



NHT Survey Report

NHT Survey Annual Report 2021

NHT NETWORK PARTNERS

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Overview

The National Highway and Transport Public Satisfaction Survey (NHT Survey) collects the public's views on different aspects of Highway and Transport services in local authority areas, it covers:

- Pavements
- Cycle Routes/Lanes
- Local Bus Services,
- Local Taxi (or mini cab) Services
- Community Transport
- Demand Responsive Transport
- Safety on Roads
- Traffic Congestion
- Levels of Traffic Pollution
- Street Lighting
- Condition of Roads
- Local Rights of Way Network

It is a 12 page postal survey, it asks detailed questions about each of these aspects in turn. There are also questions canvassing opinion on climate change, changing travel habits and congestion charging as well as questions on methods and frequency of travel and the ease of access to key services.

The results are presented using 161 Indicators - 27 **Key Benchmark Indicators** (KBI's), 101 **Benchmark Indicators** (BI's) , 5 **Key Quality Indicators** (KQI's) and 28 **Quality Indicators** (QI's).

Survey Coverage

The NHT Survey has become an unrivalled resource of public perception on Highways and Transport services in local authority areas going back fourteen years. It has been sent to over 5.2 million households since it was first launched in 2008 and over 1.1 million members of the public have made their views known. The public's responses can be categorised by; age group, gender, whether they have an illness, disability or infirmity limiting their daily activities or are a blue badge holder, employment status and ethnicity.

2021 was another year of very high levels of participation in the NHT Public Satisfaction Survey with 111 Authorities taking part, which was an increase of two from the numbers that took part in 2020. A total of 145 Authorities have taken part in the survey since 2008, including 129 English Authorities, nine Scottish Authorities, six Welsh Authorities and the Isle of Man Government.

Numbers of Respondents

This year the survey was sent to 411,061 households across 111 local authority areas and produced 93,629 responses, with an average response rate of 22.9%, which was slightly down on last year but remains a very high return rate for a survey of this type.

The majority of the returns are submitted by post, although the number of on-line responses is increasing, this year was the highest ever at 17% of the total, the rate was under 14% in 2020.

Summary Changes

The gauges below show how the Survey results compare with last year, the general trend is down although some Authorities have registered more improvements than reductions..

↓ **130 INDICATORS**
have gone down (out of 156)

↑ **12 AUTHORITIES**
have more results up than down (out of 111)

Key Public Perceptions

Below are some of the key findings from this years results, the detail behind these can be found in the other sections of the report.

Most Important
CONDITION OF ROADS

Least Satisfied
CONDITION OF ROADS

Need to Spend More
CONDITION OF ROADS

Climate Change
FAIRLY WELL INFORMED

Pollution caused by Traffic
NOT WELL INFORMED

Air quality by local roads
NOT WELL INFORMED

Number of Potholes
MORE THAN A YEAR AGO

Action to repair local roads
LESS THAN A YEAR AGO

Travel as pre-COVID
TEND TO DISAGREE

Result Highlights

- **Tackling congestion** and **Highway Maintenance** indicators are down across the board
- The five lowest satisfaction scores are all **Highway Maintenance** indicators
- The largest falls were for **Potholes**, **Road Condition** and **Customer Enquiry Handling** indicators
- **Walking & Cycling'** results suffered the least this year, all **Cycling** indicators were up
- The ten largest improvements on last year were all **Cycling** related indicators

Other Perception Highlights

Below are the public's views on Potholes and Damaged Roads, on how well informed they feel about 'Climate Change and Traffic Pollution' and their views on 'Changing Travel Habits and the effects of Coronavirus'.

Potholes and Damaged Roads

Compared to a year ago would you say :

- There are more potholes and damaged roads, there are fewer or no change in the number - **'More'**
- The Council is doing more to repair local roads, doing less, or about the same - **'Less'**

Climate Change and Traffic Pollution

The public were asked... 'How well informed do you feel about the following:

- Climate change - sometimes called 'global warming' - **'Fairly Well Informed'**
- The level of pollution caused by traffic in the local area - **'Not Very Well Informed'**
- The actions the Council is taking to help tackle climate change - **'Not Very Well Informed'**
- The actions you can take personally to help tackle climate change - **'Fairly Well Informed'**
- The quality of air alongside local roads - **'Not Very Well Informed'**

Changing Travel Habits and the effect of Coronavirus

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

- I could personally travel by car less than I do now - **'Tended to disagree'**
- I could personally walk, cycle or use public transport more than I currently do - **'Tended to agree'**
- I am currently travelling by public transport less than I was before the Coronavirus pandemic - **'Doesn't apply/Dont know'**
- I am currently travelling by car more than I was before the Coronavirus pandemic - **'Strongly disagreed'**
- I am currently walking/cycling more than I was before the Coronavirus pandemic - **'Tended to agree'**
- Overall, I have got back to travelling as much as I used to before the Coronavirus pandemic - **'Tended to disagree'**

Importance, Satisfaction & Spending Priorities

The Survey asks the public to consider key aspects of Highways & Transport Service and rate **how important** and **how satisfied** they feel with each one. It also asks where they feel that the level of service provided could be **reduced by spending less** or **improved by spending more**.

Note: The service areas the public were asked to consider were; Pavements, Cycle Routes/Lanes, Local Bus Services, Local taxi services, Community Transport, Demand Responsive Transport, Safety on Roads, Traffic Congestion, Traffic Pollution, Street Lighting, Condition of Roads and Local Rights of Way Network.

Most Important
CONDITION OF ROADS

Least Satisfied
CONDITION OF ROADS

Highest Priority
CONDITION OF ROADS

How Important

The public placed most importance on **Condition of Roads** and **Safety on Roads** and least importance on **Demand Responsive Transport**'.

*88% of the respondents (82,207 people), rated Condition of Roads as **Very Important** and 97%, (91,228 people), rated them as either **Very Important** or **Fairly Important**.*

How Satisfied

The public were most satisfied with **Local Taxi (Mini-Cab) Services** and least satisfied with '**Condition of Roads**', which was chosen as most important service.

*64% of the respondents (59,756) were dissatisfied with Condition of Roads, either **very dissatisfied** or **fairly dissatisfied** with 38% saying they were **very dissatisfied**.*

Importance/Satisfaction Gap

The biggest difference between 'how important' and 'how satisfied' the public felt about these different services was for 'Condition of Roads' and the closest alignment between Importance and Satisfaction was for 'Local bus services'.

Spending Priorities

'Local taxi (or mini-cab) services' was the most popular choice for a possible reduction in the level of service by spending less, while 'Condition of Roads' was the most popular choice for improving the level of service and spending more.

Indicator Results for Satisfaction Questions

No. of Indicators

124

No. of Indicators Up

 20

No. of Indicators Down

 104

Headlines

- The majority of authorities satisfaction results were down on last year
- Walking & Cycling results have suffered the least. The ten largest improvements were all Cycling related indicators
- All Tackling Congestion and Highway Maintenance indicators are down on average
- The five lowest authority scores were all highway maintenance
- The 10 largest downward changes were Highway Maintenance or Communication indicators, related to potholes/road condition or enquiry handling

Best Performers & Biggest Improvers

MORE UP THAN DOWN

Lancashire (67)

Bolton (51)

Wiltshire (47)

BEST PERFORMER

Portsmouth (28)

Milton Keynes (12)

Reading (11)

BIGGEST IMPROVER

Bolton (67)

Telford & Wrekin (51)

Wirral (47)

Highlights

NHT Averages

- Highest Score - How easy buses are to get on/off (71%)
- Lowest Score - HMBI30 - Speed of repairs to damaged roads (27%)
- Largest Trend Up - WCBI28 - The number of cycle routes provided (+3%)
- Largest Trend Down - KBI24 - Highway Maintenance (-8%)
- Largest Spread - KBI07 - Local Bus Services (44%)
- Smallest Spread - WCBI19 - Signposting right of way (10%)

Individual Authority Scores

- Highest Score - PTBI02 - Number of Bus Stops (83%)
- Lowest Score - HMBI30 - Speed of repair to damaged roads (12%)
- Largest Trend Up - KQI01 - Enquiry Handling Overall (+17%)
- Largest Trend Down - CMQI02 - Professional of staff re enquires (-24%)

Indicator Results for Well Informed Questions

No. of Indicators

9

No. of Indicators Up

↑ 2

No. of Indicators Down

↓ 7

Headlines

- The majority of indicators are down
- The public feel fairly 'well informed' about climate change
- The public feel 'not well informed' about pollution caused by traffic and air quality alongside local roads

Best Performers & Biggest Improvers

MORE UP THAN DOWN

Telford & Wrekin (7)

Sandwell (5)

BEST PERFORMER

Bath & NE Somerset (3)

Southwark (2)

BIGGEST IMPROVER

Cornwall (1)

Southwark (1)

Highlights

NHT Averages

- Highest Score - CMQI18 - Informed about climate change (61%)
- Lowest Score - CMQI07 - Informed about local air quality (26%)
- Largest Trend Down - CMQI04 - Informed about public transport (-3%)
- Largest Spread - CMQI04 - Informed about public transport (28%)

Individual Authority Scores

- Highest Score - CMQI18 - Informed about climate change (70%)
- Lowest Score - CMQI07 - Informed about air quality (21%)
- Largest Trend - TCQI19 - Informed about local pollution levels (-7%)

Indicator Results for Ease of Access Questions

No. of Indicators

11

No. of Indicators Up

 3

No. of Indicators Down

 8

Headlines

- Three indicators are unchanged and the rest are down on last year
- The widest spread of results is for 'Ease of access (no car)', which also has the highest and lowest reported accessibility score

Best Performers & Biggest Improvers

MORE UP THAN DOWN

Lancashire (11)

Wiltshire (11)

BEST PERFORMER

Stockton-on-Tees (3)

Southwark (2)

BIGGEST IMPROVER

Wiltshire (3)

Manchester (2)

Highlights

NHT Averages

- Highest Score - ABI03 - Ease of access to local shops/supermarkets (81%)
- Lowest Score - KBI04 - Ease of access (diabilities) (65%)
- Largest Trend Down - KBI03 - Ease of access (all) (-2%)
- Largest Spread - KBI05 - Ease of access (no car) (31%)

Individual Authority Scores

- Highest Score - KBI05 - Ease of Access no car) (85%)
- Lowest Score - KBI05 - Ease of Access (no car) (54%)
- Largest Trend Up - KBI05 - Ease of access (no car) (+13%)
- Largest Trend Down - KBI 05 - Ease of Access (no car) (-11%)

Indicators for Other Questions

Provision Indicators

There are five 'Provision' questions which ask the public if they feel there are 'too many', 'too few' or 'about the right amount' in the local area.

- Highest Score - PTQI08 - Provision of bus Stops (81%)
- Lowest Score - ACQI25 - Electric Vehicle charging points (26%)
- Largest Spread - WCQI15 - Provision of cycle routes (34%)

More or Less Indicators

There are two 'More or Less' questions which ask the public if they think there are 'more or 'less' potholes and damaged roads than a year ago' and if they think the council is doing 'more or 'less' to repair local roads than a year ago'.

- HMQI11 - Number of potholes - Best 42%, Average 22%, Worst 8%, Trend -6%
- HMQI12 - Action to repair local roads - Best 45%, Average 32%, Worst 19%, Trend -6%









Agree/Support Indicators

There are seven 'Agree/Support' questions which ask the public if they 'agree or disagree' with statements about Climate Change and The Effects on Travel of Coronavirus, and if they 'support' Congestion Charge Schemes.

- Highest Score - ACQI26 - Travel Less by Public Transport (60%)
- Lowest Score - ACQI27 - Travel more by car (38%)
- Largest Spread - TCQI22 - Support for congestion charge scheme (33%)
- Largest Trend - TCQI22 - Support for congestion charge scheme (-3%)

Theme Highlights

This year's Survey results by by Highways & Transport Theme are set out in the table below. It shows the Average, High and Low for each theme, and the trend in performance from last year.

Theme	Description	NHT High	NHT Average	NHT Low	Trend
	Overall	57%	51%	42%	-2%
	Accessibility	77%	70%	64%	-1%
	Communications	55%	46%	40%	-4%
	Public Transport	67%	55%	45%	-2%
	Walking/Cycling	59%	52%	47%	0%
	Tackling Congestion	51%	43%	34%	-3%
	Road Safety	57%	52%	45%	-1%
	Highway Maintenance	56%	45%	37%	-4%

The highest and lowest individual scores and the best performers and biggest improvers within each theme are shown below.

Accessibility

11 Indicators

↑ 3 Up

↓ 8 Down

HIGHEST SCORE

85%

Ease of access no car

LOWEST SCORE

54%

Ease of Access (no car)

BEST PERFORMERS

Southwark (3)
Stockton-on-Tees (3)
Dudley (2)

BIGGEST IMPROVERS

Wiltshire (3)
Manchester (2)

Communications

14 Indicators

↑ 2 Up

↓ 12 Down

HIGHEST SCORE

75%

Professionalism of staff re enquiries

LOWEST SCORE

21%

Informed about local air quality

BEST PERFORMERS

Portsmouth (3)
West Lothian (3)

BIGGEST IMPROVERS

Coventry, Knowsley, Hatton (1)

Public Transport

34 Indicators

↑ 6 Up

↓ 28 Down

HIGHEST SCORE

83%

Number of bus stops

LOWEST SCORE

26%

Public Transport information

BEST PERFORMERS

Reading (11)
Brighton & Hove (6)
Rochdale (5)

BIGGEST IMPROVERS

Lancashire (5)
Bolton, Rochdale,
Southend-on-Sea, St.
Helens (3)

Walking/Cycling

31 Indicators

↑ 14 Up

↓ 17 Down

HIGHEST SCORE

74%

The provision of cycle routes

LOWEST SCORE

31%

Pavements being kept clear of obstruction

BEST PERFORMERS

Milton Keynes (12)
Leicester City (6)
Darlington (3)

BIGGEST IMPROVERS

Telford & Wrekin (7)
Bolton (6)
Hull City (3)

Tackling Congestion

19 Indicators

↑ 0 Up

↓ 19 Down

HIGHEST SCORE

72%

Good park and ride schemes

LOWEST SCORE

22%

Time taken to complete roadworks

BEST PERFORMERS

City of York (3)
Leicester City (3)
Stockton-on-Tees (3)

BIGGEST IMPROVERS

Coventry City, Isle of Man, St. Helens, Redcar & Cleveland (2)

Road Safety

14 Indicators

↑ 3 Up

↓ 11 Down

HIGHEST SCORE

70%

Speed limits

LOWEST SCORE

36%

Safety of children cycling to school

BEST PERFORMERS

Isle of Man Government (3)
Milton Keynes (3)
Portsmouth, Brighton (2)

BIGGEST IMPROVERS

Hull City (3)
Telford & Wrekin (3)
Shropshire (2)

Highway Maintenance

30 Indicators

↑ 0 Up

↓ 30 Down

HIGHEST SCORE

69%

Street lighting

LOWEST SCORE

12%

Speed of repair to
damaged roads

BEST PERFORMERS

Portsmouth City (22)

Southwark (5)

BIGGEST IMPROVERS

Wirral (8)

Bolton (5)

Rochdale (2)

Overview

Survey Questions

The NHT Survey is a 12 page postal survey, it asks the public to provide 176 individual answers across 30 questions. The survey starts with 'how important' (Question 1) and 'how satisfied' (Question 2) the public feel about key services. Question 3 then asks for views on spending priorities. Questions 4 to 17 are all satisfaction related questions, with the exception of Question 6, which is about 'the number of potholes' and 'council actions to repair local roads', and Question 8 which asks questions about 'how well informed' the public feel. Question 18 is about provision and includes a new question this year about electric vehicle charging points.

Question 19 asks 'how well informed' the public feel about climate change, traffic pollution and global warming, Question 20 which seeks views on 'changing travel habits', including four new question this year about the effects of Coronavirus and Questions 21 asks for views on 'congestion charging'.

Questions 22 and 23 are about 'car ownership' and 'bus passes', Question 24 covers 'method and frequency of travel' and Question 25 the 'ease of access' to key services. The remaining questions, Question 25 to 30, ask for information 'about you'.

Survey Indicators

Traditionally NHT Survey results have been presented using **Key Benchmark Indicators** (KBI's) and **Benchmark Indicators** (BI's), although over the last couple of years **Key Quality Indicators** (KQI's) and **Quality Indicators** (QI's) have been introduced to cover some of the non satisfaction related questions in the survey.

This year's results are reported using 161 individual indicators. There are 27 KBIs, including 22 KBIs that measure 'satisfaction', three that measure 'ease of access' (KBI03 to KBI05) and two that measure the gap between 'importance and satisfaction' (KBI01 & KBI02).

Looking at the remaining indicators, 101 are BI's and most of these are measures of 'satisfaction', although there are eight 'ease of access' indicators. There are five KQI's which all measure 'satisfaction' and 28 QI's, which include four 'satisfaction' indicators, nine 'well informed' indicators, six 'provision' indicators, two 'more or less' indicators and seven 'agree/support' indicators. Five of the QI indicators are new this year to reflect new questions on electric charging points and the effects on travel of coronavirus.

Participation and Response Rates

Survey Participation

2021 was another year of very high levels of participation in the NHT Public Satisfaction Survey with 111 Authorities taking part, which was an increase of two from the numbers that took part in 2020. A total of 145 Authorities have taken part in the survey since 2008, including 129 English Authorities, nine Scottish Authorities, six Welsh Authorities and the Isle of Man Government.

Numbers of Respondents

This year the survey was sent to 411,061 households across 111 local authority areas and produced 93,629 responses, with an average response rate of 22.9%, which was slightly down on last year but remains a very high return rate for a survey of this type.

The majority of the returns are submitted by post, although the number of on-line responses is increasing, this year was the highest ever at 17% of the total, the rate was under 14% in 2020.

The table below gives details of the number of participants, the number of households sampled, the number of responses made and the average response rate in each year since the survey first ran in 2008.

Year	Number of Participants	Total Households Sampled	Total Responses Made	Average Response Rate
2008	33	148,500	27,682	18.6%
2009	76	370,950	69,332	18.6%
2010	95	479,300	81,614	16.9%
2011	70	352,000	62,026	17.6%
2012	76	385,500	61,459	15.9%
2013	70	352,200	53,676	15.2%
2014	78	300,050	69,566	23.3%
2015	101	370,289	77,064	20.9%
2016	107	399,346	97,573	24.4%
2017	113	441,541	109,314	25.0%
2018	113	412,088	104,119	25.3%
2019	111	406,639	99,229	24.5%
2020	109	403,094	95,704	23.8%
2021	111	411,061	93,629	22.9%

The next table provides a breakdown of the responses made each year and provides a split between postal and on-line returns by year (facilities for on-line responses were first introduced in 2013).

The increase in average response rates and the reduction in sample size from 2014 onwards reflects the introduction of a single reminder sent to those households that had not responded part way through the survey period.

ABOUT THE SURVEY

Year	Average Sample Size	Average On-line Responses	Average Postal Responses	Average Total Responses
2008	4,500	0	838	838
2009	4,880	0	912	912
2010	5,045	0	859	859
2011	5,028	0	886	886
2012	5,072	0	808	808
2013	5,031	24	742	766
2014	3,846	30	861	891
2015	3,666	31	732	763
2016	3,732	62	849	911
2017	3,873	98	860	958
2018	3,614	54	858	913
2019	3,630	85	800	885
2020	3,664	121	748	870
2021	3,670	139	696	835

Regional & Peer Group Response Rates

The following tables provide details of the average response rate for the 2020 Survey by region and by authority type;

Region	Sample Size	Response Rate
East Midlands	3,636	24.6%
Eastern	3,548	23.0%
Greater Manchester	3,545	19.9%
London	3,300	15.3%
North East	3,651	21.0%
North West	3,666	21.9%
Scotland	3,300	18.5%
South East	3,800	24.6%
South West	3,738	26.4%
West Midlands	3,300	23.3%
Yorkshire & Humberside	3,837	22.3%

Peer Group	Sample Size	Response Rate
County Council	3,570	27.0%
London Borough	3,300	15.3%
Metropolitan Borough	3,596	20.4%
Scottish Unitary	3,300	18.5%
Unitary Authority	3,747	22.4%