



in Lancashire

Highway maintenance services

Fieldwork 11 June – 18 July 2008

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1 Executive Summary

This wave of the Life in Lancashire panel dealt with residents' perceptions of, and satisfaction with, highway services provided by the county council. The survey was sent to all 3301 members of the panel. In total 2553 questionnaires were returned, giving an overall response rate of 77%.

1.1 Key findings

- Residents are most satisfied with the condition and maintenance of street lighting (72% and 79% satisfied respectively) and pedestrian crossings (62% and 72% satisfied respectively). They are least satisfied with the condition and maintenance of roads (39% and 34% satisfied respectively) and pavements (34% and 38% satisfied respectively).
- Three-fifths of respondents disagreed that roads and pavements are repaired quickly (58% and 57% disagreed respectively). There was more agreement with the statement that streetlights are repaired quickly (41% agree).
- Residents of Ribble Valley were on the whole more satisfied with the condition and maintenance of roads and pavements, and were more likely to think they are repaired quickly. In Lancaster more residents were satisfied with the condition and maintenance of cycle paths.
- Three-fifths of respondents were satisfied with winter maintenance services last year (59%), Ribble Valley residents being more satisfied. Most thought the council salts about the right amount of the road network (59%), although a third would like more roads salting (33%).
- When communicating road works seven in ten residents hear about them from roadside notices (either in advance or during the road works). Respondents prefer to be informed of road works from roadside notices in advance of the works (61%) and from local newspapers (53%), rather than indirect methods (word-of-mouth 8%).
- Most respondents haven't reported a highway fault (86%). Most people reported faults by telephone (62%). Seven in ten people found it easy to report the fault, though one in five found it difficult. There were more people satisfied with how their query was handled (50%) than satisfied with the outcome of reporting the problem (32%).
- On the whole respondents found road and street signs directed them to where they want to go (66% and 51% satisfied respectively). Most respondents were satisfied with the ease of crossing the road with a pram or wheelchair (43% satisfied), though one in six people were dissatisfied.

- Almost twice as many people felt there weren't enough cycle lanes (41%) as thought the number was about right (24%). Lancaster residents were more likely to be satisfied with the number of cycle lanes (37% about right), and younger people and those with children were more likely to say there are too few.
- Among people who use each form of transport, people feel safest travelling in a car (93% safe), followed by as a pedestrian (76% safe). Feelings of safety among motorcycle and bicycle users are much lower (43% and 38% respectively), and only a quarter of horse riders feel safe.

1.2 Recommendations

- In order to improve satisfaction with the condition and maintenance of both roads and pavements the ways of improving their condition and maintenance should be looked into (eg ensuring they are repaired quickly), or look at ways to improve public perceptions.
- Make sure road works have notices posted by the roadside in advance of any road works, and where appropriate make use of local newspapers to advertise any closures or disruptions as these are the most preferred options.
- Review which roads get salted during the winter months, as a third of respondents would like more to be salted.
- To improve the process of reporting highway network faults, it is suggested:
 - that the reasons behind why people were less satisfied with the outcome or reporting highway faults be investigated into;
 - to look at ways of improving how queries are handled; and
 - to decide the preferred method for reporting faults, as the telephone is the most commonly used at present, and then promote these communication channels (eg the county council website to increase its use).
- To improve feelings of safety while travelling on a bicycle and motorcycle:
 - the creation of more cycle lanes could be considered; and
 - more training courses for motorcycle and bicycle users could be set up, expanded or promoted more extensively.
- Look at ways of further improving road crossings to make them easier for wheelchair users and people with prams to use.

2 Introduction

Lancashire County Council has used Life in Lancashire regularly since August 2001. A panel of willing participants is recruited and is approached on a regular basis to seek their views on a range of topics and themes. Panel members are voluntary participants in the research they complete and no incentives are given for completion.

The panel has been designed to be a representative cross-section of the county's population. The results for each survey are weighted in order to reflect the demographic profile of the county's population.

The panel provides access to a sufficiently large sample of the population so that reliable results can be reported at a county wide level. It also provides data at a number of sub-area and sub-group levels.

Each Life in Lancashire wave is themed. Firstly, it enables sufficient coverage on a particular topic to be able to provide insight into that topic. And secondly, it comes across better to the residents completing the questionnaires if there is a clear theme (or 2-3 clear themes) within each survey.

The panel is refreshed periodically. New members are recruited to the panel and some current members are retired on a random basis. This means that the panel remains fresh and is not subject to conditioning i.e. the views of panel members become too informed with county council services to be unrepresentative of the population as a whole.

3 Research Objectives

The objectives of this consultation are to:

- find out how satisfied residents are with the condition and maintenance of the highway network, and winter maintenance services;
- learn how residents find out about road works in their local area;
- gauge residents satisfaction with the mechanisms of reporting highway faults; and
- find out how safe people feel travelling on the highway network and how easy it is to use.

4 Methodology

This wave of Life in Lancashire research was sent to 3301 members of the panel on 11 June. A reminder was sent on the 2 July, and the fieldwork ended on 18 July 2008.

In total 2553 questionnaires were returned, giving an overall response rate of 77%.

All data are weighted by age, ethnicity and district to reflect the Lancashire overall population, and figures are based on all respondents unless otherwise stated. The weighted responses have been scaled to match the effective response of 2147, which is the equivalent size of the data if it had not been weighted and was a perfect random sample.

4.1 Limitations

The table below shows the sample tolerances that apply to the results in this survey. Sampling tolerances vary with the size of the sample as well as the percentage results.

Number of respondents	50/50 + / -	30/70 + / -	10/90 + / -
50	14%	13%	8%
100	10%	9%	6%
200	7%	6%	4%
500	4%	4%	3%
1000	3%	3%	2%
2000	2%	2%	1%

On a question where 50% of the people in a sample of 1000 respond with a particular answer, the chance are 95 out of 100 that the answer would be between 47% and 53% (ie +/- 3%), versus a complete coverage of the entire Lancashire population using the same procedure.

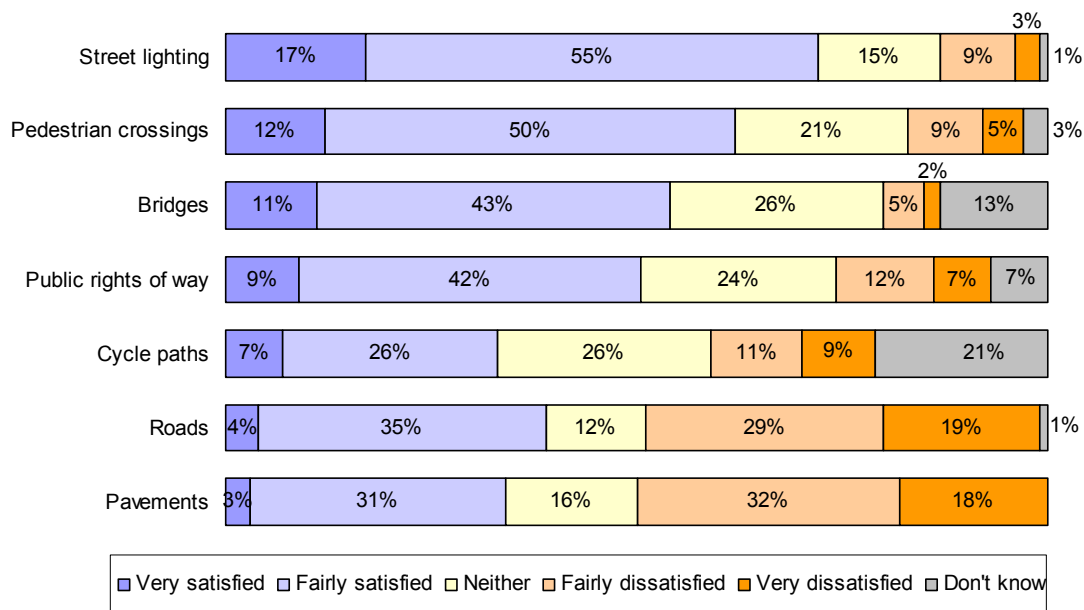
In charts or tables where responses do not add up to 100%, this is due to multiple responses or computer rounding.

5 Main Research Findings

5.1 Satisfaction with highway network services

The first section of the questionnaire looked at residents’ satisfaction with a range of highway services provided by the county council. The first question asked about perceptions of the condition of the highway network. Residents are most satisfied with the condition of street lighting and pedestrian crossings (72% and 62% very or fairly satisfied respectively). The lowest levels of satisfaction exist for the condition of roads, pavements and cycle paths (39%, 34% and 33% very or fairly satisfied respectively) – although one in five people didn’t give an opinion on cycle paths. Overall, there are few people very satisfied with any parts of the highway network, the highest for street lighting is only one in six people very satisfied.

Chart 1 - Thinking about your local area how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the condition of the following parts of the highway network?



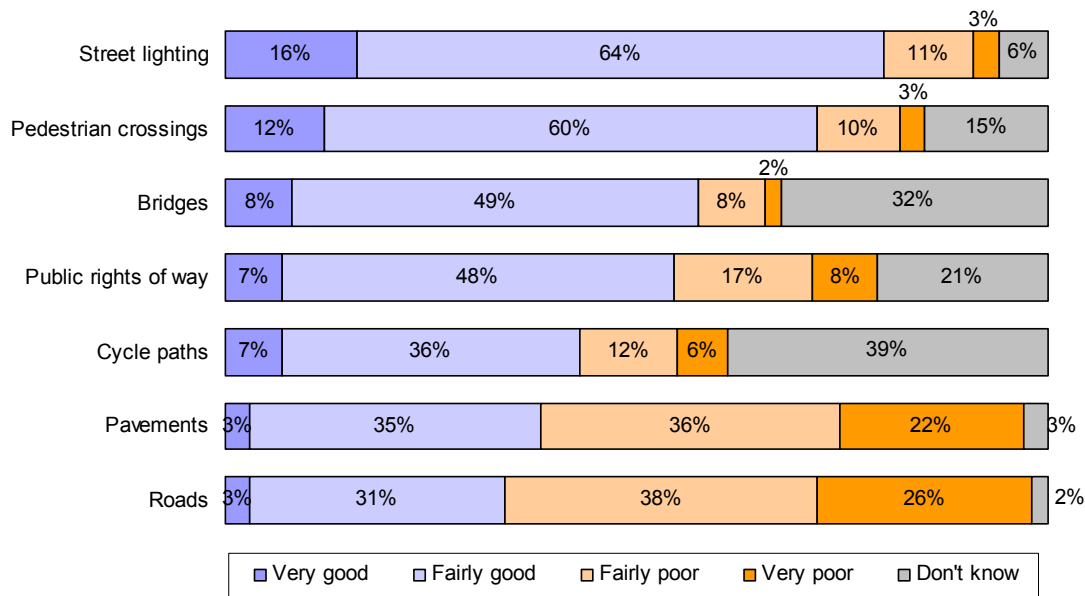
Base: All respondents (Unweighted 2356 to 2508, Weighted 2039 to 2114)

There are some differences in satisfaction with the different parts of the highways system for different people. For many parts of the highway network Ribble Valley residents are more likely to be satisfied with its condition (49% satisfied with pavements, 51% satisfied with roads, and 65% satisfied with public rights of way). In Lancaster residents were more likely to be satisfied with the condition of cycle paths (57% satisfied, 20% very satisfied). Whereas residents of Rossendale were less likely to be satisfied with roads (23% satisfied) and bridges (32% satisfied).

There are also some differences by demographic profile for some parts of the highway network. For roads, people who own their own home are less likely to be satisfied (50% are dissatisfied, 34% very dissatisfied), as are people aged 45 to 59 (55% dissatisfied). Older residents are more satisfied with street lighting (25% very satisfied) and less satisfied with pavements (40% of 25 to 44 year olds, 32% of 45 to 59 year olds, and 31% of the over 60s are satisfied). White residents are more likely to be dissatisfied with the condition of pavements compared to BME residents (51% and 41% dissatisfied respectively).

Looking at perception of highway maintenance services, respondents are most likely to say the maintenance of street lighting and pedestrian crossings are good (79% and 72% very or fairly good respectively). Again respondents are less likely to say the maintenance of pavements and roads are good (38% and 34% very or fairly good respectively). There were more people who felt they couldn't give an opinion on maintenance services, especially for cycle paths, bridges and public rights of way.

Chart 2 - And, in your local area how would you rate the maintenance of the following parts of the highway network?



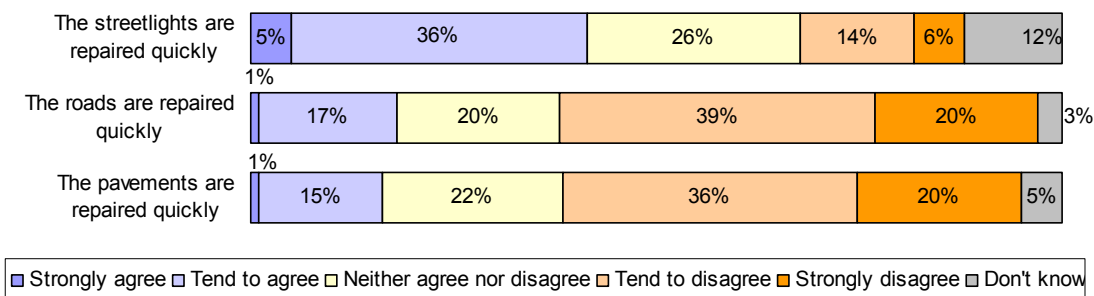
Base: All respondents (Unweighted 2307 to 2480, Weighted 1968 to 2096)

Residents in Ribble Valley were again more likely to be satisfied with the maintenance of roads and pavements (49% and 56% satisfied respectively). Lancaster residents were also more satisfied with the maintenance of cycle paths (68% satisfied) compared to all other districts. Older residents (the over 60s) were more satisfied with the maintenance of street lighting and pedestrian crossings (87% and 78% satisfied respectively).

The biggest differences demographically again were for roads and pavements. By age, the people less satisfied with road maintenance are aged 45 to 59 (30% satisfied) and for pavement maintenance it is again older residents who were less satisfied (45 to 59 are 35% satisfied, over 60s are 33% satisfied). White residents were also less satisfied with both road and pavement maintenance (64% and 60% dissatisfied respectively) compared to BME residents (45% and 36% dissatisfied respectively).

Respondents then gave their views on how quickly repairs to the highway network happen. Three-fifths of respondents disagreed that roads and pavements are repaired quickly (58% and 57% disagreed respectively). There was more agreement with the statement that streetlights are repaired quickly (41% agree).

Chart 3 - Now thinking about repairs to the highway network in your local area. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



Base: All respondents (Unweighted 2493, Weighted 2101)

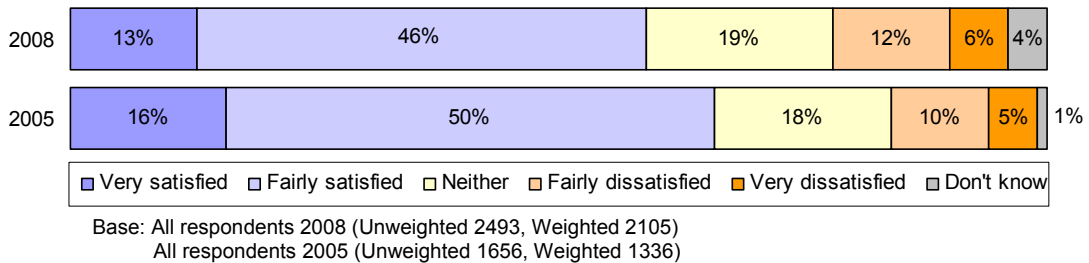
The only significant difference in perceptions of how quickly street lights are repaired were for the over 60s, who were more likely to agree that street lights are repaired quickly (53% agree).

The differences in people’s perceptions of the speed of road and pavement repairs followed similar patterns to the perceptions of the condition and maintenance of them. The people who were more likely to disagree that **roads** are repaired quickly were aged 45 to 59 (66% disagreed), white (59% disagree, compared to BME 39%), homeowners (61% disagree), or live in Rossendale (68% disagree). The people who were more likely to disagree that **pavements** are repaired quickly were white (58% disagree, compared to BME 30%), had a disability (59% disagree), and didn’t have children in the household (58% disagree). Residents of Ribble Valley were again more satisfied with the speed of road and pavement repairs (45% and 44% disagree respectively).

Residents' were also asked about the winter maintenance services provided by the county council to allow the safe movement of traffic on priority roads. These services include things like road salting and snow clearance, either directly or through agents and partners.

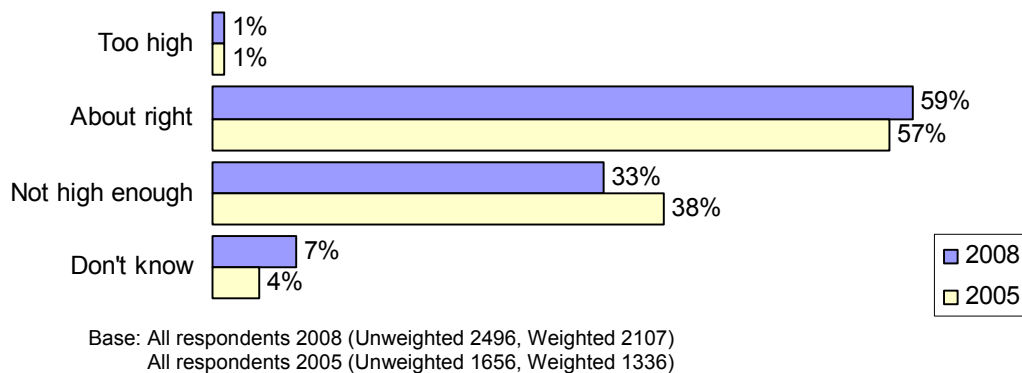
Overall satisfaction with winter maintenance services for last winter among respondents was fairly high with three-fifths being satisfied (59% very or fairly satisfied). Levels of satisfaction were similar to the results from the 2005 survey. Ribble Valley residents were more likely to be satisfied than residents in other parts of the county (81% satisfied, 23% very satisfied).

Chart 4 - Thinking about your local area, overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the quality of winter maintenance services last winter?



Most respondents also think the county council salts about the right amount of the road network during frosty or icy conditions (59%), although a third of respondents would like more roads to be salted (33%). These results are similar to the findings from the 2005 survey. Ribble Valley residents are more likely to think the council salts about the right amount of roads (79%), whereas Rossendale and Pendle residents wanted more roads salted (46% and 45% not high enough respectively). The over 60s, who probably use their vehicles less early in the morning when the roads are icier, were less likely to want more roads salting (29% not high enough, compared to 38% for 45 to 59 year olds). People in the highest socio-economic group (AB) thought the council salts about the right amount of the road network (68%).

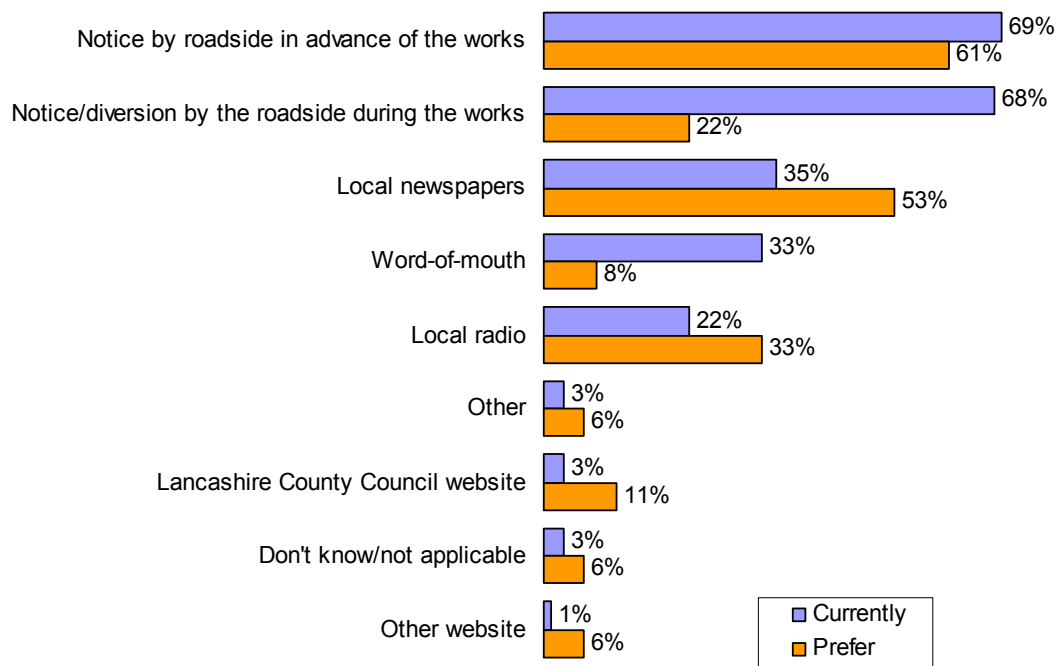
Chart 5 - And would you say that the amount of the road network that was salted during frosty and icy conditions in your local area was...?



5.2 Communication of road works

When road works are happening in Lancashire people are most likely to find out when they are happening from roadside notices (either in advance or during the road works, 69% and 68% respectively). Respondents would prefer to find out about them from roadside notices in advance of the works (61%) and from local newspapers (53%). Respondents want to be informed of road works directly from the county council as there is a large drop from how much word-of-mouth is currently used (33%) and preferences for word-of-mouth (8%). Websites appear low in respondents' preferences (county council website 11% and other website 6%), suggesting people don't want to have to proactively seek out information.

Chart 6 - How do you find out about when road works are happening in your local area? And, how would you prefer to find out about when road works are happening in your local area?



Base: All respondents (Unweighted 2432 and 1905, Weighted 2056 and 1655)

How different people currently find out about road works differs by age and socio-economic group. Older residents (over 60) were more likely to find out about them from local newspapers (43%), people in social group AB from notices by the roadside during the works (82%), and residents of Fylde from roadside notices in advance of the works (82%).

Whereas for communication preferences, the over 60s are more likely to prefer roadside notices during the road works (27%), BME residents prefer websites and word-of-mouth (39% other website, 38% county council

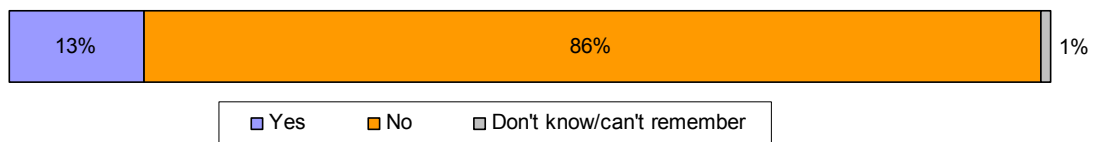
website, 21% word-of-mouth), and the lower social groups are more likely to prefer word-of-mouth (C2 10%, DE 12%).

5.3 Reporting highway faults

A series of questions were put to the panel about the reporting of highway faults aimed at finding out how they report them, and their satisfaction with the process.

The majority of people haven't reported a highway fault in the last year (86%).

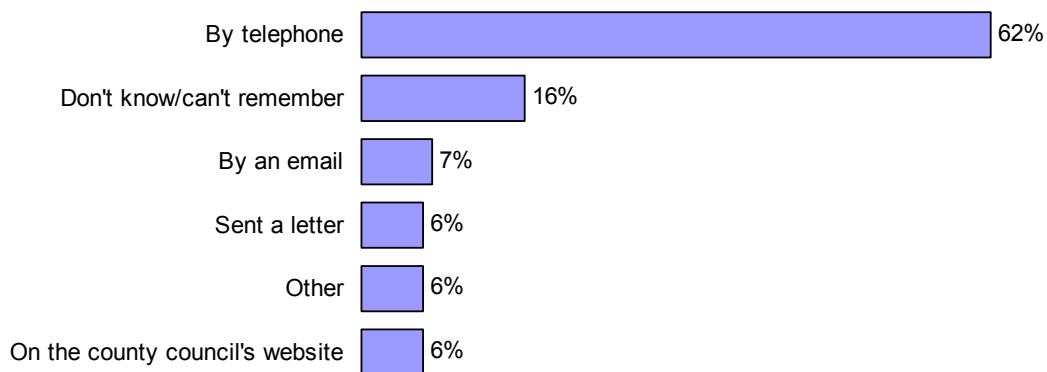
Chart 7 - Have you reported a highways fault to the county council in the last 12 months?



Base: All respondents (Unweighted 2482, Weighted 2095)

The most common method of reporting a fault was over the telephone (62%). Few people had used the other methods.

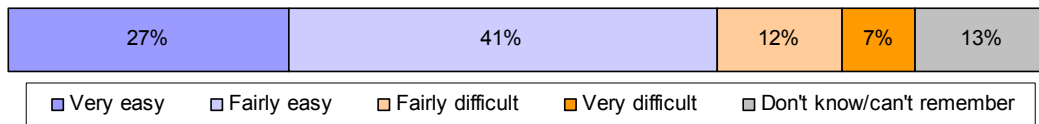
Chart 8 - Thinking about the last time you reported a highway fault. How did you report the fault?



Base: All respondents (Unweighted 518, Weighted 408)

When asked how difficult it was to report the problem most people found it easy (68%). However one in five people found it difficult (19%).

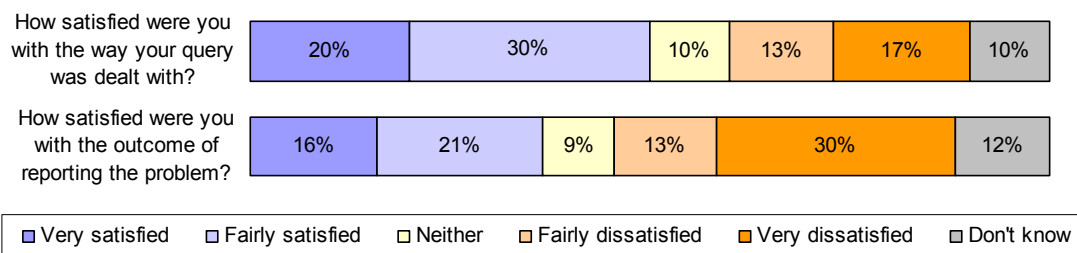
Chart 9 - How easy or difficult was it to report the problem?



Base: All respondents (Unweighted 511, Weighted 401)

More respondents were satisfied with the way their query was handled (50% very or fairly satisfied) than were satisfied with the outcome of reporting the problem (32% very or fairly satisfied), tying in with respondents perceptions of highway maintenance and speed of response.

Chart 10 - How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with...?



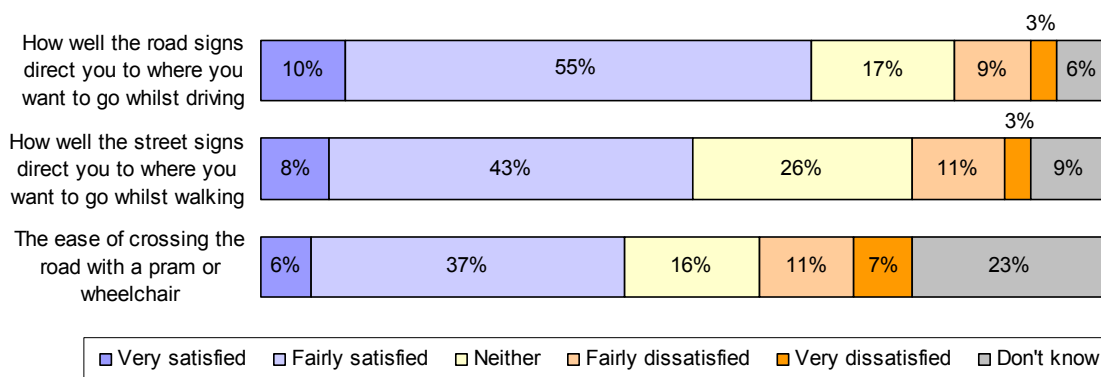
Base: All respondents (Unweighted 489 and 469, Weighted 383 and 368)

The only significant difference for different people's perceptions of the processes of reporting highway faults was that the youngest respondents (16-24) were more likely to have reported the fault on the county council's website (50%).

5.4 The highway network

Finally panel members were asked a series of questions about how easy they find the highway network to use. On the whole respondents found road and street signs directed them to where they want to go (66% and 51% satisfied respectively). Most respondents were satisfied with the ease of crossing the road with a pram or wheelchair (43% satisfied), but one in six people were dissatisfied (17%).

Chart 11 - How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following things in your local area...?



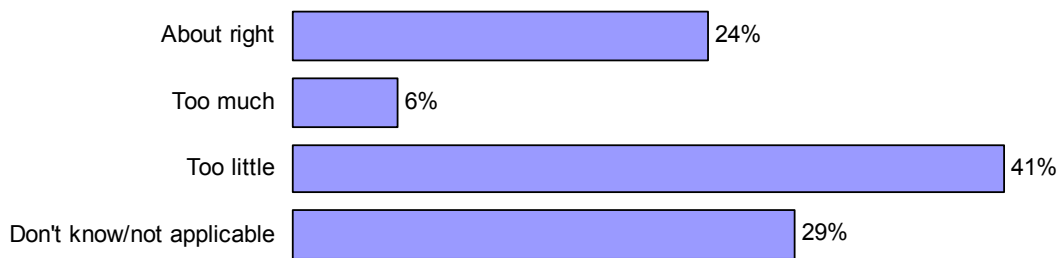
Base: All respondents (Unweighted 2431, Weighted 2065)

For how well street signs direct you to where you want to go, older people were more satisfied than younger ones (59% of the over 60s are satisfied, compared to 48% satisfied for 25 to 59 year olds). For the effectiveness of the directions on road signs it is 45 to 59 year olds who are less likely to be satisfied (62% satisfied, compared to 70% for 25 to 44 year olds and 67% for the over 60s). Perceptions of the ease of crossing the road with a pram or wheelchair were commonly held across the different groups of people.

Respondents were then asked to think about the number of cycle lanes they think they need in their local area. Three in ten respondents don't have an opinion about the number of cycle lanes in their local area. This is probably related to them having no need to use them (the people answering don't know are more likely to be over 60 38%).

Almost twice as many people felt there weren't enough cycle lanes (41%) as thought they were about right (24%). Only a minority thought there were too many (6%).

Chart 12 - Do you think the number of cycle lanes in your local area is...?



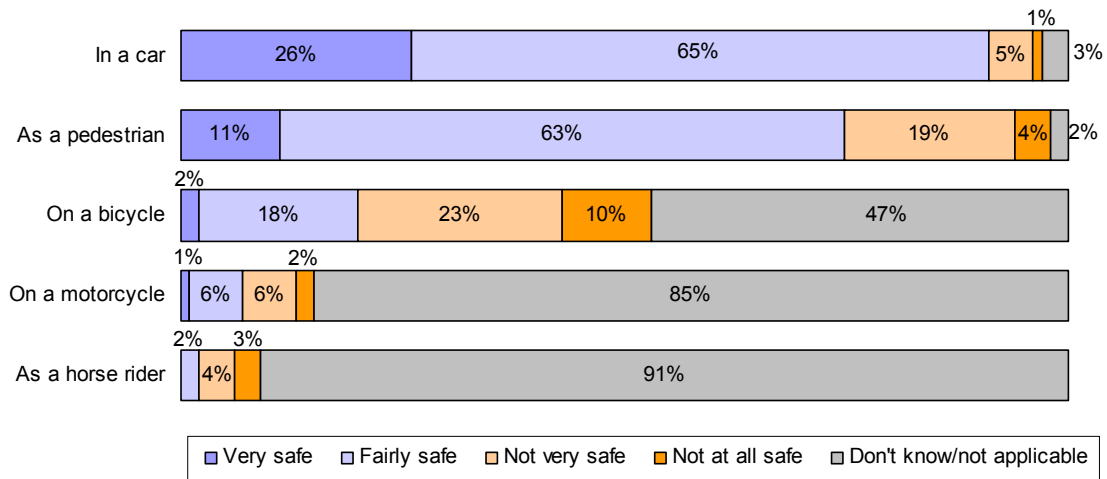
Base: All respondents (Unweighted 2485, Weighted 2100)

By subgroups there are some differences, again mainly related to general usage. Younger people were more likely to say there aren't enough cycle lanes (25 to 44 year olds it is 48% and for 45 to 59 year olds it is 42%, compared to only 30% of the over 60s). Where respondents have children in the household they are more likely to say there are too few cycle lanes (53%, compared to 38% for respondents with no children in the household). Lancaster residents are more likely to be satisfied with the number of cycle lanes in their local area (37% about right).

The final question looked into feelings of safety when travelling around in different modes of transport. Chart 13 shows that many people don't use three forms of transport and therefore felt they couldn't give an opinion. These forms of transport are a bicycle (47%), a motorcycle (85%) and riding a horse (91%).

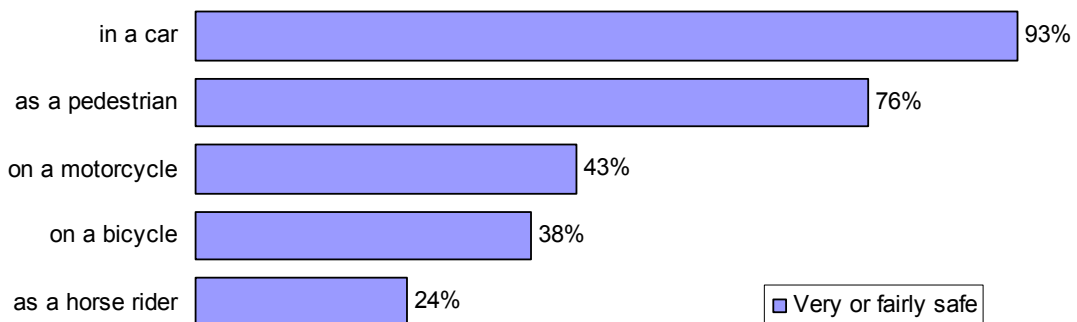
Chart 14 looks at overall feelings of safety among people who have given an opinion about each form of transport (ie excluding 'don't know/not applicable' responses). Nearly all people who travel in a car feel safe (93%), and three-quarters of pedestrians feel safe (76%). Feelings of safety among motorcycle and bicycle users are much lower (43% and 38% respectively), and only a quarter of horse riders feel safe (24%).

Chart 13 - In your local area, how safe do you feel when travelling...?



Base: All respondents (Unweighted 1974 to 2472, Weighted 1764 to 2097)

Chart 14 - Respondents who use each mode of transport feelings of safety when travelling in their local area...



Base: All respondents (Unweighted 177 to 2405, Weighted 161 to 2043)

Understandably people with a disability said they felt unsafe when travelling on a motorbike (63% not safe). 16 to 24 year olds are twice as likely than people aged 45 to 59 to feel safe on a bicycle (60% and 33% safe respectively).

6 Appendix

6.1 Socio-Economic-Group Definitions

These groups are based on Market Research Society definitions and on the respondent. They are graded as A, B, C1, C2, D and E.

Group A

- Professional people, very senior managers in business or commerce or top-level civil servants.
- Retired people, previously grade A, and their widows

Group B

- Middle management executives in large organisations, with appropriate qualifications
- Principle officers in local government and civil service
- Top management or owners of small business concerns, educational and service establishments
- Retired people previously grade B, and their widows

Group C1

- Junior management, owners of small establishments, and all others in non-manual positions
- Jobs in this group have very varied responsibilities and educational requirements
- Retired people, previously grade C1, and their widows

Group C2

- All skilled manual workers, and those manual workers for responsibility for other people
- Retired people, previously grade C2, with pensions from their job
- Widows, if receiving pensions from their late partner's job

Group D

- All semi skilled and unskilled manual workers, and apprentices and trainees to skilled workers
- Retired people, previously grade D, with pensions from their late job
- Widows, if receiving pensions from their late partner's job

Group E

- All those entirely dependant on the state long term, through sickness, unemployment, old age or other reasons
- Those unemployed for a period exceeding six months (otherwise classified on previous occupation)
- Casual workers and those without a regular income