Passenger Rail Usage 2019-20 Q2

Publication date: 13 December 2019

Next publication date: 12 March 2020

Background

This statistical release contains information on **rail usage** for Great Britain. The measures covered are:

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

The latest quarterly data in this release refers to July, August and September 2019 (Q2).

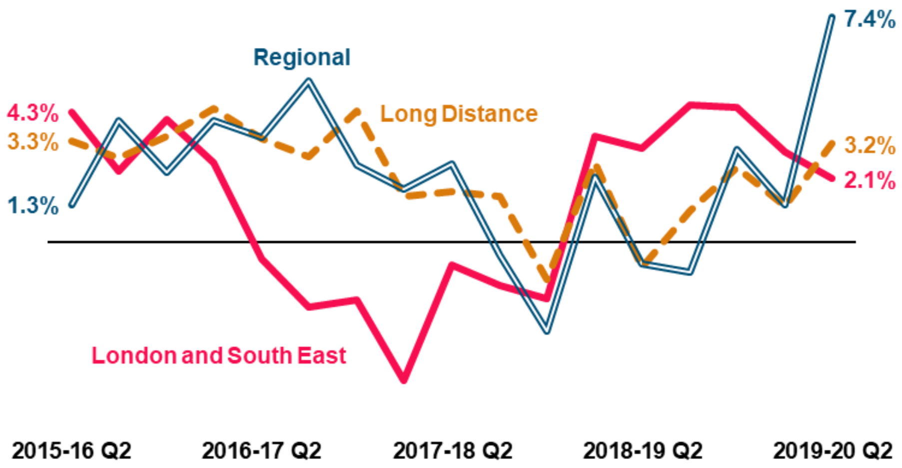
Data sources:

- LENNON ticketing and revenue database
- Train Operating Companies (TOCs)
- Network Rail

Rail passenger journeys in Great Britain in 2019-20 Q2 increased to 449 million (up 3.4% compared with 2018-19 Q2). The number of journeys in the year ending September 2019 was 1.8 billion.

All three franchised rail sectors experienced a growth in passenger journeys compared with 2018-19 Q2. The Regional sector had the largest growth this quarter at 7.4%.

Percentage change in franchised passenger journeys by sector compared with the same quarter the previous year, 2015-16 Q2 to 2019-20 Q2



Passenger kilometres increased by 3.4% compared with 2018-19 Q2. There were increases in all three franchised rail sectors, with the highest growth (8.1%) in the Regional sector.

Passenger revenue rose by 6.2% to £2.7 billion in 2019-20 Q2.

The volume of **passenger train kilometres** in 2019-20 Q2 was 142 million, up 5.3% compared with 2018-19 Q2.

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1. Passenger journeys

Passenger journeys are estimated based on travel from an origin station to a destination station. For the purpose of these statistics, where travel includes one or more changes of train, each train used is counted as one journey.

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 is also available in Table 12.5.

2019-20 Q2

- The number of passenger journeys in Great Britain[1] increased by 14.6 million (3.4%) in 2019-20 Q2 compared with 2018-19 Q2.
- The Regional sector[2] had the largest growth this quarter at 7.4%. This was the highest growth in Regional journeys for any quarter since 2011-12 Q4. The London and South East sector (up 2.1%) and Long Distance sector (up 3.2%) also experienced growth this quarter.
- Northern (up 12.8%), West Midlands Trains (up 11.7%), TransPennine Express (up 7.6%) and Govia Thameslink Railway (up 7.4%) recorded the largest percentage increases in passenger journeys this quarter. London North Eastern Railway and South Western Railway (both down 1.7%) recorded the largest percentage decreases.
- Franchised passenger journeys using season tickets fell by 2.2 million (1.5%) to record the lowest Q2 total since 2010-11. Season ticket journeys accounted for 31.3% of all franchised journeys in 2019-20 Q2, which is the lowest share for any quarter since the time series began in 1994-95.
- Passenger journeys using ordinary tickets increased by 16.8 million (5.8%) in 2019-20 Q2 compared with 2018-19 Q2. This included a 9.3 million (8.7%) increase in journeys made using anytime tickets, which represents the largest Q2 percentage increase since 2011-12.

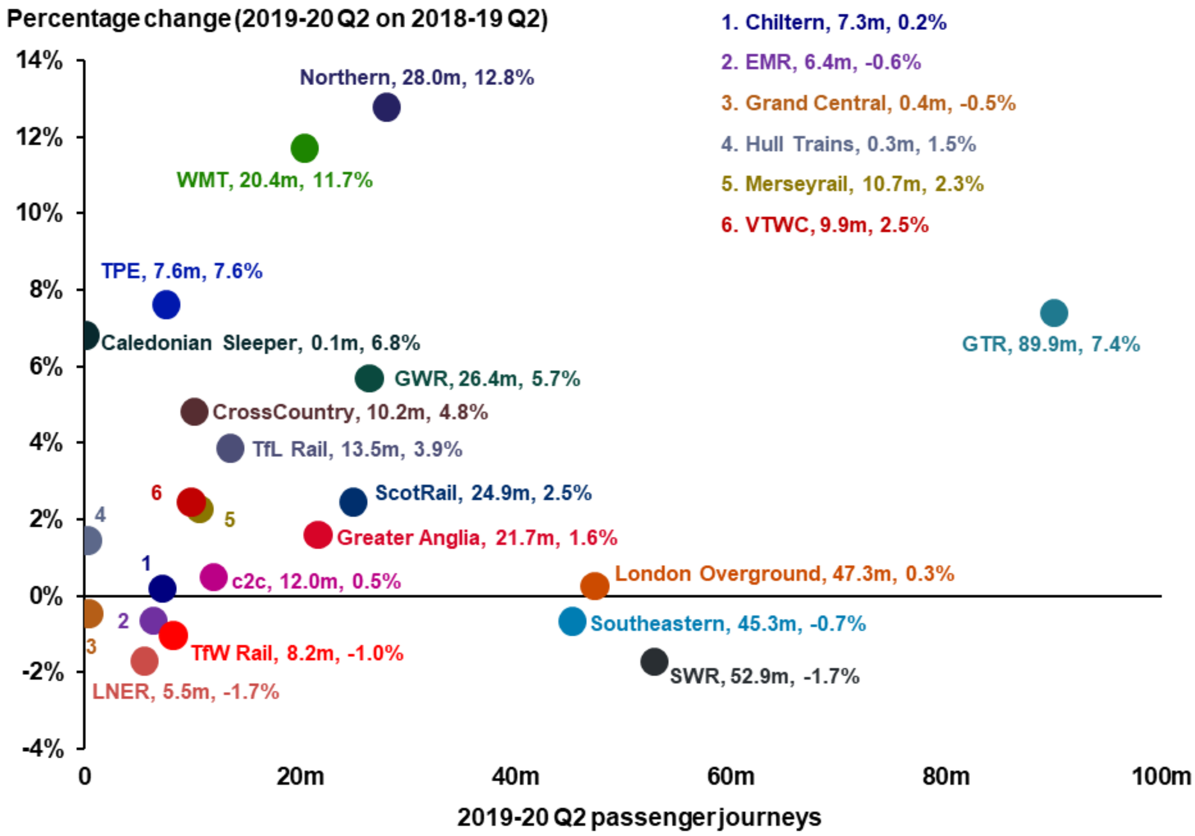
[1] All journeys in Great Britain made on both franchised and non-franchised train operators. Franchised operators are train operators who operate under the terms of franchises let by the Government. Non-franchised operators (open access) hold licences to provide supplementary services on chosen routes (Hull Trains and Grand Central only; no passenger usage data are available for Heathrow Express).

[2] The rail network is subdivided into three sectors for franchised operators – Long Distance, London and South East, and Regional.

Passenger journeys by sector and Train Operating Company (TOC)

The 3.4% growth in passenger journeys in Great Britain in 2019-20 Q2 (compared with 2018-19 Q2) was higher than the growth rate a year earlier (1.9%). There was a 2.1% growth in passenger journeys in the London and South East sector in 2019-20 Q2 compared with the previous year. This is lower than the 3.1% growth rate in 2018-19 Q2. This can be explained by around 6.5 million journeys relating to travel on TfL freedom passes and travel by the police being included in the 2019-20 Q1 estimate, which were included at Q2 in 2018-19[3]. This change contributed to the 2019-20 Q1 growth rate and suppressed the passenger journeys increase in 2019-20 Q2.

Figure 1.1: Passenger journeys by TOC, 2019-20 Q2, and percentage change compared with 2018-19 Q2



Accounting for over 50% of passenger journeys, the four largest TOCs all operate within the London and South East sector. Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) and London Overground recorded an increase in passenger journeys, while Southeastern and South Western Railway (SWR) both saw a decline in journeys compared with 2018-19 Q2.

Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR), which had the largest share (20%) of all passenger journeys in 2019-20 Q2, increased by 6.2 million compared with the same quarter last year. This was the highest Q2 growth (7.4%) since the time series started in 2011-12. An

[3] Figures provided by the Rail Delivery Group.

increase in the number of timetabled services since May 2018 and steadily improving punctuality and reliability are likely to have contributed to the increase in passenger journeys on GTR.

SWR recorded a fall of 1.7% for Q2 passenger journeys this year. In 2018-19 Q2, the operator recorded a 4.1% increase following the partial closure of London Waterloo during much of August 2017. The 52.9 million journeys recorded by SWR in 2019-20 Q2 is 7.5% below the Q2 peak of 58.6 million recorded in 2015-16. Punctuality and reliability on SWR have deteriorated during this time, which may have contributed to passenger journeys remaining below their peak.

The number of passenger journeys made on West Midlands Trains[4] in 2019-20 Q2 increased by 11.7% compared with a year earlier. This was the largest increase for any quarter since the time series began in 2011-12. Part of this is due to weekend engineering works at London Euston during 2018-19 Q2; however, timetable changes may also have contributed to the increase.

The Regional sector recorded a 7.4% growth in passenger journeys in 2019-20 Q2. This was the highest growth in Regional journeys for any quarter since 2011-12 Q4. There was a 12.8% increase in Northern passenger journeys this quarter compared with a 0.7% decrease a year ago. An increase in the number of timetabled services since May 2018, the closure of Liverpool Lime Street during July 2018, and a suspension of industrial action are likely to have contributed to the increase in passenger journeys on Northern. Growth on TransPennine Express was also strong at 7.6%. The 30.0 million journeys recorded in the year ending 2019-20 Q2 is the highest the moving annual total has been since the time series began in 2010-11.

The Long Distance sector recorded a 3.2% growth in passenger journeys in 2019-20 Q2. For the first time since 2016-17 Q4, Great Western Railway[5] recorded an increase (5.7%) in passenger journeys. This may in part reflect improved performance and reliability. CrossCountry also recorded a 4.8% growth in passenger journeys having recorded a 2.1% decrease a year earlier. Passenger journeys on London North Eastern Railway recorded a 1.7% decrease in 2019-20 Q2. This was the first decrease in Q2 since the time series began in 2011-12 and can be partly attributed to the closure of London King's Cross station during the 2019 August bank holiday weekend.

[4] Figures for West Midlands Trains include journeys made in both the London and South East and Regional sectors.

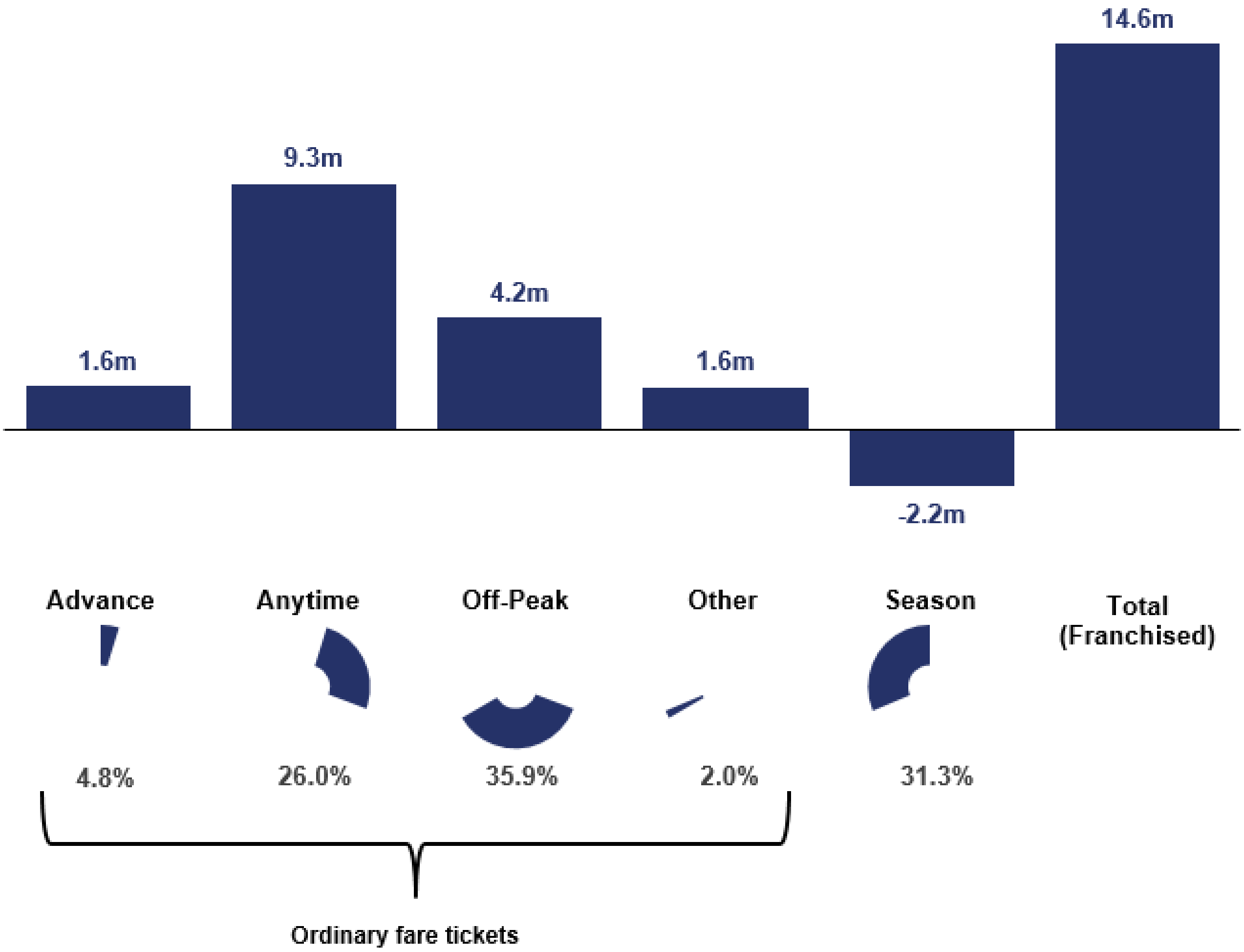
[5] Figures for Great Western Railway include journeys made in all three sectors.

Passenger journeys by ticket type

Franchised passenger journeys using ordinary tickets increased by 16.8 million (5.8%) in 2019-20 Q2 compared with 2018-19 Q2. This included a 9.3 million (8.7%) increase in journeys made using anytime tickets, which represents the largest Q2 percentage increase since 2011-12. A small part of this increase may relate to the 2.2 million (1.5%) fall in journeys made using season tickets. The 140.5 million journeys made using season tickets in 2019-20 Q2 was the lowest number for any quarter since 2010-11 Q2.

Of the 448 million franchised passenger journeys made in 2019-20 Q2, 68.7% were made using ordinary fare tickets. The remaining 31.3% of journeys were made using season tickets and this is the lowest share recorded by season tickets for any quarter since the time series began in 1994-95.

Figure 1.2: Change in franchised passenger journeys by ticket type, 2019-20 Q2 compared with 2018-19 Q2, and market share percentage, 2019-20 Q2



2. Passenger kilometres

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

Quarterly and annual data **by sector** are available from 1994-95 onwards in Table 12.3.

Quarterly data **by ticket type** are available from 1994-95 Q1 and annual data are available from 1986-87 onwards in Table 12.4.

Quarterly and annual data **by TOC** are available from 2011-12 onwards in Table 12.11.

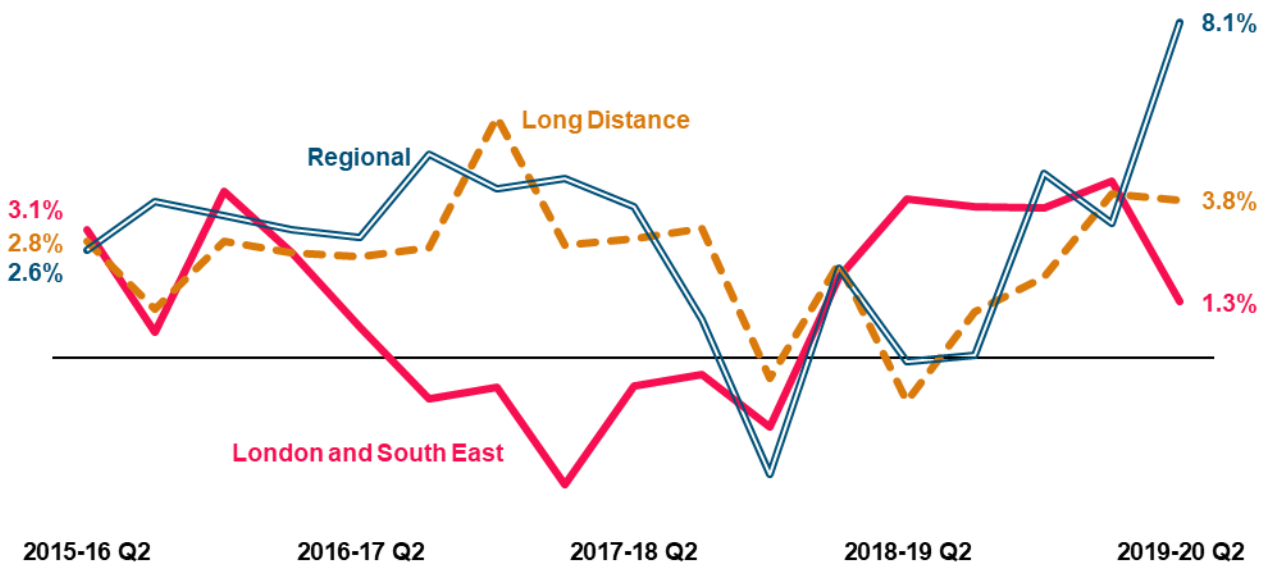
A time series of aggregate annual data from 1947 is also available in Table 12.2.

2019-20 Q2

- The number of passenger kilometres increased by 590 million (3.4%) in Great Britain in 2019-20 Q2 compared with 2018-19 Q2 to reach 17.7 billion kilometres in 2019-20 Q2.
- The Regional sector had the largest growth of passenger kilometres this quarter at 8.1%. This was the highest growth for any quarter since 2011-12 Q3. The London and South East sector (up 1.3%) and Long Distance sector (up 3.8%) also grew this quarter.
- Franchised passenger kilometres using season tickets fell by 94 million (2.5%) to record the lowest Q2 total since 2011-12.

Passenger kilometres by sector and Train Operating Company (TOC)

Figure 2.1: Percentage change in franchised passenger kilometres by sector compared with the same quarter the previous year, 2015-16 Q2 to 2019-20 Q2

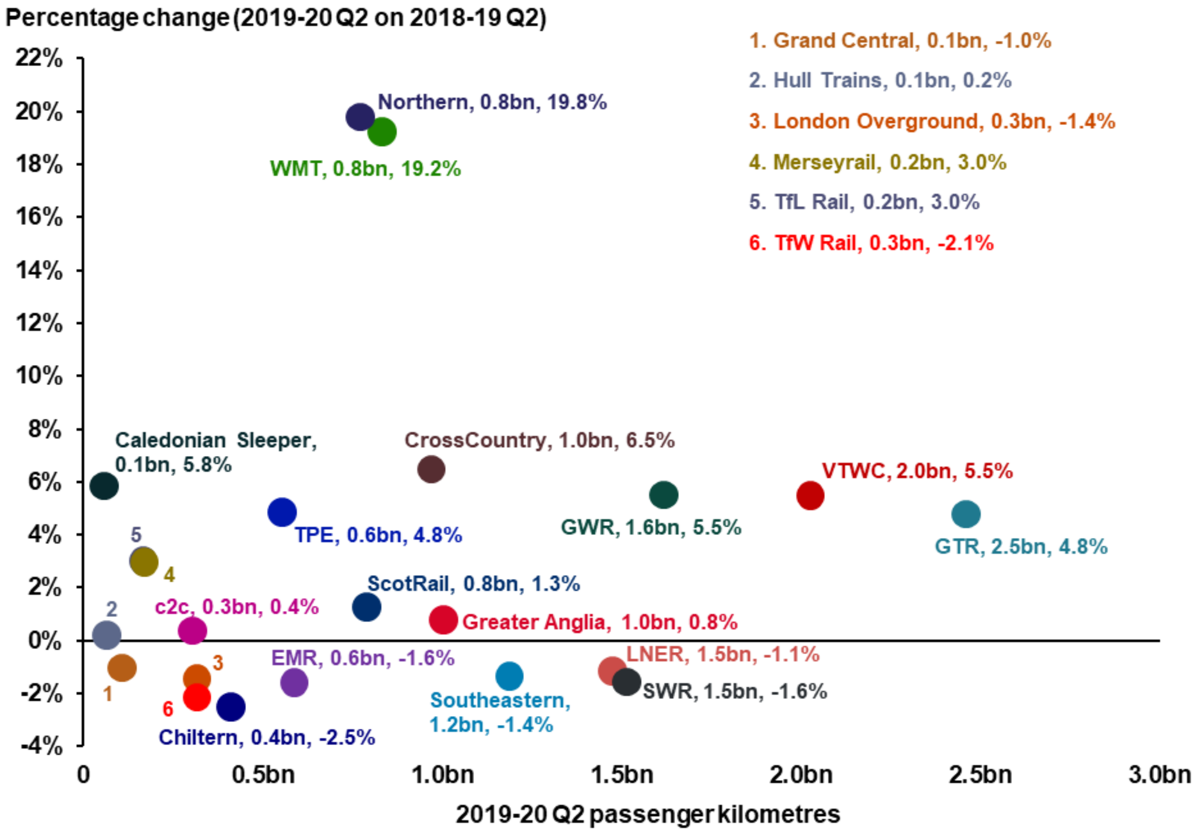


The growth in passenger kilometres (3.4%) in Great Britain was the same as for passenger journeys (3.4%). Northern (19.8%) and West Midlands Trains (19.2%) both experienced significant growth in passenger kilometres in 2019-20 Q2. These increases were both larger than the growth in passenger journeys. In the case of West Midlands Trains, this may be related to the timetable change in May 2019 and the increase in destinations served by direct services to and from London.

The London and South East sector recorded lower passenger kilometre growth in 2019-20 Q2 (1.3%) compared with a year earlier (3.8%). As with passenger journeys, this is partly due to passenger kilometres relating to some travel on TfL freedom passes and travel by the police being counted in 2019-20 Q1 rather than 2019-20 Q2.

Govia Thameslink Railway recorded 112 million (4.8%) more passenger kilometres in 2019-20 Q2 than in 2018-19 Q2. This was lower than 7.4% increase in passenger journeys indicating that these journeys were shorter in distance than the average recorded a year earlier.

Figure 2.2: Passenger kilometres by TOC, 2019-20 Q2, and percentage change compared with 2018-19 Q2

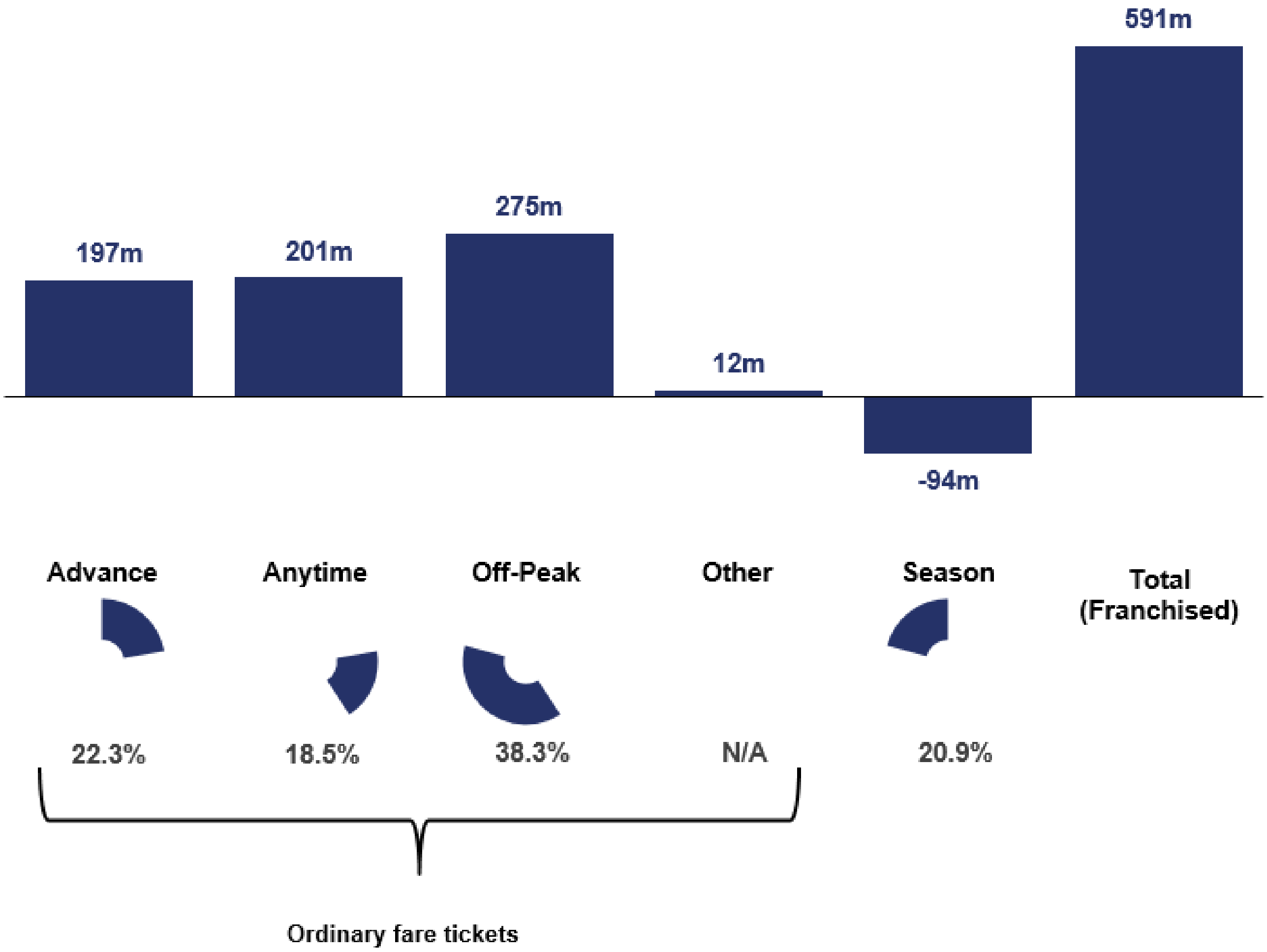


Passenger kilometres by ticket type

Franchised passenger kilometres using ordinary tickets increased by 685 million (5.2%) in 2019-20 Q2 compared with 2018-19 Q2. This included a 275 million (4.3%) increase in kilometres made using off-peak tickets. Some of this increase may relate to the 94 million (2.5%) fall in kilometres made using season tickets. The 3.7 billion kilometres made using season tickets in 2019-20 Q2 was the lowest number for any quarter since 2011-12 Q2.

Of the 17.5 billion franchised passenger kilometres made in 2019-20 Q2, 79.1% were made using ordinary[6] fare tickets. The remaining 20.9 of journeys were made using season tickets and this is the lowest share recorded by season tickets for any quarter since the time series began in 1994-95.

Figure 2.3: Change in franchised passenger kilometres by ticket type, 2019-20 Q2 compared with 2018-19 Q2, and market share percentage, 2019-20 Q2



[6] The market share statistics exclude passenger kilometres for Other tickets. This is because the value for such tickets is less than 0 due to the allocation of refund data to this category.

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** are available from 1995-96 Q1 and annual data are available from 1994-95 onwards in Table 12.8.

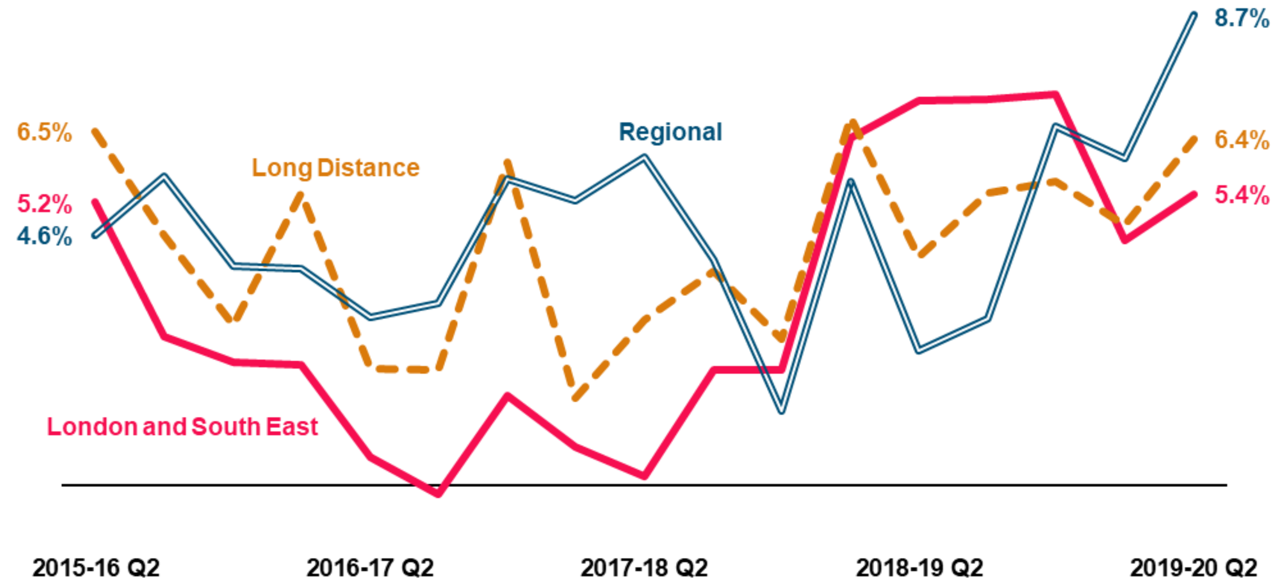
Quarterly data **by ticket type** (including inflation adjusted figures) are available from 1996-97 Q1 and annual data are available from 1986-87 onwards in Table 12.9.

2019-20 Q2

- Passenger revenue increased by £159 million (6.2%) in Great Britain in 2019-20 Q2 compared with 2018-19 Q2 to reach £2.7 billion in 2019-20 Q2.
- The Regional sector had the largest growth this quarter at 8.7% compared with 2018-19 Q2. This was the highest growth in Regional revenue for any quarter since 2014-15 Q2.
- Franchised passenger revenue from ordinary tickets increased by 7.7% in 2019-20 Q2 compared with 2018-19 Q2, including a 7.9% increase in revenue from off-peak tickets.
- Revenue per passenger kilometre for franchised operators in 2019-20 Q2 was 15.28p, while revenue per passenger journey for franchised operators was £5.97 this quarter.

Passenger revenue by sector

Figure 3.1: Percentage change in franchised passenger revenue by sector compared with the same quarter the previous year, 2015-16 Q2 to 2019-20 Q2



Passenger revenue was £2.7 billion in Great Britain in 2019-20 Q2. This was up 6.2% compared 2018-19 Q2 and is the highest Q2 growth rate since 2014-15. The London and South East sector, which accounts for around half of passenger revenue, recorded growth of 5.4% in 2019-20 Q2. This was down from the Q2 growth of 7.1% in 2018-19. As with passenger journeys and kilometres, this is partly due to passenger revenue relating to some travel on TfL freedom passes and travel by the police being counted in 2019-20 Q1 rather than 2019-20 Q2.

Passenger revenue in the Regional sector was up 8.7% in 2019-20 Q2 compared with 2018-19 Q2. This was up from 4.6% a year ago and is the highest growth for any quarter since 2014-15 Q2. The Long Distance sector recorded growth of 6.4% in 2019-20 Q2, which was up from 4.2% a year earlier.

Revenue for non-franchised operators (Hull Trains and Grand Central only) increased by 3.3% to £21.5 million. These operators account for less than 1% of all passenger revenue.

Passenger revenue by ticket type

Franchised passenger revenue from ordinary tickets increased by £157 million (7.7%) in 2019-20 Q2 compared with 2018-19 Q2. This was up from 5.4% recorded a year ago and the highest Q2 growth rate since 2012-13. This included a £67 million (7.9%) increase in revenue from off-peak tickets, which is the highest Q2 growth rate since the time series began in 2013-14.

Of the £2.7 billion franchised passenger revenue recorded in 2019-20 Q2, 81.7% came from ordinary fare tickets. The remaining 18.3% of revenue came from season tickets and this is the lowest share recorded by season tickets for any quarter since the time series began in 1996-97.

Revenue per passenger kilometre and revenue per passenger journey

Revenue per passenger kilometre for franchised operators in 2019-20 Q2 was 15.28p, an increase of 2.7% compared with 2018-19 Q2. The growth rate was down from 4.0% a year earlier. The rate of growth for revenue per passenger kilometre for advance tickets fell from 6.9% in 2018-19 Q2 to 1.8% in 2019-20 Q2.

Revenue per passenger journey for franchised operators reached £5.97, an increase of 2.8% on 2018-19 Q2. The growth rate was down from 3.4% a year earlier. For advance tickets, revenue per passenger journey fell by 0.9% to £21.49 in 2019-20 Q2. This was the first fall recorded for any quarter since 2017-18 Q1.

4. Passenger train kilometres by TOC

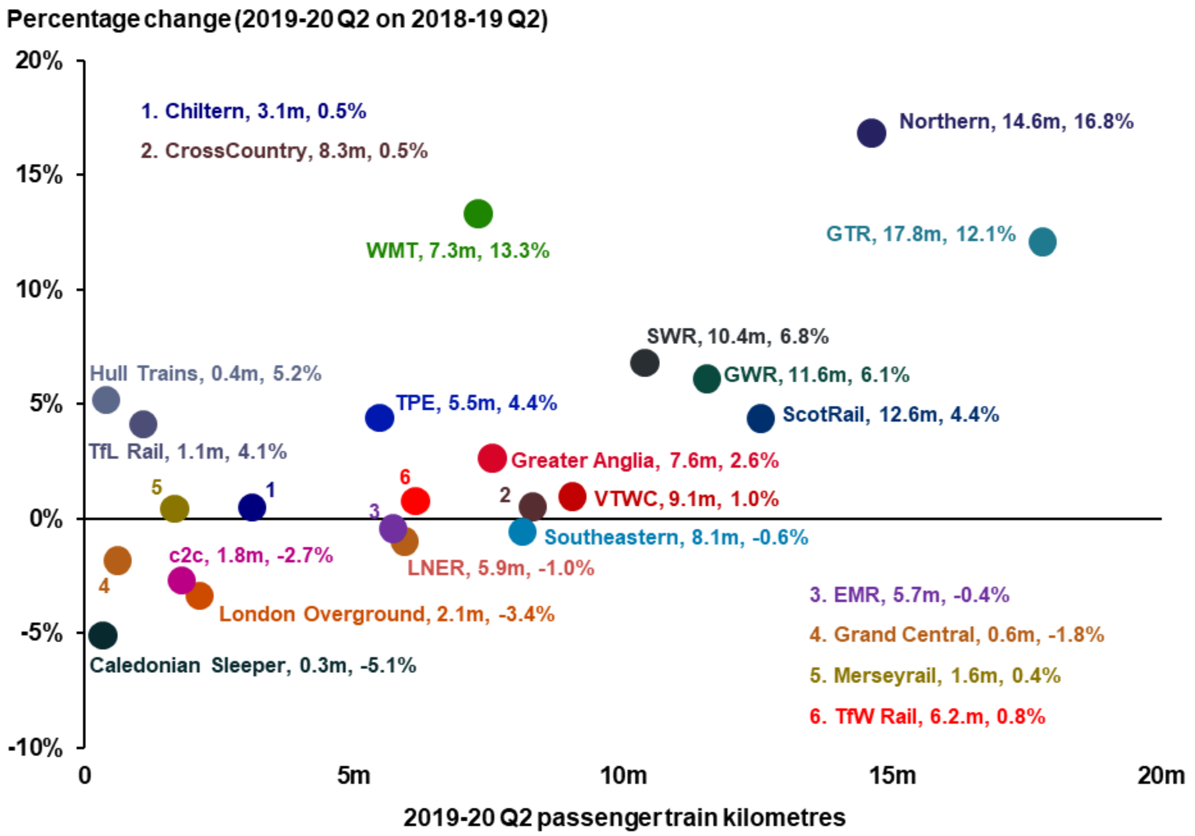
Passenger train kilometres refers to the number of train kilometres (million) travelled by revenue earning passenger trains, sourced from Network Rail's Track Access Billing System (TABS). Only kilometres run on Network Rail infrastructure are included in the data. For further information, please see page 5 of the Quality Report.

Data for **Passenger train kilometres** are available from 2010-11 onwards in [Table 12.13](#).

2019-20 Q2

- Passenger train kilometres increased by 5.3% in Great Britain in 2019-20 Q2 compared with 2018-19 Q2. Northern recorded the largest growth this quarter (16.8%).
- Caledonian Sleeper recorded 5.1% less train kilometres in 2019-20 Q2 compared with the same quarter last year. This was partly due [to strike action at the end of September](#).

Figure 4.1: Passenger train kilometres by TOC, 2019-20 Q2, and percentage change compared with 2018-19 Q2



Annex 1 – List of data tables available on the ORR data portal

All data tables can be accessed on the ORR data portal free of charge and can be downloaded in Excel format. We can also provide data in csv or ods format on request.

All tables associated with this release can be found under Data Tables on the passenger rail usage page.

Passenger journeys

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

Passenger kilometres

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

Passenger revenue

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

Passenger train kilometres

- Passenger train kilometres by operator - quarterly – 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

In 2019-20 Q1, Table 12.13 was showing incorrect values for the following 2019-20 Q1 values:

- Total for Non-Franchised Operators (excluding Heathrow Express) – was 1.3 when it should have been 1.0.
- Grand Total for all operators (excluding Heathrow Express) – was 139.5 when it should have been 139.2.

Further details on historic revisions to the data set can be found on the 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.

Annex 2

Statistical Releases

This publication is part of ORR's National Statistics accredited releases, which consist of:

Annual

- Rail Finance
- Rail Fares Index
- Rail Safety Statistics
- Rail Infrastructure and Assets
- Rail Emissions
- Regional Rail Usage

Quarterly

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

In addition to the above, ORR publishes the following Official Statistics on the ORR data portal:

Annual

- Estimates of Station Usage
- Train Operating Company Key Statistics
- Rail Statistics Compendium
- Occupational Health

Quarterly

- Signals passed at danger (SPADS)
- Delay Compensation Claims
- Disabled Person's Railcard (DPRC)
- Passenger assistance

A full list of publication dates for the next twelve months can be found in the release schedule on the data portal.

The Department for Transport (DfT) also publishes a range of rail statistics which can be found at DfT Rail Statistics. For example, Rail passenger numbers and overcrowding on weekdays in major cities.

Transport Focus publish the National Rail Passenger Survey (NRPS).

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 - Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR). The OSR 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 OSR promptly. National Statistics status can be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained, and reinstated when standards are restored.

Our statistical releases were assessed in 2012 and hold National Statistics status. Since our assessment we have improved the content, presentation and quality of our statistical releases. Also, in July 2019 we launched our new data portal. Therefore in late 2019 we worked with the OSR to conduct a compliance check to ensure we are still meeting the standards of the Code. On 4 November 2019, OSR published a letter confirming that ORR's statistics should continue to be designated as National Statistics. OSR found many positive aspects in the way that we produce and present our statistics and welcomed the range of improvements made since the statistics were last assessed in 2012. OSR identified some areas that we could consider that may enhance the value of the statistics further and we will be working on these.

For more information on how we adhere to the Code please see the UKSA Code of Practice page on the ORR data portal.

For more details, please contact the Statistics Head of Profession Lyndsey Melbourne at rail.stats@orr.gov.uk.

This publication is available on the ORR data portal

Any media enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at orr.gov.uk/contact-us.