



Freight Rail Usage and Performance 2019-20 Q2 Statistical Release

Publication date: 17 December 2019

Next publication date: 5 March 2020

Background

This release contains information on rail freight usage and performance in Great Britain with the latest quarterly data from July, August and September 2019 (Q 2).

The statistics cover:

- freight moved,
- freight lifted,
- freight delivery metric (FDM),
- 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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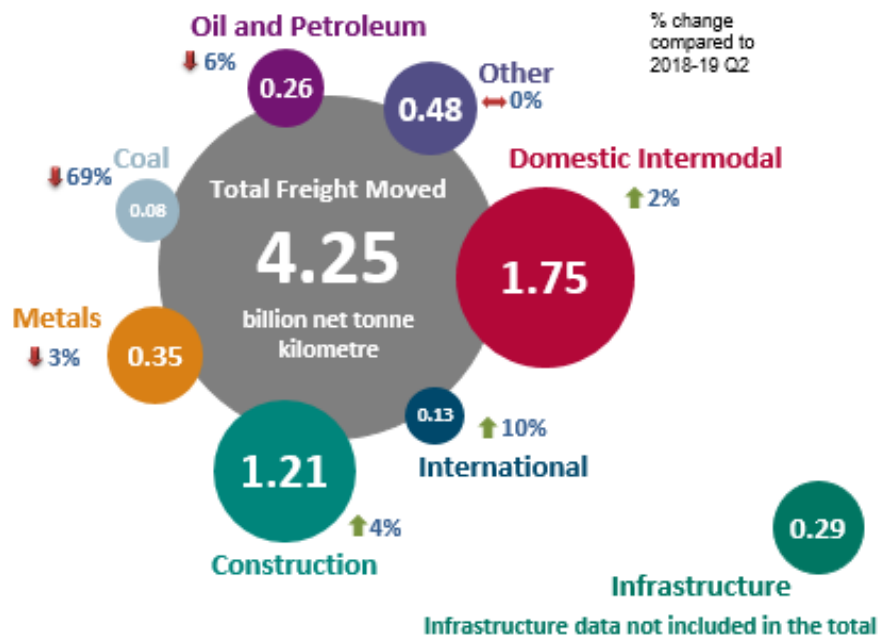
[Freight delivery metric \(FDM\)](#)

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Freight moved by commodity, Great Britain 2019-20 Q2



The total volume of rail **freight moved** was 4.25 billion net tonne kilometres in 2019-20 Q2, a 3% decrease compared with 2018-19 Q2.

Domestic Intermodal recorded its highest ever total for a quarter with 1.75 billion net tonne kilometres. **Construction** recorded its joint highest quarterly total with 1.21 billion net tonne kilometres.

The amount of **Coal** freight moved is close to being phased out with only 0.08 billion net tonne kilometres moved in 2019-20 Q2.

The **Freight Delivery Metric** remained similar to Q2 last year with 93.5% of trains arriving within 15 minutes of their scheduled arrival time in 2019-20 Q2.

Freight delay in 2019-20 Q2 was 10.3 minutes per 100 train kilometres, an 11% reduction in delays compared to 2018-19 Q2.

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1. Freight moved



2019-20 Q2

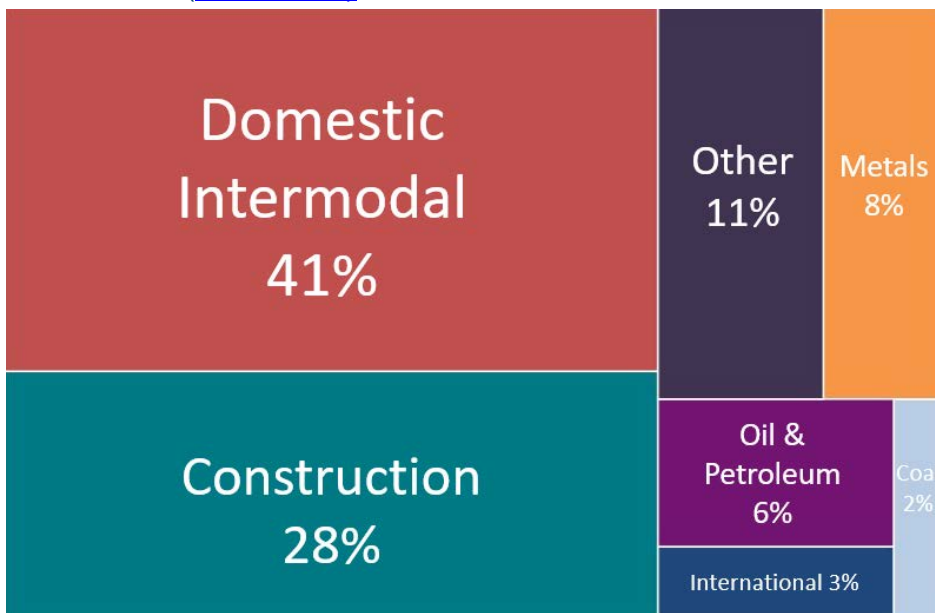
Total freight moved by rail was 4.25 billion net tonne kilometres in 2019-20 Q2, a 3% decrease compared to Q2 last year. This was affected by the continued decline in coal.

Construction (up 4%) and Domestic Intermodal¹ (up 2%) increased to their highest ever levels since the time series began in 1998-99 and together accounted for 70% of rail freight moved in 2019-20 Q2.

Coal fell by 69% to 0.08 billion net tonne kilometres, its lowest level recorded and now accounts for only 2% of the overall rail freight moved, compared to 6% in 2018-19 Q2 and 35% at the peak in 2013-14 Q2.

This large fall in Coal was accompanied by decreases in Oil & Petroleum (down 6%) and Metals (down 3%).

Figure 1.01: Share by commodity: volume of rail freight moved, 2019-20 Q2 ([Table 13.7](#))



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.

■ Quarterly freight moved data are available on the data portal in [Table 13.7](#).

¹ Domestic Intermodal is traffic not destined through or to the Channel Tunnel (containerised goods transported by two or more modes of transport within the UK)

2. Freight lifted

2019-20 Q2



The total amount of freight lifted in 2019-20 Q2 was 18.2 million tonnes, the same volume recorded in Q2 last year.

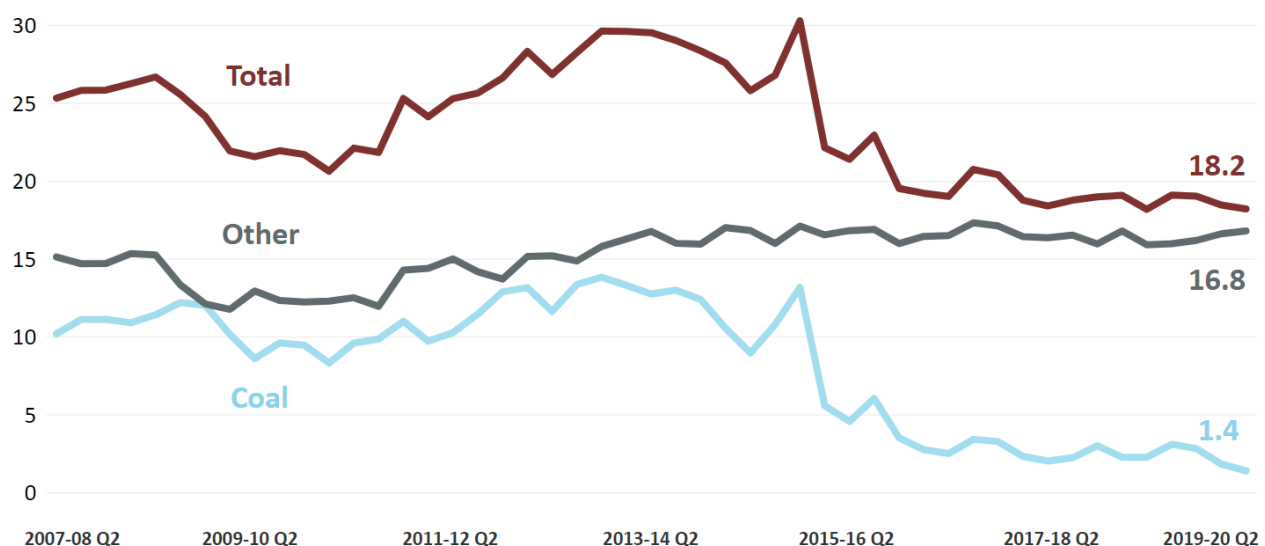
The long-term downward trend for coal continues; falling to its lowest amount on record for any quarter (1.4 million tonnes), a reduction of 38% compared with 2018-19 Q2. This is attributable to significantly reduced coal production in the UK due to government targets to eliminate coal related emissions by 2025².

The amount of other freight lifted increased by 5% to 16.8 million tonnes compared with the same quarter last year.

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

Freight lifted information is sourced from the four major Freight Operating Companies (FOCs): DB Cargo UK (formerly EWS), Freightliner Ltd (formerly the BR container business), Direct Rail Services (DRS) and GB Railfreight.

Figure 2.01: Freight lifted (million tonnes), Great Britain, 2007-08 Q2 to 2019-20 Q2 ([Table 13.6](#))



■ Quarterly freight lifted data are available on the data portal in: [Table 13.6](#)

² <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-48215896>

3. Freight Delivery Metric

The **Freight Delivery Metric (FDM)** is the percentage of freight trains that arrive at their destination within 15 minutes of their scheduled arrival time. Freight trains are only considered to have failed FDM where the delay was caused by Network Rail. The **moving annual average (MAA)** reflects the proportion of trains that met FDM in the past 12 months. In Q4, the MAA also represents the FDM for the financial year.

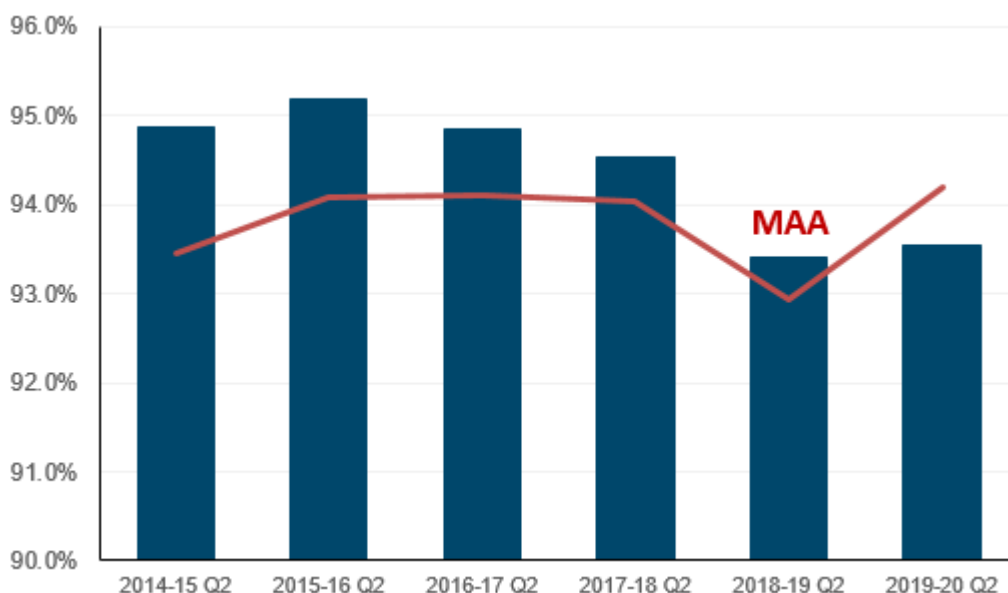
A higher score indicates higher performance.

FDM was introduced for CP5 (Control Period 5: 2014-15 – 2018-19), although it has been recorded since the end of the 2012-13. It replaced the Freight Performance Measure (FPM), which was previously used to provide an indication of the punctuality of freight journeys.

2019-20 Q2

In 2019-20 Q2, FDM was 93.5%, which was 0.1 percentage points (pp) higher than in 2018-19 Q2. Quarterly FDM moving annual average (MAA) has risen significantly in 2019-20 Q2 to 94.2%, which is 1.3 pp higher (better) than in 2018-19 Q2.

Figure 3.01: FDM, Great Britain, 2013-14 Q2 to 2019-20 Q2 ([Table 3.41](#))



■ Quarterly FDM data are available on the data portal in: [Table 3.41](#)

4. Freight delay per 100 train kilometres

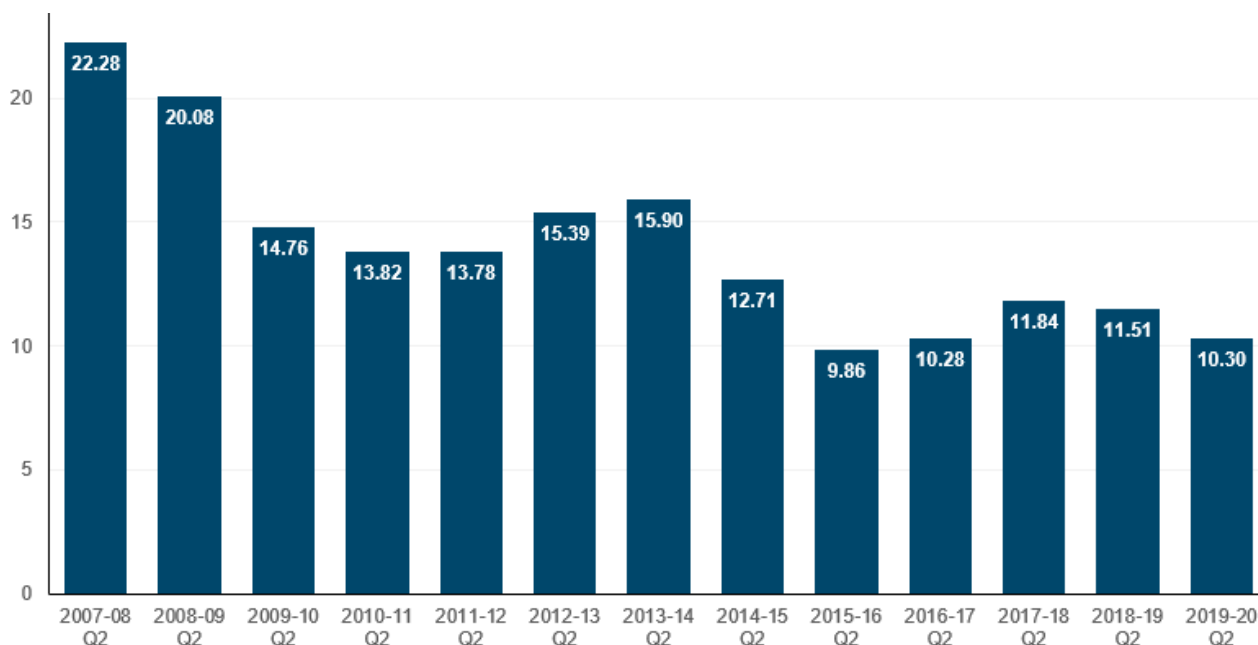


2019-20 Q2

Freight delay in 2019-20 Q2 was 10.3 minutes per 100 train kilometres, an 11% reduction in delays (improvement) from 2018-19 Q2. This is the lowest level of freight delay in Q2 since 2016-17.

A similar improvement can be seen for passenger train delays in the [2019-20 Q2 Passenger rail performance](#) statistical release. Train delay minutes attributed to Network Rail also fell by 8% this quarter compared to Q2 last year (see [interactive chart](#)).

Figure 4.01: Normalised freight delay per 100 train kilometres, Great Britain, 2007-08 Q2 to 2019-20 Q2 ([Table 13.5](#))



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.

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 usually peaks in Q3 and Q4 each year, coinciding with the expected periods of adverse weather, during autumn and winter.

■ Quarterly freight delays per 100 train km data are available on the data portal: [Table 13.5](#)

5. Freight train kilometres by operator

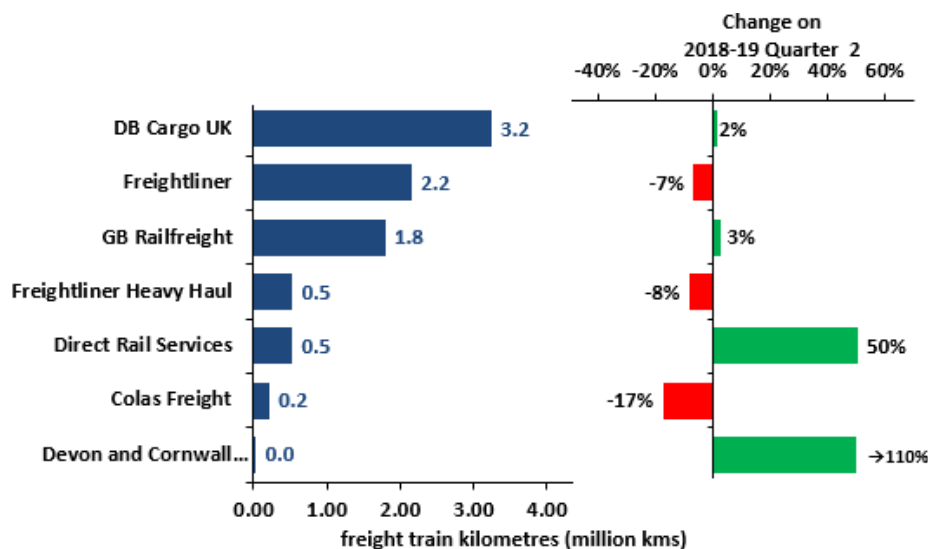
2019-20 Q2

Total freight train kilometres in 2019-20 Q2 was 8.5 million kilometres, relatively unchanged (just half a percent rise) compared with the same quarter last year.

Direct Rail Services recorded a 50% increase in kilometres travelled compared to 2018-19 Q2 and have gone up from a 4% to a 6% share of kilometres travelled on the network (an equal share to Freightliner Heavy Haul).

DB Cargo UK retained the highest share for a single freight operator (38%) with a 2% increase in kilometres. Freightliner has the second highest share (25%) despite a 7% drop in kilometres from last year and GB Railfreight has the third highest (21%) share having increased 3%.

Figure 5.01: Freight train kilometres by FOC, Great Britain, 2019-20 Q2 ([Table 13.25](#))



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.

Please see the accompanying [quality report](#) for more information.

- Quarterly freight kilometres by operator data are available on the data portal in [Table 13.25](#).

Annex 1 – List of pre-created reports available on the 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 provide data in csv format on request.

Freight moved

- Freight moved, 1982-83 to 2018-19 (annual), 1998-99 Q1 to 2019-20 Q2 (quarterly) – [Table 13.7](#)

Freight lifted

- Freight lifted, 1982-83 to 2018-19 (annual), 1996-97 Q1 to 2019-20 Q2 (quarterly) – [Table 13.6](#)

Freight delivery metric (FDM)

- FDM, 2012-13 Q4 to 2019-20 Q2 (quarterly) – [Table 3.41](#)

Freight delay minutes per 100 train kilometres

- Normalised freight delay, 2007-08 to 2018-19 (annual), 2007-08 Q1 to 2019-20 Q2 (quarterly) – [Table 13.5](#)

Freight train kilometres by operator

- Freight train kilometres, 2010-11 to 2018-19 (annual), 2010-11 Q1 to 2019-20 Q2 (quarterly) – [Table 13.25](#)

Freight market indicators (Q4/annual publications only)

- Number of freight train movements, 2003-04 to 2018-19 – [Table 13.10](#)
- Impact on rail haulage, 2004-05 to 2017-18 – [Table 13.8](#)
- Rail market share, 1998 to 2017 – [Table 13.12](#)

Revisions: There are no revisions to the previously published data. Further details on historic revisions to the data can be found at: [Revisions Log](#).

Methodology and Quality: 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 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 and Assets;
- Rail Emissions;
- Regional Rail Usage;
- *Estimates of Station Usage (not National Statistics).*

Quarterly

- Passenger Rail Performance;
- Freight Rail Usage and Performance;
- 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 data portal.

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 hold National Statistics status since being assessed³ in 2012. 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. A letter⁴ was published on 4 November 2019 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 over the coming months.

For more information on how we adhere to the Code please see our compliance statements at: dataportal.orr.gov.uk/code-of-practice/. For more details please contact the Statistics Head of Profession Lyndsey Melbourne at 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](#) and includes statistics on freight transported between road and rail.

³ <https://dataportal.orr.gov.uk/media/1334/uksa-assessment.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/correspondence/compliance-check-office-rail-and-road-statistics/>



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