

Appendix E - Analysis of Customer Reports

1.0 Executive Summary

Customer reports relating to highway defects have increased significantly since 2022, reaching a peak of 10,148 reports in 2023 and remaining elevated at 9,883 in 2024 and 9,130 in 2025 (year shown in the report). This represents a material increase compared with the 2019–2022 period when annual reports were typically between 5,953 and 7,033.

The analysis shows that a small number of defect categories generate the majority of customer contacts. The following categories consistently dominate reporting volumes across the period analysed:

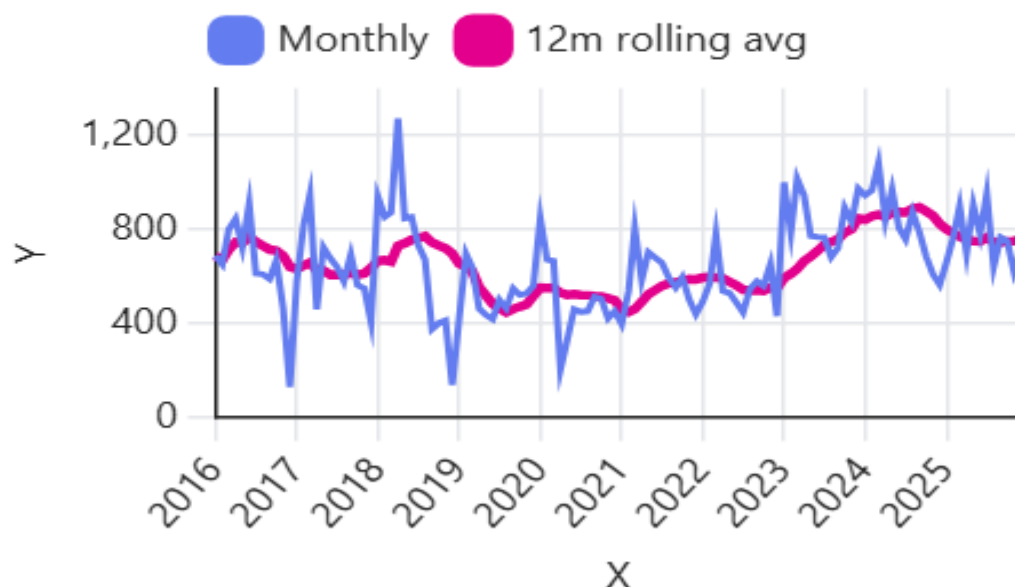
- Footway slabs/concrete defects
- Carriageway potholes/resurfacing defects
- Tree-related issues
- Drainage (blocked gullies)
- Street furniture and signs

2.0 Customer Reports of Highway Defects

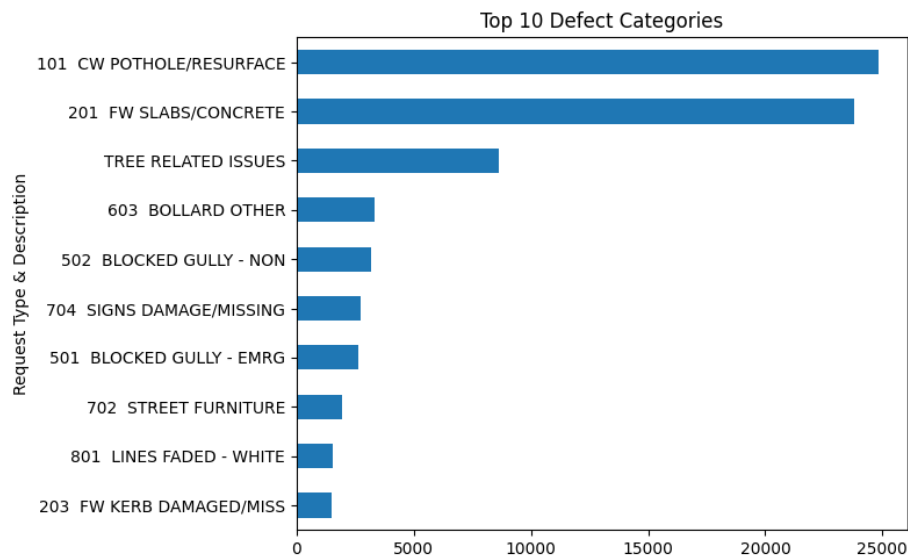
Annual number of customer-reported highway defects, 2016–2025.

Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Number	7676	7,623	8,357	6,177	5,953	7,033	6,599	10,148	9,882	9130

Customer Reports with 12-Month Rolling Average



Top 10 Categories by Total Volume (2016–2025)



A few observations from the data:

- The series covers 120 monthly periods (Jan 2016–Dec 2025).
- Monthly totals range from approximately 128 to 1,273 customer reports.
- There are noticeable peaks during severe pothole/reporting periods (particularly around 2018, early 2023 and early 2024), and a marked reduction during the first COVID lockdown period in 2020.
- Reporting remained relatively stable between 2016 and 2018.
- A significant reduction occurred during 2019–2020, coinciding with the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Reports increased steadily from 2021 peaking in 2023.
- Although there has been a slight reduction since 2023, report numbers remain well above the pre-pandemic average.

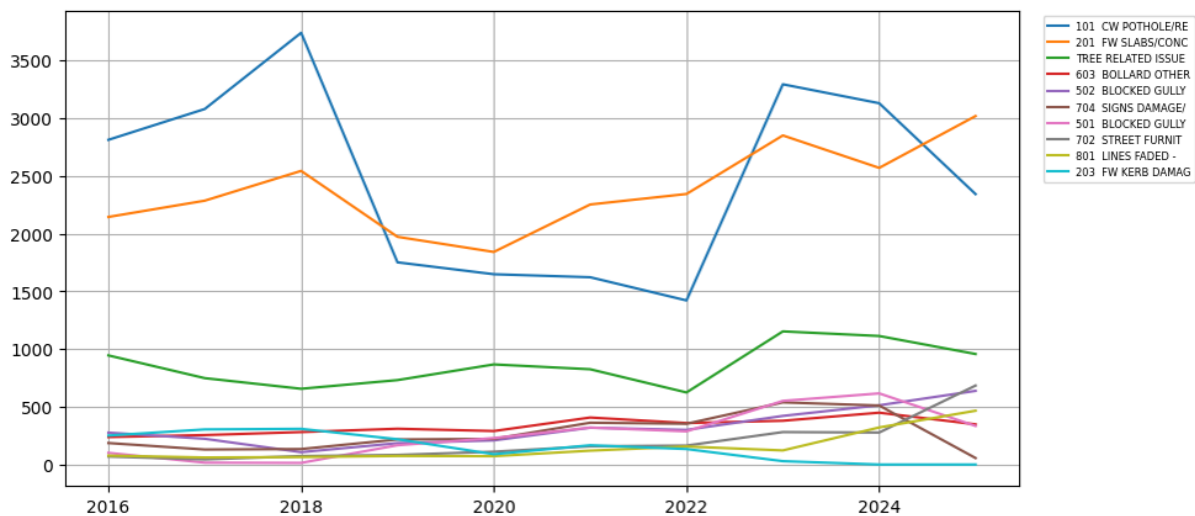
3.0 Key Findings

3.1 Demand has increased substantially since 2022

The data indicates a step change in customer demand from 2023 onwards rather than normal annual fluctuation. Possible reasons are:

- Increased customer reporting;
- Changes to reporting channels;
- Deterioration in asset condition;
- Weather-related impacts; and
- Increased public expectations.

3.2 Key Trends



Footway defects and potholes dominate complaints

Potholes and footway slab defects dominate the dataset, accounting for the largest share of all customer contacts throughout the period. Their trends largely drive total report volumes.

- **Carriageway potholes/resurfacing** - This category remains the principal source of highway safety-related reports and dominates winter demand periods.
- **Footway slabs/concrete** - Monthly totals frequently exceed 200 reports and remain the largest category in many years.

Maintaining investment in preventative carriageway resurfacing and targeted footway renewal programmes is likely to have the greatest impact on reducing customer demand.

3.3 Tree-related issues show strong seasonality

Tree-related issues have grown significantly since 2023, becoming the third-largest reporting category and one of the most prominent seasonal patterns. Tree-related reports rise noticeably during spring and summer. Examples are:

- 2023 July: 180 reports
- 2024 June: 171 reports
- 2025 May: 107 reports

The data supports a proactive approach to cyclical tree inspection, pruning programmes and management of overhanging vegetation, to reduce seasonal demand.

3.4 Drainage issues remain significant

Drainage reports (emergency and non-emergency gullies) increase noticeably from 2022 onwards, with major spikes during wetter periods. Both emergency and non-emergency blocked gully reports increase during wetter periods. Examples include:

- 2023 October: 80 emergency blocked gullies
- 2023 November: 110 emergency blocked gullies
- 2024 July: 74 emergency blocked gullies

Drainage remains a significant driver of customer contact and should continue to be prioritised through targeted cleansing, asset condition assessment and flood-risk interventions.

3.5 Street furniture and signs, and markings are growing categories

Signs and street furniture complaints show a gradual upward trend from 2021 onwards and become increasingly prominent in later years. Particularly notable are:

- Street furniture reports in 2025 May (130)
- Signs damage and missing signage reports occurring consistently throughout the period

These reports may indicate ageing assets, increased public reporting and higher expectations regarding public realm quality. Further investigation would be beneficial.

White-lining reports have risen steadily in recent years, suggesting increasing public concern about road marking visibility.

4.0 Risk Assessment

4.1 Strategic Risks

Risk	Impact
Continued growth in reports	Increased service demand and response times
Deteriorating asset condition	Higher maintenance liability
Drainage failures	Flooding and reputational risk
Footway defects	Public liability claims
Tree-related issues	Safety and customer satisfaction concerns

4.2 Commentary

A notable shift can be seen from a historically pothole-dominated customer reporting profile towards a broader mix of issues, particularly trees, drainage,

street furniture and road markings, indicating that customer demand is increasingly spread across multiple highway asset groups rather than concentrated solely on carriageway defects.

5.0 Conclusion

Customer reports relating to highway defects have increased materially since 2023 and remain significantly above historic levels. The majority of demand is generated by a small number of asset types, principally footways, carriageways, drainage assets and trees. Targeted preventative maintenance and asset renewal within these categories is likely to provide the greatest opportunity to improve network condition, reduce future service demand and improve customer satisfaction.