowest levels of satisfaction (both 44% in 2019 and 25% in 2023) (Figure 3.2).

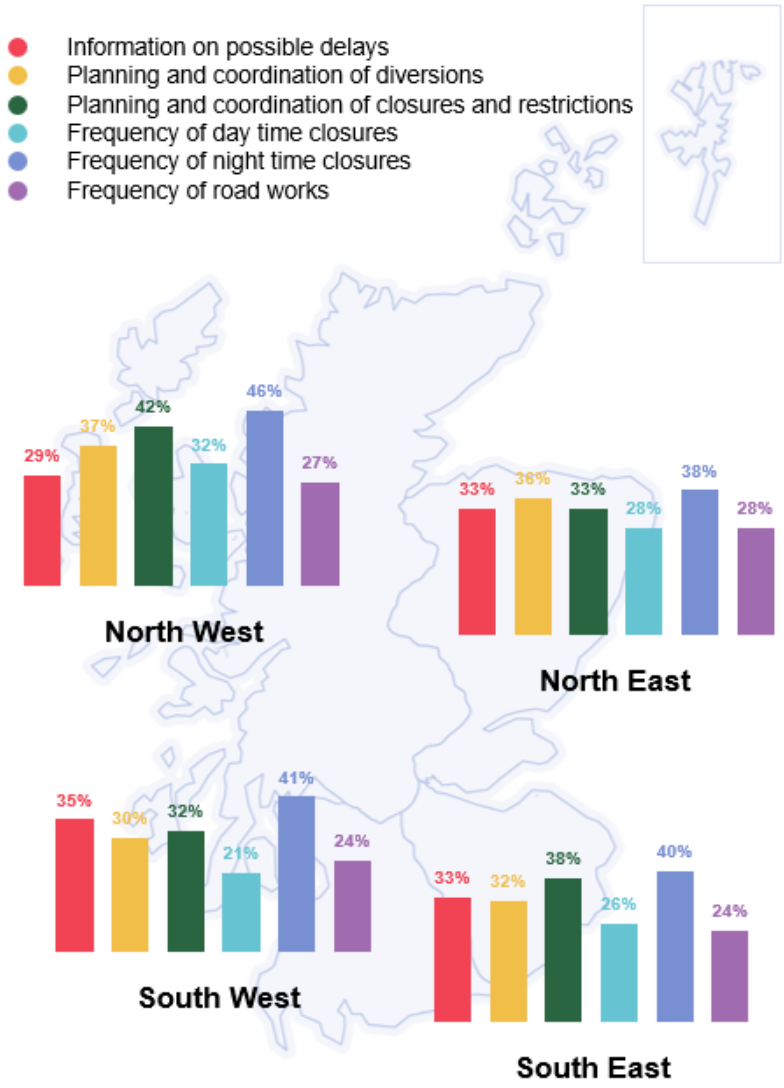
Figure 3.2: Trends in satisfaction with aspects of road works



Base: All who used trunk roads in the past year (1,259)

There was little regional variation in satisfaction with road works. However, respondents in the South West were more likely to be dissatisfied with day time lane closures than average (42%, compared with 37% overall) (Figure 3.3).

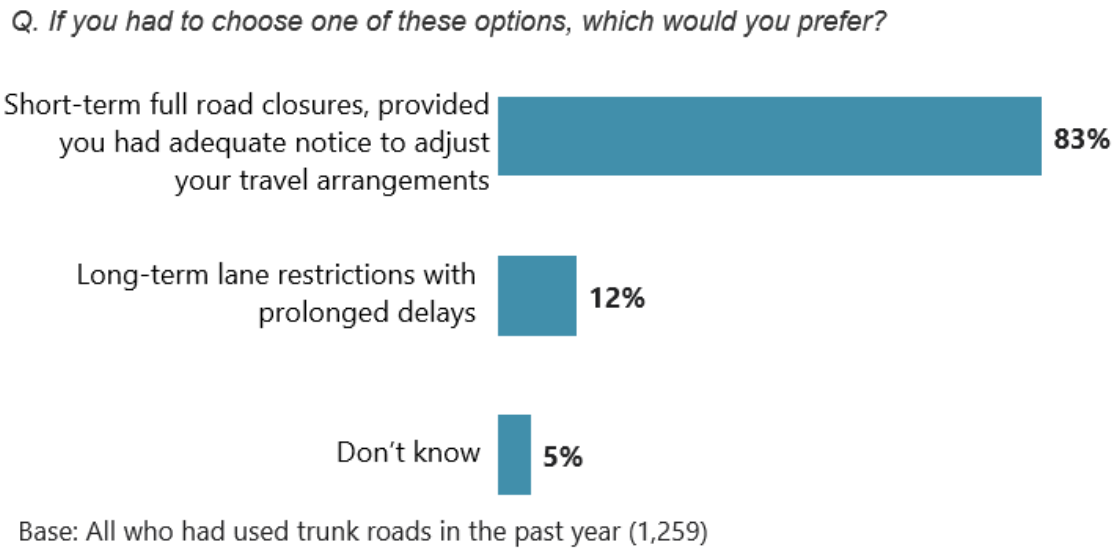
Figure 3.3: Satisfaction with aspects of roadworks, by region



Transport Scotland's approach to road works

Respondents were asked to choose between two approaches to road closures: short-term full road closures with adequate notice to adjust travel arrangements and long-term lane closures with delays. In line with previous years, most respondents (83%) said they preferred short term full road closures, though the proportion stating this has increased by 8% since 2019 (Figure 3.4).

Figure 3.4: Preferred approach to road works

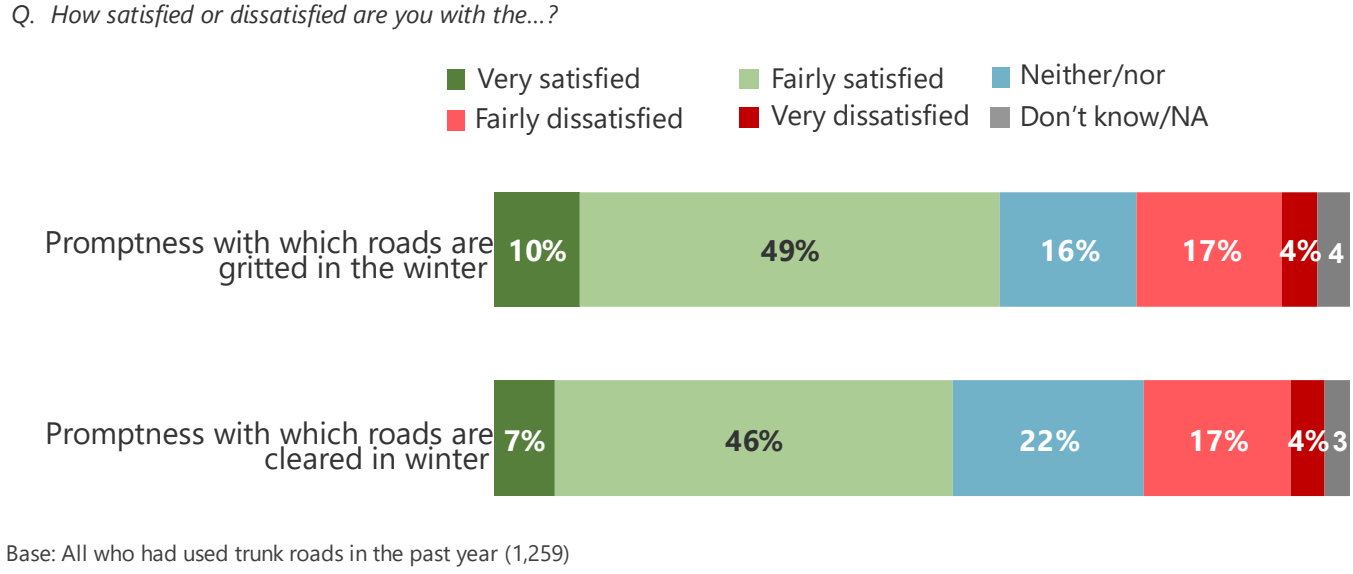


Respondents who expressed dissatisfaction with the frequency of roadworks were asked with which roads they were most dissatisfied. The three most common responses were the M8 (28%), A90 (15%) and A720 (12%).

Winter maintenance

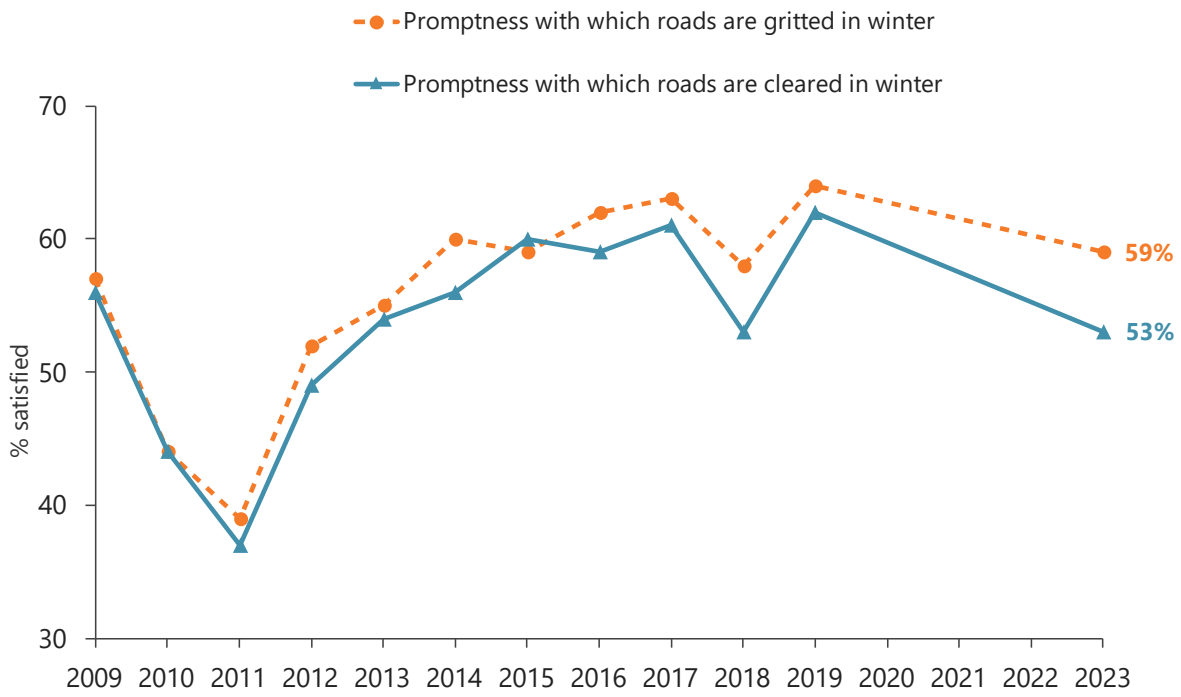
Respondents were fairly positive about winter maintenance, with 59% being satisfied with the promptness with which roads are gritted and 53% with the promptness with which they are cleared (Figure 3.5).

Figure 3.5: Views on winter maintenance



Overall satisfaction with winter maintenance was lower than in 2019. However, 2019 had the highest levels of satisfaction since the beginning of the survey in 2009 (Figure 3.6).

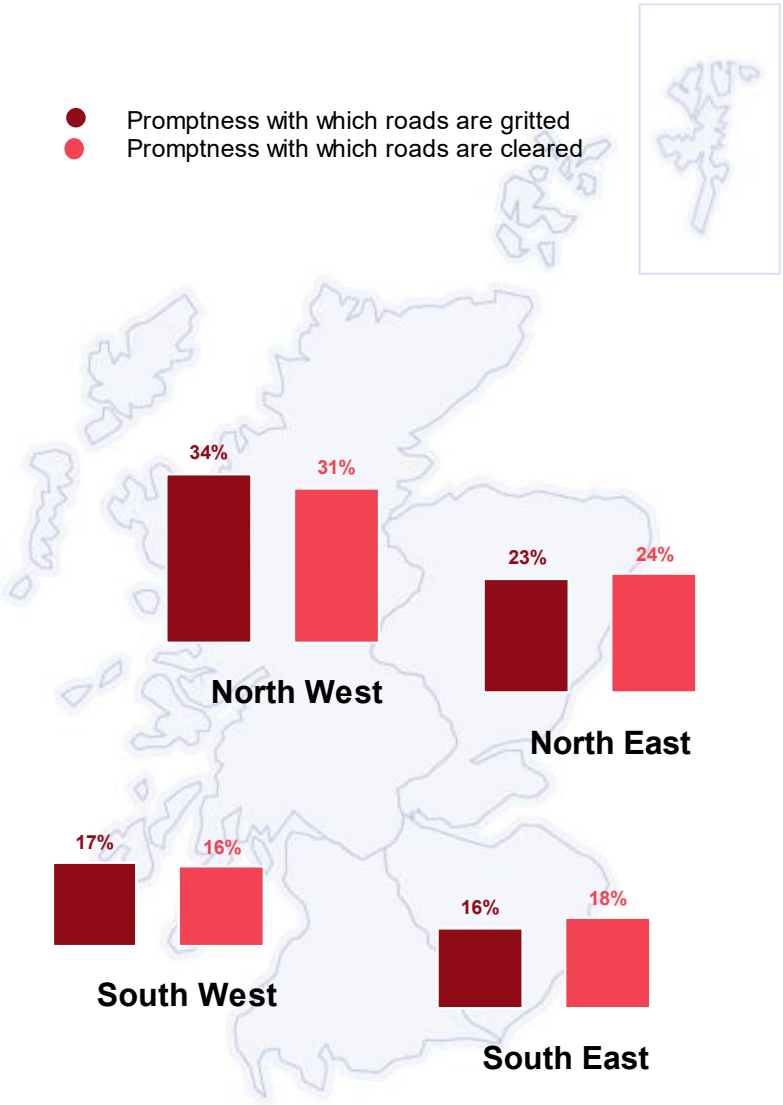
Figure 3.6: Trends in views on winter maintenance



Base: All who used trunk roads in the past year (1,259)

Users in the North West were more likely than average to be dissatisfied with both aspects of winter maintenance – 34% were dissatisfied with the promptness roads are gritted (compared to 21% overall) and 31% with the promptness roads are cleared (compared to 21%) (Figure 3.7).

Figure 3.7: Dissatisfaction with the promptness of winter maintenance, by region



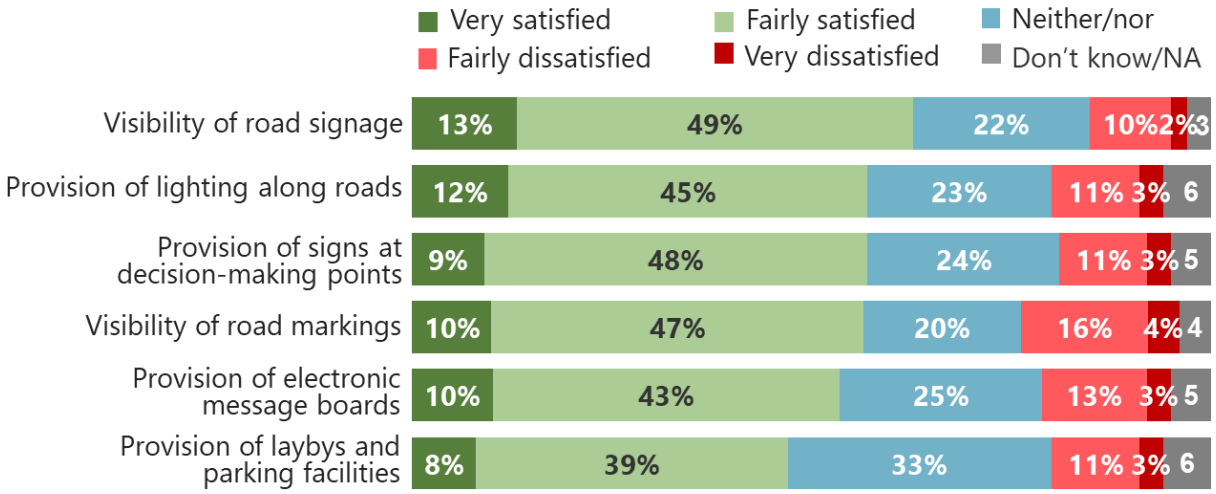
4 Lighting, markings, signage, laybys and parking facilities

Satisfaction with lighting, markings, signage, laybys and parking facilities

Respondents were largely positive about lighting, markings, signage, laybys and parking (Figure 4.1). Satisfaction was highest with the visibility of road signage (62%) and lowest with the provision of laybys and parking facilities (47%).

Figure 4.1: Satisfaction with lighting, markings, signage, laybys and parking facilities

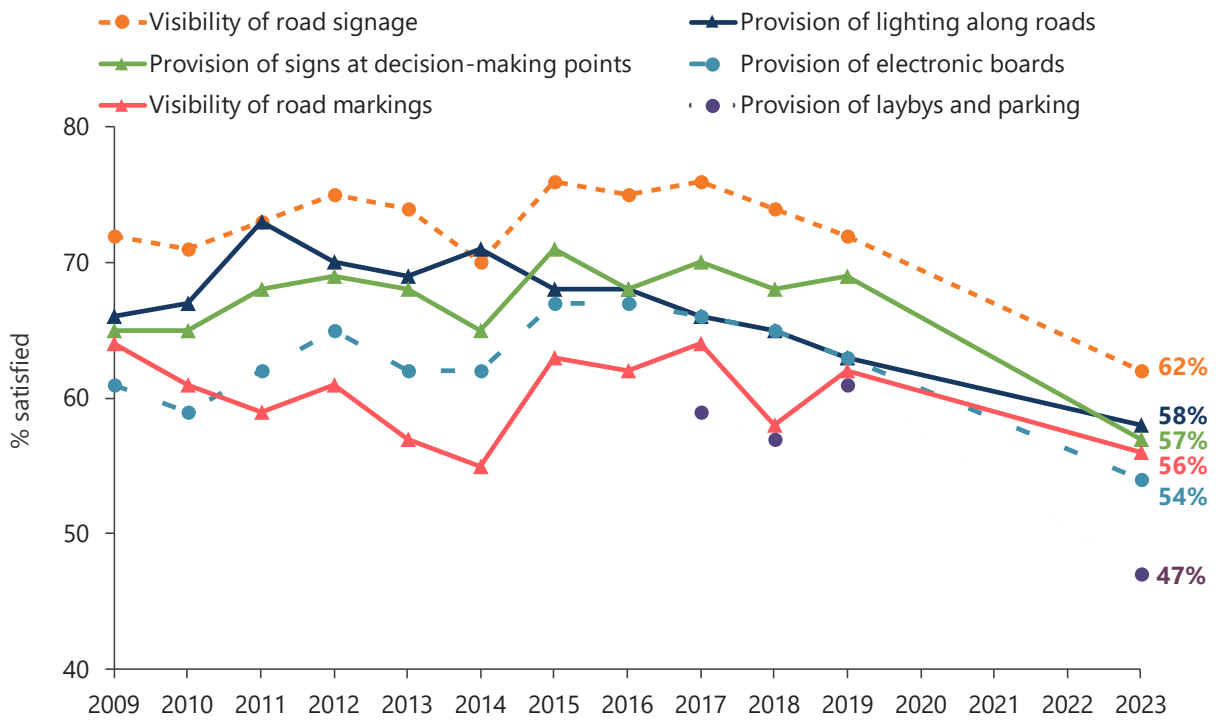
Q. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following aspects of trunk roads?



Base: All who had used trunk roads in the past year (1,259)

Satisfaction with lighting, markings and signage is lower than previous years. Despite this, the relative level of satisfaction for each aspect has remained consistent. For example, satisfaction with the provision of laybys and parking has ranked consistently low since 2017 (Figure 4.2).

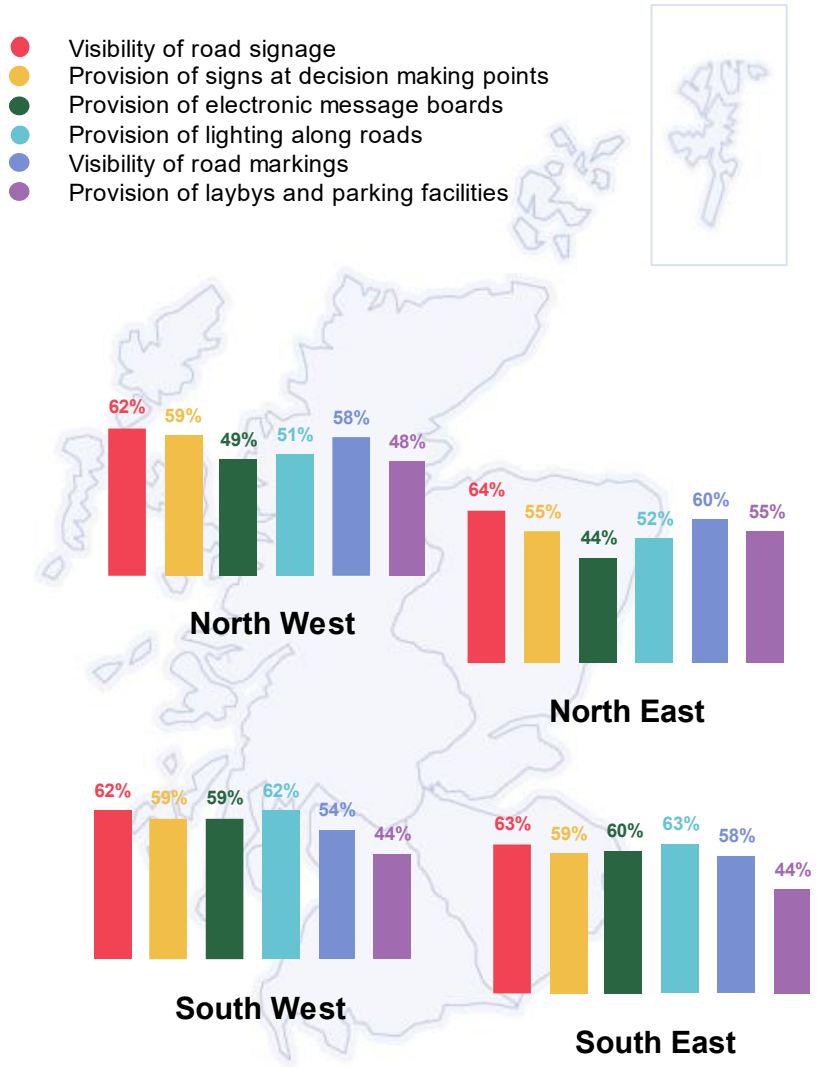
Figure 4.2: Trends in satisfaction with lighting, markings and signage



Base: All who used trunk roads in the past year (1,259)

Respondents in the South East and South West were more likely to report satisfaction with the provision of electronic message boards than average (60% and 59% respectively, compared with 54% overall). Those in the North East were more likely to be satisfied with laybys and parking facilities than average (55%, compared with 47% overall) (Figure 4.3).

Figure 4.3: Satisfaction with lighting, markings, signage, laybys and parking facilities, by region



Those aged 65 and over were the most likely to be dissatisfied with the visibility of road markings (26%, compared with 20% overall), road signage (16%, compared with 12% overall) and the provision of laybys and parking facilities serving the trunk roads (17%, compared with 14% overall).

Respondents who expressed dissatisfaction with the visibility of road markings were asked with which road they were most dissatisfied. The most common responses were M8 (20%), A9 (12%), A90 and A720 (both 11%).

5 Cycle lanes and footways

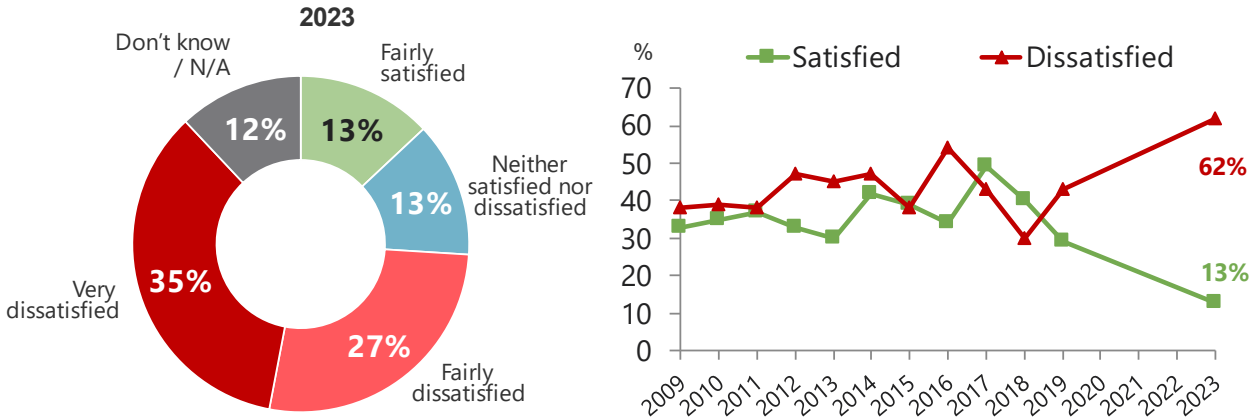
This section covers the usage of cycle lanes and footways that are alongside trunk roads. Because the base sizes are relatively small, (60 cycle lane users and 91 footway users), the data presented here cannot be said to be representative of the wider population of cycle lane and footway users and should be interpreted with caution.

Satisfaction with cycle lanes

Cycle lane users were largely dissatisfied with the general condition of cycle lane surfaces (62%), with just 13% being satisfied. Overall satisfaction was lower than in 2019 (13%, compared with 29%) (Figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1: Satisfaction with the general condition of cycle lane surfaces

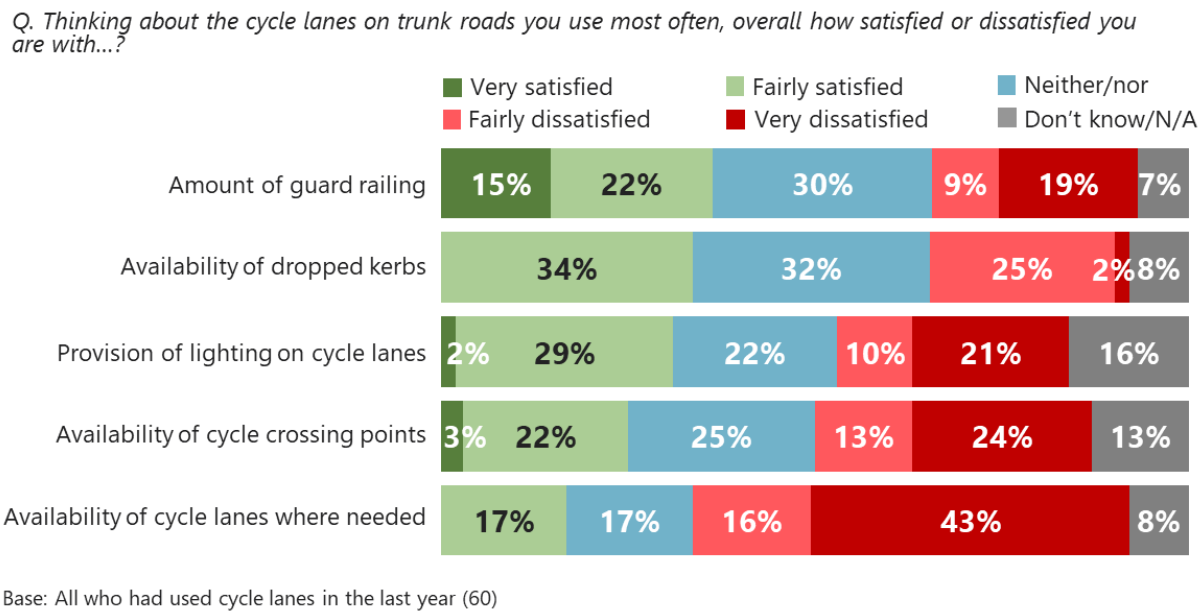
Q. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the general condition of cycle lane surfaces?



Base: All who had used a cycle lane on trunk roads in the last year (60)

Of all aspects of cycle lanes, users were most satisfied with the amount of guard railing (37%) and least satisfied with the availability of cycle lanes (17%) (Figure 5.2).

Figure 5.2: Satisfaction with features of cycle lanes

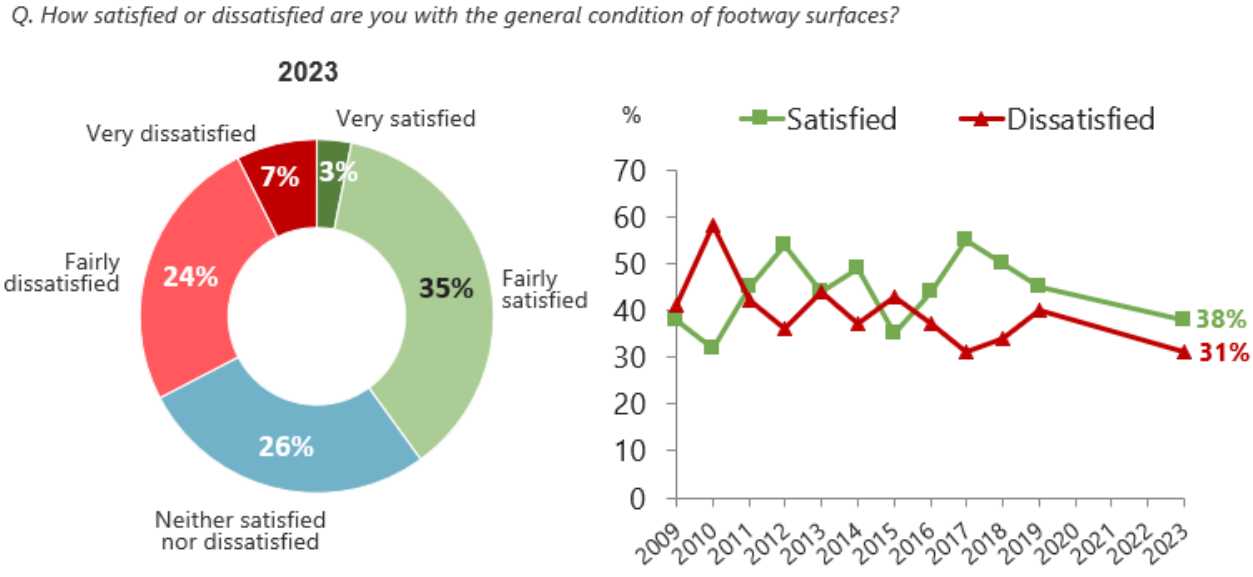


Base: All who had used cycle lanes in the last year (60)

Satisfaction with footways

Among those who had used footways by trunk roads in the previous 12 months or so, 38% were satisfied with the general condition of footway surfaces, while 31% were dissatisfied. (Note that due to a scripting error, 11 users were not asked the questions about satisfaction with footways.) These findings are broadly in line with results from previous years (Figure 5.3).

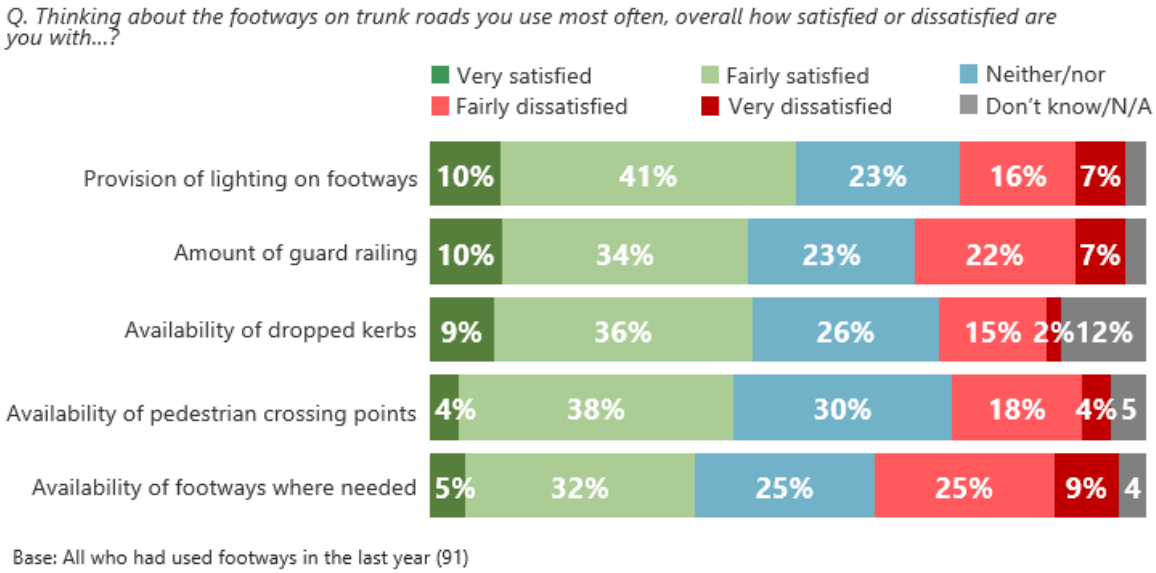
Figure 5.3: Satisfaction with the general condition of footway surfaces



Base: All who had used a footway on trunk roads in the last year (91)

Respondents were generally positive about the features of footways they had used along trunk roads, with lighting on footways having the highest satisfaction rating (51%) (Figure 5.4).

Figure 5.4: Satisfaction with features of footways



Base: All who had used footways in the last year (91)

6 Improving the trunk road network

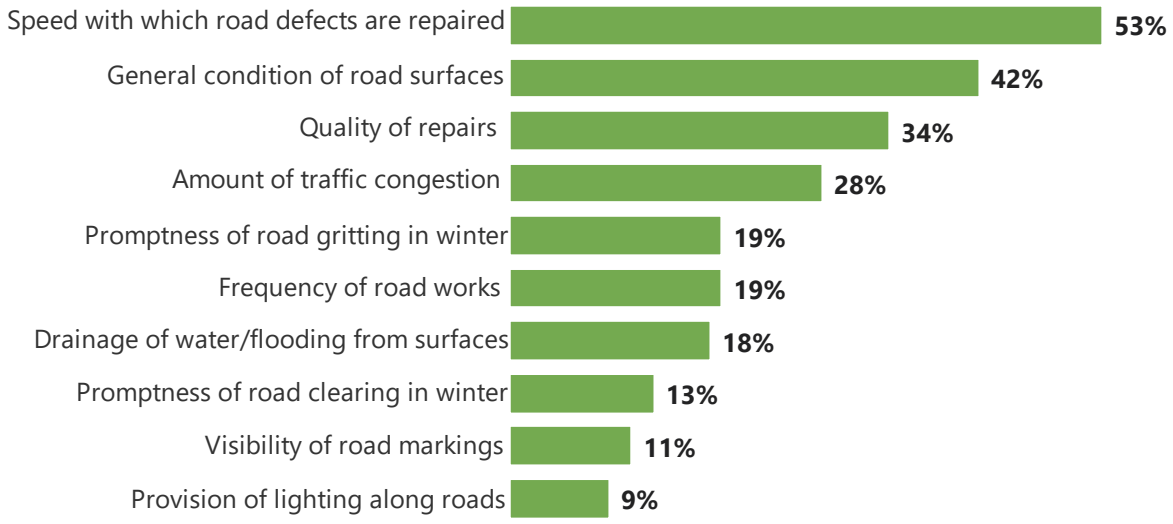
Future improvements to the trunk road network

Respondents were asked to select up to three aspects of road works that they would most like to see improved. As shown in Figure 6.1, just over half of respondents (53%) selected the speed with which road defects and potholes are repaired, with around two in five (42%) selecting the general condition of road surfaces. This is a slight difference to 2019, when condition of road surfaces was highest ranked. The quality of repairs was also regarded as important (34% would like to see it improved) but this has declined since 2019 when nearly half (46%) prioritised it.

(Note that the wording of the question on priorities for improvement was changed in 2023 in response to the change of mode. Previously, respondents were asked to select 'two or three' from the list, whereas in the online survey in 2019, respondents were instructed to select 'up to three'. This, and the change in mode, may account for the change in percentage values between years.)

Figure 6.1: Priorities for improving the trunk road network

Q. Thinking about the trunk roads you use most often, which of these would you most like to see improved?



Base: All who used trunk roads in the past year (1,259)

Respondents in the South West were more likely than average to state the speed of repairs to road defects and potholes as a priority for improvement (60%, compared with 53% overall) while road users in the South East were more likely to prioritise the quality of repairs (39%, compared with 34% overall). Respondents in the North East were less likely to select the amount of traffic congestion as an area for improvement (23%, compared with 28% overall).

Men were more likely than women to prioritise improvements in the speed at which road defects are fixed (57% compared with 49%), as were those aged over 55 (62%, compared to 53% overall). Younger respondents (aged 18–24) were more likely to prioritise improving the amount of traffic congestion (46%, compared with 28% overall).

Priorities for development

The priorities for improvement outlined above in Figure 6.1 were reinforced by analysis of the relationship between satisfaction with various aspects of trunk road management and maintenance, and the relative perceived importance of each (see Appendix B).

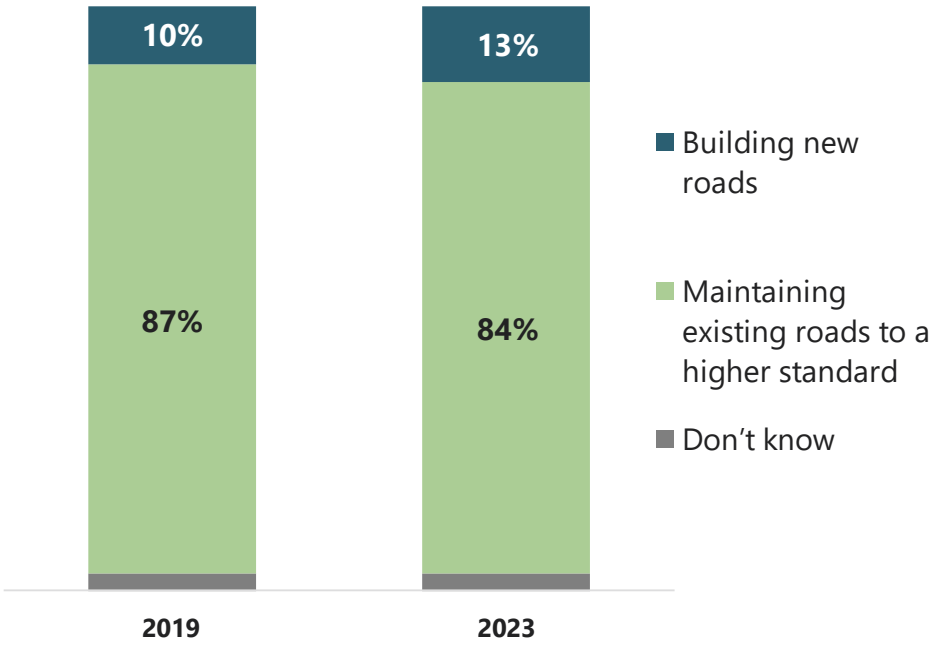
In line with previous years, the key priorities for development emerged as: the speed of repairs, quality of repairs, and general condition of surfaces.

Priorities for future investment by Transport Scotland

Respondents were asked whether Transport Scotland should prioritise: a) investment in the building of new roads or; b) the maintenance of existing roads to a higher standard. As in 2019, respondents were overwhelmingly in favour of maintaining existing roads to a higher standard, with more than 8 in 10 (84%) choosing option b) (Figure 6.2).

Figure 6.2: Priorities for future investment by Transport Scotland

Q. Which of these options do you think Transport Scotland should prioritise?

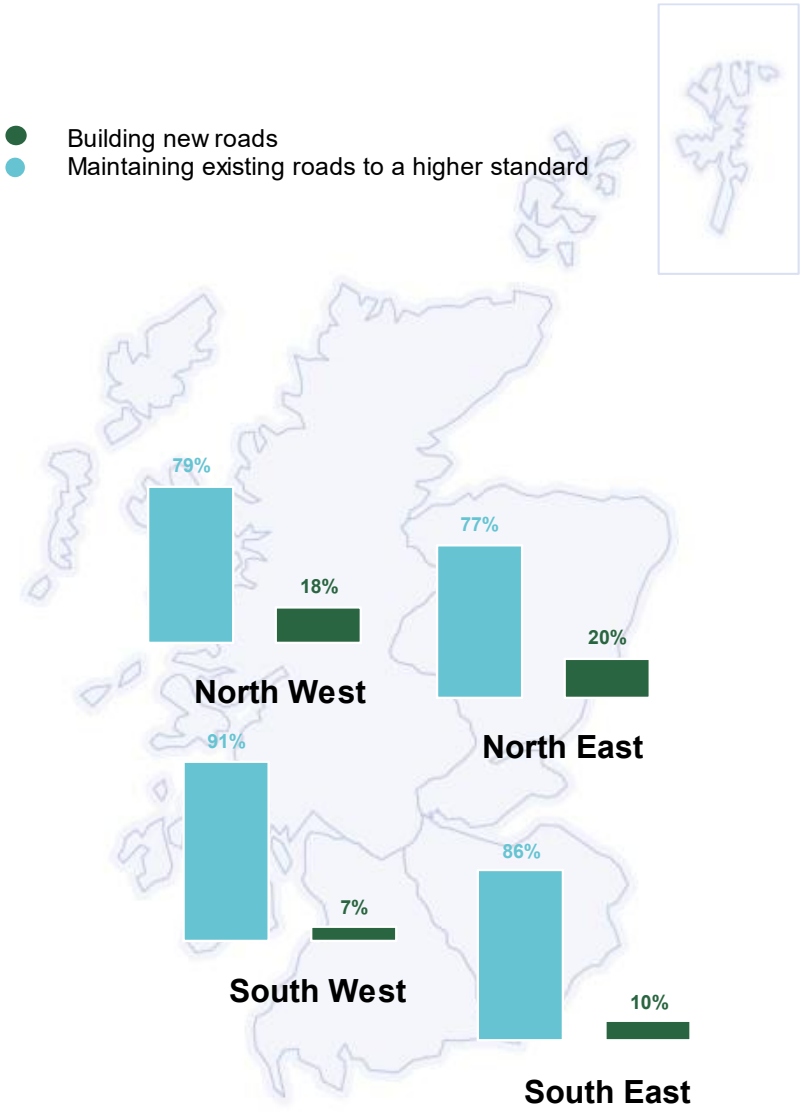


Base: All who had used trunk roads in the past year (1,259)

Respondents in the South West (91%), over 55s (89%) and women (87%), were all even more likely to choose this option.

In terms of regional differences, respondents in the North East were the most likely to prioritise building new roads (20%, compared with 13% overall) while those in the South West were more likely to want to maintain existing roads to a higher standard (91%, compared with 84% overall) (Figure 6.3).

Figure 6.3: Priorities for future investment by Transport Scotland, by region



7 Disruption due to severe weather

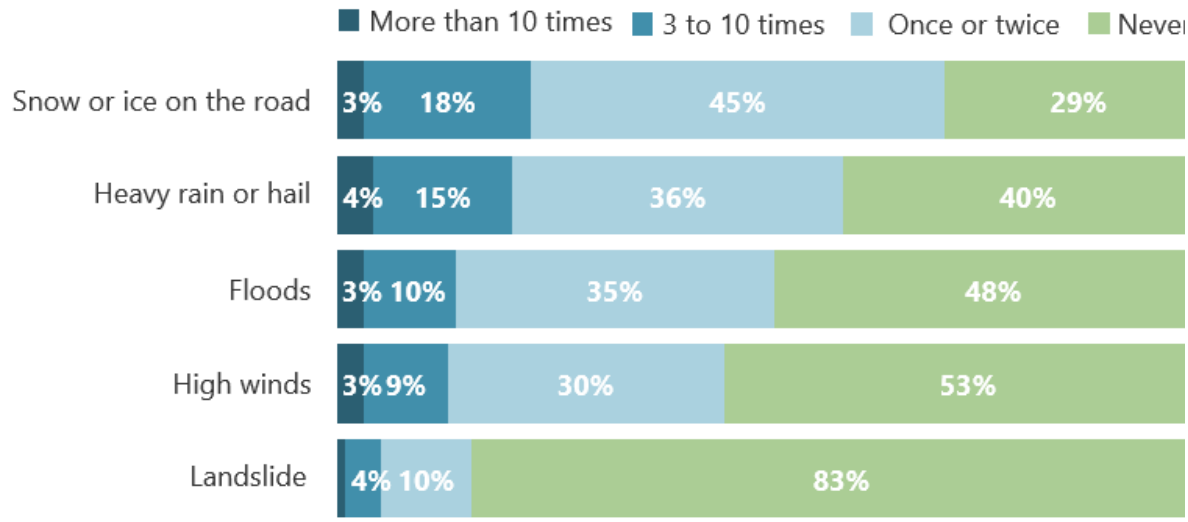
Experience of severe weather disruption

Four in five respondents (81%) said that, in the past 12 months or so, at least one of their journeys had been disrupted by severe weather.

As in 2019, disruption due to snow or ice was the most frequently encountered (66%), with landslides the least (14%). Respondents were more likely to report having a journey disrupted at least once by all five severe weather types listed when compared to 2019 (Figure 7.1).

Figure 7.1: Experience of severe weather disruption

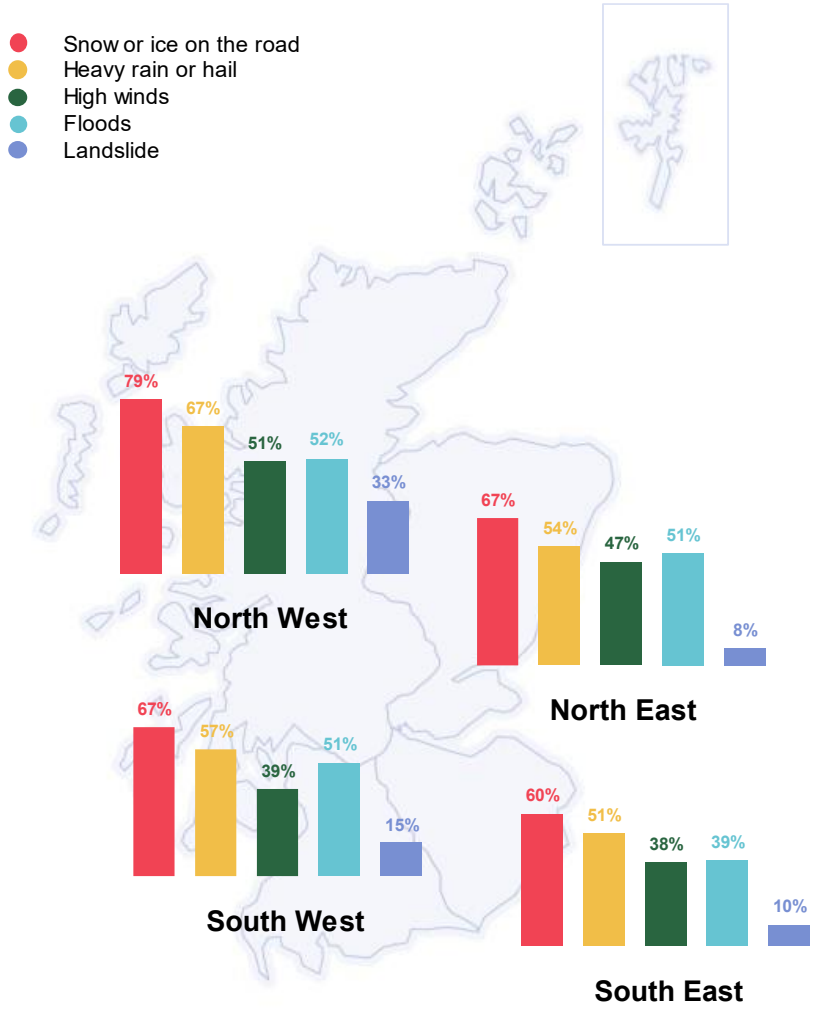
Q: In the last 12 months or so, how often would you say that journeys that you make on trunk roads have been disrupted by the following... ?



Base: All respondents who used trunk roads in the last year (1,259)

Respondents in the North West were much more likely to have experienced disruption from landslides (33%, compared with 14% overall), from snow and ice (79%, compared with 66% overall) and from heavy rain and hail (67%, compared with 56% overall). Respondents in the South East were the least likely to have experienced disruption due to floods (39%, compared with 48% overall). Respondents in the North East and South East were less likely to have experienced disruption due to landslides (8% and 10% respectively, compared with 14% overall) (Figure 7.2).

Figure 7.2: Experience of severe weather disruption, by region

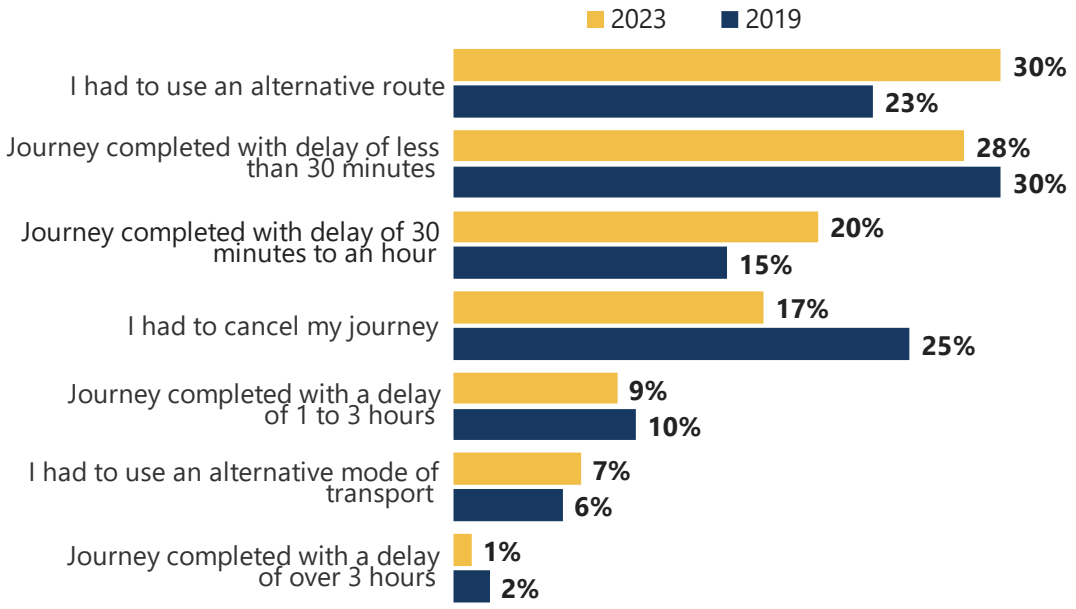


Respondents who had experienced disruption due to floods were asked which specific roads were affected. The A90 and M8 were the most common occurrences (15% and 12% respectively).

Of those who experienced a disruption due to severe weather, 58% experienced a delay to a journey that they were eventually able to make. Seventeen per cent had to cancel a journey, a decrease from 25% in 2019 (Figure 7.3).

Figure 7.3: Impact of severe weather disruption on journeys

Q. Thinking back to the last time your journey was disrupted as a result of severe weather conditions, in which of these ways were you affected?



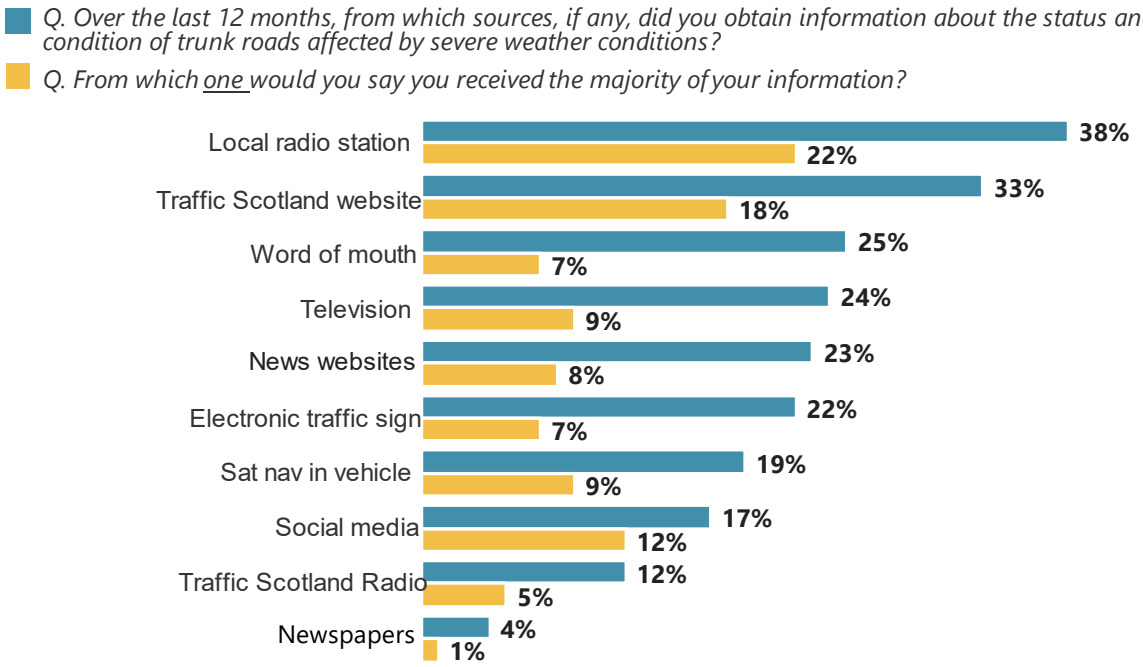
Base: All who had experienced disruption to at least one journey in the past year as a result of severe weather (1,029)

Sources of information about conditions before, during and after severe weather

The most common sources of information on the condition of trunk roads affected by severe weather were local radio (38%), the Traffic Scotland website (33%), television (24%) and news websites (23%). When pressed for one source used for the majority of information, around one in five opted for each of local radio (22%) and the Traffic Scotland website (18%).

The use of online sources had increased since 2019 – the Traffic Scotland website (33%, compared with 18% in 2019) and news websites (23%, compared with 12% in 2019) (Figure 7.4).

Figure 7.4: Sources of information on the status and condition of trunk roads during severe weather



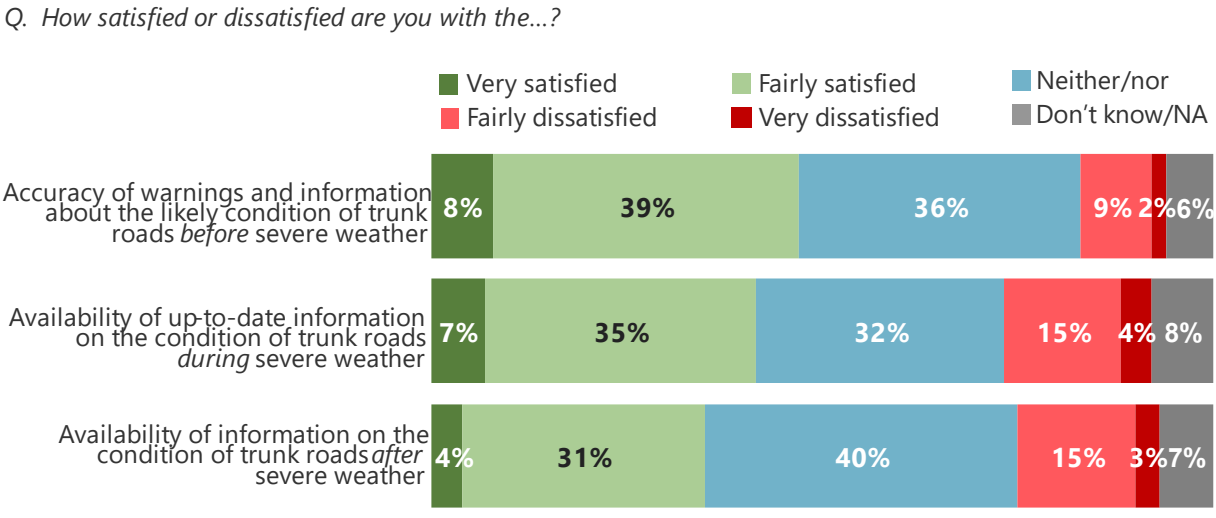
Base: All who had used trunk roads in the past year (1,259)

Respondents in the North West were more likely to use television as a source of information about severe weather impacting road conditions (45%, compared with 33% overall) while those aged 65 and over were more likely to consult Traffic Scotland radio (15%, compared with 12% overall).

Satisfaction with information about conditions before, during and after severe weather

Respondents were more likely to be satisfied than dissatisfied with the quality of information about severe weather affecting trunk roads (Figure 7.5).

Figure 7.5: Satisfaction with information before, during and after severe weather



Base: All who had used trunk roads in the past year (1,259)

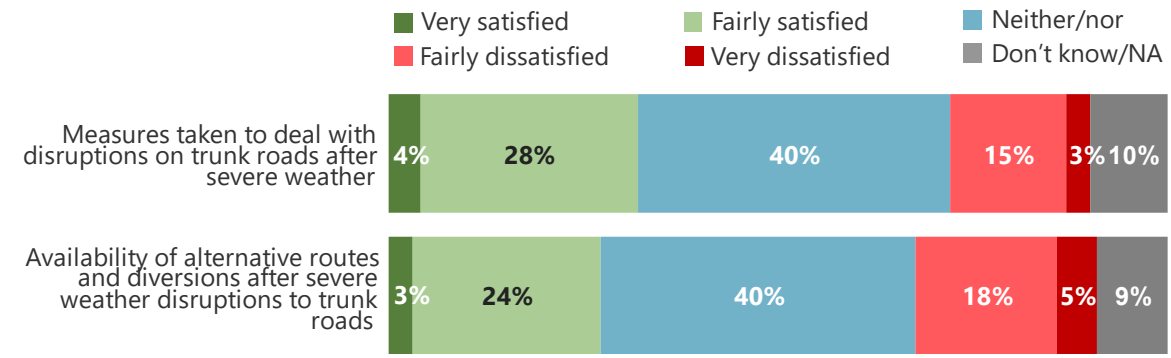
Respondents aged 55 and over were less likely than average to be satisfied with the availability of information on the condition of trunk roads after severe weather (31%, compared with 35% overall).

Satisfaction with measures to deal with severe weather disruption

Around a third of respondents (32%) were satisfied with the measures taken to deal with disruptions after severe weather, while over a quarter (27%) were satisfied with the availability of alternative routes and diversions(Figure 7.6). Both have decreased since 2019 when levels of satisfaction were closer to half of respondents.

Figure 7.6: Satisfaction with measures to deal with severe weather disruption

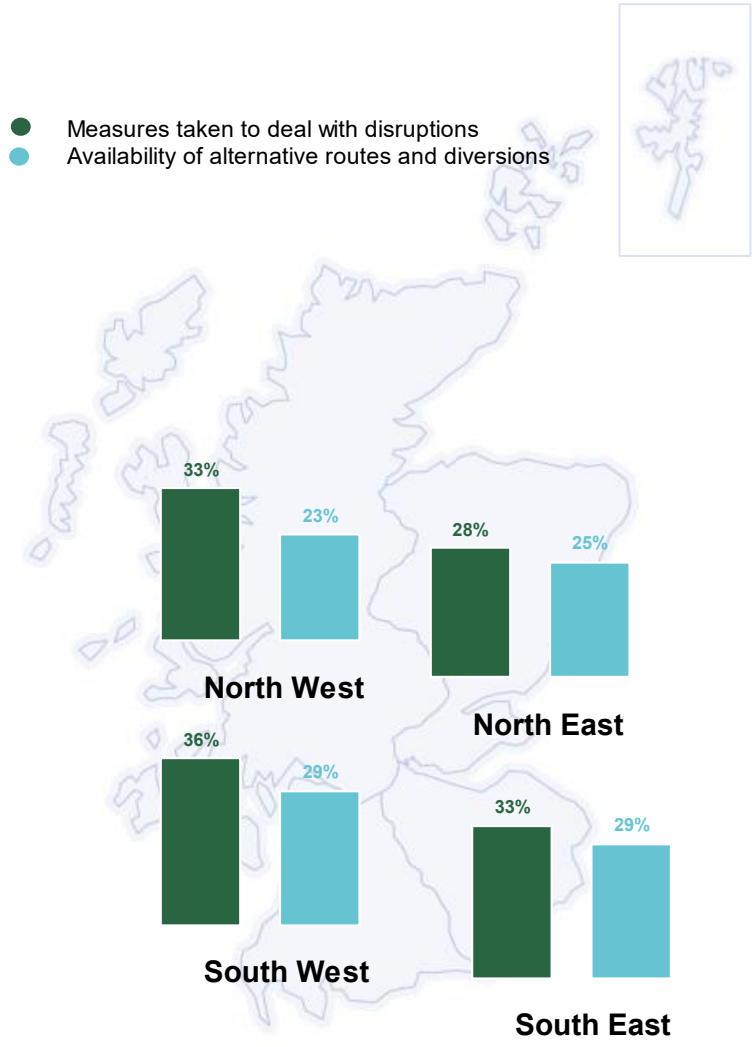
Q. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the…?



Base: All who had used trunk roads in the past year (1,259)

Respondents in the North West were more likely to be dissatisfied with the availability of alternative routes (34%, compared with 23% overall) (Figure 7.7).

Figure 7.7: Satisfaction with measures to deal with severe weather disruption, by region



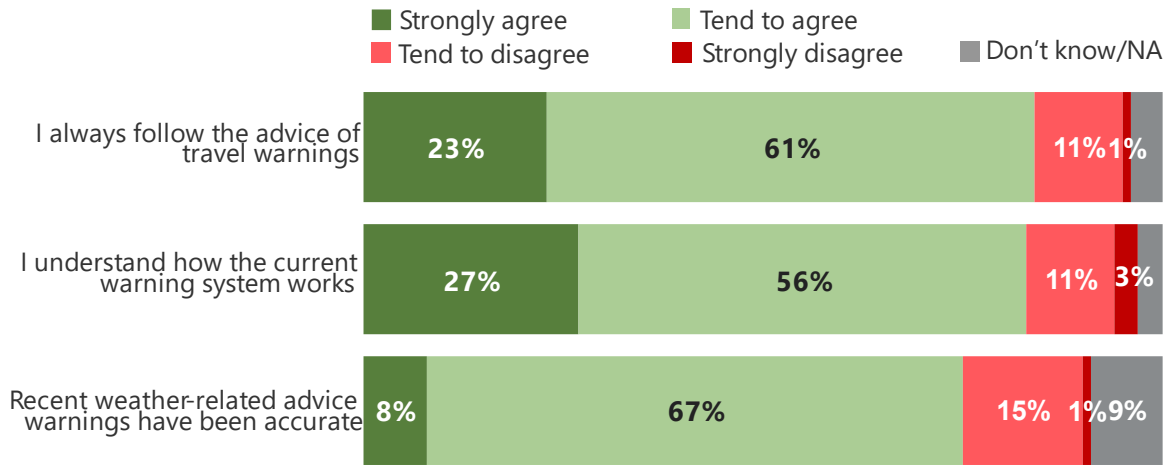
Respondents aged 55 and over were less likely to be satisfied with the measures taken to deal with disruptions from severe weather (27%, compared with 32% overall).

Weather-related travel advice warnings

More than four in five (83%) said that they understand how the current warning system works, with a similar proportion (83%) saying they follow the advice of the travel warnings. Three-quarters (75%) agreed that the recent weather warnings had been accurate. The rates of agreement were broadly in line with the 2019 data. However, fewer reported understanding the warning system (83%, compared with 91% in 2019) (Figure 7.8).

Figure 7.8: Views on weather-related travel advice warnings

Q. How much do you agree or disagree with the following…?



Base: All who had used trunk roads in the past year (1,259)

Younger respondents, aged 18-24, were least likely to say that they understood the current system of weather warnings (64%, compared with 83% overall). Older respondents, aged 55 and over, were the most likely to say that they follow the advice of travel warnings (89%, compared with 83% overall).

8 Information about Transport Scotland

Sources of information about Transport Scotland

Almost nine in ten respondents (87%) had heard of Transport Scotland before completing the survey, the same proportion as in the last three waves of the survey. Respondents aged 35 and over were more likely to have heard of Transport Scotland than those aged under 35 (91%, compared with 76%).

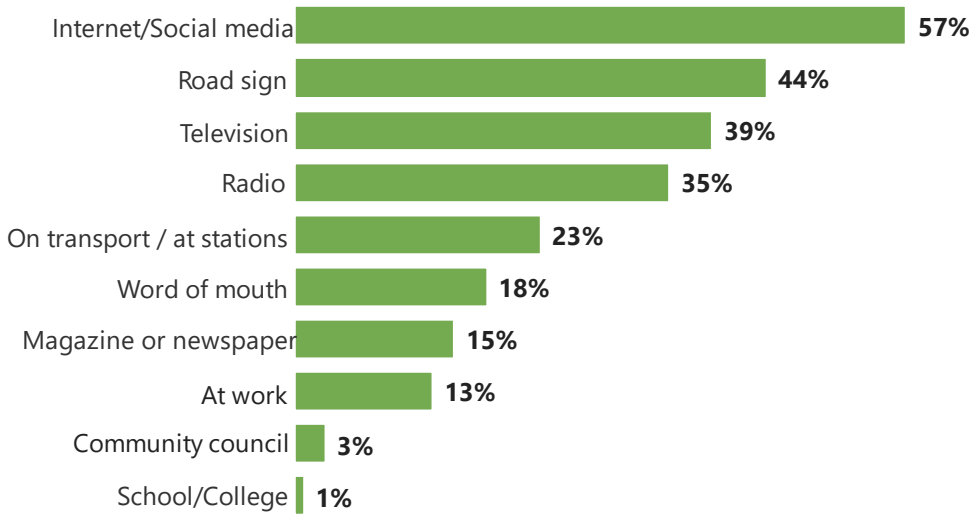
The most common source of information on Transport Scotland was online (on the internet or social media), mentioned by 57% of respondents (Figure 8.1). The next most common sources were road signs (44%), television (39%) and the radio (35%).

In comparison to 2019, a greater proportion of respondents said they had heard about Transport Scotland online (57%, compared with 38% in 2019) or on roads signs (44%, compared with 35%).

(Note that the change in survey method is likely to have contributed towards the increase in those reporting the internet or social media as an information source - those completing an online survey are more likely to be active online and therefore more likely to hear about Transport Scotland this way.)

Figure 8.1: Sources of information on Transport Scotland

Q. Where have you seen or heard anything about Transport Scotland?



Base: All who had heard of Transport Scotland (1,121)

Those aged 55 and above were more likely than average to mention television as a source of information about Transport Scotland (51%, compared with 39% overall). Meanwhile, those aged 65 and above were less likely than average to mention the internet or social media (41%, compared with 57%).

Use of Traffic Scotland information sources

Just over half of respondents (55%) had used an online information source provided by Traffic Scotland, with the website being the most commonly mentioned (Table 8.1).

Table 8.1 - Use of Traffic Scotland information sources

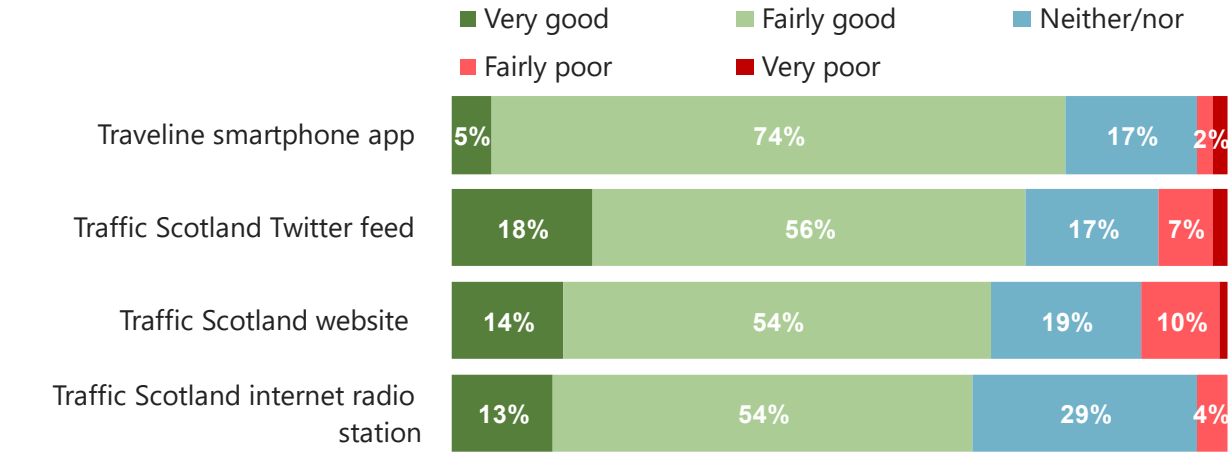
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2023
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Website	37	35	34	38	43	45	45	40	41
Twitter feed	2	3	2	5	6	8	10	9	15
Smartphone App	4	7	5	9	9	10	9	7	7
Internet radio	3	3	2	3	5	5	5	7	7
Base (all who had access to the internet)	*1,558*	*1,617*	*1,735*	*1,797*	*1,812*	*1,830*	*1,841*	*2,008*	*1,259*

Older respondents, aged 65 and over, were more likely than average to say that they had not used any of these Transport Scotland online sources of information (55%, compared with 43% overall) while younger people, aged 18-24, were most likely to have used the Traffic Scotland Twitter feed (34%, compared with 15% overall).

Views of the Traffic Scotland online information sources were largely positive with most respondents rating each as being 'fairly' or 'very' good (Figure 8.2).

Figure 8.2 - Ratings of the Traffic Scotland online information sources

Q. Thinking about your experiences of using this online information source, how would you rate it?



Base: Traffic Scotland Twitter feed (108); Traffic Scotland website (466); Traffic Scotland internet radio station (60); Traveline smartphone app (46)

(When rating online information sources, if a respondent had used more than one source of online information, they were asked to give their views on just one of these sources (randomly selected by the online script.)

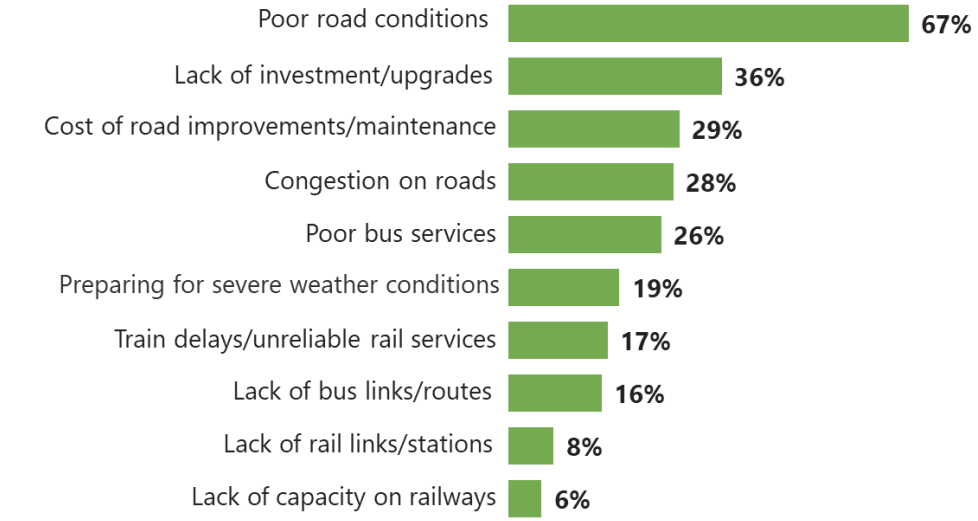
9 Local transport challenges

Respondents were asked what they thought were the main transport-related challenges facing their local area (it was not specified whether this was a trunk road or non-trunk road area).

The most commonly reported challenge was poor road conditions, mentioned by 67% of respondents. As in 2019, this was mentioned by almost twice as many respondents as the next most commonly perceived challenge (Figure 9.1)

Figure 9.1: Perceived transport-related challenges facing respondents' local areas (top ten responses)

Q. What do you think are the main transport-related challenges facing your local area?



Base: All who had used trunk roads in the past year (1,259)

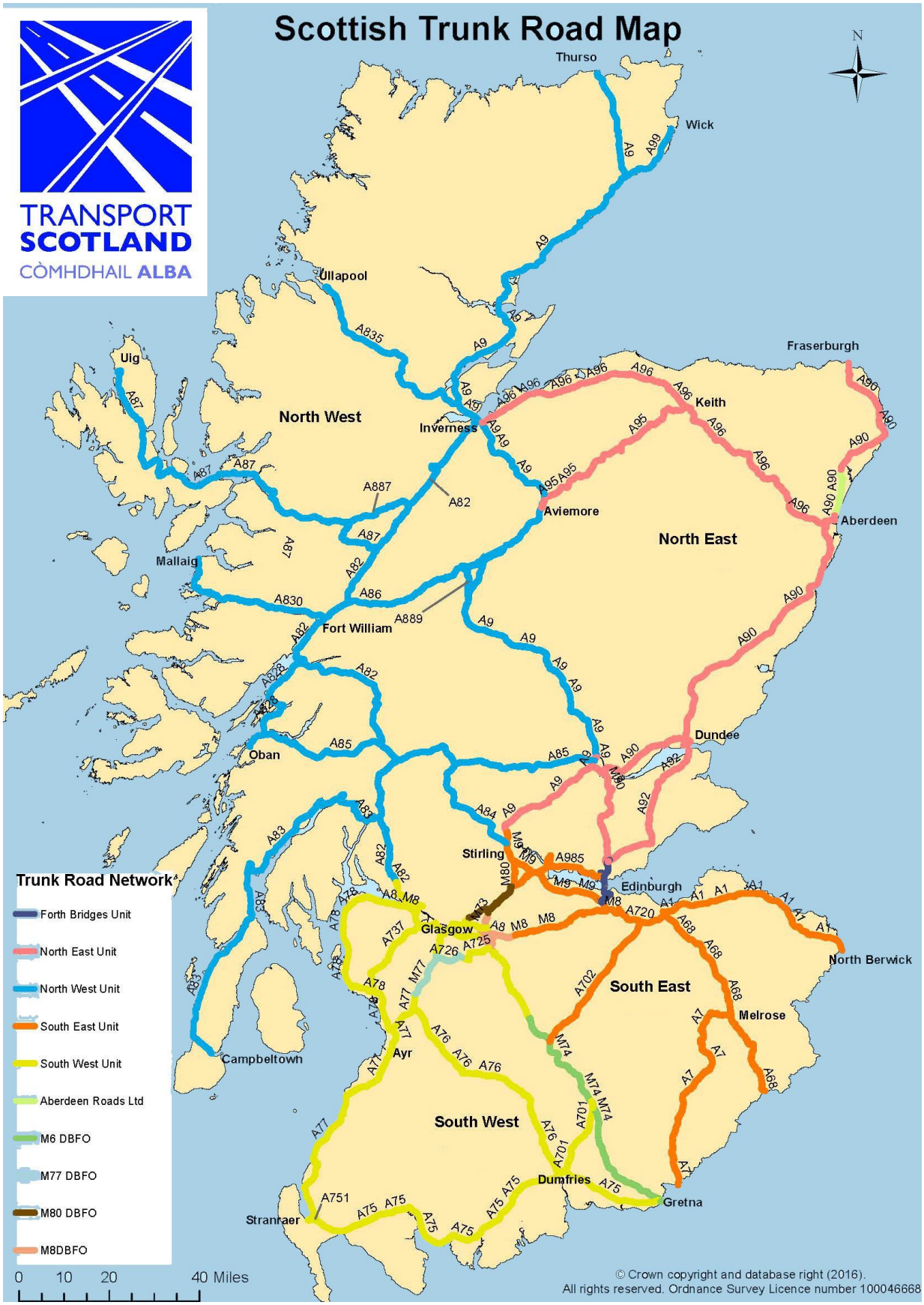
There was some variation in perceived challenges by region:

- Respondents in the North East were more likely to mention the cost of road improvements/maintenance (35%, compared with 29% overall), preparing for/dealing with severe weather conditions (24%, compared with 19% overall) and the lack of bus links/routes in rural areas (22% compared with 16% overall). They were less likely to report congestion on roads (17%, compared with 28% overall).

- Those in the South East were more likely to report congestion on roads being a challenge (39%, compared with 28% overall).

- Those in the South West were more likely to report train delays/unreliable rail services (21%, compared with 17% overall). They were less likely to mention a lack of bus links/routes in rural areas (10%, compared with 16% overall).

Appendix A: Map of trunk road network in Scotland



Appendix B: Trunk road management and maintenance – importance versus satisfaction

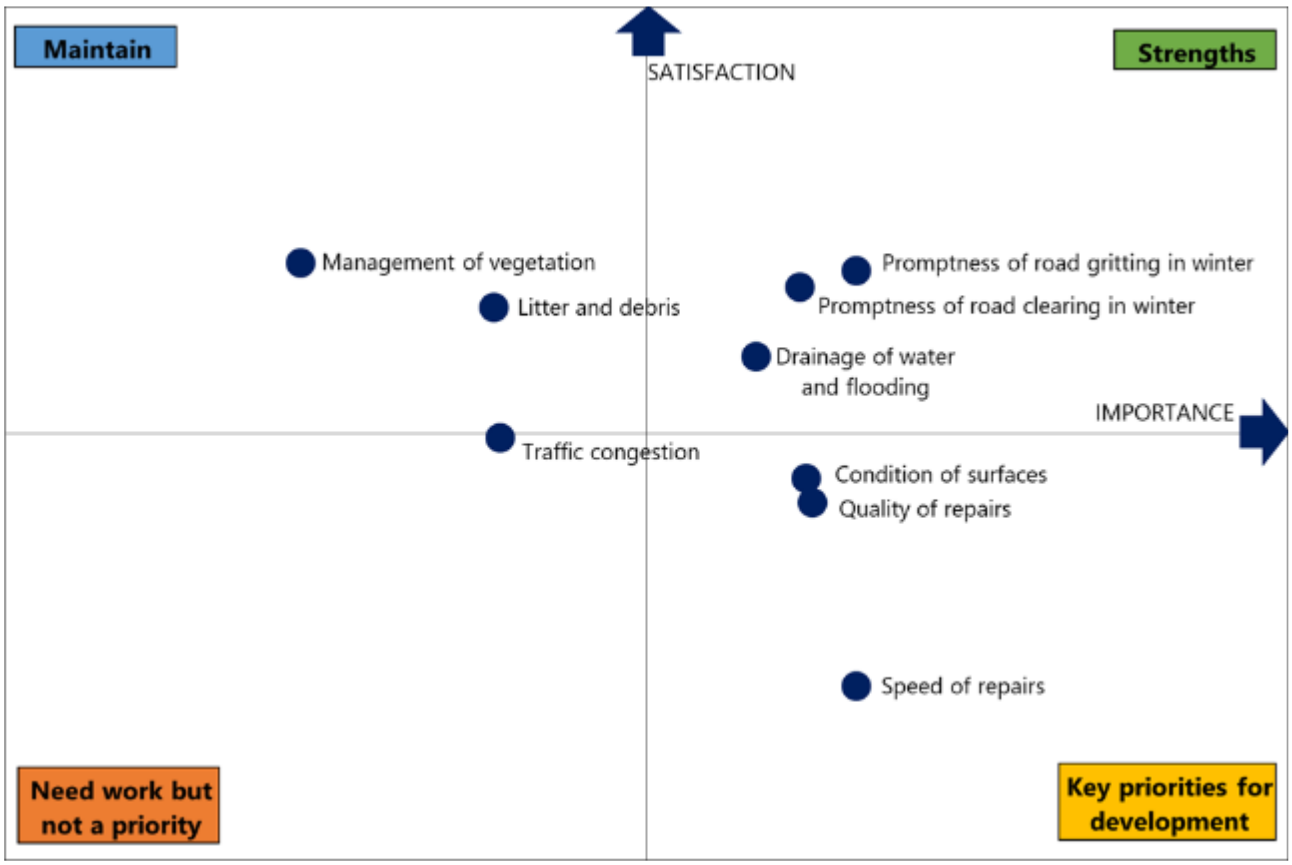
In the survey, importance and satisfaction were recorded on a four and five point scale respectively. In order to 'plot' the two measures on equivalent scales and show the relationship between them, the scores for each were standardised using z-scores. A z-score expresses each item in a numerical series in terms of the series mean and standard deviation to tell us which have scored higher or lower than average. The z score for any item is calculated as the value minus the mean of the series, divided by the standard deviation of the series.

The z scores are plotted on a quadrant chart. The four quadrants are: Maintain (top left), Strengths (top right), Need work but not a priority (bottom left) and Key priorities for development (bottom right).

In this analysis, the 'ideal' scenario is for aspects accorded the highest level of importance to appear in the top right quadrant of the chart – e.g. those deemed of relatively high importance with high levels of satisfaction ('Strengths'). Aspects that appear in the bottom right quadrant; that is, those deemed of relatively high importance but with which satisfaction is low, should be considered key priorities for development.

As shown in Figure B.1, the aspects that appear in the bottom right quadrant (those deemed of relatively high importance but with which satisfaction is low) and that should be considered key priorities for development are: condition of surfaces, quality of repairs, and speed of repairs.

Figure B.1: Trunk road management and maintenance – importance versus satisfaction



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