



Highways and Winter Maintenance Trend Analysis 2018/19

This briefing provides details on the performance information available from APSE's performance networks service looking at performance indicators and current policy issues for councils who deliver Highways services.

Key issues

- The condition of principal and non-principal roads in England & Wales has further improved to the best ever. Scotland remains broadly static.
- The number of Cat 1 defects per Km of maintained highway stands at 0.33.
- Third party claims have risen in line with a harsher winter over 2017/18.
- Planned maintenance now represents 75.58% of expenditure vs proactive maintenance.

Overview

The APSE performance networks performance indicators for highways and winter maintenance cover the cost, productivity and quality elements of the services. This analysis aims to provide participating authorities with an overview of service trends, what this infers and what further activity and analysis individual authorities and the APSE highways, winter maintenance and street lighting benchmarking group could consider. The analysis in this summary is based on averages across all family groups for the last 5 years.

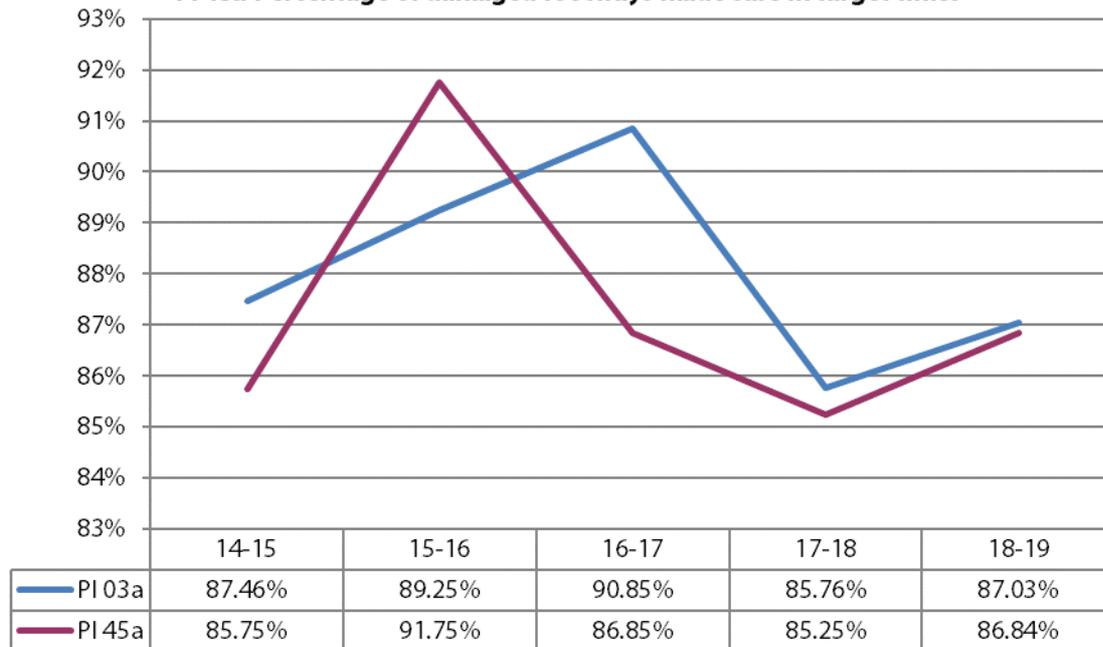
Trend analysis

Particular points of interest are as follows:

Carriageways and footways

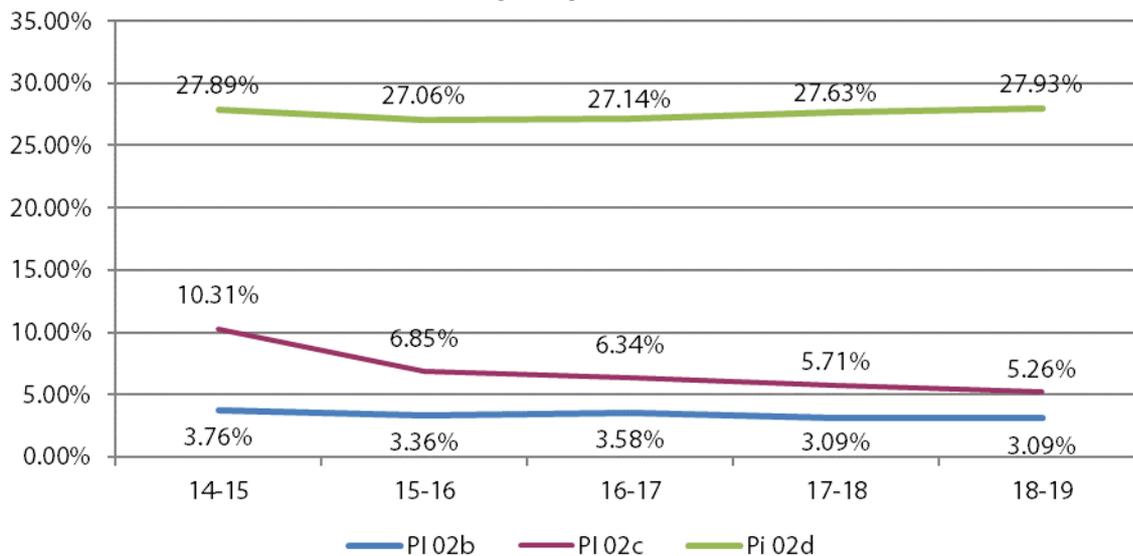
PI 03a and PI 45a show the percentage of damaged carriageways and footways made safe within their respective target times. Both have fluctuated around 88% for the past 5 years and that trend continues.

PI 03a Percentage of damaged roads made safe in target times
PI 45a Percentage of damaged footways made safe in target times



The performance indicators for the condition of roads in England and Wales are PI 02b (principal roads via TRACS) and PI 02c (non principal roads). In this case the lower the percentage needing attention the better. PI 02b, covering the condition of principal roads, continues to show an improvement since 2011/12 and has been steady over the past 7 years currently flat-lining at 3.09% of the principal road network.

Condition of roads
PI 02b principal- England/Wales
PI 02c non principal- England/Wales
PI 02d principal - Scotland

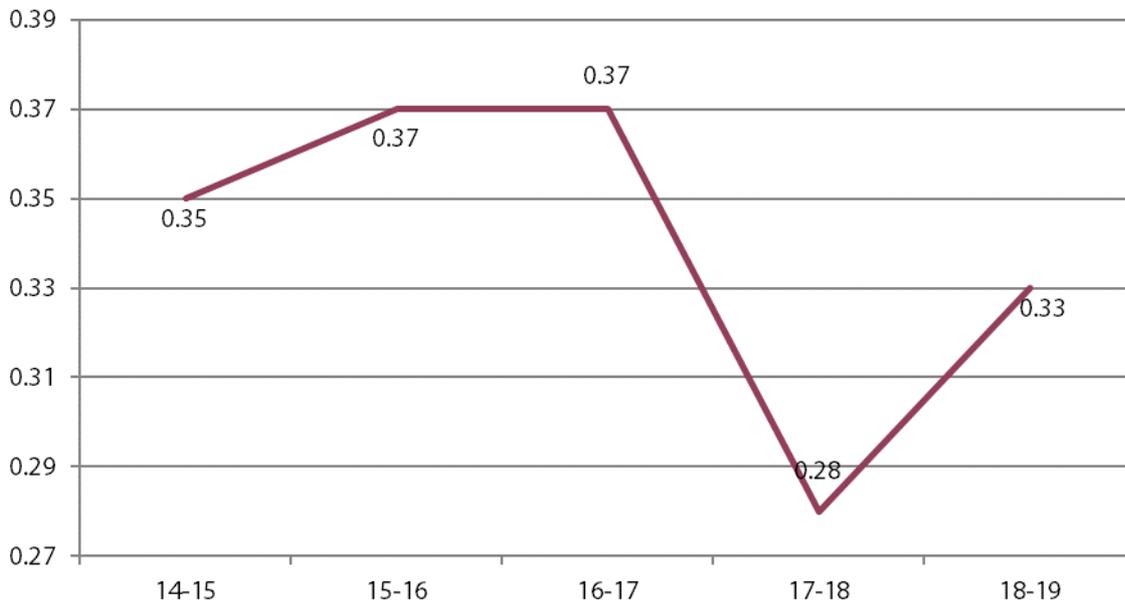


The non principal road condition (PI 02c) covering England and Wales has improved significantly to 5.26%, 50% better than 2014/15 and the lowest on record.

In Scotland PI 02d (principal roads via SMRCS) has remained stable, averaging 27.93% in 2018/19.

There are a number of factors influencing the condition of roads and although the weather is one, historical investment will have a greater effect. The increase in capital funding in England allied to the asset management approach taken across the UK has led to a focus on principal roads in terms of planned work and a resultant improvement in condition. Clearly local authorities will have to keep a lid on reactive works although revenue spend continues to be an area of concern.

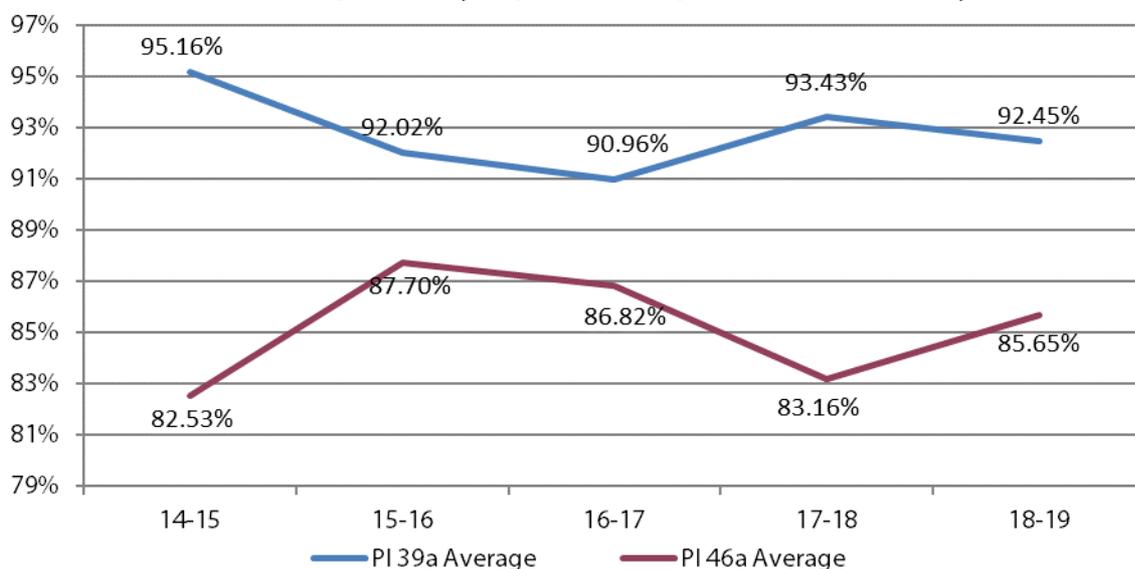
PI 28 Number of Cat 1 defects per Km of maintained road



PI 28 above shows the number of category 1 defects per kilometre of maintained road. This shows a jump over the past year and is currently at 0.33. This increase is likely related to the more severe winter of 2017/18.

Category 1 defects remain the highest priority for highways managers and it would appear that reductions since a high of 2012/13 reflect a focus on this issue. Maintaining these figures will have a big impact across the network and this can be seen as a success story for the sector.

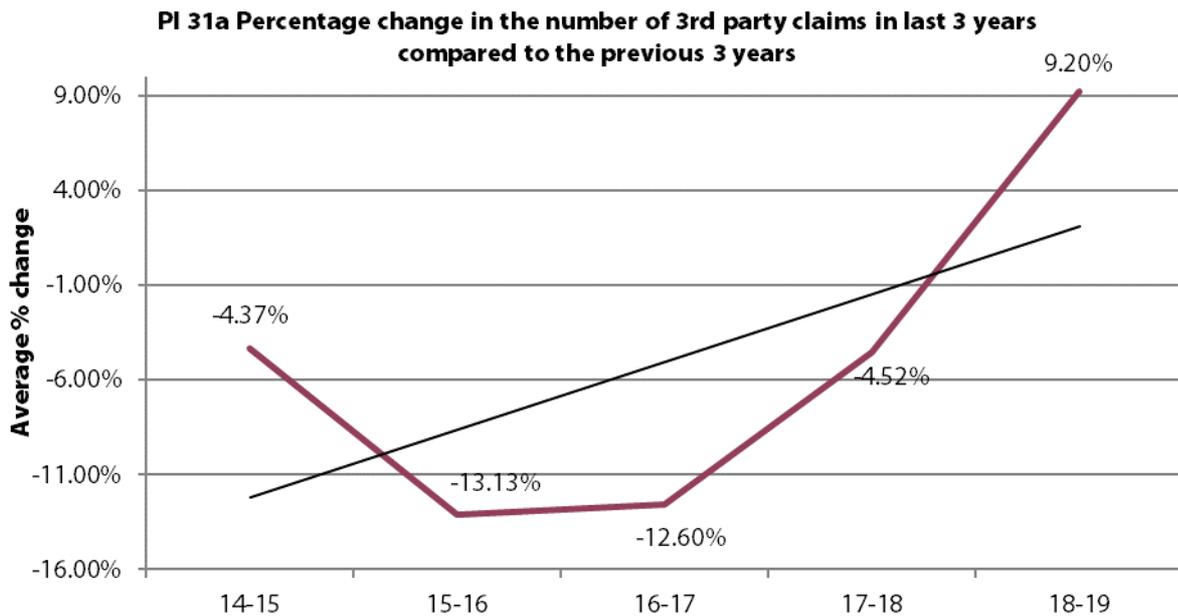
PI 39a Percentage of safety inspections completed on time (carriageways)
PI 46a Percentage of safety inspections completed on time (footways)



The percentage of carriageway safety inspections carried out on time (PI 39a) has fluctuated around 92% for the past 5 years to currently stand at 92.45%. It should be noted that the percentage has never been below 90% for the same period.

For footways (PI 46a) the level stands at 85.66% around the 5 year average. Although the figures continue to show a higher focus on the highway rather than the footway, we can see from the figures above that there has been no marked deterioration in either over the past 5 years.

The area that has seen the most dramatic 5 year change is that of 3rd party claims (PI 31). Decreases of over 30% over the period have shown the first increase to 9.20% in 2018/19. Earlier falls are undoubtedly due to a more robust approach to defending spurious claims combined with the continued improvement in response times. The recent increase likely reflects the harsher winter of 2017/18 and decreases in future years might be anticipated.



Winter maintenance

There are 2 PIs which reflect the total cost for carriageway (PI 43) and footway (PI 50) winter maintenance treatment over the entire winter period divided by the total carriageway/footway network length.

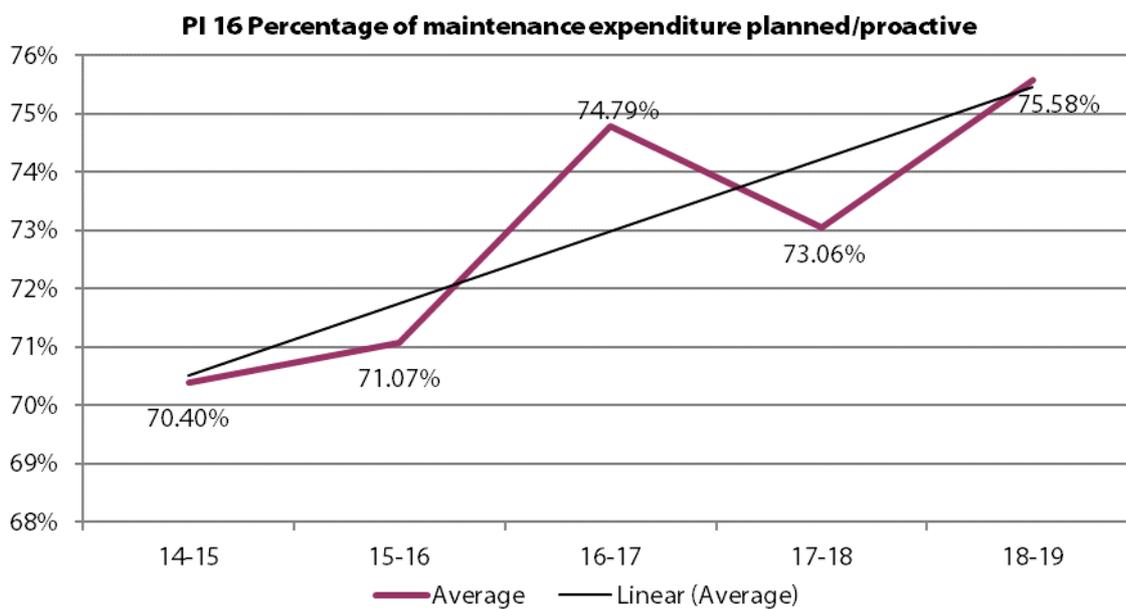
PI 50 Total cost for footway winter maintenance treatment over the entire winter period divided by the total footway network length
PI 43 Total cost for carriageway winter maintenance treatment over entire winter period divided by the total carriageway network length



PI 43 covering carriageways stands at £763, down from a peak of £1177 in 2017/18. The cost of footways has similarly reduced to £131 from a high of £219 in 2017/18. These substantial changes were undoubtedly due to a harsher winter in 2017/18, but also show the danger of complacency and the temptation to cut winter budgets after several years of mild winters.

Combined asset types

The average percentage of actual maintenance expenditure which was planned or proactive (PI 16) in 2018-19 stands at 75.58%. This shows an increase on 2017/18 but the 5 year trend remains upwards and improving.



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