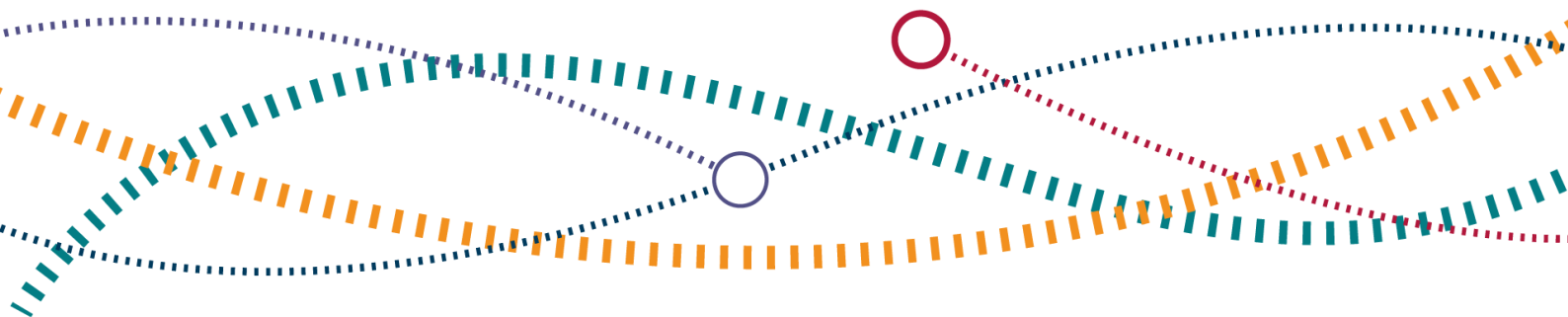




# Benchmarking National Highways

## – Regional performance in the second road period

17 February 2026



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# Highlights

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Benchmarking the performance of National Highways is an important means of improving its delivery and efficiency. Since 2016, we have maintained a regional benchmarking series comparing performance across the company's six regions: North East, North West, Midlands, East, South East and South West.

This report summarises regional performance over the second road period (RP2, 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2025). It focuses on five of the six outcome areas set out in the government's [second Road Investment Strategy](#) (RIS2). Performance is assessed using a range of Performance Indicators (PIs) and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Key findings for each reported outcome are set out below.

## Improving safety for all

In respect of safety performance, we have focused on the period between the (calendar) years 2019 to 2023 due to the unusually low level of traffic and therefore casualties in 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The number of people killed or seriously injured (KSI) on the Strategic Road Network (SRN) fell in all regions except for the North West during this period. The largest reductions were achieved in the East and Yorkshire and the North East. Although casualties declined overall, National Highways is expected to fall short of its national target to reduce casualties to 50% of 2005–09 levels by 2025.

## Fast and reliable journeys

Average delay, including delay from roadworks, increased in all regions. However, as for safety performance, trends are influenced by the effects of the pandemic. Delays fell sharply between the 2019-20, and 2020-21 financial years but have since risen above pre-pandemic levels in all regions. The regions with the highest baseline delay also experienced the largest increases over the period. By the end of RP2, the South East had the highest delays, the least reliable journeys and was more affected by roadworks than any other region.

Incident clearance performance remained consistently strong across all regions. In 2024–25, Yorkshire and the North East were the best performers, clearing 89.7% of motorway incidents within an hour, compared with the SRN average of 88.7% and the national-level target of 86%.

### A well-maintained and resilient network

Pavement condition continues to vary across National Highways' regions although there are signs that regional disparities are beginning to lessen. Previous benchmarking reports have highlighted weaker pavement condition in the East, and this remains the case. However, the gap between the East and the national average has narrowed slightly during RP2.

### Meeting the needs of all road users

Road user satisfaction declined sharply in the final year of RP2, likely reflecting rising delays and disruption associated with the national emergency area retrofit (NEAR) programme, which delivered additional emergency areas on sections of all lane running motorways. Satisfaction was lowest in the Midlands (65.5%) and South East (66.1%), reinforcing the link between delays and user perceptions. By contrast, satisfaction has consistently been highest in the South West.

All regions improved the timeliness and accuracy of roadworks information. By the end of RP2, however, the South East remained the weakest performer, with 65.9% of overnight roadworks accurately notified seven days in advance. All other regions exceeded the SRN average of 74.1%, with the East exceeding 80%.

### Delivering better environmental outcomes

As set out in our [Annual Assessment](#), National Highways met national end-of-RP2 targets for air quality, noise and biodiversity. Environmental improvements were delivered in all regions, with biodiversity mitigation concentrated in the East and North West, and noise mitigation concentrated in the South East and North West.

Table 1. Regional performance overview (key performance indicators)

Outcome area	Improving safety for all		Providing fast and reliable journeys						A well maintained and resilient network		Delivering better environmental outcomes				Meeting the needs of all road users			
Key performance indicator	Number of people killed or seriously injured		Average delay		Incident clearance		Roadworks network impact		Pavement condition		Noise	Air Quality		Biodiversity	Road user satisfaction		Roadworks information	
Measurement	Number of people killed or seriously injured (adjusted) on the SRN		Seconds of delay per vehicle mile		Percentage of incidents cleared within one hour		Lane-metre-days impacted by roadworks (mil)		Percentage of network in good condition		Number of households benefitting from mitigations	Number of links exceeding NO2 limits		Biodiversity units delivered	Percentage of SRN users satisfied with their journey		Percentage of planned overnight road closure information notified	
	2019	2023	20-21	24-25	20-21	24-25	21-22	24-25	20-21	24-25	Second road period total	20-21	24-25	Second road period total	22-23	24-25	20-21	24-25
Yorkshire and North East	334	247	6.2	11.1	88.8	89.7	5.8	8.1	95.6	98.0	792	7	2	632	72.9	66.4	58.4	74.6
North West	254	277	6.0	11.1	88.1	89.1	6.9	3.7	97.2	96.9	3,914	2	6	2,051	69.6	71.1	58.3	77.7
Midlands	388	383	6.9	13	87.3	88.6	9.5	7.3	94.4	95.4	379	11	3	623	72.7	65.5	66.3	77.0
East	321	249	6.0	9.9	87.9	88.7	6.9	5.7	92.1	94.1	236	0	2	1,537	72.2	69.4	58.0	80.2
South East	569	556	7.9	14.3	88.8	87.3	10.3	13.6	96.6	97.3	1,958	8	6	840	71.5	66.1	42.4	65.9
South West	220	201	6.2	8.7	89.7	88.7	3.3	3.2	96.0	97.7	497	3	0	1,060	80.2	74.9	63.5	78.4
National Highways	2086	1,913	6.7	11.8	88.6	88.7	42.7	41.8	95.2	96.5	7,776	31	19	6,743	72.6	68.6	54.5	74.1

# 1. Introduction

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- 1.1 The strategic road network (SRN) plays a critical role in supporting the economy and connecting communities. National Highways is responsible for operating, maintaining and improving the SRN, while the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) holds the company to account for its performance and efficiency. Our overarching assessment of National Highways' performance during the second road period (RP2) is set out in the 2024–25 [Annual Assessment](#).
- 1.2 One of the ways we seek to drive performance improvement is by benchmarking the performance of National Highways' six regions (Figure 1.1). Regional comparisons are particularly important, as relying solely on national-level data can mask variation in performance. Benchmarking at a regional level helps to drive internal improvement and promote consistency in the service provided to road users, regardless of where they travel. It also improves transparency and helps ensure that no region is left behind.
- 1.3 This report is primarily focussed on regional performance during RP2, covering the financial years 2020–21 to 2024–25. It draws on data from a selection of indicators we use to monitor National Highways' performance at a national level, as set out in Table 1.1.
- 1.4 Indicators are classified as Performance Indicators (PIs) and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), with KPIs linked to national-level targets. While we hold National Highways to account for meeting these targets nationally and recognise that some regional variation is inevitable, we expect the company to understand the causes of underperformance in individual regions and take action where possible. This is essential to improving overall performance, delivering better outcomes for SRN users and taxpayers, and ensuring a consistent level of service across regions.
- 1.5 The [operation metrics manual](#) for the second road period provides detailed technical descriptions of each indicator.
- 1.6 The remainder of this report is structured around five of the six outcome areas defined in the second road investment strategy (RIS2). They are as follows:
  - Improving safety for all
  - Providing fast and reliable journeys
  - A well-maintained and resilient network

- Delivering better environmental outcomes
- Meeting the needs of all road users

1.7 A further outcome area – achieving efficient delivery – is only measured at a national level and is therefore excluded from this report.

1.8 Alongside this report, we have published a set of [interactive dashboards](#) on the ORR website, allowing users to explore national and regional data in greater detail. We have also provided [regional summaries](#) for readers interested in specific regions.

Figure 1.1 National Highways' regions



Table 1.1 Performance indicators for the second road period

	Improving safety for all	Fast and reliable journeys	A well-maintained and resilient network	Delivering better environmental outcomes	Meeting the needs of all road users
Key performance indicator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The number of people killed or seriously injured on the SRN</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Average delay</li> <li>Incident clearance rate</li> <li>Roadworks network impact</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pavement condition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Noise</li> <li>Biodiversity</li> <li>Air quality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Road user satisfaction</li> <li>Roadworks information timeliness and accuracy</li> </ul>
Performance indicator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The total number of people killed or injured on the SRN</li> <li>The number of non-motorised and motorcyclist users killed or seriously injured on the SRN</li> <li>The number of injury collisions on the SRN</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delay from roadworks</li> <li>Journey time reliability</li> <li>Average speed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Structures condition</li> <li>Drainage condition</li> <li>Geotechnical condition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supply chain carbon emissions</li> <li>Water quality</li> <li>Litter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Timeliness of information provided to road users through electronic signage</li> <li>Ride quality</li> <li>Working with local highways authorities to review diversion routes for unplanned events</li> </ul>

# 2. Improving safety for all

## Key findings:

- For safety performance, we have focused specifically on the period from 2019 to 2023, given the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on traffic volumes and casualties in 2020 and 2021.
- The number of people killed or seriously injured on the SRN fell during this period although at a slower rate than expected.
- The largest absolute reductions in casualties occurred in the East and Yorkshire and the North East. In contrast, the North West reported a slight increase.
- The casualty rate (casualties per mile travelled) fell nationally and either declined or remained broadly stable across five of National Highways' six regions.



### Key performance indicator: the number of people killed or seriously injured on the SRN

**Purpose:** This metric focuses on the most serious incidents on the SRN with a view to reducing the number of occurrences

**Target:** a reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured on the SRN to decrease by at least 50% by the end of 2025, against the 2005-09 average baseline.

### Performance indicators

The total number of individuals killed or injured on the SRN



The number of non-motorised and motorcyclist users killed or injured on the SRN.



The number of injury collisions on the SRN



## Key Performance Indicators

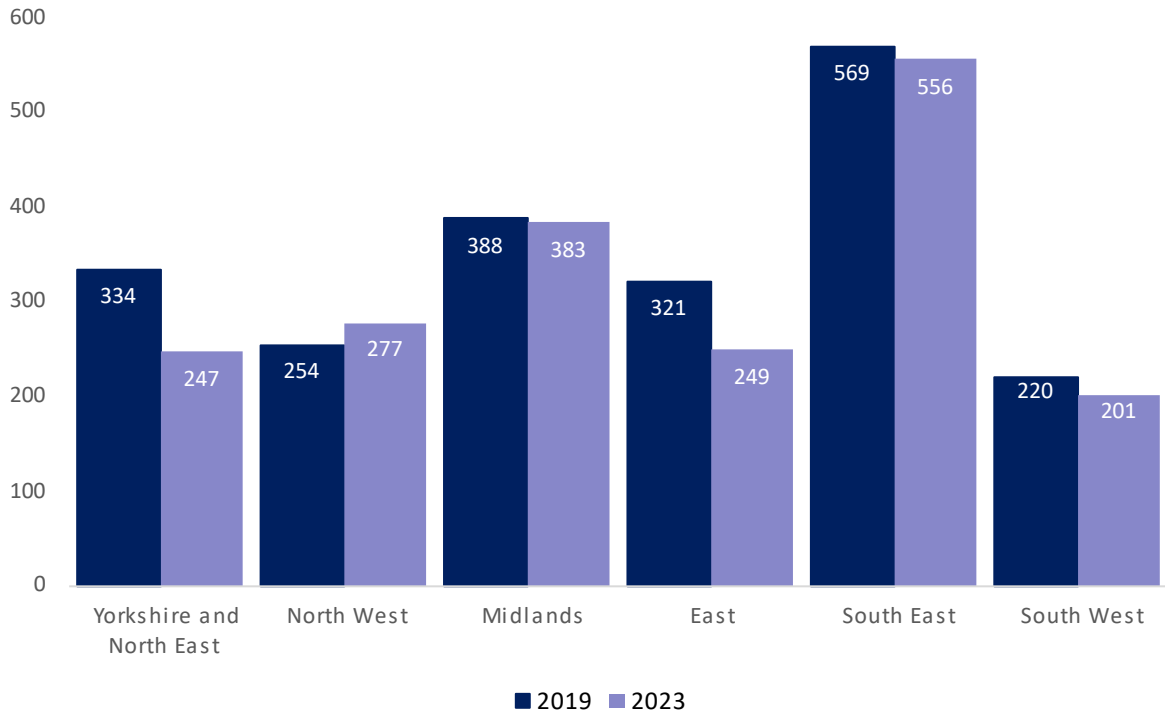
- 2.1 **The number of people killed or seriously injured (KSI)** is the single key performance indicator (KPI) under the 'Improving safety for all' outcome. Safety is National Highways' number one priority and this metric focuses on the most serious incidents on the strategic road network (SRN).
- 2.2 National Highways reports safety performance annually using STATS19 data published by the Department for Transport (DfT). This data is compiled on a calendar year basis (January to December), rather than by financial year, to

remain consistent with national road casualty statistics and to enable comparability across the wider transport sector.

- 2.3 As this data requires time for validation and adjustment to account for differences in police reporting, final figures are typically published the following autumn. Further work is then required to calculate casualties at a regional level. Therefore, the most recently available validated safety data available for National Highways' regions relates to the 2023 calendar year.
- 2.4 We have chosen to focus on performance trends since 2019 (the final full calendar year of RP1), rather than since 2020. The latter coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic, which significantly reduced traffic volumes and casualties.
- 2.5 The casualty figures used in this report are adjusted to account for differences and changes in how injury severity is reported by police forces, this enables a more reliable comparison of trends over time. The adjustment factors applied vary from year to year. The figures from this report are sourced from the adjustment of 2023 data. The data includes injury collisions and casualties on DBFO (design, build, finance and operate) roads, which are not managed directly by National Highways.
- 2.6 By the end of 2025, the target set for National Highways is to achieve a 50% reduction in KSIs compared with a baseline of the annual average from 2005 to 2009. By the end of 2023, National Highways remained off-course to achieve this target, with 1,913 people killed or seriously injured in 2023, a 39% reduction on the baseline.
- 2.7 In our [annual safety performance report](#) for 2023, we acknowledged that the company is doing everything it reasonably can to reduce casualties on the SRN. However, despite implementing additional measures, we consider it unlikely that National Highways will achieve its target. A further update on progress based on data collected in 2024 will be provided in our upcoming safety performance report.
- 2.8 Each region faces different challenges in reducing casualties, due to varying combinations of road types, highway design characteristics, and traffic volumes. Additionally, some of the key influences on casualty rates, like driver behaviour and advances in vehicle safety, lie outside of National Highways' immediate control.
- 2.9 Figure 2.1 shows total KSIs on the SRN by region in 2019 and 2023. This shows that the majority of regions have experienced an overall reduction in casualties since 2019. The largest reductions occurred in the East (22% reduction) and

Yorkshire and the North East (26% reduction). Only one region – the North West – saw casualties increase.

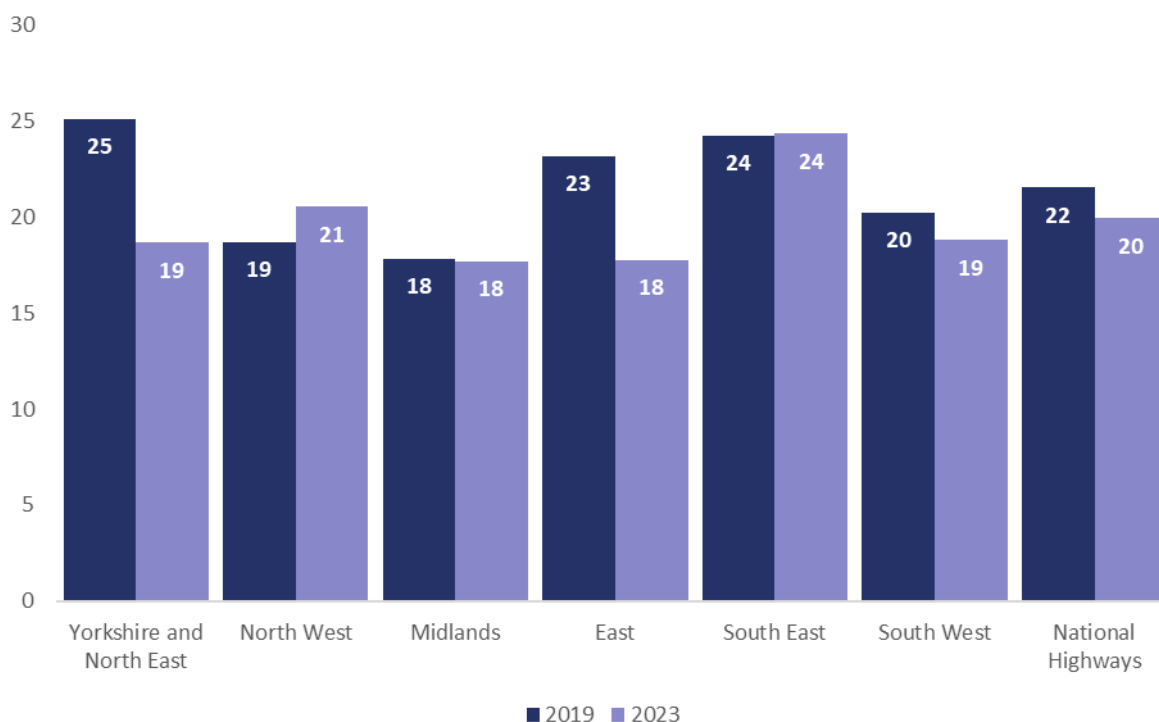
**Figure 2.1 Killed or seriously injured (adjusted) casualties, strategic road network, 2019 and 2023**



2.10 The number of KSI casualties is influenced by changes in traffic levels on the network. To account for this, Figure 2.2 shows the *rate* of KSIs on the SRN per billion vehicle miles travelled. This can be more instructive when considering trends in safety performance across regions and over time.

2.11 As with the SRN as a whole, regional KSI casualty rates have followed a downward trend between 2019 and 2023. However, this pattern is not uniform, with rates increasing in the North West and remaining broadly stable in the Midlands and South East.

**Figure 2.2 Killed or seriously injured (KSIs adjusted), KSI rate per billion vehicle miles travelled, strategic road network, 2019 and 2023**



## Performance indicators

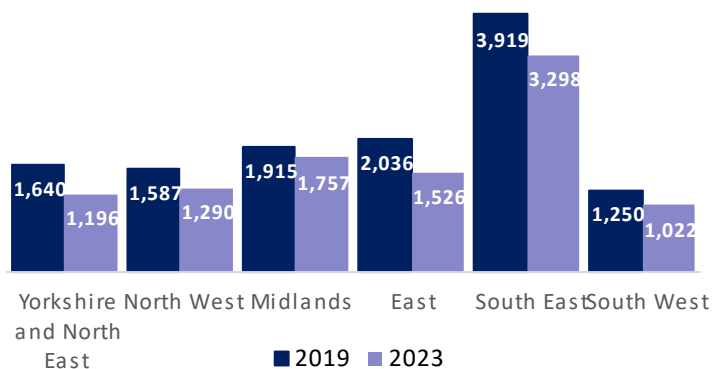
2.12 Data for three safety-related PIs are included in this report:

- the total number of people killed or injured on the SRN;
- the number of non-motorised and motorcyclist users killed or seriously injured on the SRN; and
- the total number of injury collisions.

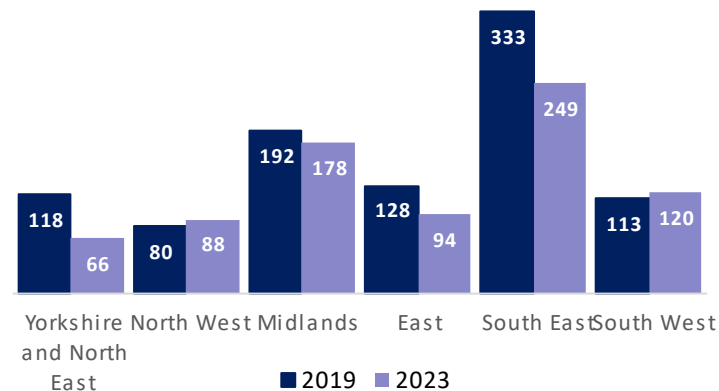
2.13 The **number of people killed or injured on the SRN** has fallen at a faster rate than the number killed or *seriously* injured (KSIs) with all regions showing reductions in the broader measure between 2019 and 2023. The total number of **injury collisions** also declined in all regions over the same period. Taken together, these trends suggest that reducing the number of more serious collisions and casualties is proving more challenging.

**Figure 2.3 Performance indicators**

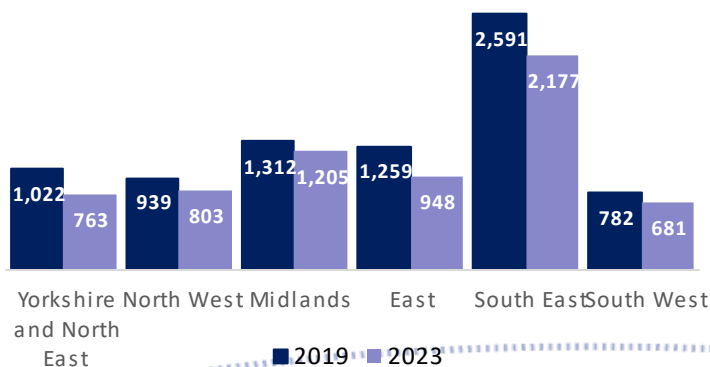
**Killed or injured on the SRN PI: total number of people killed or injured on the SRN, 2019 and 2023**



**Non-motorised and motorcyclists killed or seriously injured on the SRN PI: total number of people killed or injured on the SRN, 2019 and 2023**



**Injury collisions PI: total number of injury collisions on the SRN, 2019 and 2023**



# 3. Providing fast and reliable journeys

## Key findings

- Since the start of the road period, average delay has increased in all regions, with those that had the highest baseline levels of delay experiencing the largest increases.
- The South East reported the highest average delay, the highest delays due to roadworks and has been disproportionately impacted by roadworks.
- All regions met the national-level incident clearance target. Yorkshire and the Northeast exhibited the best performance. Performance worsened slightly in both the South East and South West.



### Key performance indicator: average delay

**Purpose:** This metric provides a measure of the overall delay experienced by users of the strategic road network.

**Ambition:** Government's ambition is for average delay in 2024-25 to be no worse than 9.5 seconds per vehicle mile



### Key performance indicator: incident clearance rate

**Purpose:** This KPI measures success against National Highways aim to provide fast and reliable journeys by rapidly restoring motorway traffic flow after an incident.

**Target:** 86% of incidents cleared within 1 hour



### Key performance indicator: roadworks network impact

**Purpose:** This metric is a hybrid of Road Period 1's Network Availability and Road Period 2's Roadworks Network Impact (RNI) and aims to balance interpretability and responsiveness.

**Target:** 51 million Lane-metre-days impacted by roadworks

## Performance indicators

Delay from roadworks.



Average Speed.



Journey time reliability.



## Key performance indicators

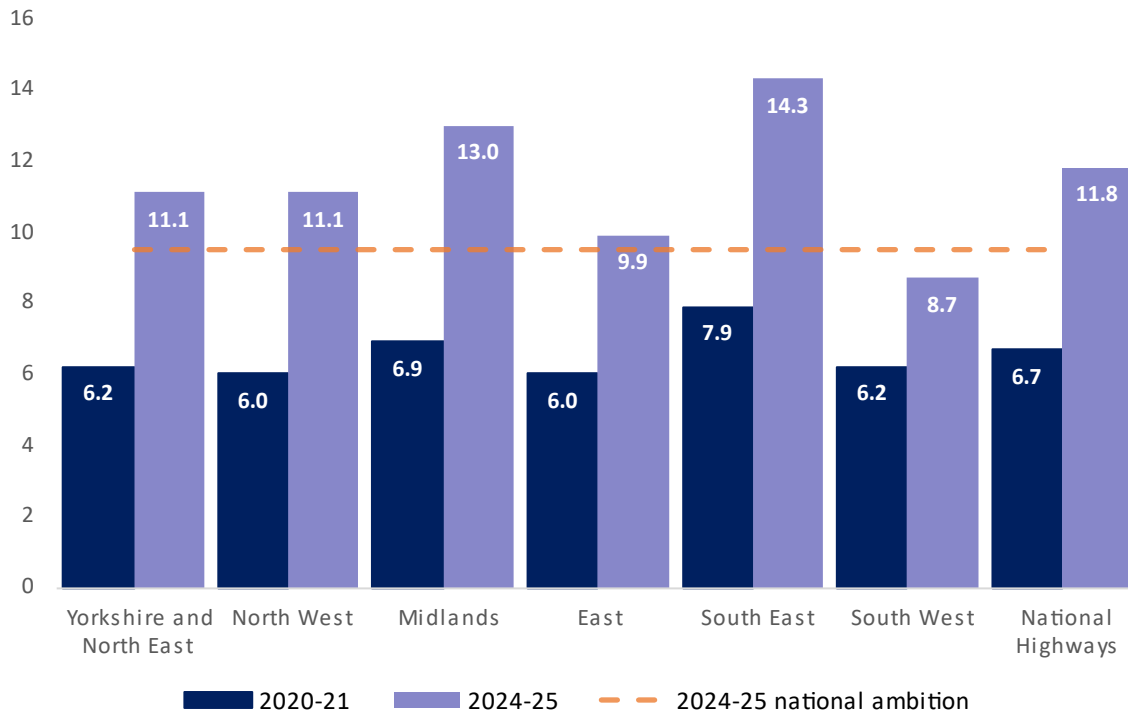
3.1 Three KPIs are reported at a regional level under outcome 2: providing fast and reliable journeys:

- **Average delay** measures the difference between the travel time at the speed limit and the actual travel time. The department set an ambition for performance at the end of RP2 to be no worse than 9.5 seconds per mile.
- **Roadworks network impact** captures the level of roadworks activity affecting traffic flow, measured in weighted lane-metre days. The national target throughout Road Period 2 was to remain below monthly averages of: 43 million weighted lane-metre days in 2021-22; 47 million in 2022-23; 48 million in 2023-24; and 51 million in 2024-25.
- The final KPI is **incident clearance**, which measures the percentage of motorway incidents cleared within one hour. The national target is to clear at least 86% of incidents within this timeframe.

### Average delay

- 3.2 Regional performance against this measure is shown in Figure 3.1. Delays in 2020–21 were influenced by reduced traffic volumes due to COVID-19. Nevertheless, at 11.8 seconds per vehicle mile, delays at the end of RP2 were considerably higher than pre-pandemic levels of 9.5 seconds per vehicle mile.
- 3.3 Average delays increased in all regions. At the end of RP2, the South East had the highest delays at 14.2 seconds per vehicle mile, followed by the Midlands at 13.0 seconds per vehicle mile. All other regions were below the network-wide average, with the South West recording the lowest delays at 8.7 seconds per vehicle mile – the only region to record delays lower than the national-level ambition of 9.5 seconds.
- 3.4 Notably, regions with the highest baseline delays at the start of the road period also experienced the largest increases. Delays rose by 6.4 seconds per vehicle mile (81%) in the South East, compared with an increase of 2.5 seconds per vehicle mile (40%) in the South West.

**Figure 3.1 Average delay KPI: seconds of delay per mile travelled, 2020-21 and 2024-25**

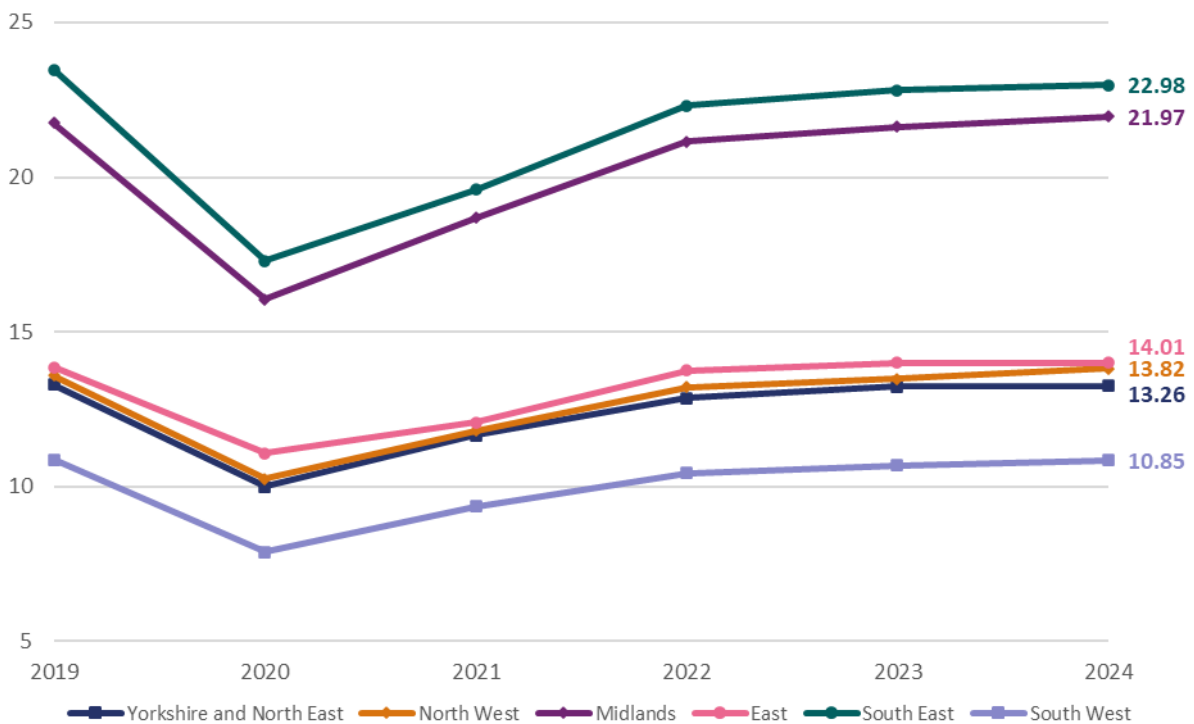


3.5 Previous reports highlighted that regional differences in average delay are closely linked to traffic volumes, a factor largely beyond National Highways’ control. Lower delays in 2020–21 clearly reflect reduced traffic in that year. As illustrated in Figure 3.2, traffic volumes across most regions have returned to pre-pandemic levels and average delays have increased as a result. The South East and Midlands stand out as having the highest traffic volumes, and the highest average delay.

3.6 Notwithstanding the relationship between traffic levels and delays, traffic volumes have increased only modestly since 2022. Despite these relatively stable traffic levels, average delays have continued to increase in every region. In all cases, delays now exceed pre-pandemic levels.

3.7 As noted in our annual assessment, it is essential that the company improves both the quality of its evidence and its understanding of why delays have increased at a significantly higher rate than traffic growth since the end of the pandemic.

**Figure 3.2 Traffic levels, billions vehicle miles, 2019 and 2024**



3.8 Roadworks are a key contributing factor to delays. During RP2, National Highways delivered a programme of safety improvements on smart motorways, including the national emergency area retrofit (NEAR) programme, which installed 151 additional emergency areas on all-lane-running sections. As discussed further in section 5, this programme is likely to have influenced regional roadworks patterns in 2024 and 2025. The regions most affected by the NEAR programme – Yorkshire and the North East, the Midlands, and the South East – all experienced significant increases in average delay between 2022–23 and 2024–25. Over this period, delays rose by 1.9 seconds, 2.9 seconds and 4.0 seconds respectively, compared with an increase of 2.3 seconds across the SRN as a whole.

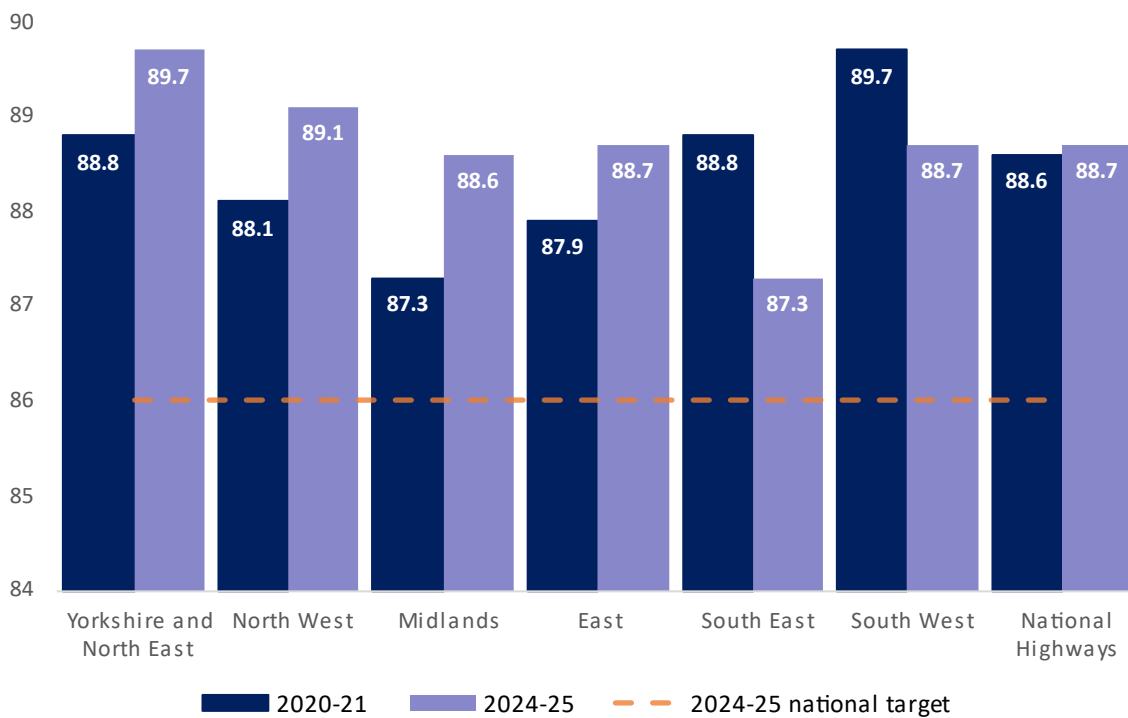
**Incident clearance**

3.9 Nationally, performance against this KPI has consistently exceeded the target of clearing 86% of motorway incidents from the network within one hour.

3.10 All regions performed above the national-level target throughout RP3. However, there was some variation in regional performance, with Yorkshire and North East and the North West achieving over 89% in 2024-25 compared with 87.3% in the South East.

- 3.11 Between the start and end of RP2, performance has declined in two regions: the South West and the South East. While the South East was one of the better performing regions in 2020-21, it is now the worst performing region.
- 3.12 National Highways is dealing with a growing number of incidents on the network. Regional analysis can support the identification and dissemination of good practice, helping to ensure incidents are managed safely and efficiently.

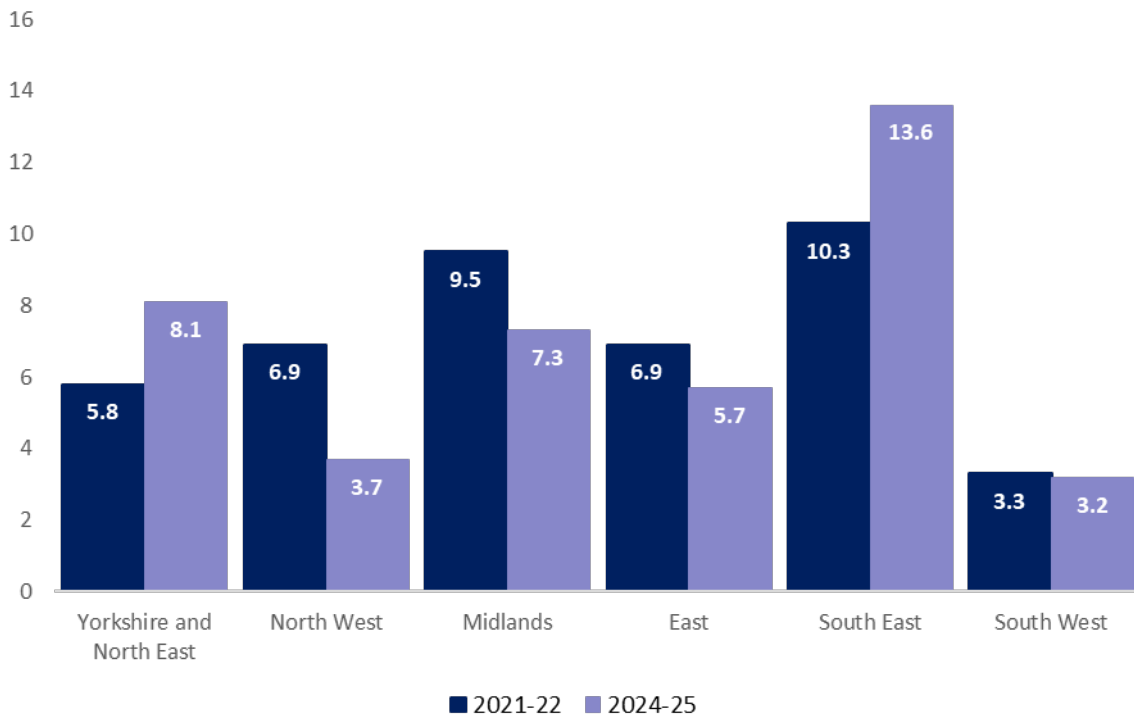
**Figure 3.3 Incident clearance KPI: percentage of incidents cleared within one hour, 2020-21 and 2024-25**



**Roadworks network impact**

- 3.13 This measure is designed to incentivise National Highways to manage maintenance and improvement activities in a way that minimises disruption and maintains the effective operation of the network. Regional data is available from 2021-22.
- 3.14 At the national level, National Highways met the target of keeping the impact of roadworks below 51 million weighted lane-metre days, finishing the period at 41.8 million (Figure 3.4).
- 3.15 Compared with 2021-22, the impact of roadworks increased in the South East and Yorkshire and the North East, but decreased in all other regions.

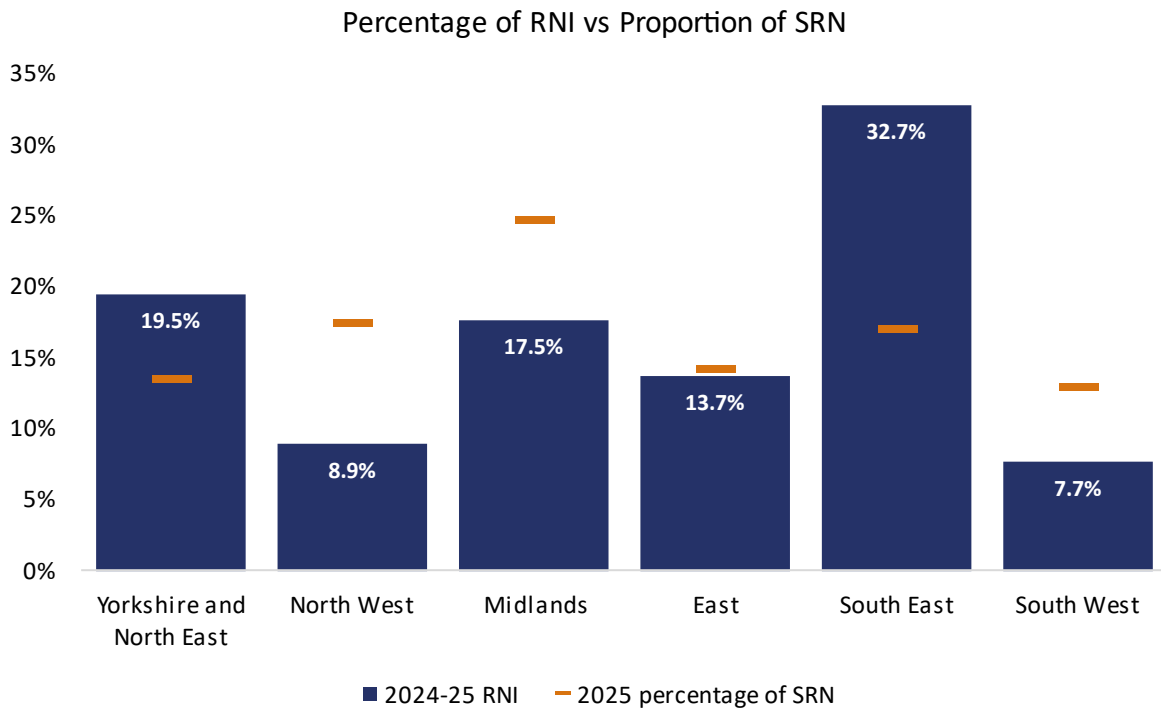
**Figure 3.4 Roadworks network impact KPI: weighted lane-metre days (millions), 2021-22 and 2024-25**



3.16 Regional variation in the level of roadworks is to be expected, reflecting differences in network size and the nature and extent of works required. It is therefore instructive to compare the level of roadworks (weighted lane metre days) in each region with the overall length (lane metres) of that regional network. This is shown for 2024-25 in Figure 3.5. Notably, roadworks have disproportionately impacted the South East. This region represents 17% of the SRN but accounted for 32.7% of the total weighted lane-metre days of roadworks.

3.17 The effects of the NEAR programme are also evident in the Roadworks Network Impact data. As noted above, the majority of NEAR schemes were located in Yorkshire and the North East, the Midlands, and the South East. As shown in Figure 3.5, these regions accounted for the highest proportion of weighted lane-metre days of roadworks disruption in 2024–25.

**Figure 3.5 Percentage of RNI vs Proportion of SRN in 2024-25**



### Performance Indicators

3.18 The company provides regional data for three PIs for this outcome area:

- journey time reliability – measured as the average difference between observed travel times and typical travel times;
- average speed – measures the average speed of vehicles travelling on the SRN; and
- delay from roadworks – measures the additional journey time during roadworks in minutes of delay per hour travelled.

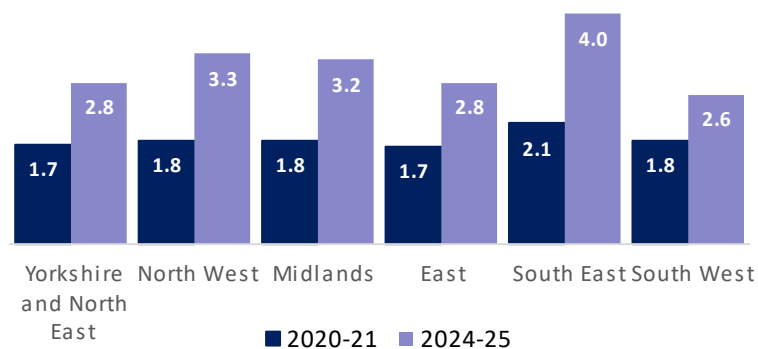
3.19 Nationally, **journey time reliability** has steadily worsened since the start of the road period, rising from 1.9 seconds of unexpected delay per vehicle per mile in 2020-21 to 3.2 seconds in 2024-25. The South East experienced the most unreliable journeys over this period, increasing from 2.1 to 4.0 seconds per vehicle per mile. This likely reflects the high volume of traffic in the region, as increased congestion tends to produce longer delays and greater variability in journey times, although roadworks may also contribute.

3.20 **Average speed** across the SRN steadily declines during the road period, with all regions reporting slower speeds in 2024–25 compared to 2020–21.

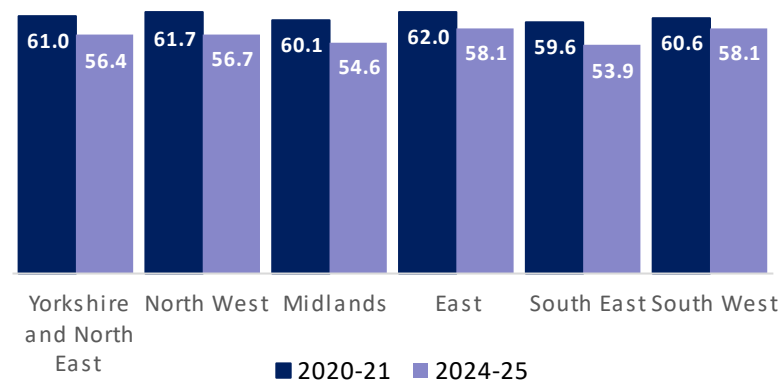
3.21 **Delays from roadworks** increased nationally from 0.9 minutes in 2020–21 to 1.5 minutes in 2024–25. This rise is likely due to a combination of factors, including higher traffic volumes and the extent of traffic restrictions associated with roadworks. The South East experienced the sharpest increase, with delays nearly doubling from 1.3 minutes in 2020–21 to 2.4 minutes in 2024–25, reflecting the corresponding rise in network impact from 10.3 to 13.6 lane-metre days.

Figure 3.6 Performance indicators

**Journey time reliability PI: differences in seconds between observed and actual travel time, 2020-21 and 2024-25**



**Average speed PI: miles per hour, 2020-21 and 2024-25**



**Delays due to roadworks PI: average annual delay (mins per hour travelled), 2020-21 and 2024-25**



# 4. A well maintained and resilient network

## Key findings

- Nationally pavement condition has improved although trends are affected by a change in methodology introduced in 2023-24.
- Pavement condition scores have improved in all regions except for the North West.
- The East region exhibits the lowest pavement condition and lags the national level target. However the gap between the East and the national average has narrowed slightly during RP2.



### Key performance indicator: pavement condition

**Purpose:** The metric monitors the level of condition provided by National Highways for the pavements across the Strategic Road Network excluding lengths forming parts of Design Build Finance and Operate, DBFO, concessions.

**Target:** Percentage of the network (as defined by HAPMS, excluding DBFOs) in good condition at 96.2% or above at the end of each year. (Target adjusted from 95% from 2023-24 following change in methodology).

### Performance indicators

Structures condition



Drainage resilience



Geotechnical condition



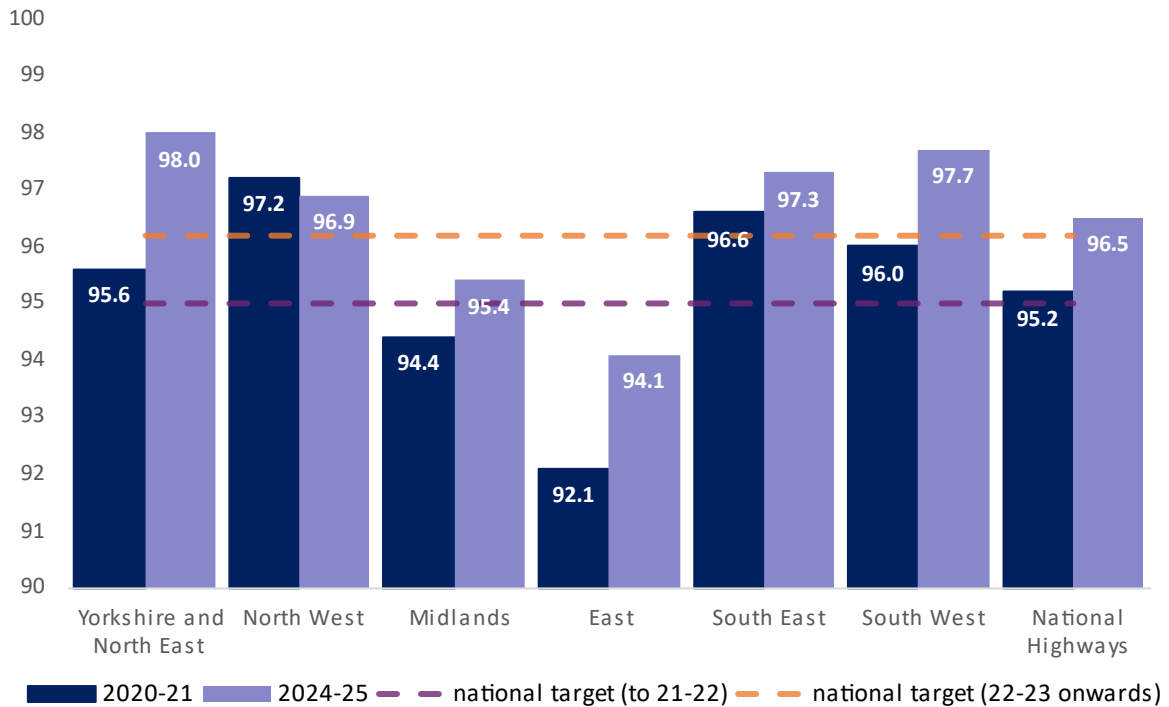
## Key Performance Indicators

- 4.1 The outcome area “a well-maintained and resilient network” is assessed through a single KPI: **pavement condition**. This measures the percentage of road surfaces that meet expected standards for characteristics such as smoothness and skid resistance.
- 4.2 The national target is for at least 96.2% of the SRN, excluding DBFO roads, to be in ‘good condition’ at the end of each financial year. Prior to 2022–23, the target was 95%, but it was revised to 96.2% following a change in methodology introduced in April 2022. Previously, only lane 1 (the left-hand lane) was assessed, which typically deteriorates more quickly due to heavier traffic. Under the revised approach, condition is averaged across all lanes, generally resulting in higher

scores. The target was adjusted to maintain a consistent level of challenge despite the methodological update.

- 4.3 As shown in Figure 4.1, most regions have seen pavement condition scores increase since the start of the road period, although this likely reflects the change in methodology described above. Yorkshire and the North East demonstrated the most notable improvement, with the proportion of the network in good condition rising 2.4%, from 95.6% in 2020–21 to 98.0% in 2024–25. The South East and North West also performed well, maintaining levels above the national target throughout RP2. Meanwhile, the Midlands and the East failed to meet the national target in any year, with the East recording the lowest proportion of pavements in good condition.
- 4.4 Pavement condition has been a persistent issue in the East. The high proportion of All Purpose Trunk Roads (ATPR), as well as the presence of some concrete road surfaces contribute to lower road surface quality. However, our research [comparing road surface across the company's regions](#) suggests that these factors fail to fully explain the performance gap between the East region and the network-wide average. There are signs of improvement, with the East's pavement condition score increasing by 2% during RP2, compared with a network-wide improvement of 1.3%.
- 4.5 During Road Period 3 (2026–2031), we expect National Highways to continue improving pavement condition in the Midlands and East regions, with the aim of reducing disparities relative to other regions.

**Figure 4.1 Pavement condition KPI: % of the SRN in good condition, 2020-21 and 2024-25**



## Performance Indicators

4.6 The regional PIs for this outcome area are:

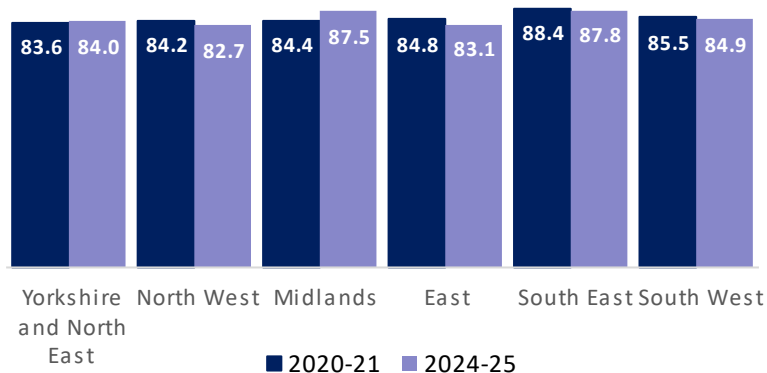
- structures condition – measured as an average condition score of an assets structural elements;
- critical structures condition – measure as the lowest condition score of any structural elements deemed as critical;
- drainage resilience – measures the percentage length of carriageway that does not have an observed significant susceptibility to flooding; and
- geotechnical asset condition – percentage length of the geotechnical asset that is in good condition.

4.7 There is significant regional variation in both the **average** and **critical structures condition measures**. This is likely to reflect differences in the type and age of structures across the regions rather than differences in maintenance practices. In contrast, **geotechnical condition** is much more consistent across the regions with a very small proportion of assets failing to meet condition standards.

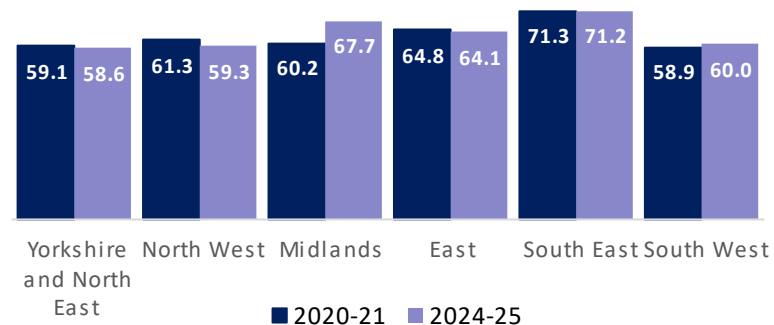
- 4.8 **Drainage resilience** is a key issue given increasing rainfall. While the reported percentage of the network without observed susceptibility to flooding is similar at the start and end of the road period, we consider, as described in our Annual Assessment, that this is influenced by the way the indicator is calculated, and that in reality drainage resilience has worsened.
- 4.9 All regional networks contain substantial areas susceptible to flooding, with the highest concentrations in the Midlands and South West. Differences in scores are likely due to a combination of topographic and climatic factors and are not necessarily a reflection of maintenance quality. For example, the East's drier climate may partly explain its higher performance.
- 4.10 All regions have an important role to play in delivering the improvements required to drainage asset management, as described in the Annual Assessment.

**Figure 4.2 Performance indicators**

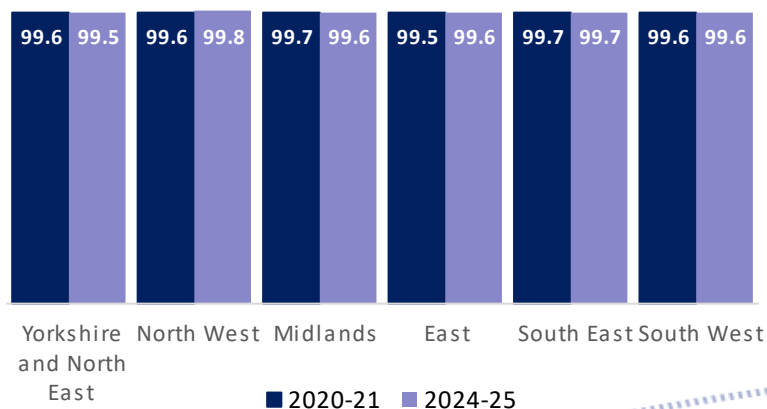
**Structures condition: average condition of structures across the SRN, 2020-21 and 2024-25**



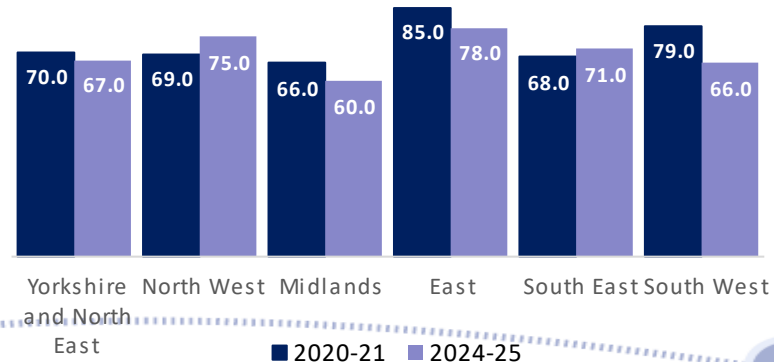
**Critical structures condition PI: lowest condition score of any structural elements deemed as critical, 2020-21 and 2024-25**



**Geotechnical condition PI: percentage length of the geotechnical asset that is in good condition, 2020-21 and 2024-25**



**Drainage resilience PI: percentage of carriageway without an observed significant susceptibility to flooding, 2020-21 and 2024-25**



# 5. Meeting the needs of all users

## Key findings

- Road user satisfaction declined sharply in the final year of RP2, likely reflecting rising delays and disruption from the network emergency area retrofit (NEAR), a programme to create additional emergency areas on sections of all lane running motorways.
- Satisfaction is highest in the South West (74.9%) and lowest in the Midlands (65.5%) and South East (66.1%), reinforcing the link between delays and user perceptions.
- All regions improved the timeliness and accuracy of roadworks information between the start and end of the road period. The South East has shown the largest improvement (+23.5%) but performance still lags other regions.



### Key performance indicator: road user satisfaction

**Purpose:** This metric gives National Highways a view of the long-term trends of how customers perceive their journeys on the strategic road network.

**Target:** based on April 2022 to January 2023 data, achieve a 73.0% road user satisfaction score in 2023-24.

A revised target of 71% has been set for 2024-25



### Key performance indicator: Roadworks information timeliness and accuracy

**Purpose:** This metric will help monitor performance in providing accurate and timely information about planned roadworks.

**Target:** Target set at the beginning of Roads Period 2 to achieve 90% accuracy of roadworks information seven days (rolling).

Target revised for 2024-25 to achieve 75% accuracy of roadworks information seven days (rolling) for the end of Road Period 2

### Performance indicators

Timeliness of information provided to road users through electronic signage



Ride quality



Working with local highways authorities to review diversion routes for unplanned events



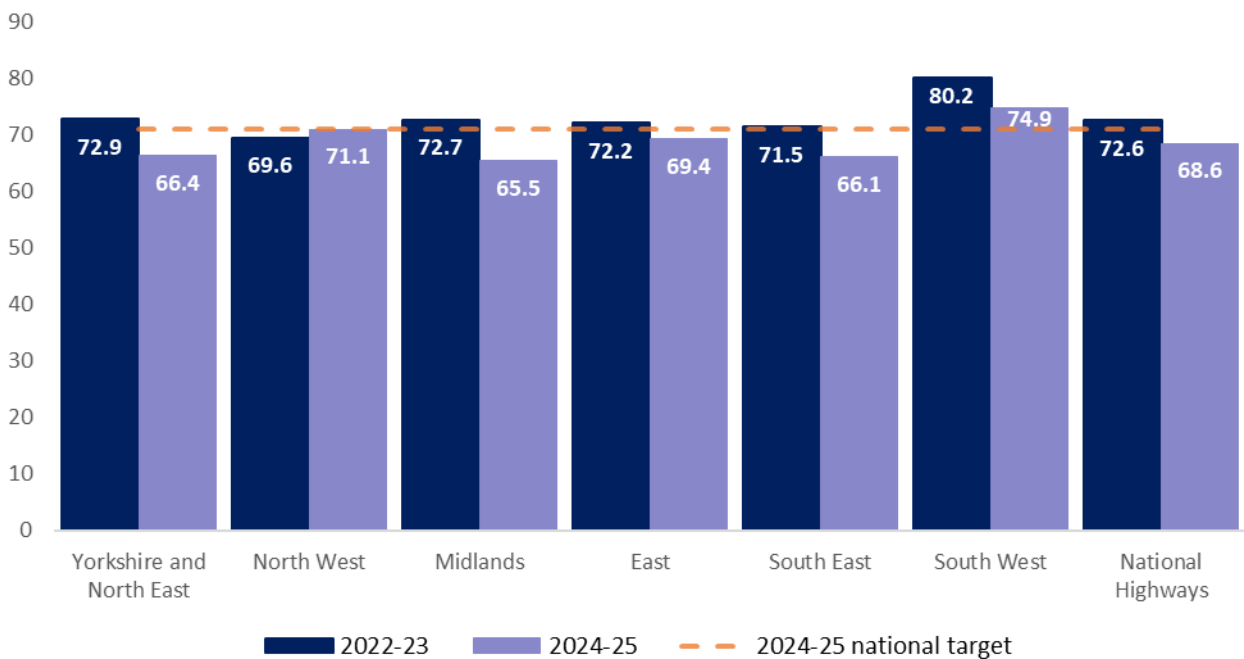
## Key Performance Indicators

- 5.1 The two key performance indicators (KPI) for 'Meeting the needs of all road users' are:
- The **road user satisfaction** KPI is measured via monthly surveys conducted by Transport Focus.
  - The second KPI evaluates **the accuracy of overnight roadworks information** provided by National Highways and whether these were notified seven days in advance.

## Road User Satisfaction

- 5.2 The Strategic Roads User Survey (SRUS), managed by Transport Focus, measures satisfaction with a single journey on the SRN taken within the previous 28 days. It captures a range of aspects of the user experience, including overall satisfaction.
- 5.3 The survey was suspended during the pandemic and, as a result, the KPI was paused for the remainder of 2020–21. An online version of the survey was launched in April 2021; however, results were not directly comparable with the previous face-to-face method. Consequently, the KPI remained suspended during 2022–23 due to insufficient baseline data.
- 5.4 From April 2023, a new satisfaction target of 73% was introduced, based on ten months of data. This was subsequently revised to 71% for 2024–25 following a review by the Department for Transport.
- 5.5 User satisfaction declined in all regions between 2022–23 and 2024–25 with the exception of the North West which achieved a slight improvement despite the declining national trend.
- 5.6 The South West continues to exhibit the highest levels of user satisfaction. User satisfaction in the region stood at 74.9% in 2024-25, although this represents a reduction on earlier years. The Midlands and South East recorded the lowest satisfaction levels, falling to 65.5% and 66.1%, respectively, in 2024–25.

**Figure 5.1 Percentage of satisfactory journeys on the SRN, 2022-23 and 2024-25**



- 5.7 In previous reports, we noted a correlation between user satisfaction and delay. This helps explain why the Midlands and South East – the regions with the highest average delays – also record the lowest satisfaction levels.
- 5.8 In 2024–25, this relationship remains evident, with satisfaction falling across all regions as delays increased. It is also notable that the largest regional reductions in user satisfaction between 2022–23 and 2024–25 appear to coincide with regions that experienced the greatest disruption from the NEAR programme, which began in early 2024. This is illustrated in Table 5.1. While NEAR is intended to improve smart motorway safety, lane closures and reduced speed limits have contributed to longer delays and lower user satisfaction.
- 5.9 The Midlands and South East stand out as the regions most affected, followed by Yorkshire and the North East. The Midlands, with seven NEAR schemes and average delays peaking at 13.0 seconds per vehicle per mile in 2024–25, saw user satisfaction fall by 7.2 percentage points. The South East, with six NEAR schemes, 52 worksites, and the highest recorded delays (14.3 seconds per vehicle per mile in 2024–25), experienced a decline of 5.4 percentage points. Both regions also saw an increase in the proportion of surveyed users reporting that they had passed through roadworks during their journey. In contrast, the North West – where there were no NEAR schemes – was the only region to record an improvement in user satisfaction between 2022-23 and 2024-25.

5.10 Based on these findings, now that the NEAR programme has come to an end, we would expect those regions most affected will achieve improvements in both delays and user satisfaction.

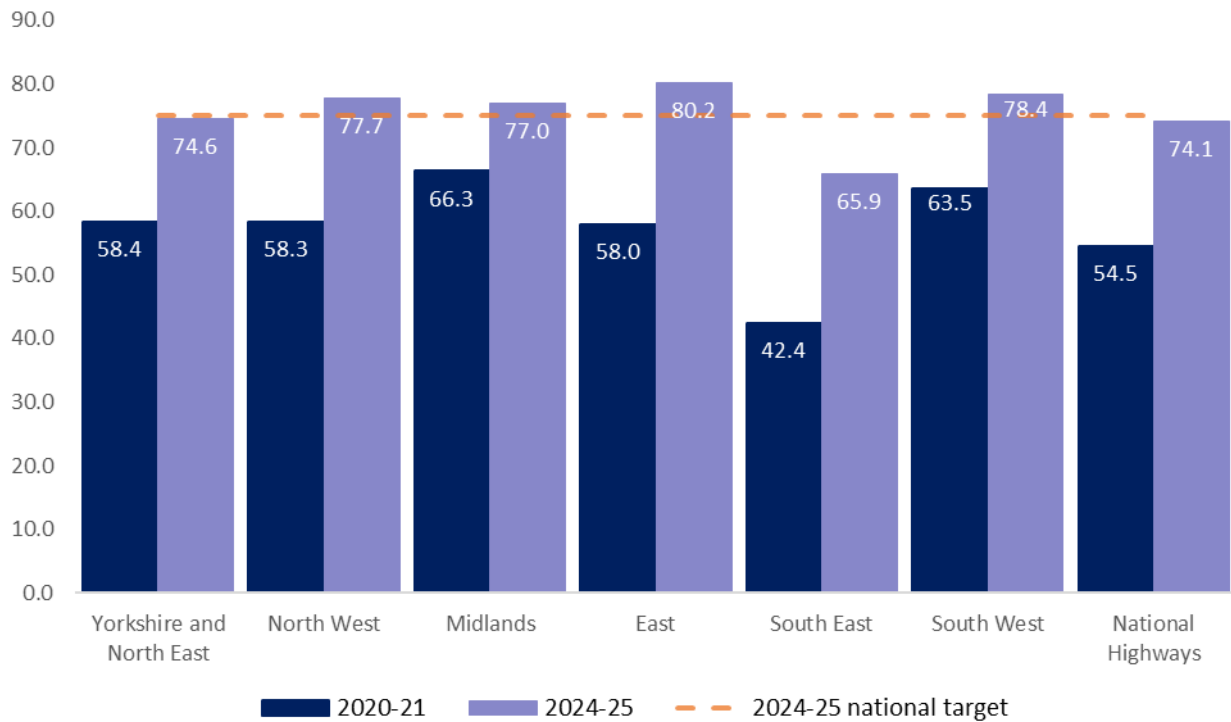
**Table 5.1 Near schemes by region**

Region	NEAR schemes	NEAR work sites	Change in user satisfaction (22-23 to 24-25)
Yorkshire and North East	2	23	-6.5
North West	0	0	+1.5
Midlands	7	68	-7.2
East	1	8	-2.8
South East	6	52	-5.4
South West	0	0	-5.3

### Timeliness and accuracy of roadworks information

- 5.11 Poor performance in the provision of roadworks information can contribute to higher delays and lower user satisfaction. The original target for the accuracy of roadworks information during the second road period was 90%, measured on a rolling seven-day basis. For 2024–25, this target was revised to 75% by the end of RP2, reflecting the challenges of achieving the original target while maintaining a focus on improvement.
- 5.12 National Highways has made consistent progress, with all regions showing substantial improvement since the start of RP2. The South East recorded the largest increase, rising by 23.5 percentage points, but remains the weakest performer at 65.9% in 2024–25.
- 5.13 Relatively poor performance against this measure in the South East is, at least in part, linked to the M25 DBFO. Under the terms of the contract inherited by National Highways, the DBFO company must rectify defects within five days – a shorter timescale than for the network operated directly by National Highways. As a result, it is not possible for the DBFO company to notify all roadworks within the seven-day period.

**Figure 5.2 Roadworks information timeliness and accuracy KPI: percentage of overnight road closures that are accurately notified, 2020-21 and 2024-25**



## Performance Indicators

5.14 There are three PIs that the company provides regional data for:

- timeliness of information provided to road users through electronic signage monitors the speed with which National Highways uses electronic signage to alert users of an incident on a motorway;
- ride quality performance – this indicator is a sub-set of the pavement condition metric discussed under the ‘well maintained and resilient’ outcome; and
- working with local highways authorities to review diversion routes for unplanned events – the percentage of local highways authorities which National Highways engaged with, to review diversion routes for unplanned events.

5.15 All regions worsened the **timeliness of roadworks information provided through electronic signage** with the exception of the South East where performance remained steady. Yorkshire and the North East and Midlands both perform above the national average.

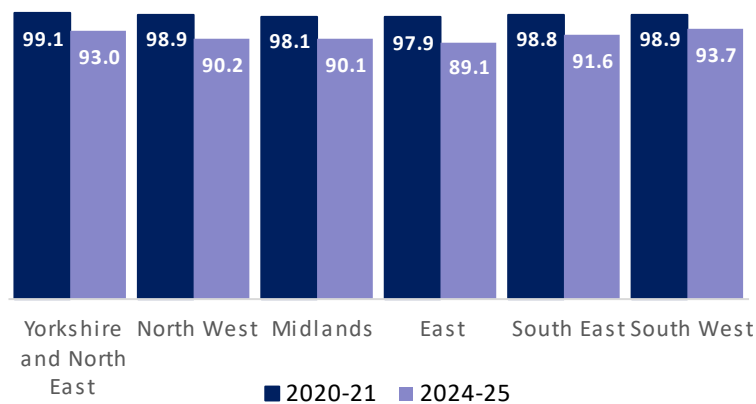
- 5.16 Due to National Highways using a new methodology for **ride quality** from April 2023, this has shown a decline across the strategic road network between the first and last years of the second road period. However, performance has remained consistent during both methodologies, showing stable performance.
- 5.17 National Highways has raised its performance in **working with local highways authorities to review diversion routes for unplanned events**, achieving 100% in all regions in the final two years of the road period.

**Figure 5.3 Performance indicators**

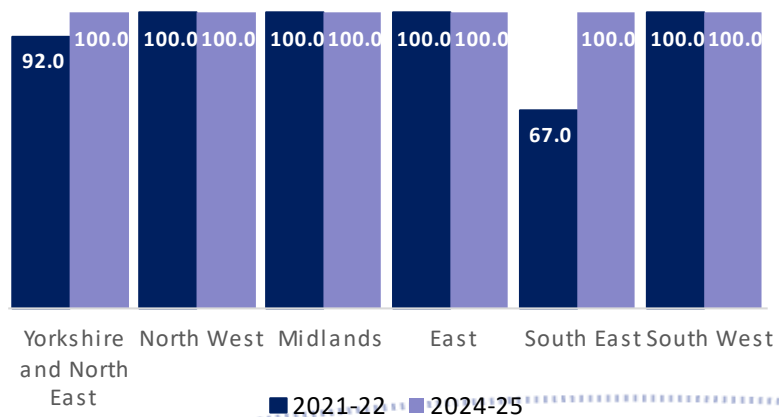
**Timeliness of information provided to road users through electronic signage PI - average median signal setup time (in minutes) in response to incidents, 2020-21 and 2024-25**



**Ride quality PI - percentage of pavement delivering ride quality, 2020-21 and 2024-25**



**Working with local highways authorities to review diversion routes for unplanned events PI, 2021-22 and 2024-25**



# 6. Delivering better environmental outcomes

## Key findings:

- National Highways met national end-of-RP2 targets for air quality, noise and biodiversity.
- Environmental improvements were delivered in all regions, with biodiversity mitigation concentrated in the East and North West, and noise mitigation concentrated in the South East and North West.



### Key performance indicator: noise

**Purpose:** This metric monitors how effectively National Highways is reducing noise exposure from the SRN near communities.

**Target:** 7,500 households benefitting from noise exposure reduction in mitigated Noise Important Areas



### Key performance indicator: biodiversity

**Purpose:** Support the government’s ambition for environmental net gain in development and provide transparency of our biodiversity performance.

**Target:** Achieve no net loss of biodiversity, across all National Highways activities, by the end of Road Period 2.





### Key performance indicator: air quality


**Purpose:** National Highways supports delivery of the government’s National Air Quality Plan, including the delivery of measures to achieve compliance in the shortest timescales.

**Target:** Bring links agreed with the department and based on the Pollution Climate Mapping model into compliance with legal NO2 limits in the shortest timescales possible

### Performance indicators

Supply chain carbon emissions 

Water quality 

Litter 

## Key performance indicators

6.1 Three KPIs are reported at a regional level for ‘Delivering better environmental outcomes’.

- The Noise KPI tracks the number of households within Noise Important Areas (NIAs) where noise pollution has been reduced through National Highways funded projects.

- The Air Quality KPI requires National Highways to deliver air quality mitigation on links identified by the government that exceed legal air quality limits.
- Biodiversity is the variety of animal and plant life, with a vital role in sustaining our natural environment. A biodiversity unit is linked to the size, condition and location of a habitat or piece of land. The KPI requires National Highways to deliver a minimum number of biodiversity units via environmental improvement or mitigation projects.

6.2 The noise and biodiversity KPIs required National Highways to deliver specified levels of improvement or mitigation over the course of RP2. Accordingly, the regional comparison is presented for the five-year period as a whole.

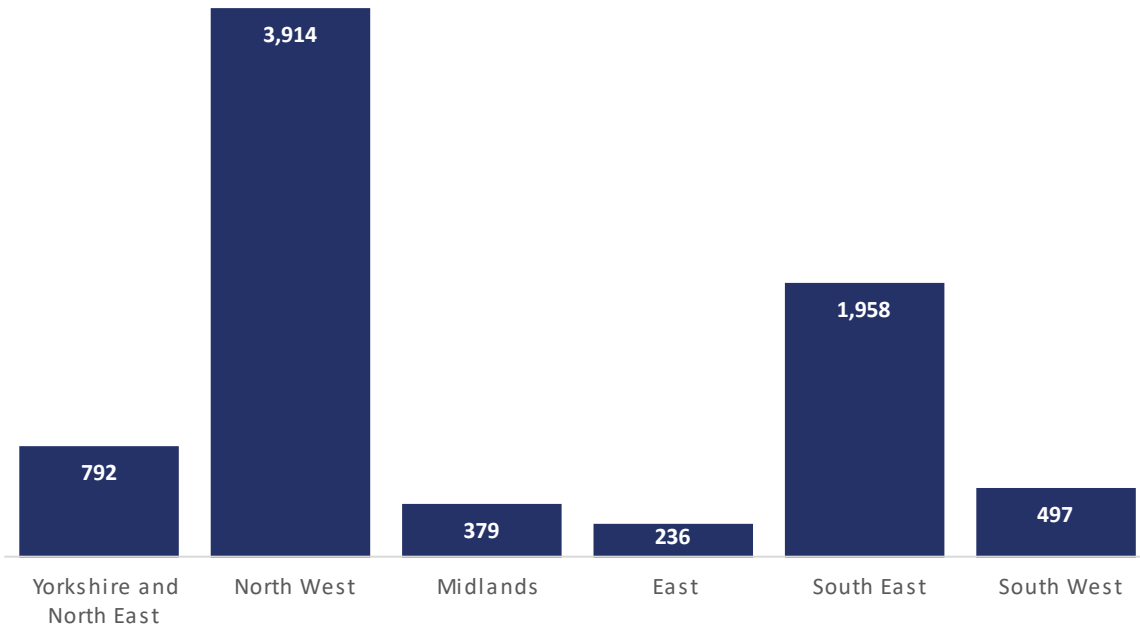
6.3 Environmental issues and the associated need for mitigation are not distributed evenly across the country. For example, NIAs and air quality exceedances are more concentrated in certain regions than in others. Consequently, regional differences in the level of improvement or mitigation delivered, as measured by the KPIs, do not necessarily reflect differences in performance.

### Noise

6.4 During RP2, National Highways delivered noise mitigation to 7,776 households in designated Noise Important Areas (NIAs), exceeding the national target of 7,500 households.

6.5 The North West made the largest contribution, accounting for over half of all households benefiting from noise mitigation during this road period. The South East also delivered significant mitigation. By contrast, regions such as the East and South West recorded much lower levels of delivery, which may reflect fewer eligible NIAs or mitigation opportunities rather than underperformance.

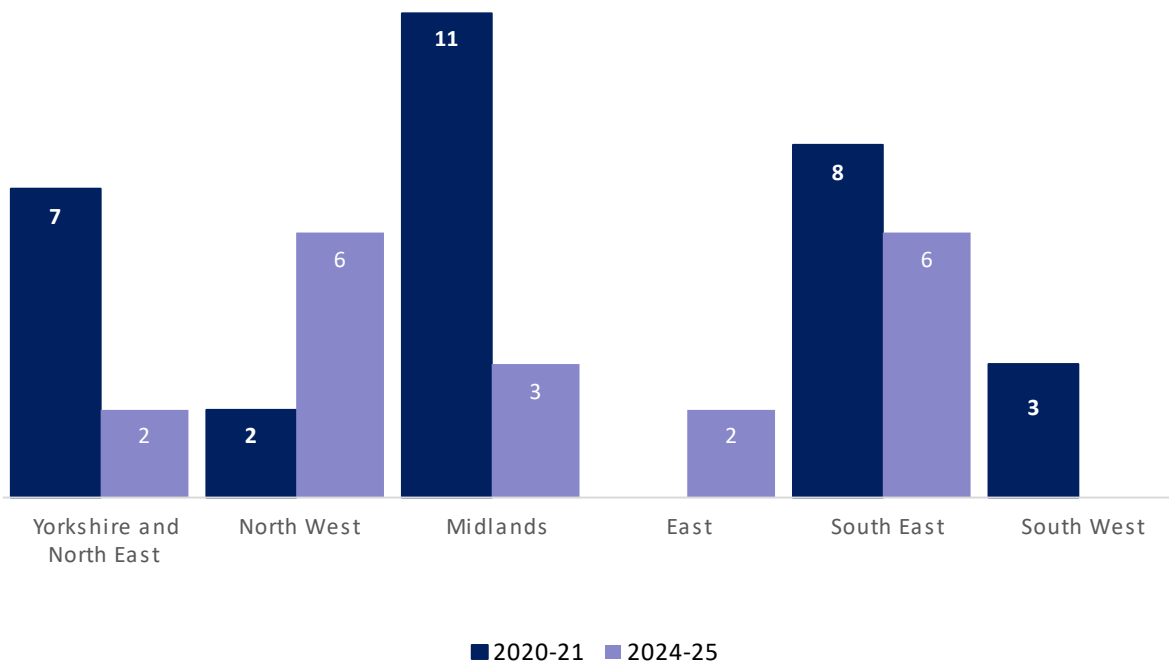
**Figure 6.1 Noise KPI: total number of mitigated households in noise important areas over the second road period**



## Air Quality

- 6.6 For air quality, National Highways is responsible for ensuring that road sections exceeding the legal limits (set by the European Union and adopted by the UK government) for nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) concentrations are brought into compliance in the shortest timescales possible.
- 6.7 At the start of RP2, there were 31 network links where air quality exceeded the legal NO<sub>2</sub> limit. This figure was revised to 43 links by 2022–23 following further assessment. By the end of the road period, the number of links with exceedances had reduced to 19. Notably, the Midlands saw a reduction of eight links, with the outturn number of links exceeding the legal NO<sub>2</sub> limit falling from 11 to three.
- 6.8 At the end of the road period, two regions—the North West and the South East—accounted for 12 of the 19 remaining links with exceedances. This likely reflects the proximity of the road networks in these regions to dense, built-up areas rather than regional differences in performance.

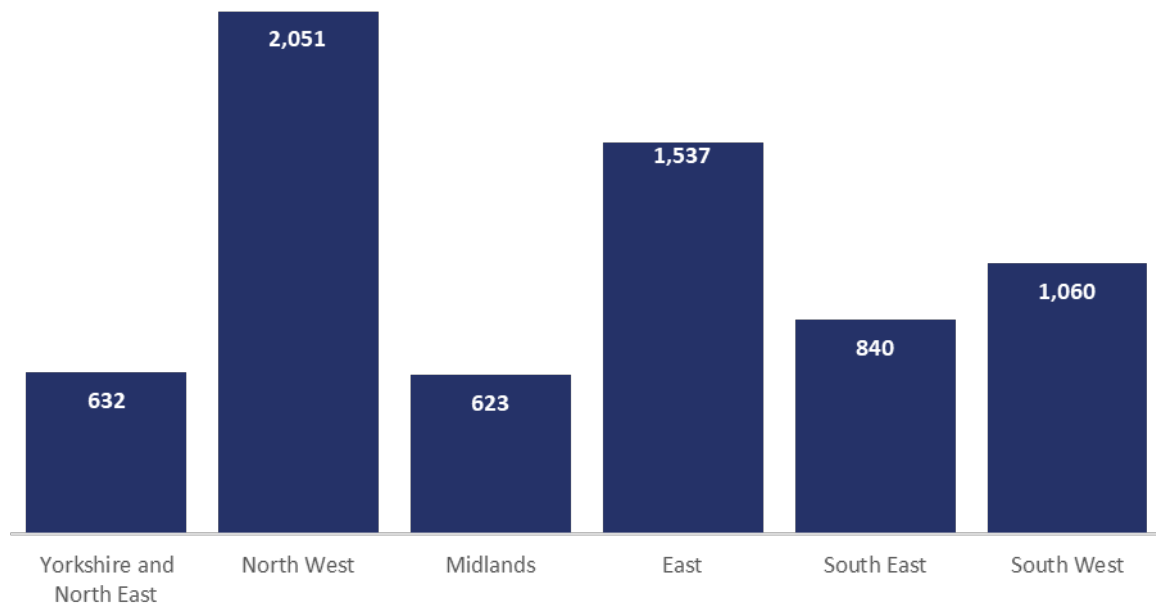
**Figure 6.2 Air quality KPI: number of SRN links above the legal nitrogen dioxide (NO2) limits in RP2, 2020-21 and 2024-25**



## Biodiversity

- 6.9 During RP2, National Highways delivered a total of 6,743 biodiversity units across the network. Delivery was distributed across all regions, although contributions varied. The North West recorded the highest total, with 2,051 units, followed by the East with 1,537 units and the South West with 1,061 units.
- 6.10 At the outturn of RP2 National Highways had successfully met its KPI for no-net biodiversity loss, achieving a net gain of 596 biodiversity units.
- 6.11 Regional data is based on the number of units delivered, rather than the net change.

**Figure 6.3 Biodiversity KPI – total biodiversity units delivered within the second road period**



## Performance Indicators

6.12 At a regional level there are three performance indicators reported:

- water quality – measures improvements to watercourses by reducing pollution from high-risk outflows and through enhancements such as rewilding and river restoration;
- supply chain carbon – assesses the carbon impact of road projects to ensure design, construction, and maintenance practices align with the government's low-carbon objectives; and
- litter – monitors the cleanliness of the strategic road network in line with the Code of Practice on litter and refuse.

6.13 National Highways has enhanced the **water quality** of 59 kilometres of watercourse, with the highest proportion (20km) delivered in the East.

6.14 Over the road period National Highways has worked to improve its **supply chain carbon emissions** reporting, which will improve quality of information provided in the future. Regional reporting began in 2021-22, and can be highly variable depending on phasing and types of projects. National supply chain emissions have

risen from 286,238 tonnes/CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent in 2021 to 334,124 tonnes/CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent in 2024-25.

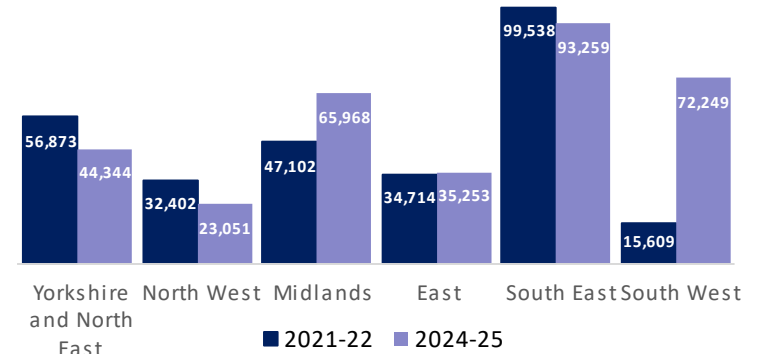
- 6.15 The proportion of the SRN meeting the A and B criteria for **litter** and refuse increased in all regions during RP2. The North West achieved the greatest improvement and, by the end of the period, also had the highest proportion of the network meeting the standard, at 81.5%. In contrast, only 43.7% of the network in the Midlands met this standard, highlighting the continued scope for improvement.

**Figure 6.4 Performance Indicators**

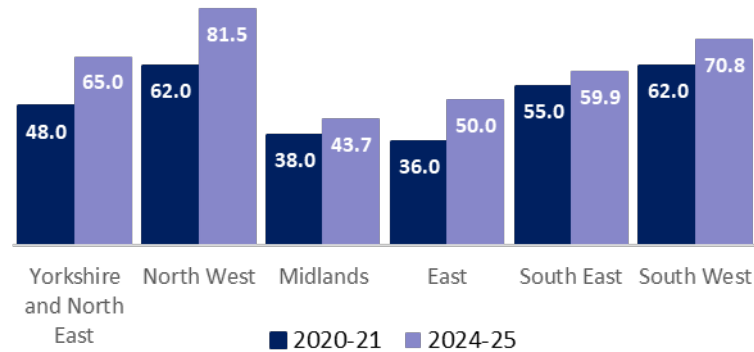
**Water quality PI - length of watercourse enhanced (km) across the second road period**



**Supply chain carbon emissions PI: tonnes of CO2 emitted, 2021-22 and 2024-25**



**Litter PI: the percentage of the Strategic Road Network where litter is graded at A or B, 2020-21 and 2024-25**





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