Passenger Rail Usage
2018-19 Q4 Statistical Release

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Contents

Rail passenger journeys in Great Britain in 2018-19 reached a record high of 1.759 billion. It increased by 3.0% compared to the previous year and was driven by a 3.9% increase in the London and South East sector.

Total passenger revenue reached £10.3 billion in 2018-19, with annual revenue growth at its highest (6.1%) since 2014-15.

Passenger revenue by sector, 1994-95 to 2018-19
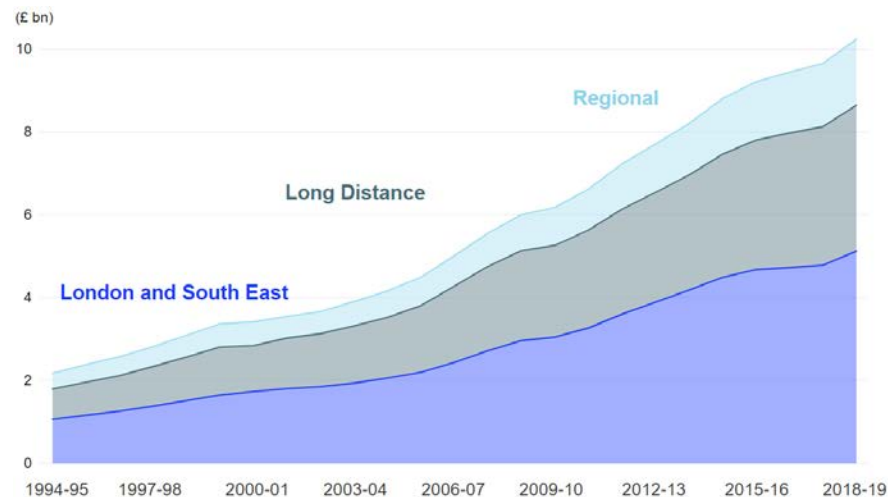
The increase in passenger revenue was driven by a 7.0% rise in the London and South East sector, which contributes to half of the total revenue, and reached a record high of £5.1 billion in 2018-19.

Passenger kilometres increased to 67.7 billion in 2018-19. All three sectors increased, with the highest growth (3.3%) in the London and South East compared to 2017-18.

The volume of **passenger train kilometres** in 2018-19 was 529 million, up by 9.1 million compared to the previous year.

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 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.

2018-19 Annual

- Nationally, passenger journeys increased by 50.9 million (3.0%) compared to last year as journeys in the London and South East sector rose by 3.9% after falling for two consecutive years.

- Passenger journeys using season tickets dropped for the third consecutive year, but at a slower rate (0.4%). In contrast, anytime/ peak ticket journeys increased by 6.9% compared to last year.

2018-19 recorded the highest number of annual passenger journeys (including non-franchise) at 1,759 million in Great Britain, with all three sectors increasing compared to the previous year. This followed a drop of 1.4% in passenger journeys in 2017-18, which was the largest decrease recorded since 1993-94.

Passenger journeys using ordinary tickets increased by 5.0% in 2018-19 compared to the previous year. This was driven by a 6.9% growth in anytime tickets. In contrast, the number of passenger journeys made using season tickets fell for the third consecutive year, down 0.4%. Market share of season ticket journeys was 36% in 2018-19, down from 48% a decade ago.

Total franchised passenger journeys increased by 3.0% compared to last year and reached the highest volume of journeys (1,756 million) since the time series started in 1994-95. All three sectors recorded increases since the previous year. In 2018-19, there were 147 million journeys in the Long Distance sector, 393 million of the Regional sector and 1,217 million in the London and South East sector. The highest increase in 2018-19 was in the London and South East sector (3.9%) which accounts for nearly 70% of the total journeys.

Figure 1.01: Passenger journeys (millions) 2018-19 and percentage change compared to 2017-18, by train operator, London and South East sector
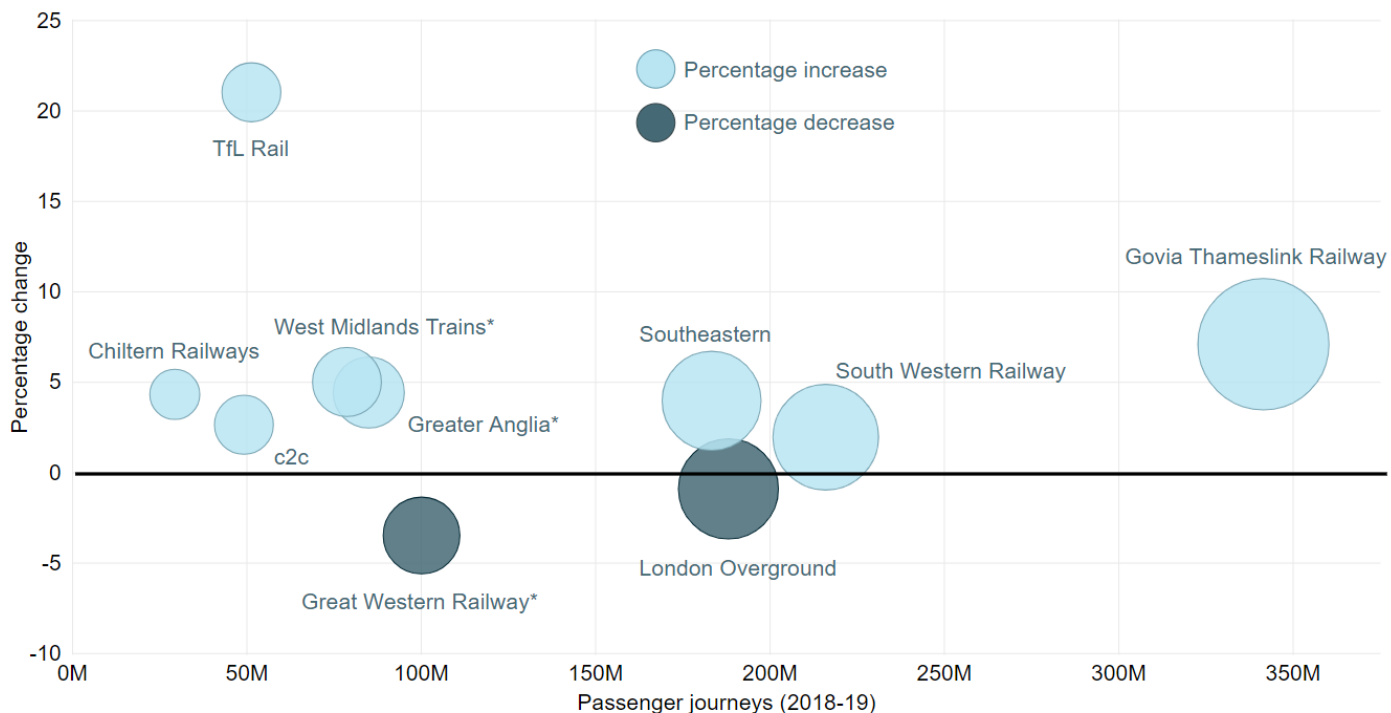
The size of the bubble represents the number of passenger journeys for each operator

* Operate in more than one sector. Percentage change and size of bubble represent figures for the whole operator, rather than solely within London and South East.

Of the four largest passenger operators, all of whom operate within the London and South East sector and account for over 50% of all journeys, three recorded an increase in passenger journeys and only London Overground saw a decrease in journeys (1.7 million) in 2018-19 compared to the previous year. This is likely due to engineering works[1] and the three weekends of closure at Euston station in August and September 2018 as part of the Railway Upgrade Plan to replace North Wembley station[2].

Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR), which had the largest number of passengers journeys (19%) of all operators in 2018-19, increased by 22.7 million compared to the previous year to reach 341.5 million.

Passengers journeys on Southeastern reached 183 million in 2018-19, the highest it has reached since 2014-15. It increased by 7.0 million compared to the previous year. This could be due to the new services introduced on the Southeastern line[3] from May 2018 onwards.

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[1] https://www.nationalrail.co.uk/tocs_maps/tocs/LO.aspx

[2] https://www.networkrail.co.uk/feeds/euston-station-to-close-for-three-summer-weekends-while-wembley-junction-is-replaced/

[3] https://www.southeasternrailway.co.uk/travel-information/live-travel-information/may-timetable

Northern services were affected by the [timetable change in May 2018](#), which caused disruption on the network, and its passenger journeys decreased by 2.0 million compared to the previous year.

On 20 May 2018, TfL Rail took over some local Great Western Railway (GWR) services out of London Paddington, which significantly increased the number of trains ran by TfL Rail and consequently explains the drop in journeys for GWR.

2018-19 Q4

- The number of journeys in 2018-19 Q4 increased by 4.0% (17 million) compared to the same quarter in 2017-18 to reach 444.9 million. This was the highest Q4 growth since 2013-14.
- Passenger journeys using season tickets in 2018-19 Q4 increased slightly (0.1%) to 171 million for the second consecutive quarter. These small increases followed decreases in passenger journeys using season tickets for nine quarters in succession prior to 2018-19 Q3.

Figure 1.02: Change in franchised passenger journeys by ticket type (millions), 2018-19 Q4 compared to 2017-18 Q4 and market share (%) in 2018-19 Q4
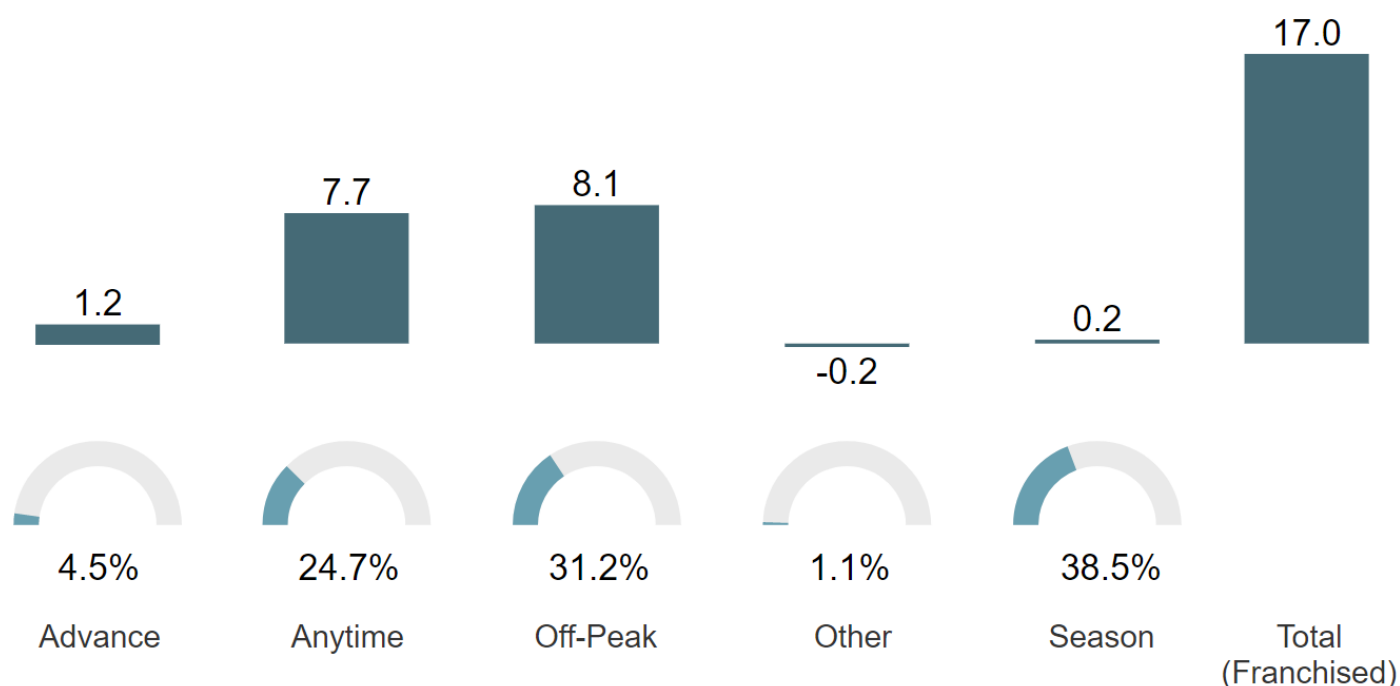
Passenger journeys using ordinary tickets increased by 6.5% in 2018-19 Q4 compared to 2017-18 Q4. This was driven by a 7.5% growth in anytime tickets and a 6.2% increase in off-peak tickets, which both make up more than 50% of the market share of total franchised tickets. The number of journeys made on season tickets increased slightly by 0.2 million compared to 2017-18 Q4, after the Q4 comparisons showed a substantial drop for the previous two years. Market share of season ticket journeys was 38% in 2018-19 Q4, down from 51% in the same quarter a decade ago.

GTR reached a record high of 88.4 million passengers in 2018-19 Q4, with an increase of 7.9% compared to the same quarter last year. This was the highest Q4 growth rate since 2013-14 Q4,

which may in part be as a result of the milder winter compared to "Beast from the East" last year. GTR's punctuality improved in 2018-19 Q4 and was at its highest Q4 level since 2011-12[4].

Passenger journeys decreased for only three operators in 2018-19 Q4 compared to the same quarter the previous year. East Midlands Trains saw a slight decrease of 1.2% in Q4, which might have been due to the upgrade of the railway in Derbyshire in February 2019[5] and delays after a power failure[6] in March 2019.

The number of passenger journeys using non-franchised operators (Hull Trains and Grand Central only) increased by 6.0% compared to 2017-18 Q4. This was largely due to Hull Trains whose journeys increased compared to the same quarter last year, recovering from the disruption in 2017-18 Q4 due to technical problems with their trains[7].

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[4] https://orr.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/41098/passenger-freight-performance-2018-19-q4.pdf

[5] https://www.eastmidlandstrains.co.uk/information/media/news/Changes-to-train-services-in-February-2019-as-Network-Rail-upgrades-railway-in-Derbyshire/

[6] https://www.itv.com/news/central/2019-03-11/no-east-midlands-trains-operating-across-the-entire-network/

[7] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-humber-42976383

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 available from 1994-95 onwards in Table 12.3

Quarterly data **by ticket type** is 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 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

2018-19 Annual

- Total passenger kilometres increased to 67.7 billion in 2018-19. This was a 2.2% increase compared to the previous year and is the highest rate of growth since 2015-16.
- Similar to passenger journeys, passenger kilometres in all three sectors increased, with the highest growth (3.3%) in the London and South East with a record high of 31.1 billion.

Growth in the Long Distance sector slowed to its lowest rate since 2013-14. Cross Country and East Midlands Trains[8] were the only two operators in this sector where passenger kilometres decreased in 2018-19 (by 1.2% and 1.5% respectively) compared to the previous year.

The London and South East sector, which makes up 46% of the total passenger kilometres, increased by 980 million in 2018-19 compared to the previous year. London Overground is the only operator in this sector where passenger kilometres decreased. This is the first time passenger kilometres (and passenger journeys) on London Overground both decreased since the time series started in 2011-12.

Passenger kilometres in the Regional sector increased by 1.6% in 2018-19 compared to the previous year. Upgrades on the West Midlands network[9] contributed to the growth of 116 million passenger kilometres for West Midlands Trains compared to 2017-18.

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[8] East Midlands Trains is split across two sectors: Long distance and Regional. Please see the Passenger Rail usage quality report for more details

[9] http://www.westmidlandsrail.com/news/near-%C2%A31-billion-investment-to-bring-new-trains,-extra-seats-and-more-frequent-services/

Figure 2.02: Passenger kilometres (billion kms) by operator, 2018-19 and percentage change compared to 2017-18

Operator	Passenger kilometres	% change
Govia Thameslink Railway	9.2bn	5.2
Virgin Trains West Coast	7.7bn	1.2
South Western Railway	6.0bn	1.7
Great Western Railway	6.0bn	0.2
London North Eastern Railway	5.8bn	3.0
Southeastern	4.7bn	3.2
Greater Anglia	3.9bn	3.2
CrossCountry	3.7bn	-1.2
ScotRail	3.0bn	0.7
West Midlands Trains	2.9bn	4.1
Northern	2.6bn	-0.1
East Midlands Trains	2.4bn	-1.5
TransPennine Express	2.1bn	3.6
Chiltern Railways	1.7bn	3.4
London Overground	1.3bn	-0.7
TfW Rail	1.3bn	0.8
c2c	1.2bn	2.1
Merseyrail	0.7bn	0.3
TfL Rail	0.6bn	20.5
Grand Central	0.4bn	7.7
Hull Trains	0.2bn	1.5
Caledonian Sleeper	0.2bn	3.3

Note: In May 2018, TfL Rail took over some local Great Western Railway services out of London Paddington, which significantly increased the passenger kilometres recorded by TfL Rail.

As with passenger journeys, passenger kilometres from season tickets fell (0.3%) for the third year in a row. In contrast, ordinary tickets, which accounted for three quarters of all passenger kilometres, increased by 3.0% compared to last year. This was driven by a 4.7% increase in anytime tickets compared to the previous year, even though it has the smallest market share (24%) compared to the other types of ordinary tickets.

2018-19 Q4

- Total passenger kilometres increased by 3.2% to 16.7 billion in 2018-19 Q4, after a reduction of 1.5% in 2017-18 Q4. This was the highest increase recorded since 2015-16 Q4.
- Passenger kilometres in all three sectors increased, with the highest growth (4.4%) in the Regional sector.

Figure 2.02: Passenger kilometres by sector, percentage change compared to the same quarter the previous year, 2014-15 Q4 to 2018-19 Q4
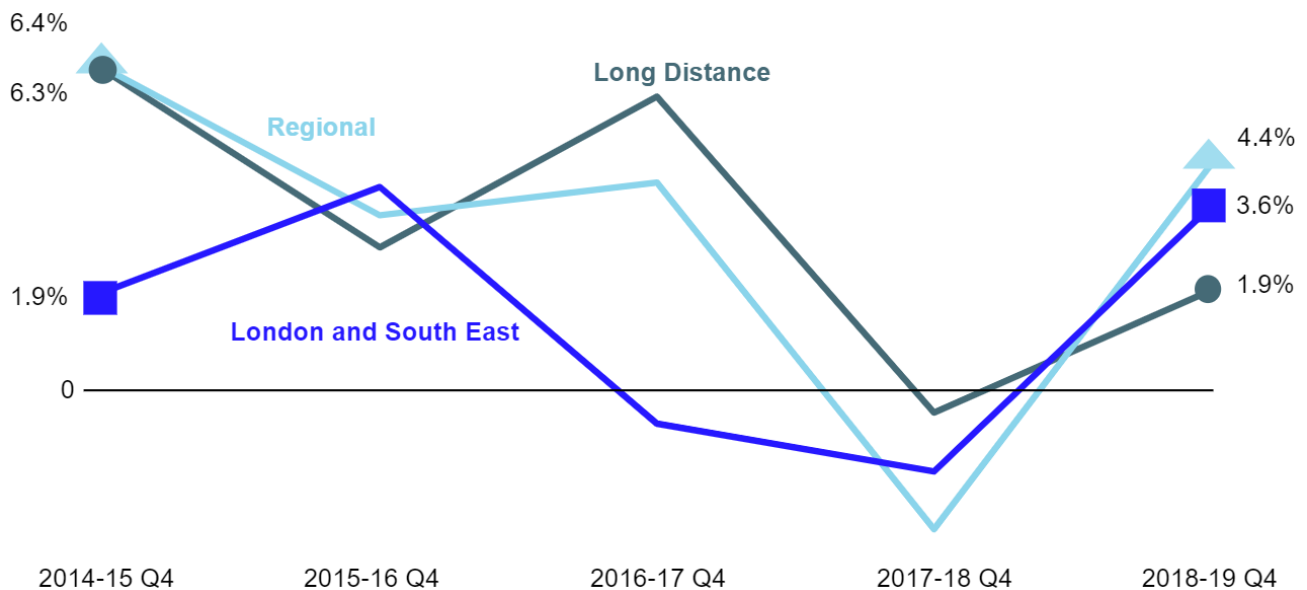
Growth in the Regional sector was at its highest since 2014-15 Q4. Northern recorded an increase in passenger kilometres of 5.9%, the highest Q4 rate since 2016-17. This could be partly due to its recovery from industrial action in 2017-18 Q4 and the benefits of the Great North Project[10], which might also have contributed to the quarterly increase (6.2%) in passenger kilometres for TransPennine Express (TPE).

The main contributor to growth in passenger kilometres in the London and South East sector was Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR), which increased by 6.4%. This was the second highest rate of growth since 2013-14 Q4.

Ordinary tickets, which accounted for nearly three quarters of all passenger kilometres, increased by 4.7% to 12.2 billion in 2018-19 Q4. This is in line with high growth rates in previous years prior to a drop in passenger kilometres in 2017-18 Q4. Unlike passenger journeys, passenger kilometres using season tickets decreased slightly (0.9%) compared to the same quarter last year.

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[10] https://www.networkrail.co.uk/our-railway-upgrade-plan/key-projects/great-north-rail-project/north-of-england-platform-extension-programme/

3. Passenger revenue

Passenger revenue statistics include all ticket revenue and miscellaneous charges associated with passenger travel on national railways. They do not include 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

2018-19 Annual

- Total passenger revenue reached a record high of £10.3 billion in 2018-19.
- Annual revenue growth of 6.1% was the highest since 2014-15.
- Nationally, revenue per passenger kilometre was up 3.8% to a record high of 15.29p, the highest rate of increase recorded since 2012-13.

Figure 3.01: Passenger revenue by sector, percentage change compared to the previous year, 2011-12 to 2018-19
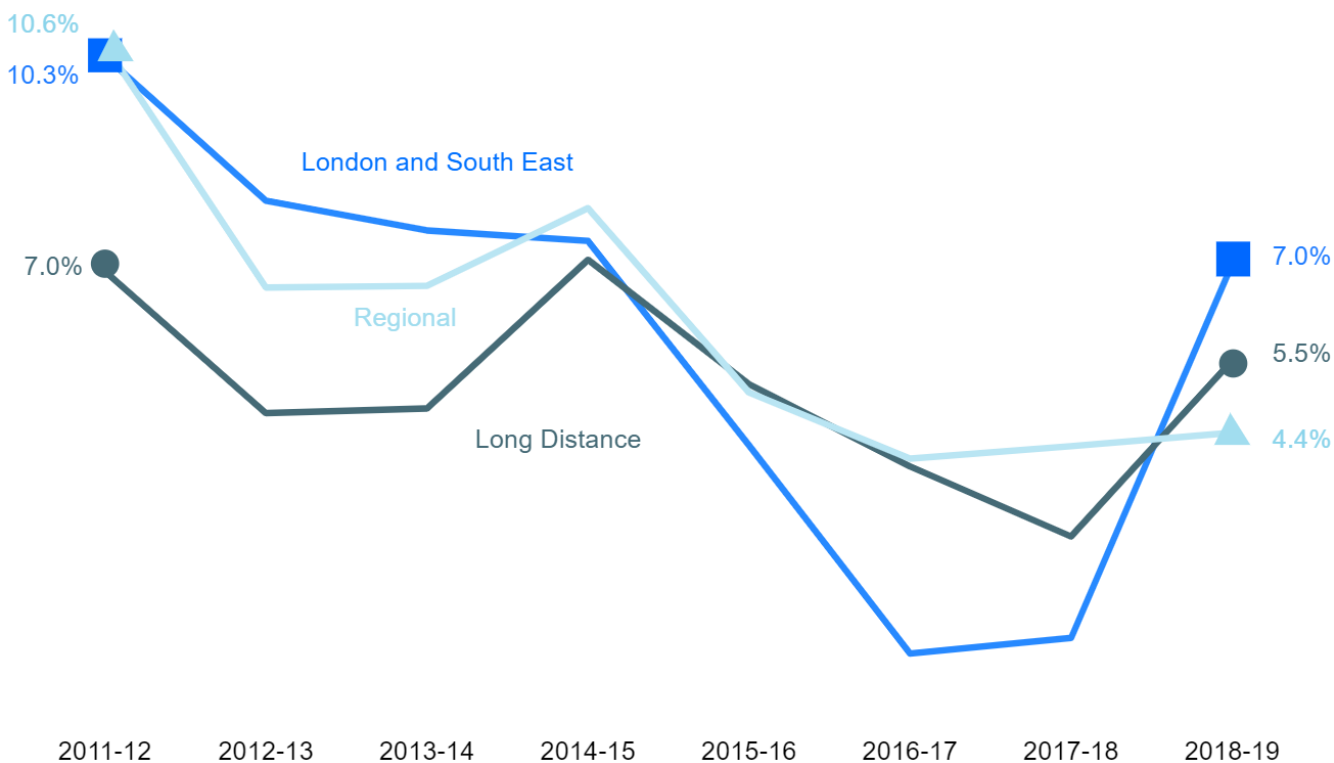
Passenger revenue in the London and South East sector, which makes up half of the total revenue, increased by 7.0% to £5,120 million in 2018-19. This was the strongest revenue growth since 2014-15. Revenue for non-franchised operators (Hull Trains and Grand Central only) increased sharply by 12.6% to £81.5 million, although these operators account for less than 1% of all passenger revenue.

Revenue from season tickets increased by 3.1% in 2018-19 after falling for two consecutive years. Ordinary tickets revenue, which accounted for almost 80% of total revenue, increased by 6.9%, the highest rate of growth since 2014-15. Advance and anytime tickets revenue had the strongest growth in 2018-19 of 10.1% and 7.5% respectively.
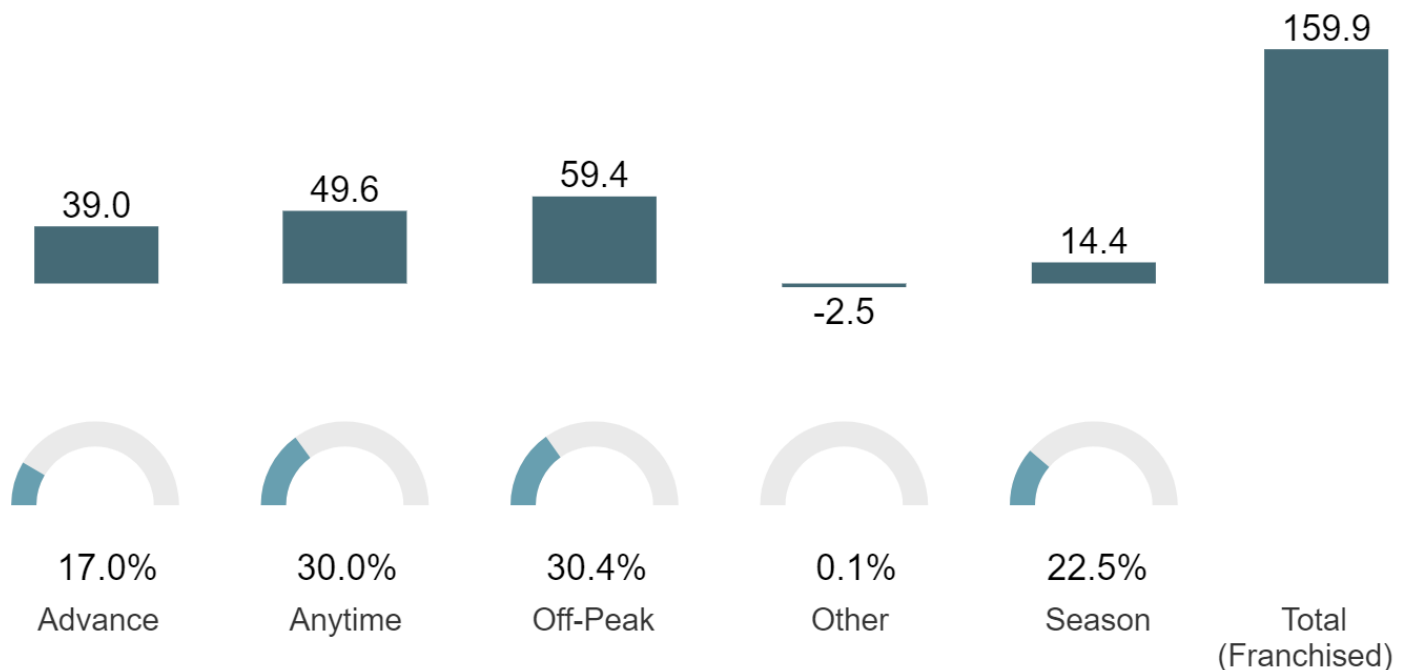
Revenue per passenger kilometre for franchised operators in 2018-19 was 15.29p, an increase of 3.8% compared to the previous year. Revenue per journey for franchised operators reached £5.83, an increase of 3.0% on 2017-18.

2018-19 Q4

- Total passenger revenue increased by 6.6% (£162 million) to £2,609 million in 2018-19 Q4 compared to 2017-18 Q4.
- Season ticket revenue went up by 2.5% compared to 2017-18 Q4 following previous falls in Q4 revenue each year since 2015-16.

Passenger revenue increased across all three sectors in 2018-19 Q4 compared to the same quarter the previous year. The London and South East sector increased by 7.2% compared to 2017-18 Q4, which represented the strongest revenue growth in the sector since 2014-15 Q4.

Figure 3.02: Change in franchised passenger revenue by ticket type (millions), 2018-19 Q4 compared to 2017-18 Q4 and market share (%) in 2018-19 Q4

Advance	Anytime	Off-Peak	Other	Season	Total (Franchised)
39.0	49.6	59.4	-2.5	14.4	159.9
17.0%	30.0%	30.4%	0.1%	22.5%	

Season ticket revenue reached £583 million in 2018-19 Q4, after increasing for the first time in Q4 since 2014-15. Over the same period there was a high increase in ordinary tickets with 7.8% compared to 2017-18 Q4, with advance, anytime and off-peak tickets all demonstrating strong growth. Off-peak tickets achieved the highest Q4 growth (8.2% compared to 2017-18 Q4) ever recorded since 2011-12.

Revenue per passenger kilometre for franchised operators in 2018-19 Q4 was 15.65p, an increase of 3.3% on 2017-18 Q4. Revenue per journey for franchised operators in 2018-19 Q4 reached £5.83, an increase of 2.5% compared to the same quarter last year.

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.
>
> Data for **Passenger train kilometres** is available from 2010-11 onwards in Table 12.13.

2018-19 Annual

■ After falling for two consecutive years, the volume of passenger train kilometres increased by 1.7% to 529 million in 2018-19.

Passenger train kilometres for franchised operators increased by 1.8% compared to 2017-18. The largest operator based on market share, Govia Thameslink Railway, increased by 3.6% compared to the previous year.

Passenger train kilometres on TfL Rail increased by 1.0 million (35.7%) compared to 2017-18. This was due to TfL Rail taking over some GWR services out of London Paddington in preparation for Crossrail. TransPennine Express (TPE) recorded the second highest growth (15.4%), which can be partly attributed to it taking over the Manchester to Leeds stopping service from Northern[11].
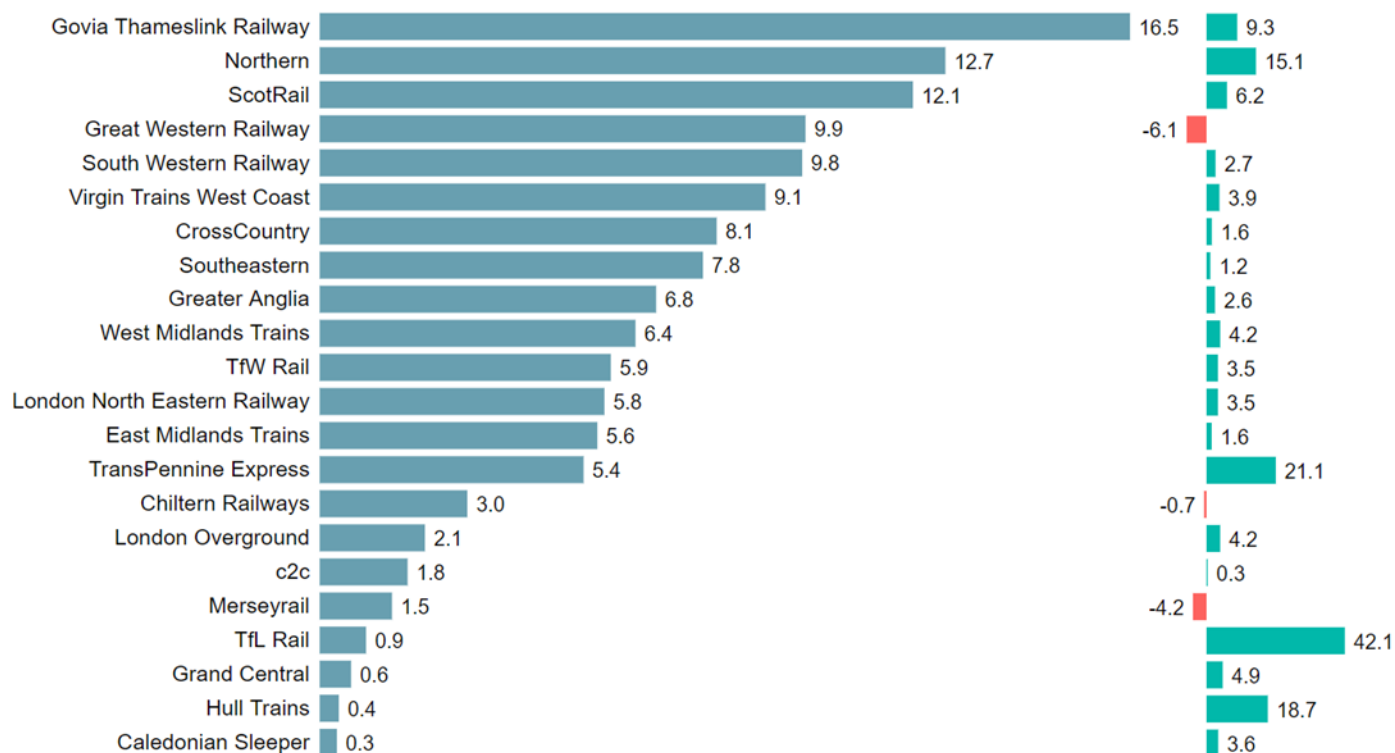
2018-19 Q4

■ Nationally, the volume of passenger train kilometres between January and March 2019 (Q4) was 133 million, up 6.1 million compared to 2017-18 Q4.

■ Only three of the 20 franchised operators recorded a decrease in their passenger train kilometres in 2018-19 Q4.

Northern, which has the second highest operator market share, recorded its highest passenger kilometres with 12.7 million kilometres in 2018-19 Q4 since the time series began in 2010-11. The 15.1% increase could be partly due to its recovery from industrial action in 2017-18 Q4 and the benefits of the Great North Project[12], which might also have contributed to the quarterly increase (21.1%) in passenger kilometres for TPE.

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[11] https://www.leeds-live.co.uk/news/leeds-news/trains-leeds-manchester-huddersfield-york-14669754

[12] https://www.networkrail.co.uk/our-railway-upgrade-plan/key-projects/great-north-rail-project/north-of-england-platform-extension-programme/

Figure 4.01: Passenger train kilometres (millions) by operator, 2018-19 Q4 and percentage change compared to 2017-18 Q4

Operator	Passenger train km (millions)	% change
Govia Thameslink Railway	16.5	9.3
Northern	12.7	15.1
ScotRail	12.1	6.2
Great Western Railway	9.9	-6.1
South Western Railway	9.8	2.7
Virgin Trains West Coast	9.1	3.9
CrossCountry	8.1	1.6
Southeastern	7.8	1.2
Greater Anglia	6.8	2.6
West Midlands Trains	6.4	4.2
TfW Rail	5.9	3.5
London North Eastern Railway	5.8	3.5
East Midlands Trains	5.6	1.6
TransPennine Express	5.4	21.1
Chiltern Railways	3.0	-0.7
London Overground	2.1	4.2
c2c	1.8	0.3
Merseyrail	1.5	-4.2
TfL Rail	0.9	42.1
Grand Central	0.6	4.9
Hull Trains	0.4	18.7
Caledonian Sleeper	0.3	3.6

Note: In May 2018, TfL Rail took over some local Great Western Railway services out of London Paddington, which significantly increased the passenger kilometres recorded by TfL Rail.

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 at rail.stats@orr.gov.uk.

Revisions: There have been no revisions to the previously published tables associated with this statistical release. 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.

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.

The **Department for Transport** (DfT) also publishes a range of rail statistics which can be found at DfT Rail Statistics. This includes Rail passenger numbers and crowding statistics which provides information on the number of passengers travelling by rail into and out of major city centres in England and Wales. The statistics represent passengers on National Rail services on a 'typical' weekday.

Annex 2 – Statistical Releases

Statistical Releases

This publication is part of the ORR's National Statistics accredited statistical releases which consist of annual and quarterly themed releases:

Annual:
- Rail Finance;
- Rail Fares Index;
- Rail Safety Statistics;
- Rail Infrastructure, Assets and Environmental;
- Regional Rail Usage;
- *Estimates of Station Usage (not National Statistics)*

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.