

Movers & Shakers Highways Leadership Snapshot

A data-led snapshot of senior leadership appointments and market trends across the highways sector





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Introduction

Leadership movement remains a strong indicator of where organisations are concentrating investment and delivery focus.

Across 2025 and into early 2026, senior-level hiring across the highways market has been shaped by a changing investment landscape, including continued focus on network resilience, asset renewal, and preparation for the next Road Investment Strategy period. Whilst Lower Thames Crossing is going into full delivery, RIS3 is expected to focus on renewals than major enhancements.

At a national level, this activity is underpinned by a substantial infrastructure pipeline, with the Treasury's National Infrastructure and Service Transformation Authority (NISTA) estimating that between 629,000 and 706,000 workers will be required annually across construction and infrastructure over the next five years.

Additionally, the third Road Investment Strategy (RIS3) allocates £27 billion to England's Strategic Road Network (SRN) for the 2026–2031 period. Delivered by National Highways, the five-year programme places a strong emphasis on renewing, repairing and resurfacing the existing network, rather than pursuing significant new road expansion.

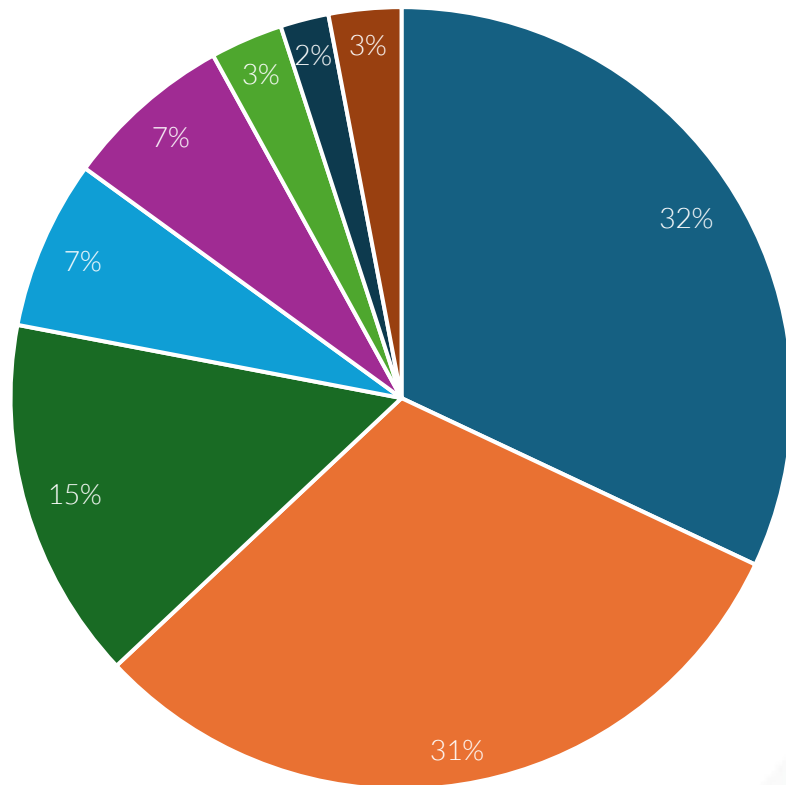
This report takes the data curated from our monthly Movers & Shakers updates to provide a snapshot of the infrastructure talent market, with a specific focus on the highways sector. Whilst the wider dataset spans transport and infrastructure, this version isolates highways-related activity to provide a more targeted view of leadership trends across roads, highways maintenance, strategic infrastructure delivery, and network operations.





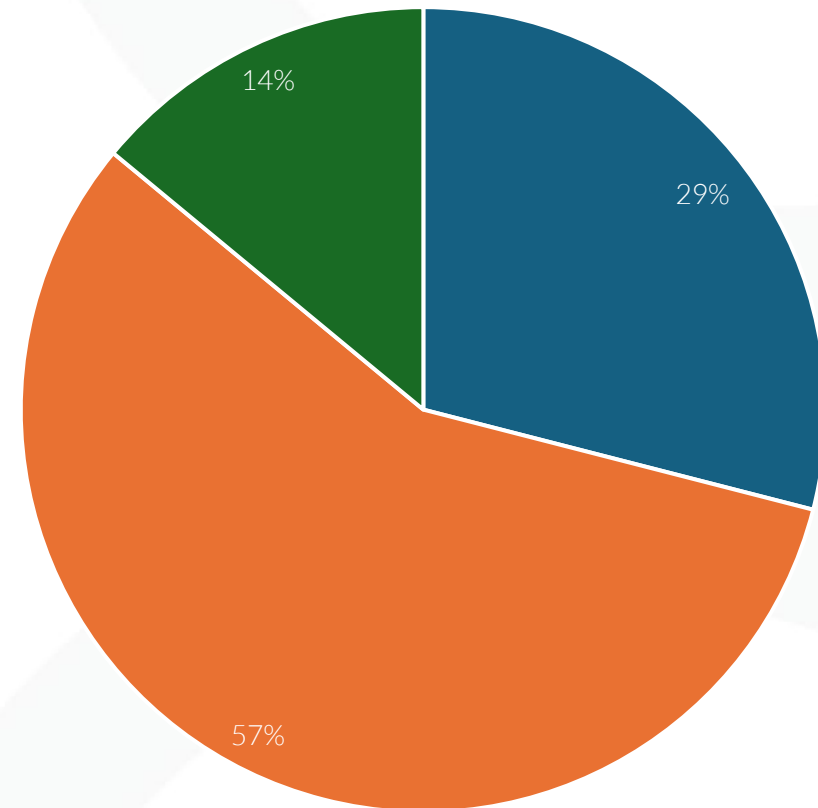
Leadership Appointments by Company Type

Appointments by Company Type (All Sectors)



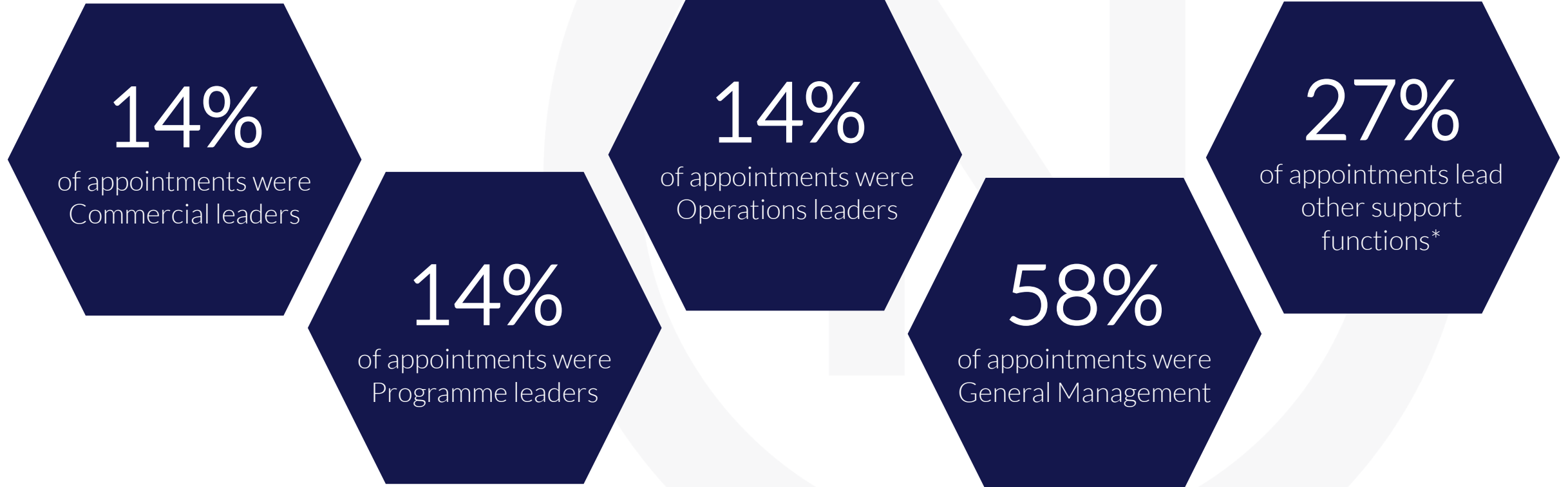
- Consultancy
- Contractor
- Operator
- Public Sector
- Asset Owner
- Manufacturer
- Investor
- Other

Appointments by Company Type (Highways)



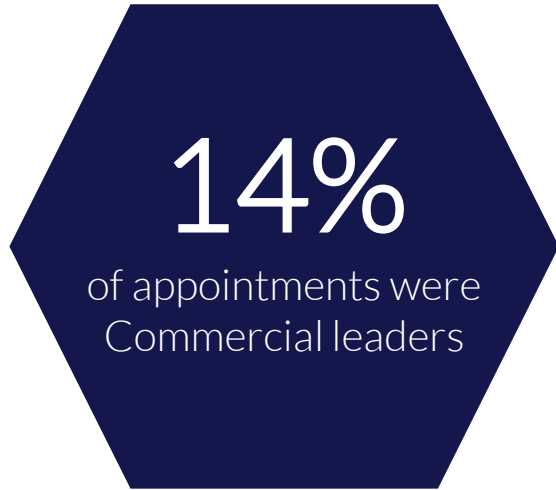
- Consultancy
- Contractor
- Asset Owner

Leadership Trends (All Sectors)



*Support functions include corporate functions such as Strategy, Finance, HR, Legal, IT, Procurement and Business Development.

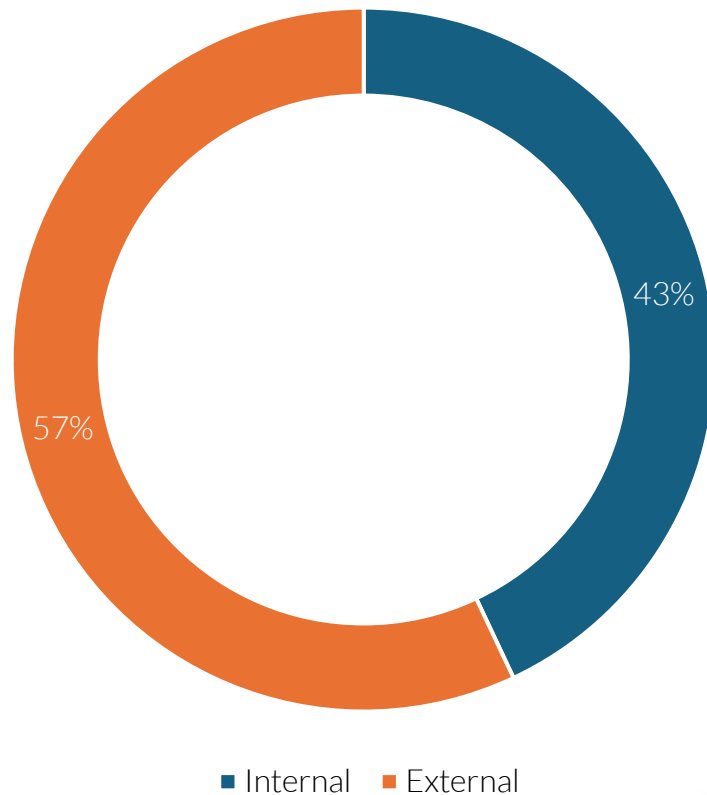
Leadership Trends (Highways)





Internal vs External Appointments

Hiring Movements (Highways)



External appointments accounted for 57% of tracked leadership moves within the Highways sector, with internal promotions representing the remaining 43%.

The relatively balanced split suggests that organisations are continuing to invest in developing internal talent, whilst also selectively bringing in external leadership expertise to support operational priorities and evolving delivery requirements.

This is consistent with the broader infrastructure pipeline, where sustained investment is driving both internal progression and external hiring to meet demand.

Comparatively, internal promotion is significantly higher in regulated and operationally stable sectors such as water (45%) and rail (42%), compared to energy (25%), where organisations show a much greater reliance on external hiring as that market expands.



Methodology

This report is based on leadership movements tracked through our ongoing Movers & Shakers updates, compiled throughout 2025 and early 2026. Readers can access the monthly blogs here: <https://www.newsomconsulting.co.uk/blog>.

Each leadership move has been recorded and categorised across a number of dimensions, including sector, organisation type, function, role title, gender (where identifiable), and whether the appointment represents an internal move.

Individual names and job titles have been manually reviewed and coded to extract consistent data points, with roles grouped into comparable categories (e.g. Commercial Director, Project & Programme Director, Operations Director) to enable meaningful analysis across the dataset.

Sector classification has been refined using both recorded sector data and contextual information from job titles and organisations, allowing for a more accurate representation of where leadership activity is occurring. Roles spanning multiple sectors have been identified as cross-sector positions, reflecting the increasing complexity of infrastructure programmes.

Whilst the dataset is not exhaustive, it is designed to provide a representative view of senior leadership activity across the transport and infrastructure sectors.



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