



Statement on user engagement

August 2019

Objective

“Users of statistics and data should be at the centre of statistical production; their needs should be understood, their views sought and acted on, and their use of statistics supported.”

[Code of Practice for Statistics Edition 2.0, Value pillar V1 – relevance to users, February 2018](#)

In this statement on user engagement, ORR has outlined how we adhere to the principles in the Code of Practice of putting users at the centre of our statistical production. This has been broken down into the following sections:

- User Engagement Policy
 - Industry stakeholder engagement
 - User consultation and feedback
 - Accessibility
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User Engagement Policy

1. Our engagement policy recognises that our users will have different needs and are categorised into the following groups:
 - Policy makers - to inform Government decision making on a wide range of transport areas;
 - Funders of the rail industry - to make informed decisions about where investment in rail and rail subsidies should be focused;
 - ORR - to monitor performance, regulate Network Rail, High Speed 1 (HS1) network, and other licence holders (e.g. train operating companies), and to inform the periodic reviews of Network Rail and HS1 Ltd;
 - Passenger watchdogs and rail user groups;
 - Academia and consultancy;
 - Media;
 - The public, including rail passengers.

Industry stakeholder engagement

2. ORR holds a quarterly forum, the [Rail Statistics Management Group](#) (RSMG). The RSMG is made up of lead statisticians or data specialists that have responsibility for the production and use of rail data in their respective organisations. Its purpose is to ensure that our data meet stakeholder needs and are of good quality. The [RSMG terms of reference](#) set out the vision for rail data and how we will deliver our aim and vision.
3. We meet separately with key stakeholders and data suppliers on a monthly or quarterly basis. ORR also liaises with the [Transport Statistics User Group](#), presenting at their seminars and adding information to their newsletter.
4. ORR seeks to produce cost-efficient quality statistics. We review our contracts with data suppliers/contractors to ensure we are receiving a high quality service with access to high quality data. If we feel we are not receiving value for money, we will look to alternative methods of data collection, ensuring that quality is not compromised by any change in supplier or through re-allocation of resources.
5. We organise workshops on specific data improvement topics, where skilled representatives from all industry bodies are invited to input into the new statistical processes or outputs.

User consultation and feedback

6. ORR ensures that the statistics it provides aligns with stakeholders and users' requirements and continuous improvement in statistical processes is an important part of ORR's work. User surveys are conducted every few years to capture views and better understand needs. In 2017, we carried out survey on our statistical outputs and the data portal and received nearly 200 responses. This feedback informed a set of user profiles and determined that users wanted greater access to the data underpinning our statistics. The valuable feedback was also used to inform the redevelopment of the data portal which aimed to incorporate the separate statistics section of the ORR website and make it more user friendly. The [data portal](#) was launched on 5 July 2019.
7. Results from feedback surveys are available on the '[User engagement](#)' section of the data portal. It also includes research papers on any data improvements or methodological changes.
8. The user engagement section also provides our users and stakeholders with information about:
 - our proposals about changes to our statistics;
 - changes in methodology prior to publication;
 - our consultations with the rail industry and other stakeholders.
9. ORR welcomes users to contact us directly via our dedicated email account at: rail.stats@orr.gov.uk to give us feedback on any aspect of our statistics, e.g. data quality, content, formatting, timeliness, and user experience.
10. ORR has also used GSS good practice team 'scrums' to review our statistical releases. The outputs from the scrum and our user survey results fed into a quality improvement plan for all of our statistical releases including improving the quality of our charts, creating a better balance between commentary and visualisations, and shortening the length of some releases to make them more readable.

Accessibility

"Statistics and data should be equally available to all, not given to some people before others. They should be published at a sufficient level of detail and remain publicly available."

Code of Practice for Statistics Edition 2.0, Value pillar V2 – accessibility

11. Users can access ORR statistics on the [data portal](#) via a fixed web address: or via a link on the ORR home page. All our statistics are provided free and are available for everyone to access in a range of recognised editable formats.
12. The new data portal was designed with our users in mind. It provides a range of output formats to meet different user needs. Within each rail statistics 'theme' users can easily find the most recent statistical release, data tables, key results, a quality and methodology report, and interactive visuals.
13. We also designed the statistical theme pages so that each user persona could access what they needed direct from the page.
 - The inquiring citizen (e.g. journalists, rail user groups) can see the key results from the latest release on the page itself rather than need to click into the pdf;
 - The trend watcher (e.g. rail industry, central government) can access the statistical release to find out more about historical trends from the commentary or use the embedded Power BI visuals to identify trends themselves;
 - The data miner (e.g. consultancy, local government) can use the Power BI visuals to focus on a particular station or particular train operator;
 - The expert analyst (e.g. academia) can access the downloadable Excel tables and reuse the data.
14. ORR statisticians work proactively with our Communications Team to make data re-usable, providing them with supporting charts and visuals to [advertise our statistical releases via Twitter](#) and reach a wider user base. We have used [blogs to explain some of the technical aspects of our work](#) more fully and to advertise user consultations. We have also conducted [Twitter Q&A sessions](#) to accompany our highest profile releases.
15. ORR statistics are disaggregated to a level that is reliable and robust, whilst adhering to rules over disclosure.
16. All ORR official statistics are included in a [publication schedule](#) on the data portal. They are also shown in the release calendar on gov.uk. The publication schedule pre-announces the release of all official statistics dates for a minimum of the next 12 months. Specific release dates are provided at least four weeks in advance. All ORR official statistics are released at 9:30am.