

Reliability of journeys on Highways Agency's motorway and 'A' road network: September 2011



Key findings	1
National overview of reliability	2
Reliability on individual routes and between junctions	3
Request for feedback	3
Strengths and weaknesses of the data	4
Background Notes	5

This Statistical Release presents provisional aggregate level information about the reliability of journeys on motorways and 'A' roads managed by the Highways Agency during September 2011.

The reliability of journeys on the Highways Agency managed network is measured by the percentage of 'journeys' that are 'on time'. For this measure:

- A 'journey' represents travel between adjacent junctions on the network.
- An 'on time journey' is defined as one which is completed within a set reference time, based on historic data on that particular section of road.

The data are based on a combination of sources, including Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras, in-vehicle Global Positioning Systems (GPS) and inductive loops built into the road surface.

These statistics are part of a new series about journey time reliability and have replaced the Department's previous measure of reliability which reported delay on the slowest 10% of journeys.

The new statistics are also used to monitor an impact indicator in the Department's 2011-2015 Business Plan.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Media Enquiries:
020 7944 3066

Public Enquiries:
Ben Coleman
020 7944 5383
congestion.stats@dft.gsi.gov.uk

The key findings from this statistical release include:

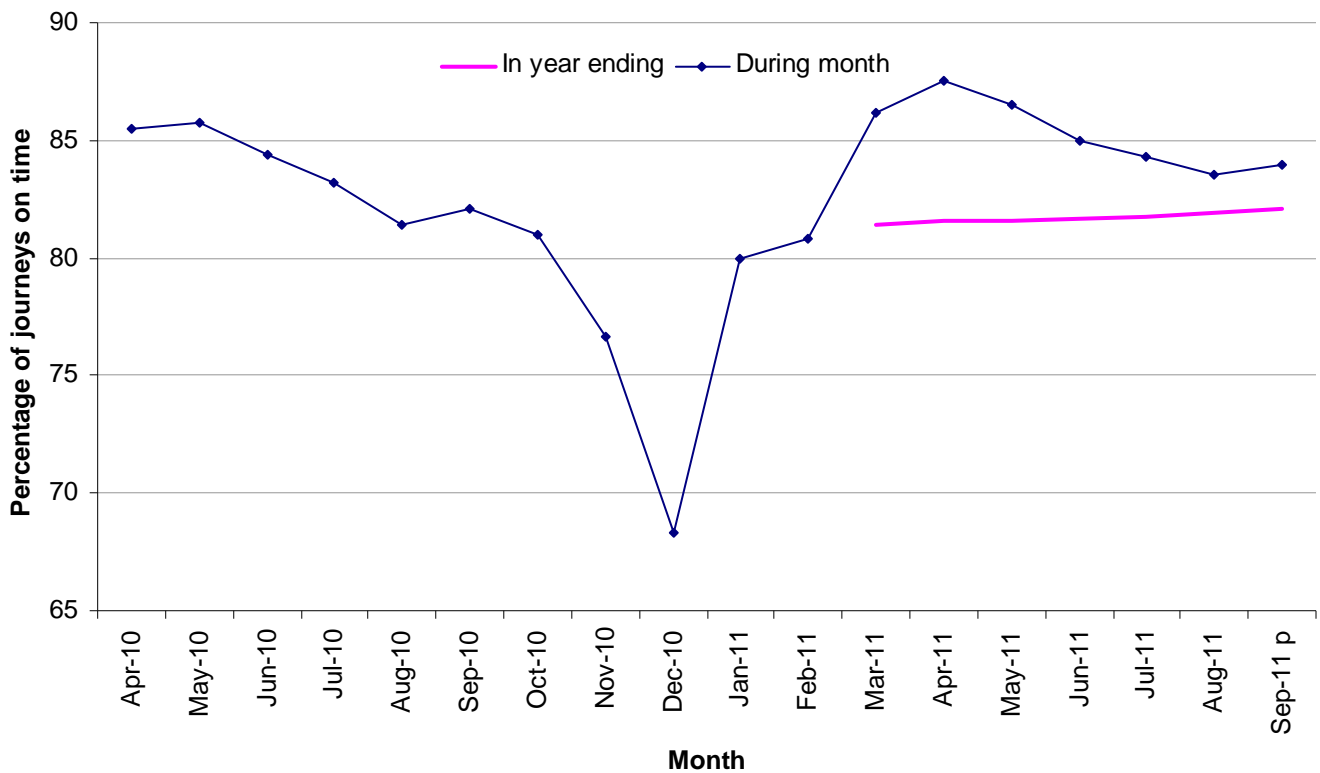
- In the year ending September 2011, provisionally 82.1 per cent of journeys on the Highways Agency managed network were 'on time'. This is 0.2 percentage points higher than the year ending August 2011.
- Provisionally, 84.0 per cent of journeys on the Highways Agency network during September 2011 were 'on time', up 1.9 percentage points from September 2010.

1. National overview of reliability

- 82.1 per cent of journeys made on Highways Agency managed roads between October 2010 and September 2011 were 'on time'. This is 0.2 percentage points higher than the previous rolling year, September 2010 to August 2011, and continues the gradual improvements in reliability seen over the last 7 months.
- During September 2011, 84.0 per cent of journeys on Highways Agency's motorway and 'A' road network were 'on time'. This is 1.9 percentage points higher than the equivalent figure for September 2010.

Percentage of journeys ¹ on Highways Agency motorways and 'A' roads deemed 'on time' ²: April 2010 to September 2011 ^p

(Congestion web table [CGN0104](#))



1. Journeys are defined as travel between adjacent junctions on the network.
 2. An on-time journey is defined as one which is completed within a set reference time, drawn from historic data on that section of road.
 3. Reference times are updated in April each year. Comparisons of performance in April with the previous period should be made with caution.
- p = provisional

2. Reliability on individual routes and between junctions

At present, information about the reliability of journeys on individual routes, or between particular junctions on the network, are not sufficiently robust to be presented as official statistics. This is due to the range of different sources used to calculate journey times across the network.

Each data source exhibits its own biases which affect the estimates of journey time reliability and, as such, performance cannot be reliably compared between sections of the network monitored through different sources. In addition, where the sources used to monitor a section of the network change over time, it may not be possible to reliably compare estimates of journey time reliability before and after the change.

The Department are working with the Highways Agency to address these issues of comparability. It is likely that any actions to address these issues will also require some historic adjustment to the national series although the trends reported in national reliability to date are unlikely to change.

Until this programme is complete, the Highways Agency will publish information about journey time reliability at a sub-national level on their website. This information will be available from the end of November.

It should be noted that while these disaggregated information are currently insufficiently robust to be published as official statistics, we are confident that the aggregated data for the complete network provide a true reflection of how reliability levels have changed.

3. Request for feedback

We are always keen to receive comments from users of transport statistics and are encouraged to seek user views by the UK Statistics Authority. Your views about the new series and how it is presented and analysed would be particularly helpful. If you have any comments, suggestions or questions they would be welcomed. Please contact us using the details listed on the first page of this release.

4. Strengths and weaknesses of the data

Estimates of journey time reliability on Highways Agency's motorway and 'A' road network are compiled from various data sources, including Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras, in-vehicle Global Positioning Systems (GPS) and inductive loops built into the road surface.

Only real, observed, data from each of these sources with a good geographic match to the Highways Agency network are used to calculate reliability for each section of road. Where these data are available from more than one source, the data are weighted according to the number of vehicles generating each estimate. Where no data of this quality are available for a particular section of road or time period, reliability is imputed based on national day-time and night-time averages for that month.

3.7 per cent of the data used to calculate journey time reliability in September 2011 required imputation in this way. This compares to 3.5 per cent of data requiring imputation in September 2010.

Please use the link provided in the following section for details about the extent of data imputation necessary each month.

5. Background notes

1. The web tables give further detail of the key results presented in this statistical release and statistics on other related topics. They are available here:

http://www.dft.gov.uk/statistics?post_type=table&series=congestion-and-reliability

2. Full guidance on the methods used to compile the reliability statistics presented in this release can be found here:

<http://assets.dft.gov.uk/statistics/series/congestion-and-reliability/ha-on-time-methodology.pdf>

3. A complete breakdown of the amount of data requiring imputation in each month is available at:

<http://assets.dft.gov.uk/statistics/series/congestion-and-reliability/ha-data-quality.xls>

4. National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the National Statistics Code of Practice. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure they meet customer needs:

<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html>

5. Details of ministers and officials who receive pre-release access to these statistics up to 24 hours before release can be found here:

<http://assets.dft.gov.uk/statistics/series/congestion-and-reliability/pre-release-haontime.pdf>

6. The next release of these statistics will be published on 8 December 2011. It will contain provisional information about the reliability of journeys on Highways Agency's motorway and 'A' road network during October 2011, and the final figures for September 2011.