



**Highways
Feedback
Survey:
Results
Report**



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Introduction

Background

Cumbria County Council has committed in its council plan to put the customer at the heart of everything we do and is focussed on delivering a consistent high-quality customer experience by involving customers in the design of services and encouraging customers who can self-serve.

As part of this commitment, the Council determined the customer experience needed to be improved in the Highways service, particularly in reporting and receiving feedback for problems on the Highway, raising enquiries and accessing information by making it readily available online, by telephone and email. The Highways Information Management project team have been consulting to develop the system used to manage customer information and highways resource.

The survey is an initial consultation with customers and feedback will be used to influence the service moving forward. By understanding customers' experiences when engaging with the service, future improvements will be led by customer insight.

Methodology

The Highways Feedback Survey was launched via Citizen Space on Monday 8 February and concluded on Sunday 21 February 2021.

Participants were recruited by a public link to the survey that was shared on Cumbria County Council's Facebook and Twitter pages which have a combined following of 51,035 users (March 2021). An email was also circulated to 263 Parish Council Clerks, 84 Councillors and 45 of their support teams to inform them of the survey. The survey was also picked up by the local media.

This self-selection survey was aimed at customers that had a shared interest of Cumbria County Council's Highways service. The results are representative of participants' own views and experiences when previously engaging with the Highways service, as well as their personal communication preferences.

Participant Insight

1137 participants from across Cumbria shared their experiences when engaging with Cumbria's Highways service and provided suggestions on how Cumbria County Council could improve their experience through communication.

57.5% (654) of participants provided their email address to receive communications about the survey results, future opportunities aimed at improving the Highways services in Cumbria and updates on the wider service. This percentage highlights participants' interest in Cumbria's Highways services and their desire to support improvements.

Participants were asked to provide their age (graph 1), what gender they identify as (table 1) and what Cumbrian District they live in (table 2).

Bar chart 1: Age of participants

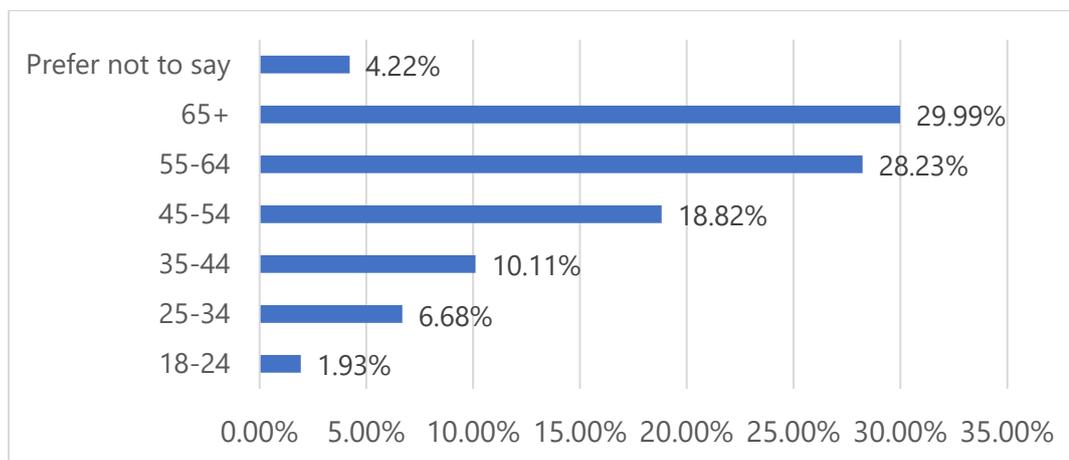


Table 1: Gender of participants

	Total	Percent
Male	574	50.4%
Female	517	45.4%
Non-Binary	1	0.09%
A gender not listed here	1	0.09%
Prefer not to say	44	3.8%

Table 2: Number and percentage of participants from each District in Cumbria

	Total	Percent
Barrow	61	5.36%
South Lakes	387	34.04%
Allerdale	243	21.37%
Copeland	153	13.46%
Carlisle	149	13.10%
Eden	144	12.66%

Experience with the Highways Service

55.7% (634) of participants answered yes to the question 'have you contacted Cumbria County Council's Highways service in the last 4 years?'

The initial question segmented the total participants that had previously engaged with the Highways service and asked them to provide an insight into their experience.

This specific group of participants were first asked, 'thinking of your most recent experience, why did you contact the Highways service?'

A large majority (90.2%) had reported a problem on the road, 5.8% had made an enquiry, 2.3% had applied for a blue badge and 1.5% applied for a permit.

Table 3: Participants' reason for contacting the Highways service in the last 4 years (answered by 634 participants)

Reason for contacting the Highways service	Total	Percent
Reported a problem on the road network	572	90.2%
Applied for a blue badge	15	2.3%
Applied for a permit	10	1.5%
Made an enquiry	37	5.8%

Focussing on how participants contacted the Highways service, 70.5% (447) selected 'using the Cumbria County Council Website', 16.7% (106) 'on the telephone via the Highways Hotline' and 12.7% (81) chose 'Other. This could be through a member of staff or your local MP. If selected, please state in the box below.'

'Other' ways included: Fix My Street, Fill that Hole, Parish Councils and Parish Councillors, local MPs, Councillors, Locality Officers, Cumbria County Council staff, Email (contact not stated) and letters to Cumbria County Council.

Table 4: The channel used by participants to engage the Highways service (answered by 634 participants)

Reason for contacting the Highways service	Total	Percent
On the telephone via the Highways Hotline	106	16.7%
Using the Cumbria County Council Website	447	70.5%
Other (This could be through a member of staff or your local MP. If selected, please state in the box below)	81	12.7%

Satisfaction along the customer journey

The following question explored participants' satisfaction levels at four main touch points in the customer journey:

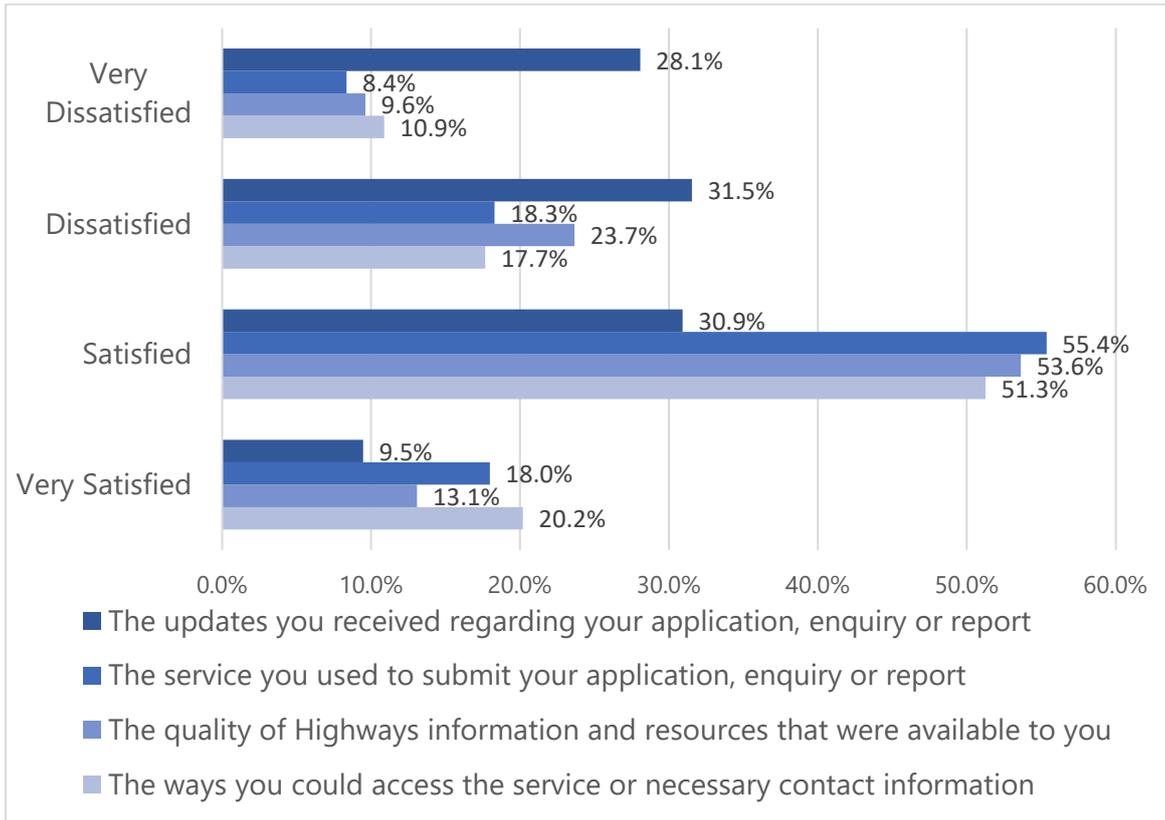
'Thinking about your most recent experience, how satisfied were you with the following?'

1. The ways you could access the service or necessary contact information
2. The quality of Highways information and resources that were available to you
3. The service you used to submit your application, enquiry, or report
4. The updates you received regarding your application, enquiry, or report

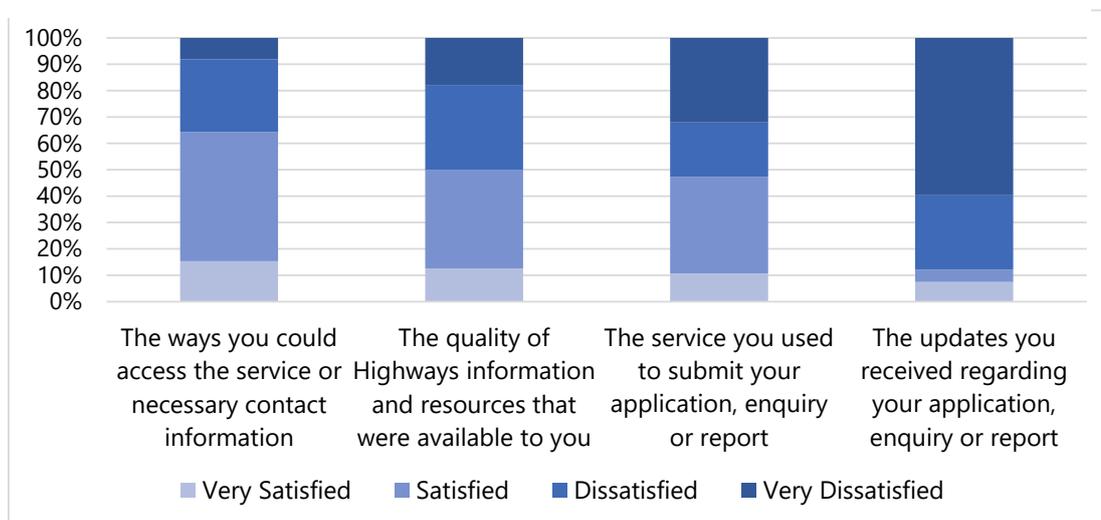
On average across all methods, 71.5% of participants are very satisfied or satisfied with ‘the way they could access the service,’ 66.7% with ‘the quality of Highways information and resources that were made available to them’ and 73.4% with ‘the service they used to submit their application.’

The results present a clear trend that participants are most dissatisfied with the final touch point in the journey; ‘the updates they received regarding their application, enquiry or report.’ Here, dissatisfaction levels rise above satisfaction with 59.6% of participants dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

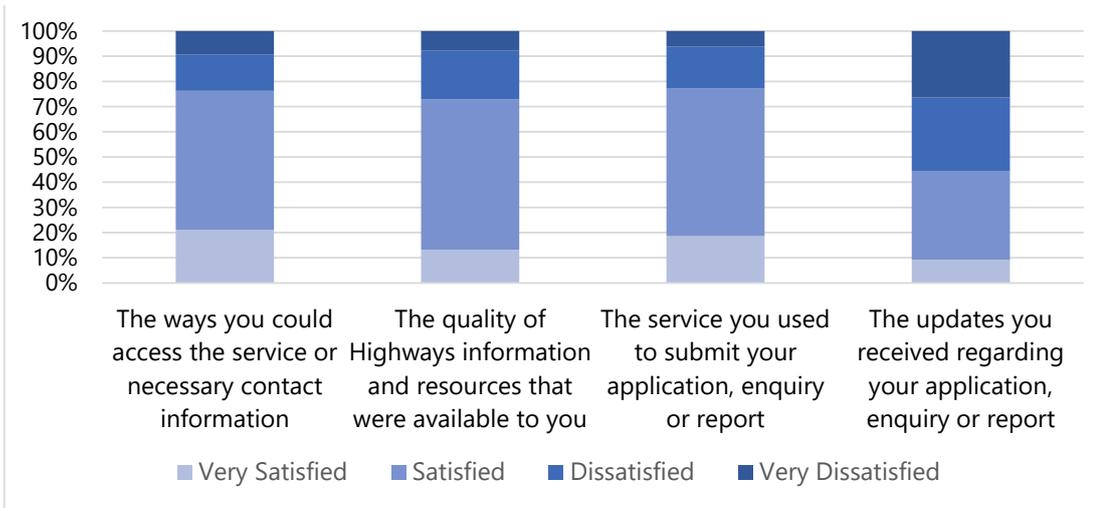
Bar chart 2: Average participant satisfaction focussing on all three ways to engage with the Highways service (answered by 634 participants)



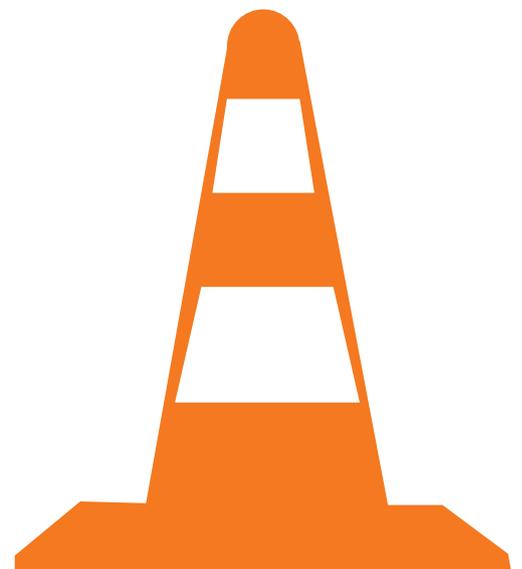
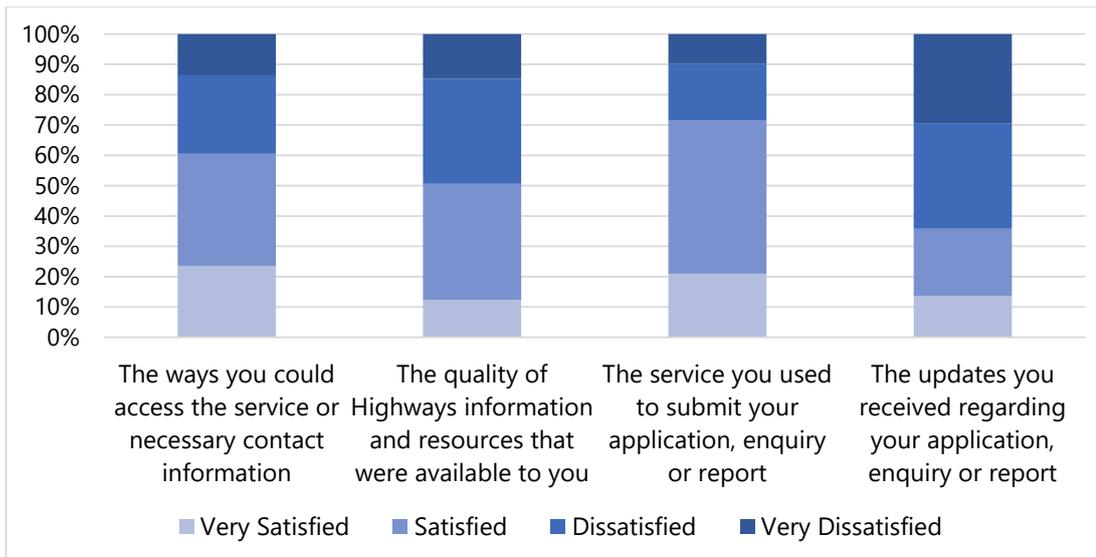
Bar chart 3: Customers satisfaction using the Highways Hotline (16.7%, 106 participants)



Bar chart 4: Customers satisfaction using the Cumbria County Council Website (70.5%, 447 participants)



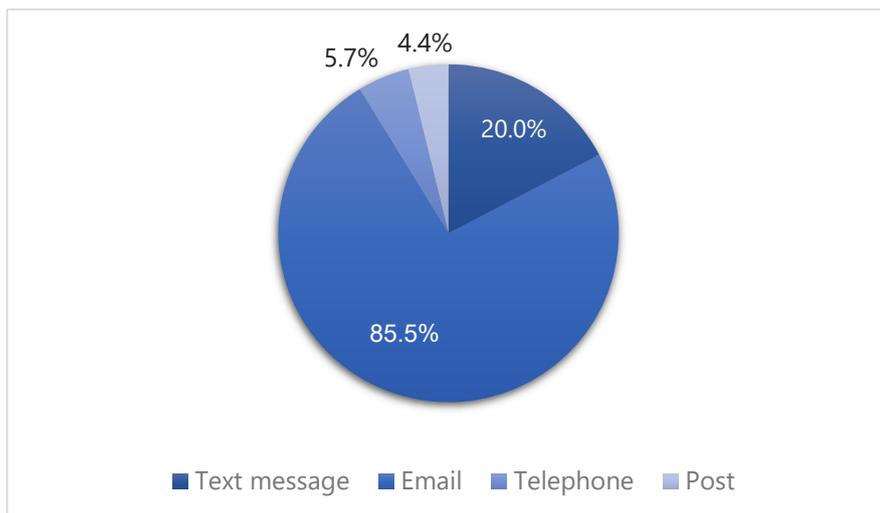
Bar chart 5: Customers satisfaction using Other Services (12.7%, 81 participants)



Communication Preferences

85.5% (973) of participants chose email as their preferred way to receive updates about a Highways enquiry or report they have made, 20% by text message, 5.7% telephone and 4.4% post.

Pie chart 1: Preferred communication method for receiving updates regarding a Highways enquiry or report (answered by 1137 participants)



Sub-group analysis showed that there were significant variations by age:



A large majority of participants (90%) aged 65+ chose email as their preference. Although email remains the most popular method across all ages, an increase in text message as a preference is seen in 18-24 (31.8%) and 25-34 (28.9%) categories.

Customer expectations of service standards

A high proportion of participants would like very frequent engagement with the service, with 64.6% (736) of participants wanting 3 or more notifications updating them on their problem report or enquiry.

Table 5: The number of notifications customers would like to receive updating them on their problem report or enquiry (answered by 1137 participants)

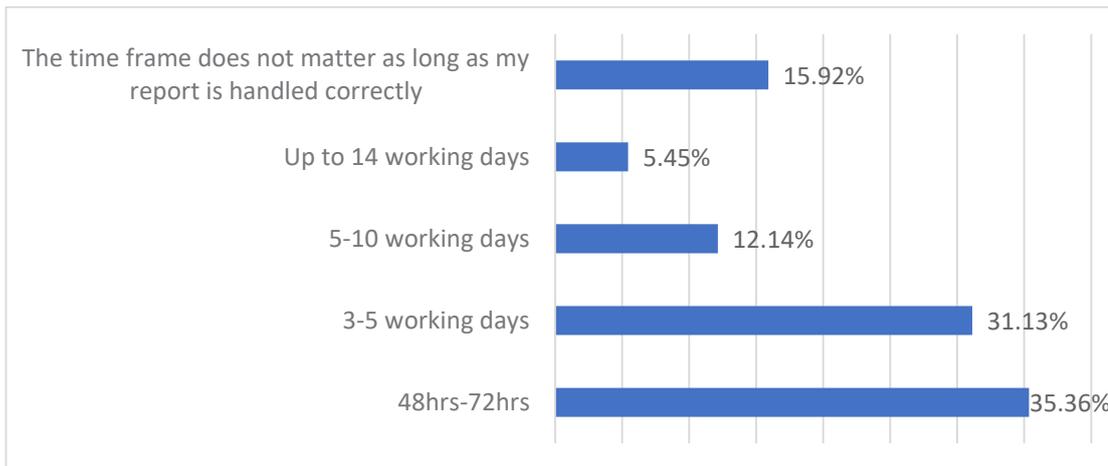
Reason for contacting the Highways service	Total	Percent
I would not like to receive any further communication - I just want to report the problem to Cumbria County Council (0 notifications)	32	2.81%
I would only like to hear the outcome of my report - when the problem has either been repaired or if no further action has been taken and the reason why (1 notification)	369	32.45%
I would like to know when the problem has been assessed, when the problem is going to be repaired and when work on the problem is complete (3 notification)	559	49.16%
I would like to receive notification at every step of the way (up to 6 notifications)	177	15.57%

Participants were also asked about how quickly they expect to receive additional updates on a query or report made, with 66.4% (756) of participants expecting to hear from the service within 5 working days.

The use of a 'log in account service to track report updates, permit or badge applications at your own leisure' was supported by 63.4% (721) of participants.

Furthermore, 74.5% (848) of participants would like to receive live updates via email or text message on road closures and works in their local area.

Bar chart 6: Participants expectations of response time for receiving additional updates on a Highways query or problem report (answered by 1137 participants)



What3words location tool

Participants were asked, 'knowing that what3words is Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service's preferred location tool when responding to an incident due to its accuracy, would you be interested in using this to report a Highways problem to ensure our team could find it?'. 67.1% (764) of participants answered yes.

Sub-group analysis showed that there were significant variations by age and with those participants that have previously engaged with the Highways service:

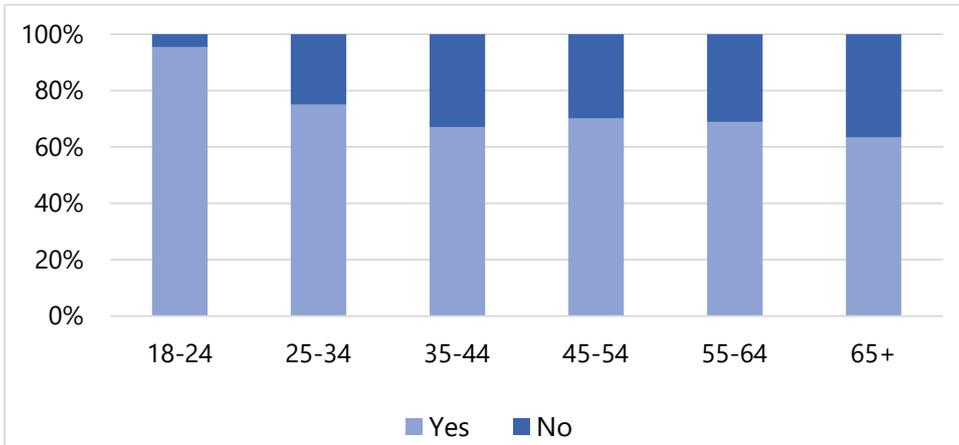


18-24 year olds are significantly more likely to use what3words to locate a problem on the road. On average, almost two-thirds of all 25 to 64-year olds would be willing to use the platform which reduces to 63.3% for the over 65 category (bar chart 7).



Participants that have previously engaged with the Highways service are slightly less interested in using what3words to report a problem, with 62.7% (-4.4%) of participants answering 'yes'.

Bar chart 7: Age of participants that would use what3words to locate a problem on the road (answered by 1137 participants)



Although just over two-thirds of participants would be willing to use what3words to report a problem, 47.8% (544) of participants would still prefer to ‘provide a standard address – first line, second line and postcode’ over the telephone.

Table 6: Preference for communicating an address over the phone (answered by 1137 participants)

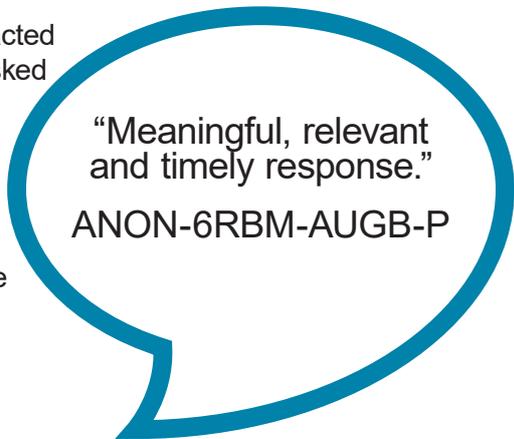
Option	Total	Percent
Use what3words - stating 3 short words	203	17.85%
Provide a standard address of first line, town and postcode	544	47.85%
I have no preference	390	34.30%



Highways Feedback Survey: Qualitative feedback

The 634 participants that answered ‘yes’ to the question, ‘have you contacted Cumbria County Council’s Highways service in the last 4 years?’ were asked two qualitative questions:

- ‘If you answered dissatisfied or very dissatisfied for any of the above questions, please provide us with some feedback on how we can improve.’
- ‘Please provide any further comments on how you feel we could have improved your experience’



Four main themes were identified.

Customer updates

Customer updates is a key focus as this what participants are most dissatisfied with. 377 tags were associated with this theme.

Four sub themes were identified: did not receive updates, frequency of updates, quality of updates and work completion confirmation.

Table 7: Communication updates sub-groups and examples of associated qualitative feedback

Did not receive updates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ANON-6RBM-AUVG-A: “it is the feeling of not being heard which is so dissatisfying.” • ANON-6RBM-AUA9-7: “You can access the fault but it’s status never changes.” • ANON-6RBM-A73H-A: “Promised email feedback. Even though correct email provided (received auto email saying fault received) I never received any update.”
Frequency of updates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ANON-6RBM-AUCK-U: “Need to be answered and kept informed regularly. “ • ANON-6RBM-A73H-A: “Provide the updates that you promise [...]” • ANON-6RBM-AUZB-9: “More interaction on the Cumbria Highways Twitter page which rarely seems to be used. A Facebook page would also be very useful to the public.”
Quality of updates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ANON-6RBM-AUMW-H: “[...] it is usually a standard response unrelated to the problem reported.” • ANON-6RBM-AUTD-5: “The query related to tree root damage lifting paving slabs. I received a “work done” email but visiting the site later nothing had been done. If the real answer was “yes its a problem but not a priority because... “ • ANON-6RBM-AUEW-9: “While I received a prompt response (to one of my reports, at least) it was somewhat vague and noncommittal. “
Work completion confirmation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ANON-6RBM-AUKU-D “A follow up email confirming jobs have been done would be helpful” • ANON-6RBM-A7CP-2 “Provide updates to people who report issues when they have been fixed” • ANON-6RBM-AU1W-N: “Email to close issue once resolved”

Service Standards

262 tags were associated with service standards and three sub themes were identified: response time, quality of repairs and enquiry or problem unresolved.

Table 8: Service standards sub-themes and examples of associated qualitative feedback

Response time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ANON-6RBM-AUCA-H: "Comply with the response time required by the FoI and EIR legislation." • ANON-6RBM-AUVK-E: "An acknowledgment of the complaint, timely communication with a response and a resolution to the complaint" • ANON-6RBM-AU49-T: "The system for reporting was great the delay to resolve the issue not so great! 6 plus months!"
Quality of repairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ANON-6RBM-AUV9-V: "Pothole repairs ... while done reasonably quickly often of poor quality and problem reoccurs in matter of weeks" • ANON-6RBM-AUTG-8: "The repair to the potholes appeared very temporary and not designed to provide a long-term repair" • ANON-6RBM-A7ZE-E: "A quicker response to some requests. Some of the responses have been a quick fix rather than a more permanent repair."
Enquiry or problem unresolved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ANON-6RBM-AUC6-6: "No one got back to me. Was allocated a number sometimes. No updates given" • ANON-6RBM-AU84-S: "No feedback given at all. Looked up fault number & report said complete & closed but fault was actually still there." • ANON-6RBM-A7VK-G: "Had many of my reports ignored. Some had really fast response to. Others completely ignored and I had to write to my councillors to get contacts to try and get something done."

Transparency

188 tags were associated with transparency. Three sub themes were identified: defining responsibility, transparency regarding decisions and availability of policy and procedures.

Table 9: Transparency sub-themes and examples of associated qualitative feedback

Defining responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ANON-6RBM-AUMD-X: "Reporting things is easy, seeing the results is very disappointing as a lot of reports are sent off to other departments and then no-one takes the responsibility to fix the problem." • ANON-6RBM-AUTC-4: "Stop passing the buck work together take the issue be helpful this is now the number to contact or we will pass it on to the correct section of council [...]" • ANON-6RBM-A7ZX-1: "Very difficult to find the person responsible, in the first instant, but after that, response was good"
Quality of repairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ANON-6RBM-AU4T-N: "You could give reasons for not rectifying road problems." • ANON-6RBM-AUYG-D: "A named contact and 'phone number. Feedback as to when the job will be and has been dealt with. If the job cannot be done, why not?" • ANON-6RBM-AUCT-4: "It would be nice to get a reason why you won't come out to repair a pothole or road defect or perhaps an idea of when an issue will get sorted."

<p>Availability of Policy and Procedures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ANON-6RBM-AUKP-8: “[...] you hide things well on your website.” • ANON-6RBM-AUYG-D: “A named contact and ‘phone number. Feedback as to when the job will be and has been dealt with. If the job cannot be done, why not?” • ANON-6RBM-A737-S: “The web page for planned roadworks is often not updated or even wrong. It does not always show planned road closures, and sometimes the information given is incorrect.”
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Communication channels

99 tags were associated with communication channels. Two sub themes were identified: general communication channels and reporting system. s.

Table 10: Communication channels sub-themes and examples of associated qualitative feedback

<p>General communication channels</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ANON-6RBM-AUTV-Q: “Better Community based liaison on issues would improve communications and balance customer expectations with resources available.” • ANON-6RBM-AU55-Q: “I can never find a phone number to talk to a person and never get feedback when a problem is reported.” • ANON-6RBM-AUS2-J “It’s difficult to feel satisfied when the problem hasn’t been resolved. On the other hand, if Highways were never alerted [when using third parties to report problems” then it’s clearly not your fault.” • ANON-6RBM-AUBB-H: “A more user-friendly website.” • ANON-6RBM-A7G9-F: “Allow people to be able to talk on the phone to someone who can understand and deal with matters Allowing a clear message to be delivered.”
<p>Reporting system</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ANON-6RBM-AUHV-B: “It should be easier to report road problems and a better system of acknowledgement.” • ANON-6RBM-AU9V-V: “I was contacting Highways to report local potholes. It would have helped to have seen on the interactive map how many others had reported the same issue. The pothole situation is very bad.” • ANON-6RBM-AUBR-1: “I wanted to report the saltbox outside my house needed filling. The phone number on the saltbox is out of date and doesn’t work - dissatisfied.”

Conclusions and Recommendations

Results from the survey showed that participants were, on average, satisfied with the ways they could access the service or necessary contact information, the quality of Highways information and resources that were available to them and the service they used to submit an application, enquiry, or report.

Customer updates

Participants' dissatisfaction focused on the updates they received. It is essential that Cumbria County Council review the way we keep our customers informed moving forward.

Currently, the automated updates are unclear and cause frustration. A prime example of this was provided by participant 'ANON-6RBM-A7ZZ-3' who stated, *'I sent an email asking if the two large sycamore trees behind my property could either be removed and replaced with appropriate smaller trees or substantially pruned. The response I received just said 'it's safe but someone else needs to fix it'. I did not think this was very helpful at all!'*

A review of the frequency of updates that customers receive is essential to improving their experience. 180 qualitative tags related to 'did not receive updates' which left participants' 'problems unresolved' (112 tags). A high proportion of participants would like very frequent engagement with the service, with just over two-thirds of participants (64.6%) wanting 3 or more notifications updating them on their problem report or enquiry.

Service standards

The qualitative feedback further emphasises the need for the Highways service to be transparent about service standards regarding response time and decisions that are made about problem reports.

Providing clear information on the criteria a problem needs to meet before it is fixed would educate customers and help them to understand reasons behind decisions.

Transparency

Customers would also benefit from the map function on the website being frequently updated with road closures and planned works. By telling customers when their report has been fixed would reduce the number of complaints and re-raised problems on the roads.

Communications channels

Sub-group analysis was conducted on every question and focused on age, gender, location and if the participant had previously engaged with the Highways service. Although these factors did not consistently impact the data, variations were found in relation to participants' communication preferences and the use of what3words.

Cumbria County Council's preferred communication method is in line with customer preferences, with 85.6% choosing email. While email is the preferred communication method for all age groups, text message contended with 18-34-year olds. Text messaging would offer Cumbria County Council with a method to provide simple, yet effective and frequent updates for customers.

Since January 2020, the Highways Operatives team have been called to 665 reports (March 2021) where they have been unable to find the location of the problem due to inaccurate details being provided. In some cases, a combination of human error, map functionality on Cumbria County Council's website and a customer's network signal in Cumbria may have affected the accuracy of transcribing an address.

What3words would enable a customer to select a 3x3 metre square on a grid and provide a more accurate location of a problem such as a pothole. The results positively support Cumbria County Council's Highways service to explore the use of what3words for locating problems on the road, with 67.1% of participants interested in using the platform. However, it is essential to still give customers the option to use traditional methods such as a providing a standard address, as 47.8% of participants choose this as their preference when communicating over the telephone.

What happens next?

The Highways project team will be reviewing the results from the Highways Feedback Survey and will be developing a 'You said, we did' piece that will be shared over the coming months.

The document will present how the customer feedback provided in this survey will be integrated in the service.

