



Freight Rail Usage 2018-19 Q1 Statistical Release

Publication date: 27 September 2018

Next publication date: 18 December 2018

Background

This release contains information on rail freight usage in Great Britain with the latest quarterly data referring to April, May and June of 2018.

The statistics cover **freight moved** (disaggregated by seven commodities), **freight lifted**, **freight delays per 100 train km**, and **freight train km by operator**.

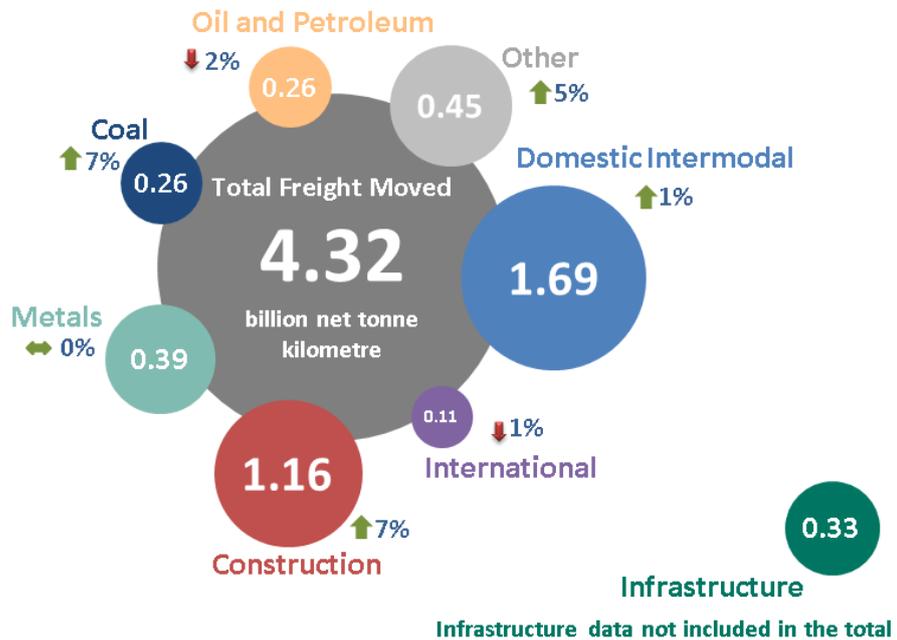
Data are sourced from Network Rail, Freight Operating Companies (FOCs), and Department for Transport (DfT).

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Total rail freight moved has been in decline in recent years, but this quarter shows a small increase overall compared to 2017-18 Q1

Freight moved by commodity, Great Britain, 2018-19 Q1



The total volume of rail **freight moved** in 2018-19 Q1 increased by 3% compared to 2017-18 Q1. Despite the decline in recent years the amount of coal freight moved increased by 7% compared to the same quarter last year. The total amount of **freight lifted** in 2018-19 Q1 was 19.1 million tonnes, an increase of 2% on the same quarter last year. This is the second lowest total for Q1 since the start of the time series in 1996-97.

Normalised **freight delay** in 2018-19 Q1 rose to 11.3 minutes per 100 train kilometres, an increase of 13% compared to 2017-18 Q1.

Total **freight train kilometres** rose to 8.4 million kilometres, an increase of 3% in comparison with 2017-18 Q1. This is the third lowest total recorded for Q1 since the time series began in 2010-11.

Author: Stephen Pottinger (0207 282 3763)

Responsible Statistician: Peter Moran

Public Enquiries: Email: Rail.Stats@orr.gsi.gov.uk

Media Enquiries: Tel: 020 7282 2094

Website: <http://www.orr.gov.uk/statistics/published-stats/statistical-releases>

1. Freight moved



2018-19 Quarter 1 Results

In 2018-19 Q1, total freight moved was 4.3 billion net tonne kilometres, an increase of 0.1 billion net tonne kilometres (up 3% on 2017-18 Q1).

During 2018-19 Q1, four out of the seven commodities recorded an increase compared to same quarter last year.

The two highest increases were in Coal and Construction, which both rose by 7%.

The increase in Construction is the more significant increase as it accounts for just over a quarter of the total freight moved. It increased by 80 million net tonne kilometres from 2017-18 Q1 to a total of 1.16 billion net tonne kilometres. This is the highest figure recorded for Construction since the time series began in 1998-99 Q1.

According to The Office for National Statistics website¹, there has been a continuing trend upward in the construction industry since 2012.

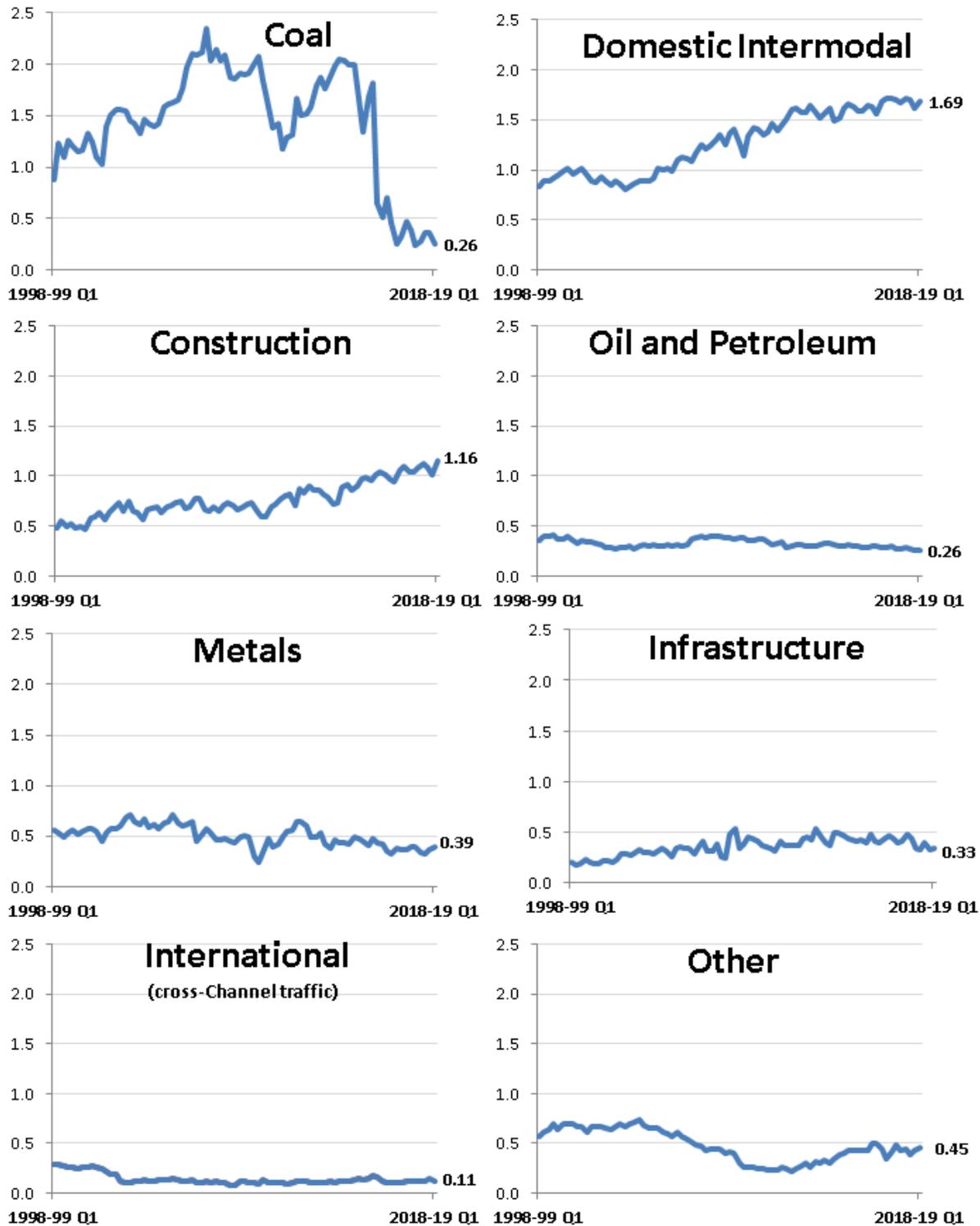
Freight moved data, measured in net tonne kilometres, shows the amount of freight which is moved on the railway network, taking into account the weight of the load and the distance carried.

Freight moved is disaggregated by seven commodities which are also summed to provide an overall total freight moved. The seven commodities are coal, metals, construction, oil and petroleum, international, domestic intermodal and other.

In addition to the seven commodities listed above the amount of goods used for railway engineering work is also reported, under the 'infrastructure' category. This is not included in the totals published in the freight moved tables and charts.

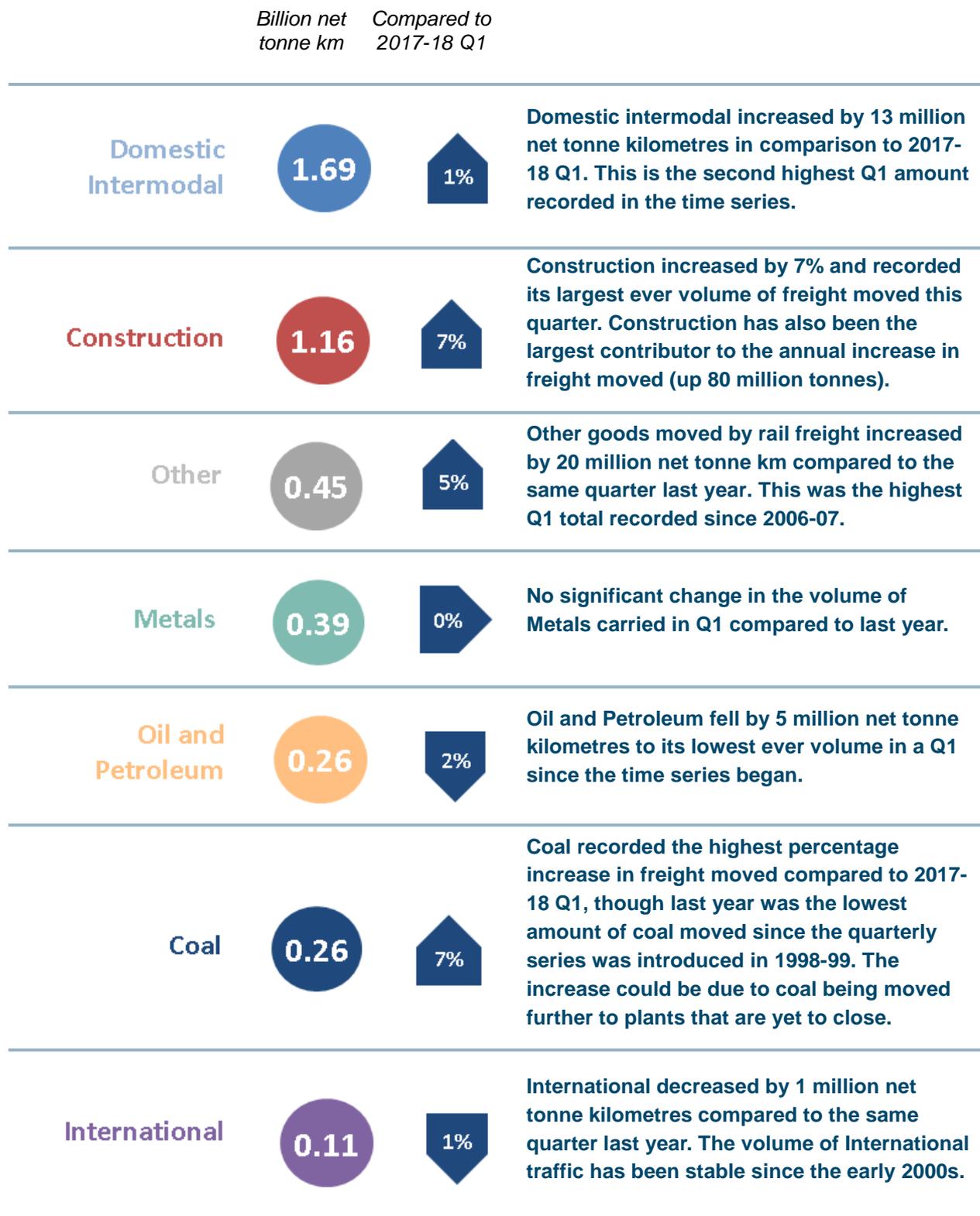
¹<https://www.ons.gov.uk/businessindustryandtrade/constructionindustry/bulletins/constructionoutputingreatbritain/june2018> (section 4, figure 2)

Figure 1.02: The volume of rail freight moved (billion net tonne km), Great Britain, 1998-99 Q1 to 2018-19 Q1 ([Table 13.7](#))



Construction had the second highest volume accounting for 27% of the total freight moved in 2018-19 Q1, Domestic Intermodal recorded the highest share, 39%.

Figure 1.03: The volume of rail **freight moved** (billion net tonne km), 2018-19 Q1 compared to 2017-18 Q1 ([Table 13.7](#))



2. Freight lifted

2018-19 Quarter 1 Results



The total amount of freight lifted in 2018-19 Q1 was 19.1 million tonnes, an increase of 2% compared to 2017-18 Q1. This is the first Q1 increase in freight lifted since 2013-14.

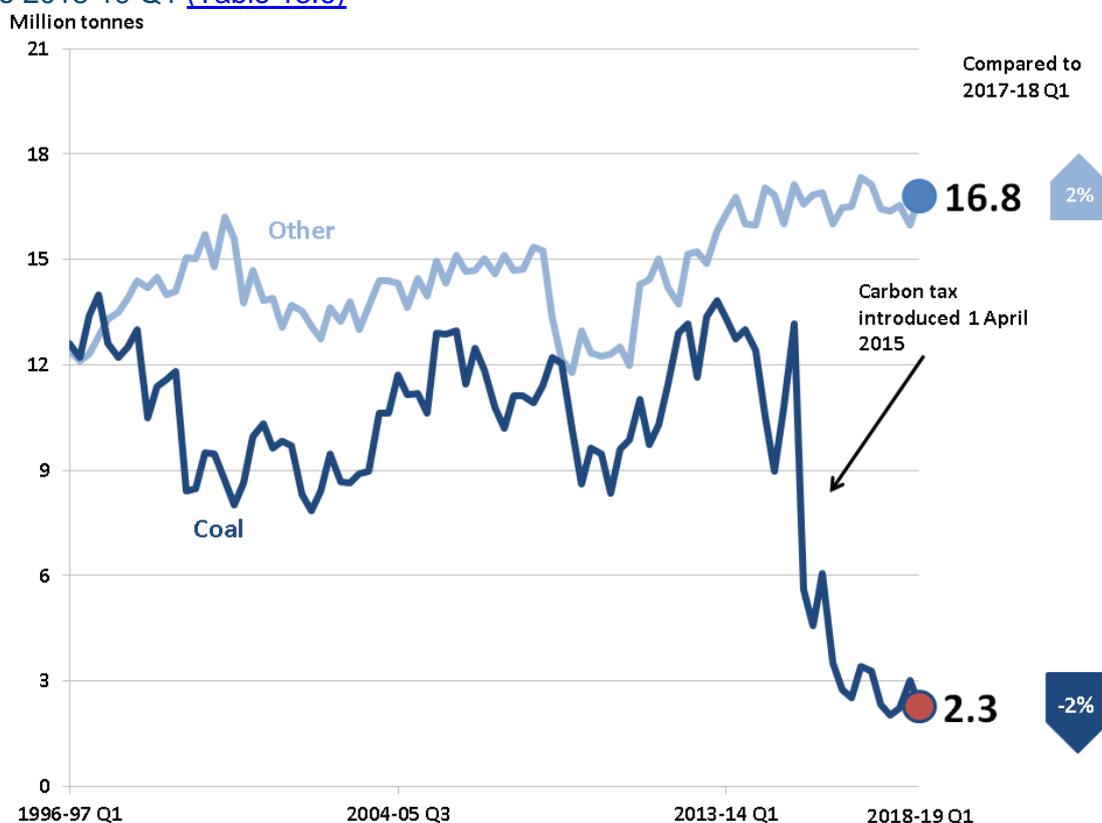
The amount of coal lifted in 2018-19 Q1 (2.3 million tonnes) is the lowest in a Q1 since the start of the quarterly time series in 1996-97. It was 2% lower than last year and has continued to fall since the closure of coal-fired power stations was announced in 2013-14².

The amount of other freight lifted increased by 0.4 million tonnes to 16.8 million tonnes during 2018-19 Q1 compared to the same quarter last year.

Freight lifted is the mass of goods (tonnes) carried on the rail network, excluding the weight of the locomotives and wagons. Unlike freight moved it takes no account of the distance travelled.

Freight lifted data is sourced from the four major FOCs: DB Cargo UK, Freightliner Ltd, Direct Rail Services (DRS) and GB Railfreight.

Figure 2.01: Freight lifted (million tonnes), Great Britain, 1996-97 Q1 to 2018-19 Q1 ([Table 13.6](#))



² <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-34851718>

3. Freight delay per 100 train kilometres



Freight delay per 100 train kilometres is a normalised measure of delay experienced by FOCs. The measure is calculated from the total delay experienced by all GB freight operators divided by their train mileage. This dataset is provisional as delay data can be revised as part of the delay attribution process.

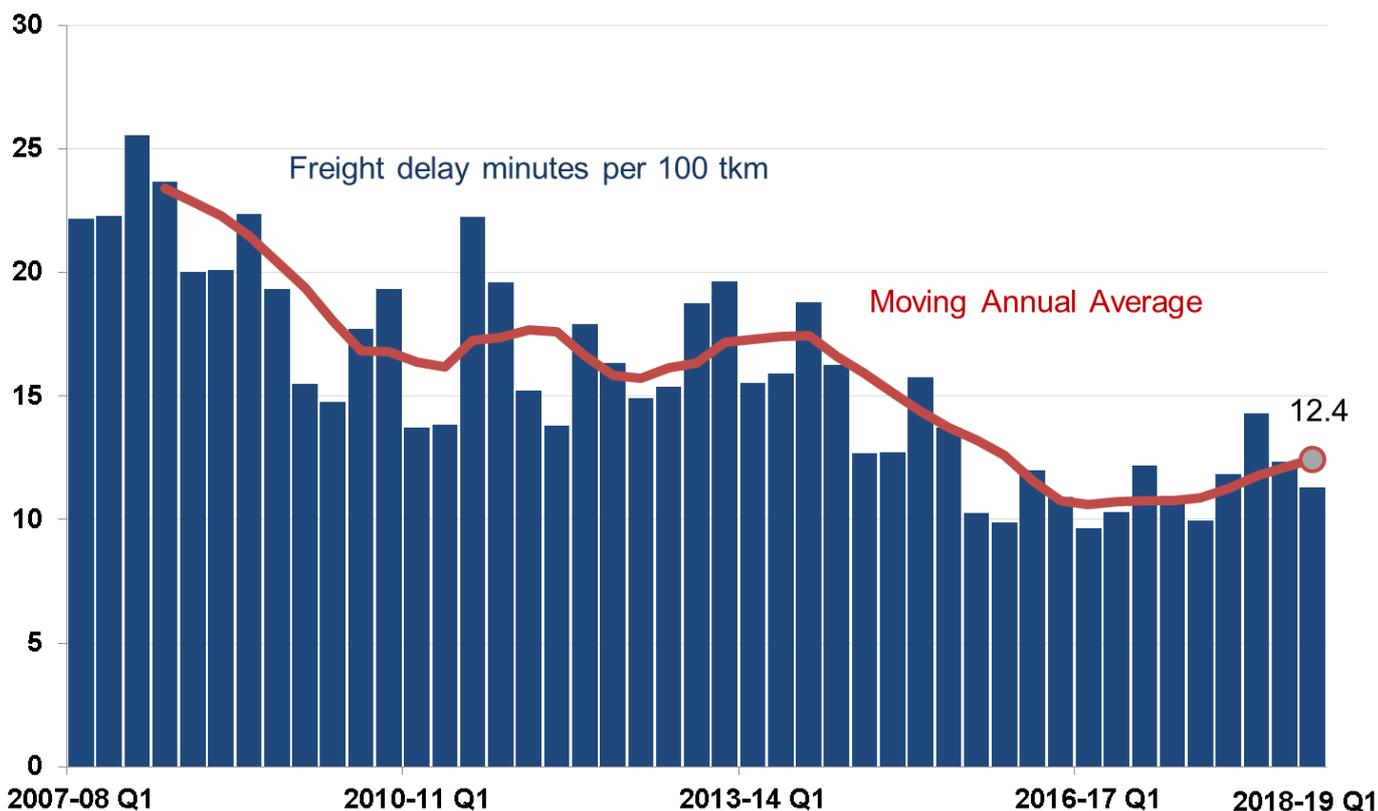
Freight train mileage can fluctuate depending on demand so a normalised measure allows for comparison over time regardless of changing levels of freight traffic on the network. Freight delay per 100 train kilometres tends to peak in Q3 and Q4 each year, coinciding with the expected periods of adverse weather, during autumn and winter.

Freight Delivery Metric (FDM) is another measure of freight train delay. It is based on the percentage of freight trains that arrive at their destination within 15 minutes of their scheduled arrival time. Results and more information can be found in the quarterly [Passenger and Freight Rail Performance statistical release](#).

2018-19 Quarter 1 Results

Freight delay increased by 13% compared to the same quarter last year to 11.3 minutes per 100 train kilometres.

Figure 3.01: Normalised **Freight delay per 100 train kilometres**, Great Britain, 2007-08 Q1 to 2018-19 Q1 ([Table 13.5](#))



4. Freight train kilometres by operator

2018-19 Quarter 1 Results

In 2018-19 Q1, the total freight train kilometres ran was 8.4 million, an increase of 0.2 million on 2017-18 Q1 and the first quarter since 2016-17 Q4 where growth has been reported.

The largest freight operator DB Cargo had a 10% drop from 3.6 million kilometres in 2017-18 Q1 to 3.3 million in 2018-19 Q1. However, four of the seven operators had increased enough to offset this decrease.

Most significantly, GB Railfreight increased by 28% from 1.3 to 1.6 million kilometres this quarter compared to 2017-18 Q1.

DB Cargo, Freightliner Intermodal and GB Railfreight accounted for 86% of all freight train kilometres travelled in 2018-19 Q1.

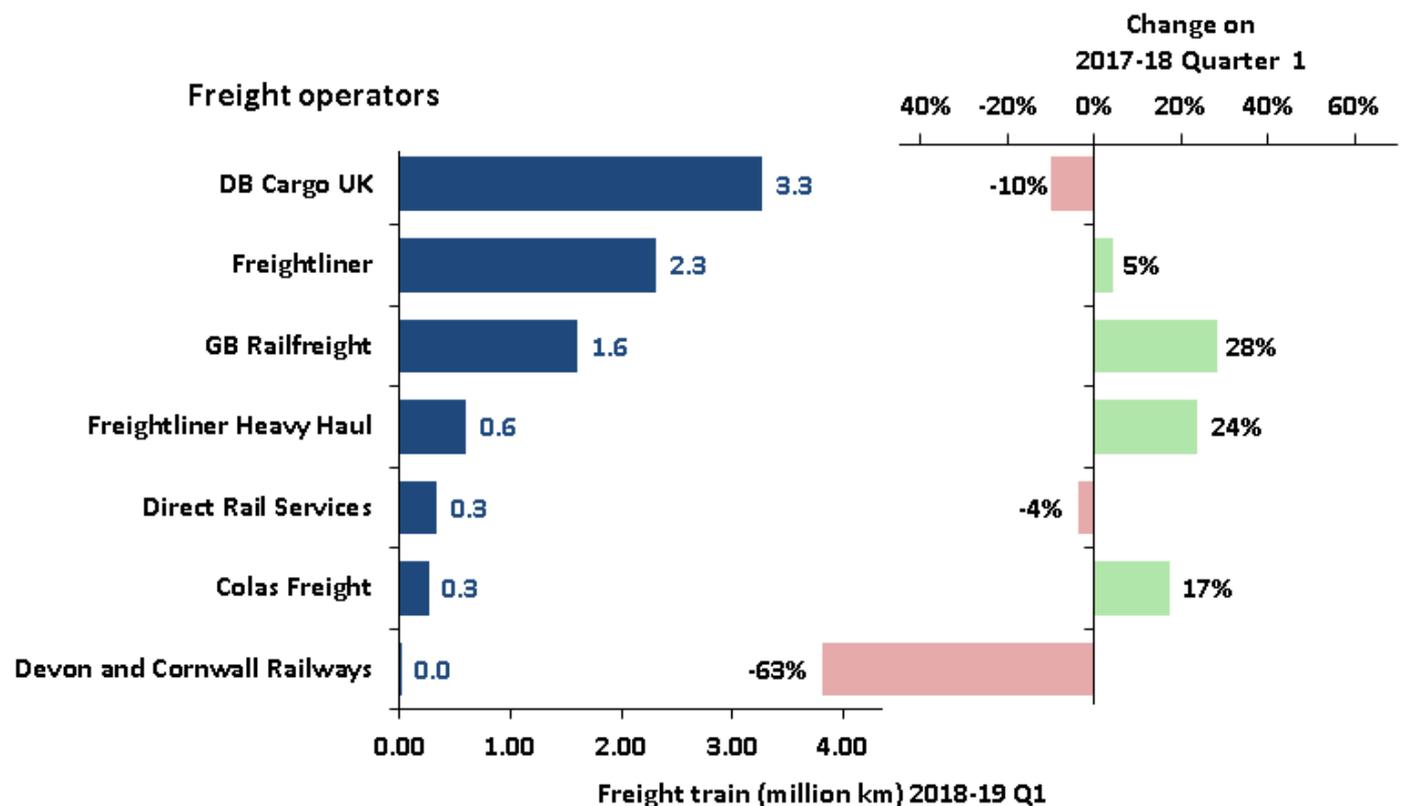
Freight train kilometres is the actual mileage in kilometres operated by FOCs on Network Rail infrastructure

The data is sourced from Network Rail's Track Access Billing System (TABS) and covers only the mileages charged through TABS.

Competition between freight operators means we would expect a greater level of variation in mileage from year to year than in the passenger market.

Not all freight operators have been in operation throughout the time-series, therefore total year on year comparison should be treated with caution.

Figure 4.01: Freight train kilometres by FOC, Great Britain, 2018-19 Q1 ([Table 13.25](#))



Annex 1 – List of pre-created reports available on the Data Portal

All data tables can be accessed on the [data portal](#) free of charge. The data portal provides on screen data reports, as well as the facility to download data in Excel format and print the report. We can provide data in csv format on request.

Freight moved

- Freight moved, 1982-83 to 2017-18 (annual), 1998-99 Q1 to 2018-19 Q1 (quarterly) – [Table 13.7](#)

Freight lifted

- Freight lifted, 1982-83 to 2017-18 (annual), 1996-97 Q1 to 2018-19 Q1 (quarterly) – [Table 13.6](#)

Freight delay minutes per 100 train kilometres

- Normalised freight delay, 2007-08 to 2017-18 (annual), 2007-08 Q1 to 2018-19 Q1 (quarterly) – [Table 13.5](#)

Freight train kilometres by operator

- Freight train kilometre, 2010-11 to 2017-18 (annual), 2010-11 Q1 to 2018-19 Q1 (quarterly) – [Table 13.25](#)

Freight market indicators (Q4/annual publications only)

- Number of freight train movements, 2003-04 to 2017-18 – [Table 13.10](#)
- Impact on rail haulage, 2004-05 to 2016-17 – [Table 13.8](#)
- Rail market share, 1998 to 2016 – [Table 13.12](#)

Revisions: There have been some minor revisions to the previously published dataset. Further details can be found at: [Revisions Log](#).

Methodology: For more information on data collection and the methodology used to calculate the statistics in this release please see the accompanying [Quality Report](#).

Annex 2

Statistical Releases

This publication is part of the statistical releases which cover the majority of reports that were previously released through the [Data Portal](#). The statistical releases consist of four annual and four quarterly themed releases:

Annual:

- Rail Finance & Rail Fares Index;
- Rail Safety Statistics;
- Rail Infrastructure, Assets and Environmental;
- Regional Rail Usage.

Quarterly:

- Passenger and Freight Rail Performance;
- Freight Rail Usage;
- Passenger Rail Usage;
- Passenger Rail Service Complaints.

A full list of publication dates for the next twelve months can be found in the [release schedule](#) on the ORR website.

National Statistics

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value.

All official statistics should comply with all aspects of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. They are awarded National Statistics status following an assessment by the Authority's regulatory arm. The Authority considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate.

It is ORR's responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected of National Statistics. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, we will discuss any concerns with the Authority promptly. National Statistics status can be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained, and reinstated when standards are restored.

For more details please contact the Statistics Head of Profession Lyndsey Melbourne on 020 7282 3978 or contact rail.stats@orr.gov.uk.

The Department for Transport (DfT) also publishes a range of rail statistics which can be found at [DfT Rail Statistics](#). They also publish road freight statistics which can be found at [Road freight: domestic and international statistics](#).



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