Highways Feedback Survey

Cumbria County Council

Survey overview

The Highways Feedback Survey launched via Citizen Space on Monday 8 February and concluded on Sunday 21 February 2021.
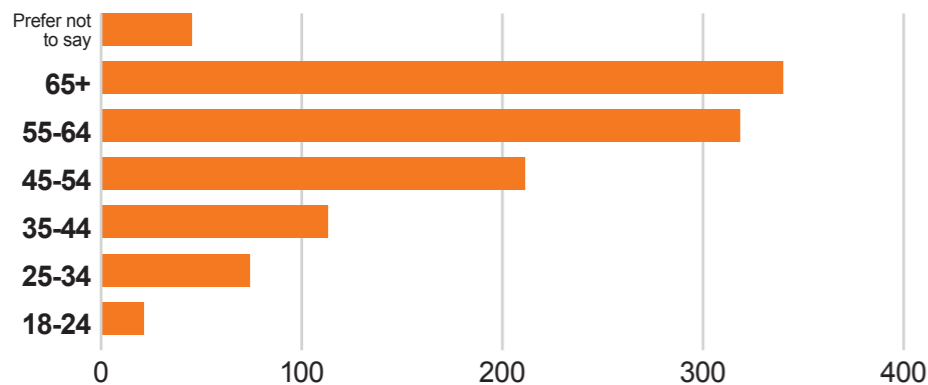
1137 participants from across Cumbria shared their experiences when engaging with Cumbria's Highways service and provided suggestions on how Cumbria County Council could improve their experience. The survey also focused on understanding their communication preferences and their expectations regarding service standards.

654 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.
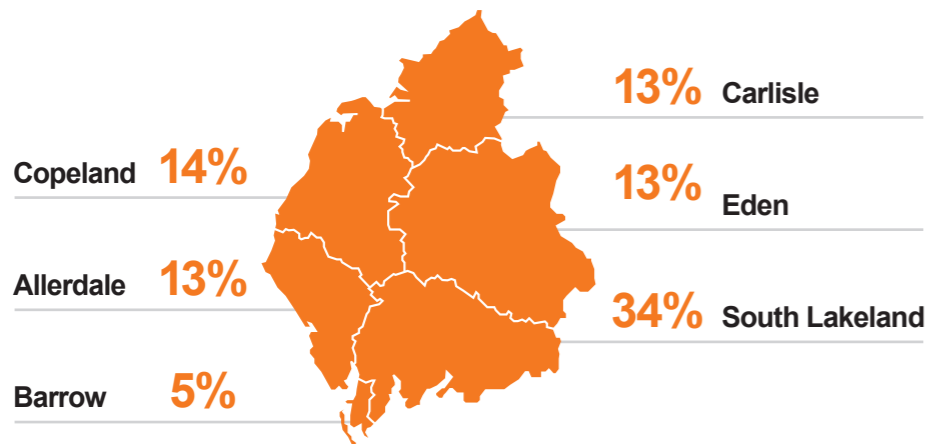
Demographics

574 (50.48%) participants identified as male, 517 (45.47%) as female with 3.87% of participants preferring not to say and 0.18% identifying as non-binary or a gender not listed.

Participant age categories

Age category	Value
Prefer not to say	~45
65+	~340
55-64	~320
45-54	~215
35-44	~115
25-34	~75
18-24	~25

(x-axis: 0, 100, 200, 300, 400)

Number of participants from each district in Cumbria

- **13%** Carlisle
- **13%** Eden
- **34%** South Lakeland
- **14%** Copeland
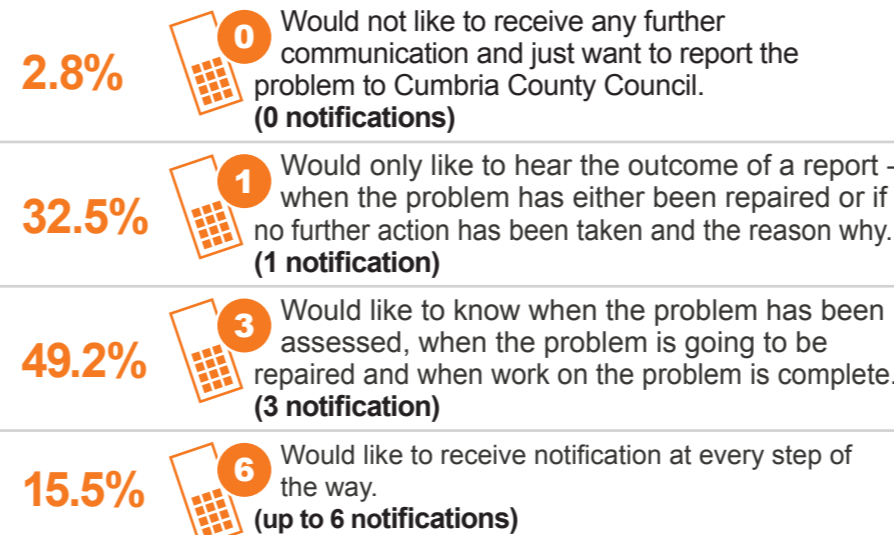- **13%** Allerdale
- **5%** Barrow

Communication preferences

1137 participants completed this section. Aiming to understand how residents would like to engage and receive information from Cumbria's Highways Service.

Preferred communication method for receiving updates regarding a Highways enquiry or report.

- **20%** Text message
- **5.7%** Telephone
- **85.6%** Email
- **4.5%** Post

If you were to report a problem on the Highways, how frequently would you like to receive updates?

2.8% — **0** Would not like to receive any further communication and just want to report the problem to Cumbria County Council. (0 notifications)

32.5% — **1** Would only like to hear the outcome of a report - when the problem has either been repaired or if no further action has been taken and the reason why. (1 notification)

49.2% — **3** 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)

15.5% — **6** Would like to receive notification at every step of the way. (up to 6 notifications)

Every customer that submits an application for a bade or permit, enquiry or problem on the roads receives an initial message.
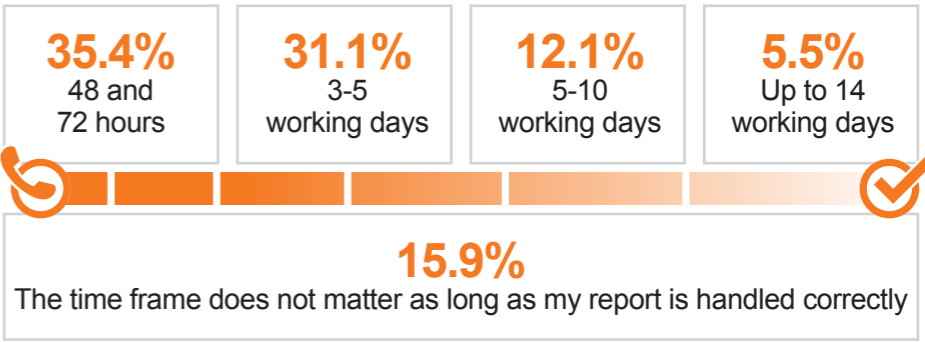
Experience with the Highways service

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

Over two-thirds of participants are very satisfied or satisfied with the ways they could access the service, the available information and the service they used to get in touch. 59.6% of participants are most dissatisfied with the final touch point in the journey; 'the updates they received regarding their application, enquiry or report.'

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

How quickly do you expect to receive additional updates on your query or problem report?

- **35.4%** 48 and 72 hours
- **31.1%** 3-5 working days
- **12.1%** 5-10 working days
- **5.5%** Up to 14 working days
- **15.9%** The time frame does not matter as long as my report is handled correctly

Would you be interested in using 'what3words' to report a Highways problem to ensure our team could find it?

/// **what3words** is a location tool that uses a grid of the world made up of squares 3 meters by 3 meters. Each square has been given an address composed of three words. It is Cumbria Fire and Recuse Service's preferred location tool when responding to an incident due to its accuracy.
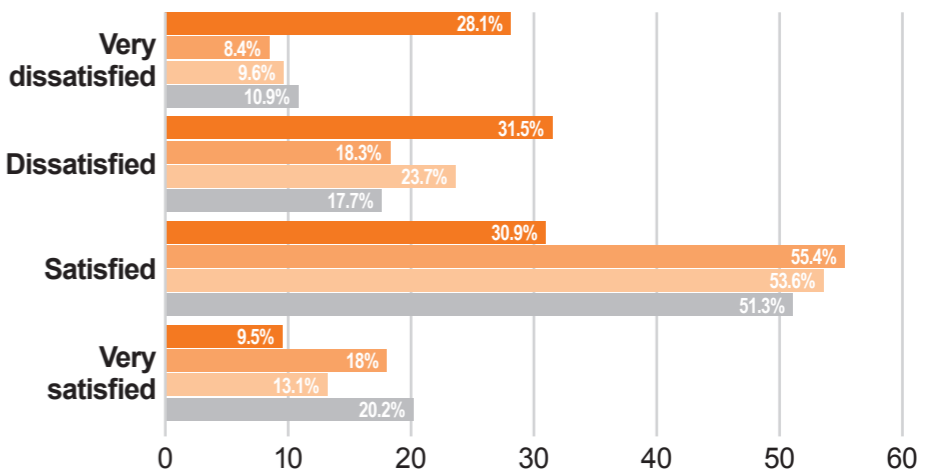
67.2% answered **Yes**   **32.8%** answered **No**

When communicating an address over the phone, would you prefer to:

Use what3words	Give standard address	Have no preference
17.9%	**47.8%**	**34.3%**
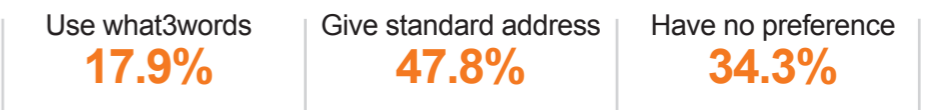
67.2% would like to sign up to receive updates via email or text regarding information on road closures and works in their area.

74.6% would use a log in account service to track report updates, permit or badge applications in their own time.

Satisfaction			
Very dissatisfied	28.1%	8.4%	9.6% / 10.9%
Dissatisfied	31.5%	18.3%	23.7% / 17.7%
Satisfied	30.9%	55.4%	53.6% / 51.3%
Very satisfied	9.5%	18%	13.1% / 20.2%

(x-axis: 0, 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60)

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.