



Passenger Rail Usage

2017-18 Q3 Statistical Release

Publication date: 8 March 2018

Next Publication date: 14 June 2018

Background

This release contains information on passenger rail usage. This covers:

- Passenger journeys
- Passenger kilometres
- Passenger revenue
- Passenger train kilometres

Coverage: Great Britain

Latest Quarter: 2017-18 Q3
(October to December 2017)

Sources:

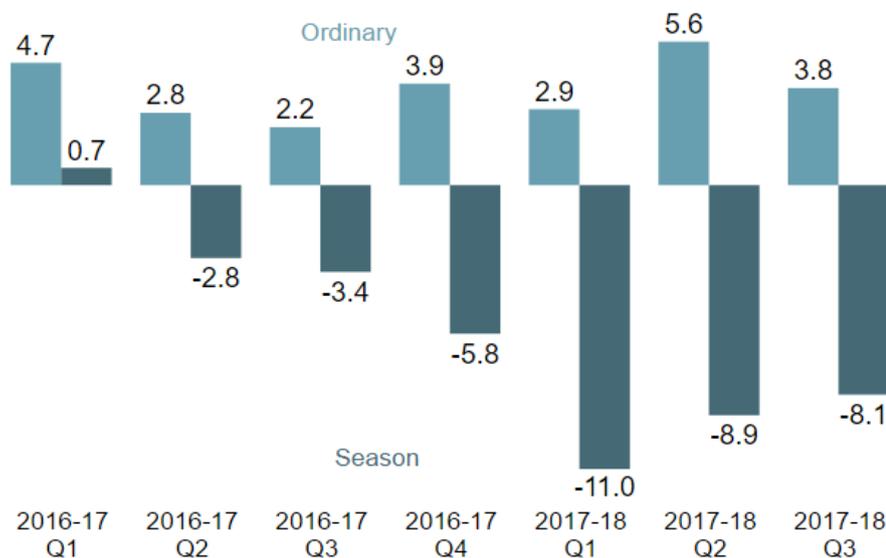
- LENNON ticketing and revenue database
- Train Operating Companies
- Network Rail

Contents

- Passenger journeys – p2
- Passenger kilometres – p4
- Passenger revenue – p6
- Passenger train kilometres – p8
- Annexes – p9

Rail passenger journeys in Great Britain fell by 0.9% to 438m in 2017-18 Q3 driven by an 8.1% fall in Season ticket journeys.

Percentage change in passenger journeys by ticket type, 2016-17 Q1 to 2017-18 Q3



Passenger journeys in the London and South East and Regional sectors fell by 1.4% and 0.4% respectively whilst the Long Distance sector reported year-on-year growth for a 17th successive quarter, up 1.5% compared to 2016-17 Q3.

Despite the drop in passenger journeys, passenger kilometres increased by 1.0% with all three sectors reporting growth.

Passenger revenue grew by 3.0% in 2017-18 Q3. Season ticket revenue fell by £17m but this was offset by increases of £39m on both Advance and Anytime fares.

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1. Passenger journeys

Passenger journeys are calculated based on travel from an origin station to a destination station. A train journey may include one or more changes of train, and one journey is generated for each train used.

Quarterly and annual data **by sector** are available from 1994-95 onwards in [Table 12.6](#)

Quarterly data **by ticket type** are available from 1994-95 Q1 and annual data are available from 1986-87 onwards in [Table 12.7](#).

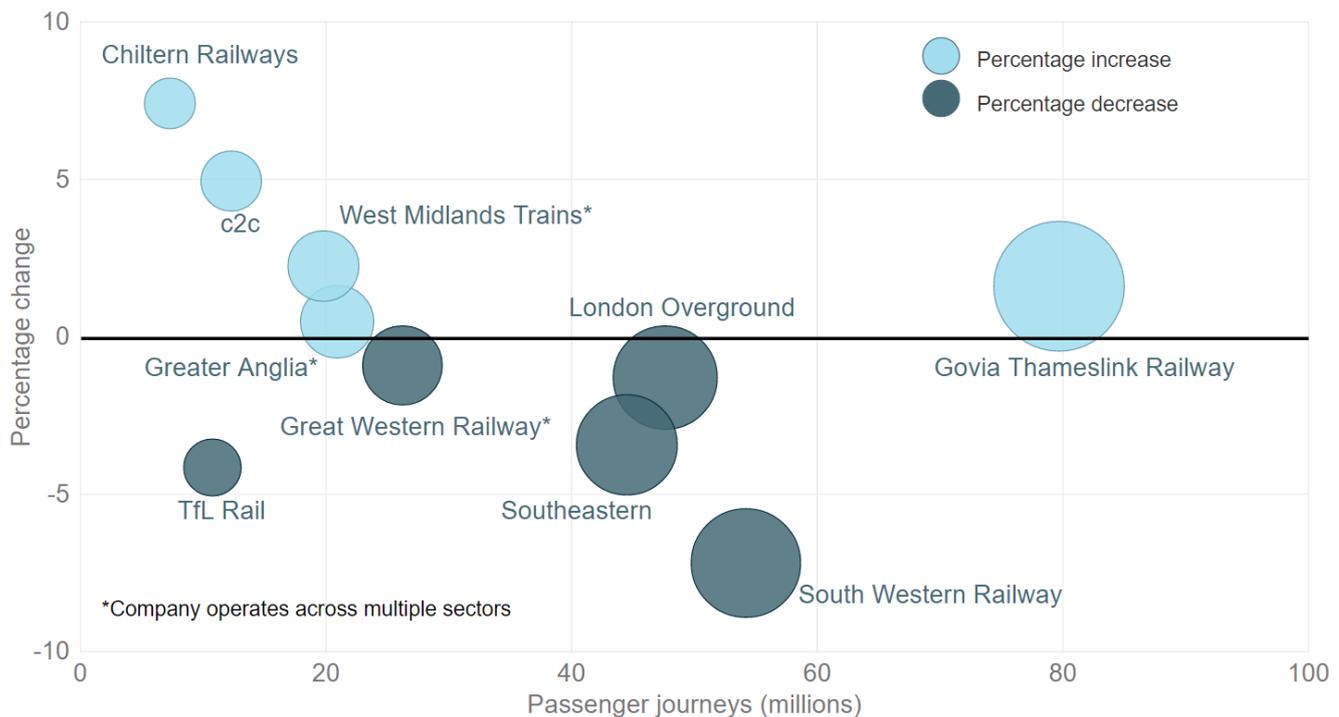
Quarterly and annual data **by TOC** are now available from 2011-12 onwards in [Table 12.12](#).

A time series of aggregate annual data from 1950 are also available in [Table 12.5](#).

2017-18 Q3

- Passenger journeys fell by 0.9% compared to 2016-17 Q3 as journeys on Season tickets and in the London and South East sector dropped for the sixth quarter in succession.
- Journeys in the Long Distance sector rose by 1.5%

Figure 1.01: Passenger journeys 2017-18 Q3 and percentage change compared to 2016-17 Q3, London and South East sector



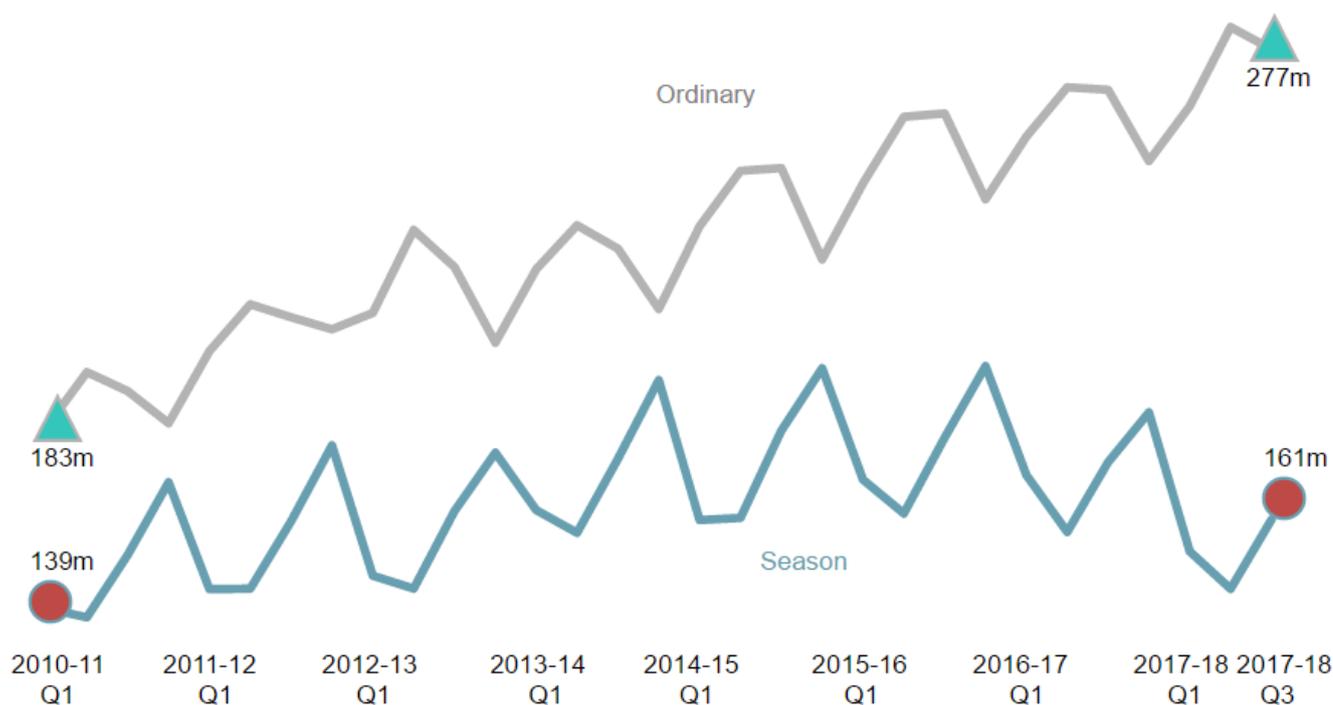
Despite Govia Thameslink Railway reporting year on year passenger journey growth for the first time since 2016-17 Q1 (up 1.6%), journeys within the London and South East sector fell by 1.4% compared to 2016-17 Q3 due to falls on five other operators in the sector.

There were four million fewer journeys on South Western Railway in 2017-18 Q3 compared to the same quarter last year and the 54m journeys represents their lowest Q3 total since 2012-13.

Chiltern Railways had the highest growth rate of all train operators (7.4%). Their direct route between London Marylebone and Oxford City Centre opened in December 2016 so the effect of that new route is still evident in 2017-18 Q3¹.

The number of passenger journeys in the Regional sector fell for the first time since 2012-13 Q4. Northern accounts for around a quarter of journeys in the sector and they reported a fall of 4.9%.

Figure 1.02: Passenger journeys, ordinary and season tickets, 2010-11 Q1 to 2017-18 Q3



Journeys made between October and December using Season tickets fell by 8.1% to 161m compared to the same quarter last year. In contrast, Ordinary tickets increased by 3.8%, driven by 6.3% growth in Anytime fares and an 8.9% increase in Advance fares.

Market share of season ticket journeys was 37% in 2017-18 Q3, down from almost 50% in the equivalent quarter a decade ago.

¹ <https://www.chilternrailways.co.uk/news/chiltern-railways-announces-oxford-city-centre-london-marylebone-launch-date>

2. Passenger kilometres

Passenger kilometres are calculated by multiplying the number of passenger journeys on a particular flow by the number of track kilometres between the two required stations.

Quarterly and annual data **by sector** is now available from 1994-95 onwards in [Table 12.3](#)

Quarterly data **by ticket type** is now available from 1994-95 Q1 and annual data is available from 1986-87 onwards in [Table 12.4](#)

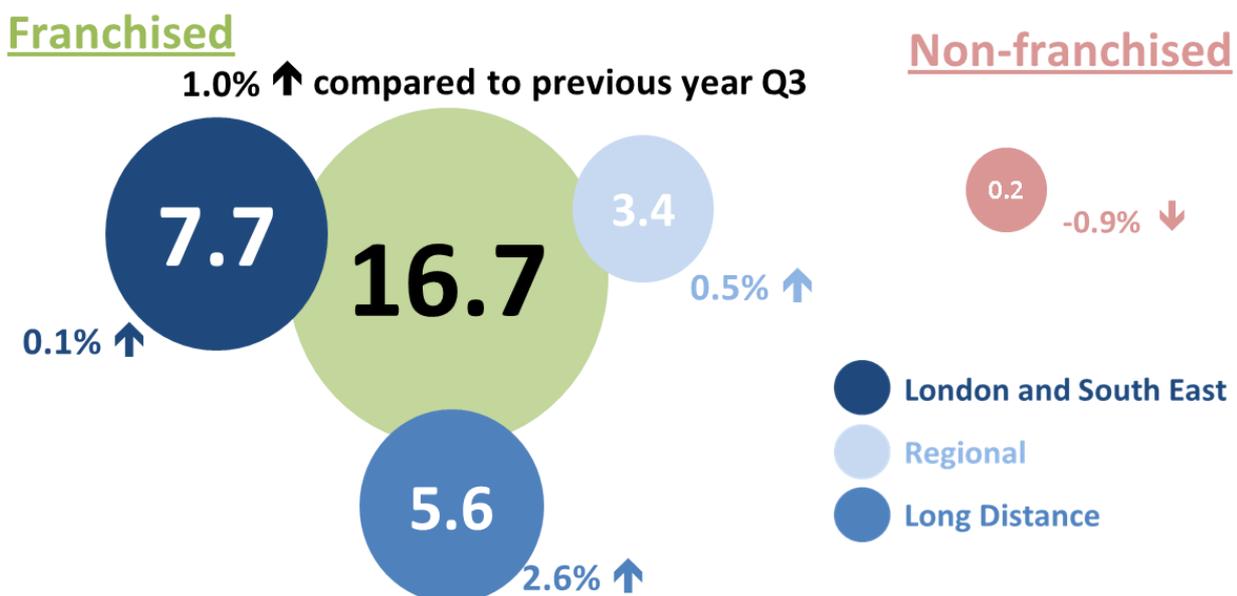
Quarterly and annual data **by TOC** is now available from 2011-12 onwards in [Table 12.11](#)

A time series of aggregate annual data from 1947 is also available in [Table 12.2](#)

2017-18 Q3

- Passenger kilometres increased by 1.0% in 2017-18 Q3
- Despite falling journey numbers in London and South East and Regional sectors, all sectors reported an increase in passenger kilometres

Figure 2.01: Passenger kilometres (billion kms) by sector, 2017-18 Q3 and percentage change compared to 2016-17 Q3



Growth in the Regional sector slowed to its lowest rate since 2012-13 Q4. Industrial action contributed to passenger kilometres on Northern services² falling by 3.3% in 2017-18 Q3 though

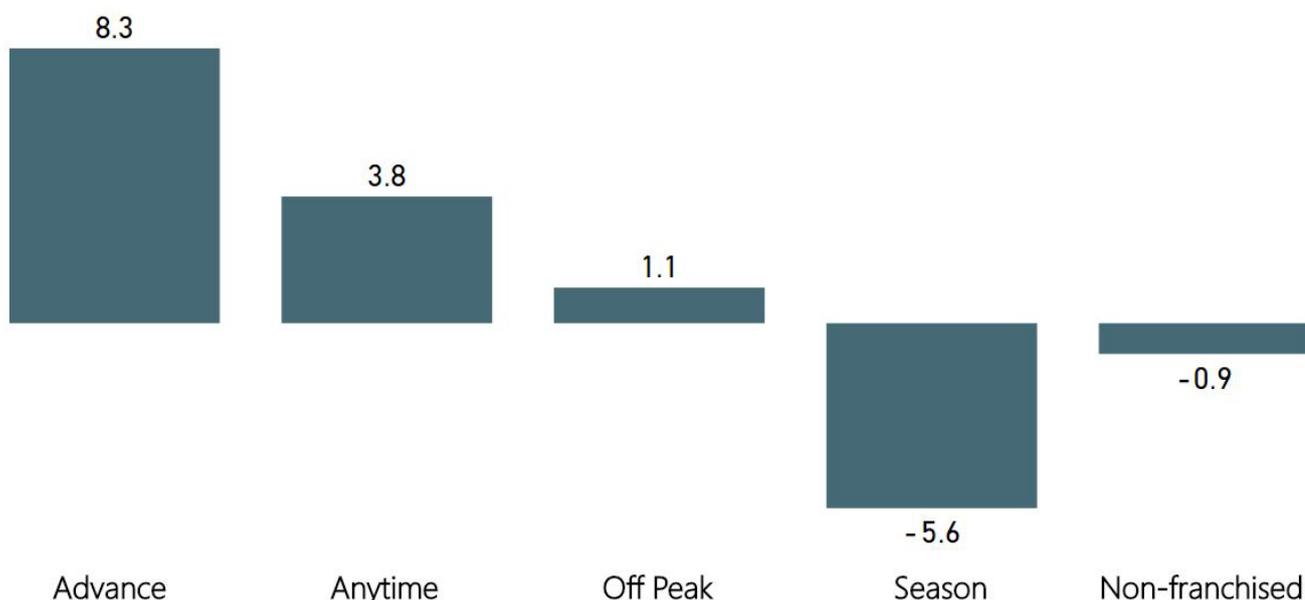
² <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-41398899>

the effect of that on the Regional sector was balanced out by an increase of 3.0% for Scotrail. Combined these account for over 40% of passenger kilometres within the sector.

Industrial action has affected Merseyrail³ services since Spring 2017 and there were a further four days of disruption between October and December 2017. This has contributed to four successive quarters of negative growth for Merseyrail with Q3 showing the largest drop of 9.5%.

Passenger kilometres on Great Western Railway increased by 0.4% despite a 0.9% fall in passenger journeys. Contributory factors included engineering works over Christmas⁴ and weekend closures of some lines between London Paddington and Ealing Broadway for the Crossrail and Great Western Main Line projects.

Figure 2.02: Percentage change in passenger kilometres, ordinary and season tickets (excludes Other), 2017-18 Q3 compared to 2016-17 Q3



As with passenger journeys, passenger kilometres from Season tickets fell compared to the same quarter last year. This is the sixth quarter in a row that Advance tickets have shown the largest growth rate of all ticket types and they now have a market share in excess of 20% compared to 17% five years ago.

There was a negative number of passenger kilometres for Other tickets. This category includes promotional fares and refunds and the volume of those refunds between October and December exceeded the number of passenger kilometres travelled using promotional fares.

³ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-41481821>

⁴ <https://www.gwr.com/about-us/media-centre/news/2017/december/dont-get-left-out-in-the-cold-this-christmas-plan-ahead>

3. Passenger revenue

Passenger revenue statistics show all ticket revenue and miscellaneous charges associated with passenger travel on national railways, but not including government support or grants.

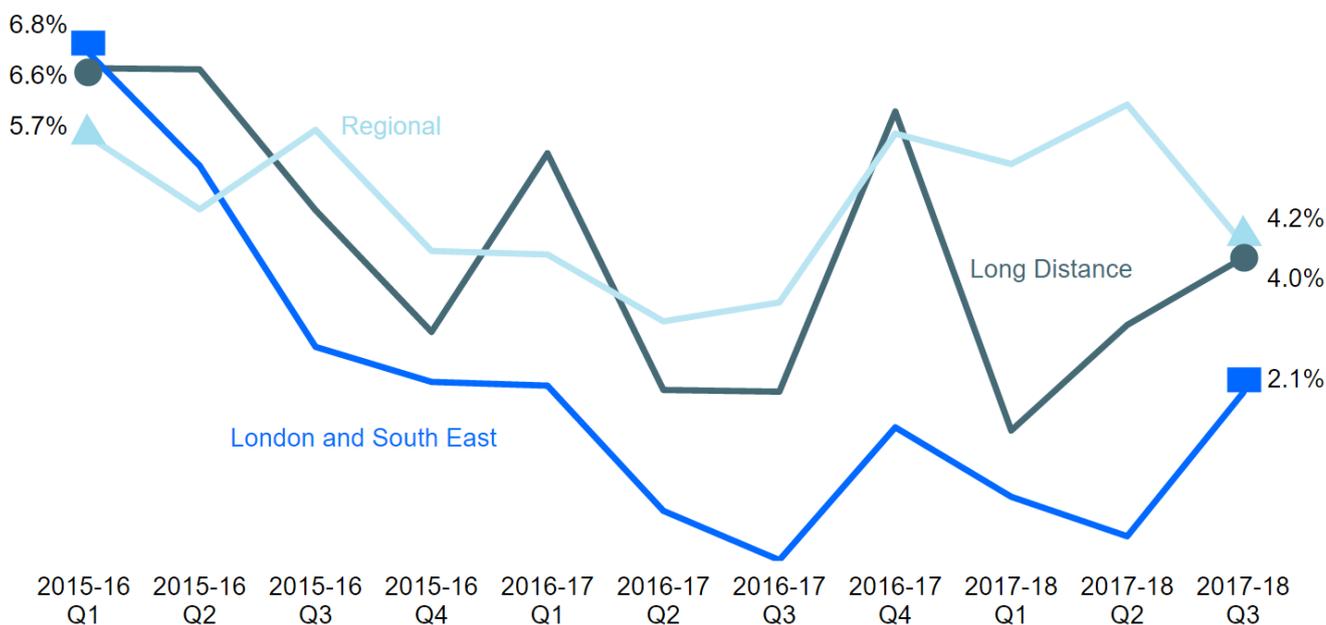
Quarterly data **by sector** is available from 1995-96 Q1 and annual data is available from 1994-95 onwards in [Table 12.8](#)

Quarterly data **by ticket type** is available from 1996-97 Q1 and annual data is available from 1986-87 onwards in [Table 12.9](#)

2017-18 Q3

- Passenger revenue increased by 3.0% (£73m) to £2,475m in 2017-18 Q3 with revenue growth across all three franchised sectors
- Eighth successive quarterly fall for Season ticket revenue offset by growth for Advance, Anytime and Off-Peak fares
- Revenue per journey up 4.1% to £5.62

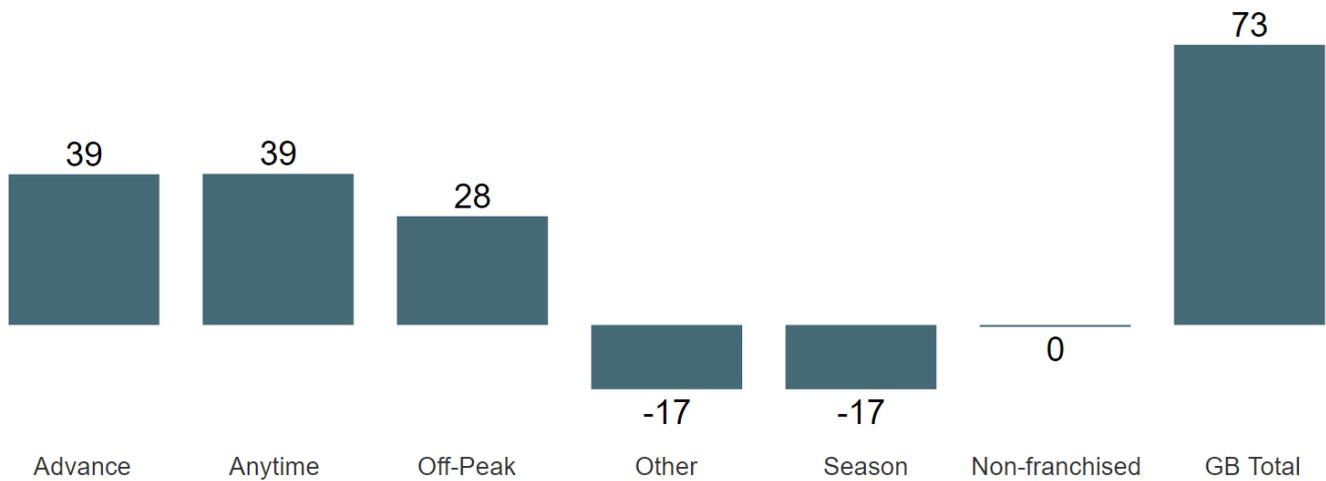
Figure 3.01: Passenger revenue by sector, percentage change compared to the same quarter the previous year, 2015-16 Q1 to 2017-18 Q3



Passenger revenue in the London and South East sector increased by 2.1% compared to 2016-17 Q3, which represented the strongest revenue growth in the sector since 2016-17 Q1. Despite the number of passenger journeys in the Regional sector falling for the first time since 2012-13,

revenue increased by 4.2% to £398m. Revenue for non-franchised operators fell by 2.7% though these operators accounts for less than 1% of all passenger revenue.

Figure 3.02: Change in passenger revenue by ticket type, 2017-18 Q3 and 2016-17 Q3 (£million)



Season ticket revenue fell by 3.0% compared to the same quarter last year and the £534m was the lowest level of revenue reported in Q3 since 2013-14. In contrast, over the same period there was strong growth for advance and anytime fares, which both gained £39m each.

Revenue per journey in 2017-18 Q3 was £5.62, an increase of 4.1% compared to the same quarter last year. Revenue per passenger kilometre reached 14.75p, an increase of 2.0% on 2016-17 Q3.

4. Passenger train kilometres

Passenger train kilometres refers to the number of train kilometres (million) travelled by revenue earning passenger trains, sourced from Network Rail's Track Access Billing System (TABS).

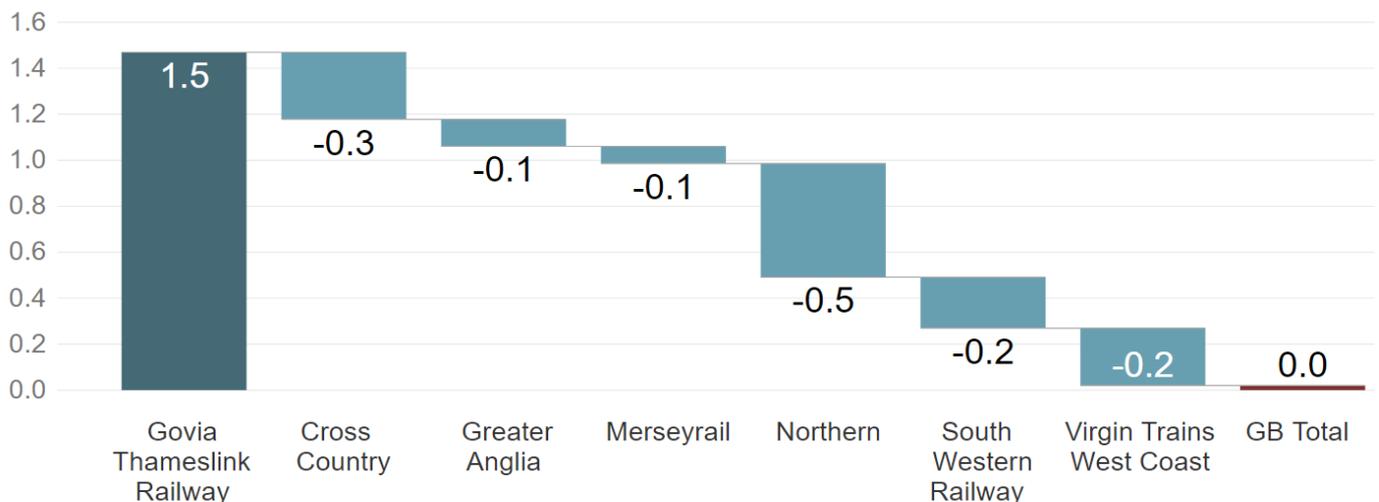
Train kilometres for Heathrow Express have been excluded from the total figures for the non-franchised operators as it is not charged through TABS.

Quarterly data for **Passenger train kilometres** is available from 2010-11 Q1 onwards and annual data for **Passenger train kilometres** is available from 2010-11.

2017-18 Q3

- The volume of passenger train kilometres between October and December was 129m. This was unchanged since 2016-17 Q3 despite a 10.8% increase for Govia Thameslink Railway.
- A number of operators fell by up to 5% due to industrial action during the quarter.

Figure 4.01: Change in passenger train kilometres, 2016-17 Q3 to 2017-18 Q3 (million tkms)



Govia Thameslink Railway passenger train kilometres increased by 1.5m compared to the same quarter last year. They operated a full timetable between October and December 2017 whereas the previous year there had been an emergency timetable in operation up to the 31st October⁵.

A number of operators were affected by industrial action between October and December 2017⁶. Cross Country, Greater Anglia, Merseyrail, Northern, South Western Railway and Virgin Trains West Coast all reported falls of between 2% and 5%.

⁵ <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2016/oct/20/southern-railway-to-restore-full-timetable-from-31-october>

⁶ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-41903887>

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

All data tables can be accessed on the data portal free of charge. The ORR 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.

Passenger journeys

- Passenger journeys – [Table 12.5](#) (franchised only)
- Passenger journeys by sector – [Table 12.6](#)
- Passenger journeys by ticket type – [Table 12.7](#)
- Passenger journeys by train operating company – [Table 12.12](#)

Passenger kilometres

- Passenger kilometres – [Table 12.2](#) (franchised only)
- Passenger kilometres by sector – [Table 12.3](#)
- Passenger kilometres by ticket type – [Table 12.4](#)
- Passenger kilometres by train operating company – [Table 12.11](#)

Passenger revenue

- Passenger revenue by sector – [Table 12.8](#)
- Passenger revenue by ticket type – [Table 12.9](#)
- Revenue per passenger kilometre and per passenger journey – [Table 12.10](#) (franchised only)

Passenger train kilometres

- Passenger train kilometres by operator – [Table 12.13](#)

We no longer publish the Timetabled Train Kilometres by train operating company table on our data portal. For historical data, please contact us on rail.stats@orr.gsi.gov.uk.

Revisions: There have not been any revisions to the previously published tables associated with this statistical release. Further details can be found at: [Revisions Log](#)

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

Regional passenger journeys showing rail journeys to/from and within each region or country are published in [Regional Rail Usage](#) statistical release and data portal [tables](#). These journeys are based on the origin and destination named on a ticket and do not take into account any changes of train. It therefore produces slightly lower estimates than the total journeys published in this Passenger Rail Usage statistical release.

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;
- Key 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 Abby Sneade on 020 7282 3978 or contact rail.stats@orr.gsi.gov.uk.

The Department for Transport (DfT) also publishes a range of rail statistics which can be found at DfT Rail Statistics.



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