Passenger Rail Usage 2019-20 Q3

Publication date: 12 March 2020

Next publication date: 4 June 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 October, November and December 2019 (Q3).

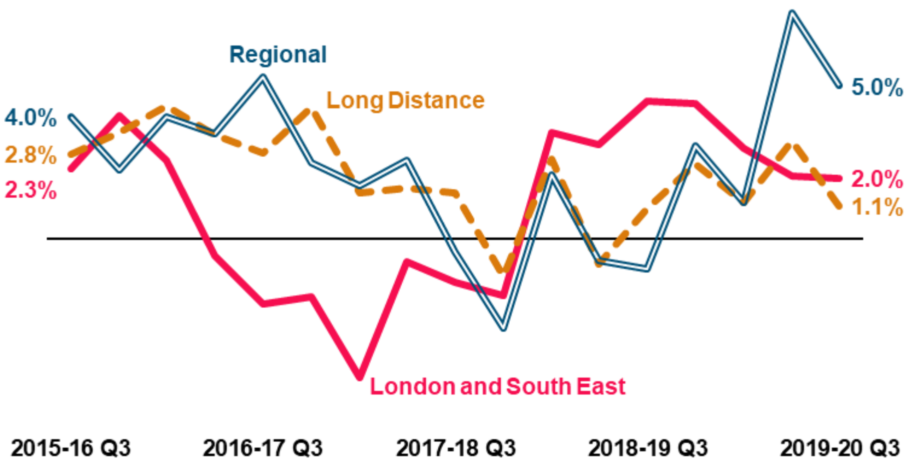
Data sources:

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

Rail passenger journeys in Great Britain in 2019-20 Q3 increased to 462 million (up 2.6% compared with 2018-19 Q3). The number of journeys in the year ending December 2019 was 1.8 billion.

All three franchised rail sectors experienced a growth in passenger journeys compared with 2018-19 Q3. The Regional sector had the largest growth this quarter at 5.0%.

Percentage change in franchised passenger journeys by sector compared with the same quarter the previous year, 2015-16 Q3 to 2019-20 Q3



Passenger kilometres increased by 2.1% compared with 2018-19 Q3. There were increases in all three franchised rail sectors, with the highest growth (5.4%) in the Regional sector.

Passenger revenue rose by 2.9% to £2.7 billion in 2019-20 Q3.

The volume of **passenger train kilometres** in 2019-20 Q3 was 136 million, up 4.3% compared with 2018-19 Q3.

Responsible Statistician: Tom Leveson Gower

Public Enquiries: Email: rail.stats@orr.gov.uk **Media Enquiries:** Tel: 020 7282 2094

Website: https://dataportal.orr.gov.uk/

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 Q3

- The number of passenger journeys in Great Britain[1] increased by 11.9 million (2.6%) in 2019-20 Q3 compared with 2018-19 Q3.

- The Regional sector[2] had the largest growth this quarter at 5.0%. The London and South East sector (up 2.0%) and Long Distance sector (up 1.1%) also experienced growth this quarter.

- Hull Trains (up 26.2%), Caledonian Sleeper (up 18.6%), Northern (up 12.5%) and TfL Rail (up 7.5%) recorded the largest percentage increases in passenger journeys this quarter. Transport for Wales Rail (down 7.7%) and South Western Railway (down 3.2%) recorded the largest percentage decreases.

- Franchised passenger journeys using season tickets fell by 5.3 million (3.3%) to record the lowest Q3 total since 2010-11. Season ticket journeys accounted for 33.7% of all franchised journeys in 2019-20 Q3, which is the lowest share for Q3 since the time series began in 1994-95.

- Passenger journeys using ordinary tickets increased by 17.2 million (5.9%) in 2019-20 Q3 compared with 2018-19 Q3. This included an 8.1 million (5.3%) increase in journeys made using off-peak tickets, which represents the largest Q3 percentage increase since 2014-15.

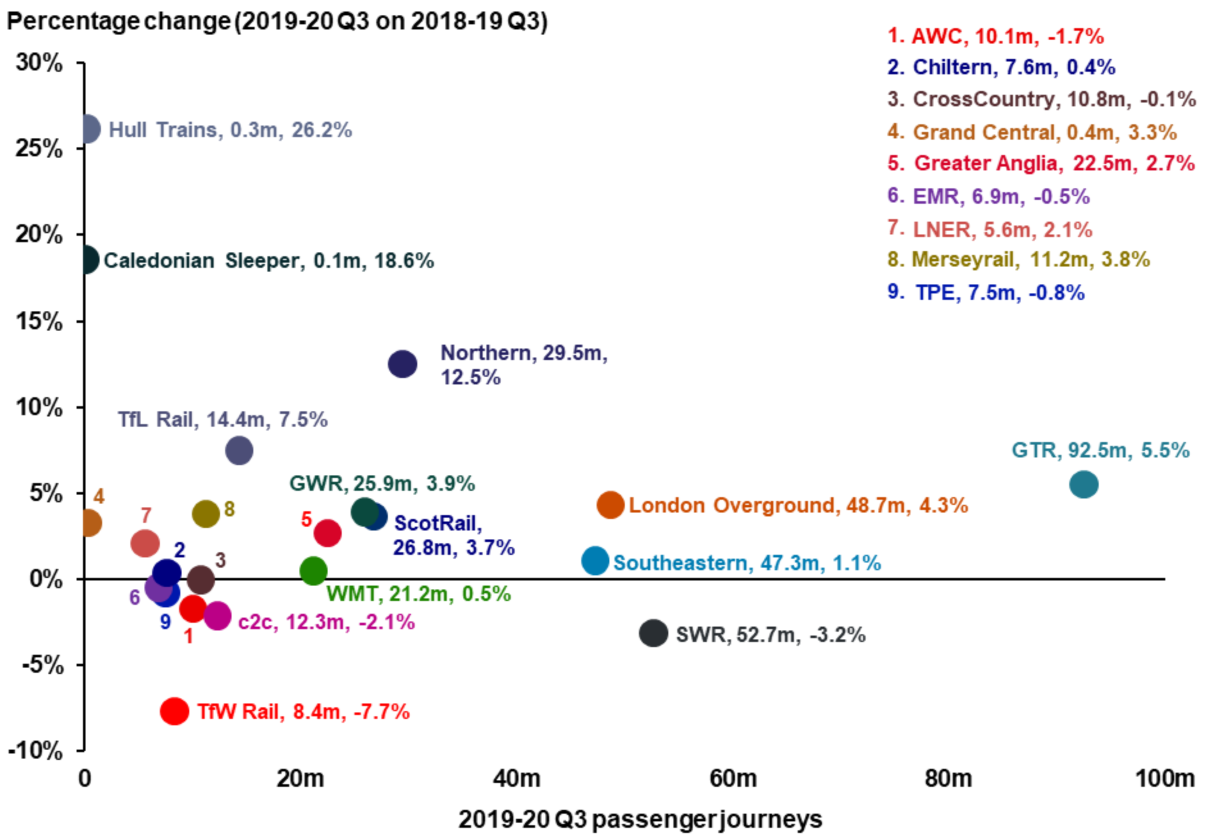
[1] All journeys in Great Britain made on both franchised and non-franchised train operators. Franchised operators are train operators who operate under the terms of franchises let by the Government. Non-franchised operators (open access) hold licences to provide supplementary services on chosen routes (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 2.6% growth in passenger journeys in Great Britain in 2019-20 Q3 (compared with 2018-19 Q3) was lower than the growth rate a year earlier (2.9%). There was a 2.0% growth in passenger journeys in the London and South East sector in 2019-20 Q3 compared with the previous year. This was lower than the 4.5% growth rate in 2018-19 Q3. **Note:** The 2.0% growth this quarter was inflated by 2019-20 Q3 including one more week of TfL contactless data (around 2.2 million journeys) than was included in 2018-19 Q3.

Figure 1.1: Passenger journeys by TOC, 2019-20 Q3, and percentage change compared with 2018-19 Q3



Accounting for over 50% of passenger journeys, the four largest TOCs all operate within the London and South East sector. Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR), Southeastern and London Overground recorded an increase in passenger journeys, while South Western Railway (SWR) saw a decline in journeys compared with 2018-19 Q3.

SWR recorded a fall of 3.2% for Q3 passenger journeys this year. This decline can be attributed in part to the industrial action during December 2019. In 2018-19 Q3, the operator recorded a 0.4% increase. The 52.7 million journeys recorded by SWR in 2019-20 Q3 is 13.3% below the Q3 peak of 60.8 million recorded in 2015-16. Punctuality and reliability on SWR have deteriorated during this time, which may also have contributed to passenger journeys remaining below their peak.

London Overground recorded a growth of 4.3% in passenger journeys in 2019-20 Q3 compared with the same quarter a year earlier. This is the first time since 2015-16 that the operator has recorded growth in Q3. Passenger journeys on TfL Rail increased by 7.5% compared with 2018-19 Q3. This was partly due to the transfer of more services from Great Western Railway to TfL Rail. Finally, for the first time since 2013-14 Q2, c2c recorded a fall in quarterly passenger journeys (down 2.1%).

The Regional sector recorded a 5.0% growth in passenger journeys in 2019-20 Q3. This was the second highest growth in Regional journeys for Q3 since 2011-12. There was a 12.5% increase in Northern passenger journeys this quarter compared with a 5.5% decrease a year ago. An increased number of timetabled services since May 2018 and a suspension of industrial action are likely to have contributed to the rise in passenger journeys on Northern.

Journeys on Caledonian Sleeper increased relative to 2018-19 Q3. The 336 million journeys made in the year ending 2019-20 Q3 is the highest number recorded for four consecutive quarters since the time series began in 2015-16. This increase may be related to the introduction of new rolling stock.

Transport for Wales Rail (TfW Rail) recorded a fall of 7.7% in passenger journeys this quarter. The closure of the line between Abergavenny and Hereford due to flood damage contributed to this fall. In addition, there was also only one rugby union autumn international played in Cardiff in 2019 compared with the four matches played in 2018.

The Long Distance sector recorded a 1.1% growth in passenger journeys in 2019-20 Q3. For the first time since 2014-15, Great Western Railway[3] recorded an increase (3.9%) in passenger journeys for Q3. This may in part reflect improved performance and reliability. For the first time since the time-series began in 2010-11, Avanti West Coast recorded a decrease in Q3 passenger journeys (down 1.7%).

Non-franchised operator Hull Trains recorded a 26.2% increase in passenger journeys this quarter following a reduced number of services in 2018-19 Q3 due to train faults.

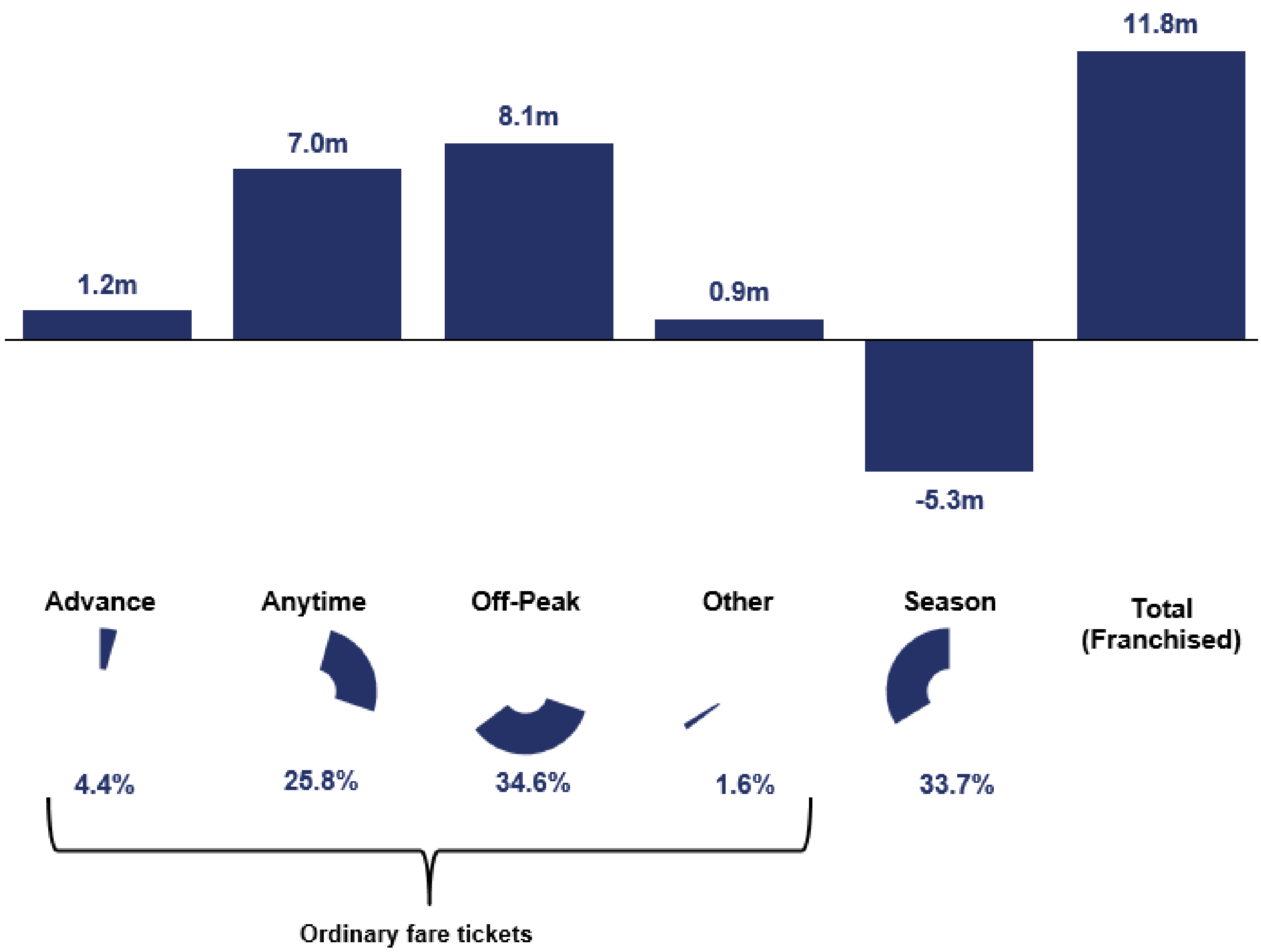
[3] Figures for Great Western Railway include journeys made in all three sectors.

Passenger journeys by ticket type

Franchised passenger journeys using ordinary tickets[4] increased by 17.2 million (5.9%) in 2019-20 Q3 compared with 2018-19 Q3. This included an 8.1 million (5.3%) increase in journeys made using off-peak tickets, which represents the largest Q3 percentage increase since 2014-15. Journeys made using anytime tickets increased by 7.0 million (6.2%). The 155.7 million journeys made using season tickets in 2019-20 Q3 was down 5.3 million (3.3%) compared with 2018-19 Q3. It is the lowest number for Q3 since 2010-11. As well as the general trend away from season tickets, the fall in journeys in 2019-20 Q3 may also be due to the industrial action on South Western Railway.

Of the 462 million franchised passenger journeys made in 2019-20 Q3, 66.3% were made using ordinary fare tickets. The remaining 33.7% of journeys were made using season tickets and this is the lowest share recorded by season tickets for Q3 since the time series began in 1994-95.

Figure 1.2: Change in franchised passenger journeys by ticket type, 2019-20 Q3 compared with 2018-19 Q3, and market share percentage, 2019-20 Q3



[4] See page 11 of the Quality Report for more information on ticket types.

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.

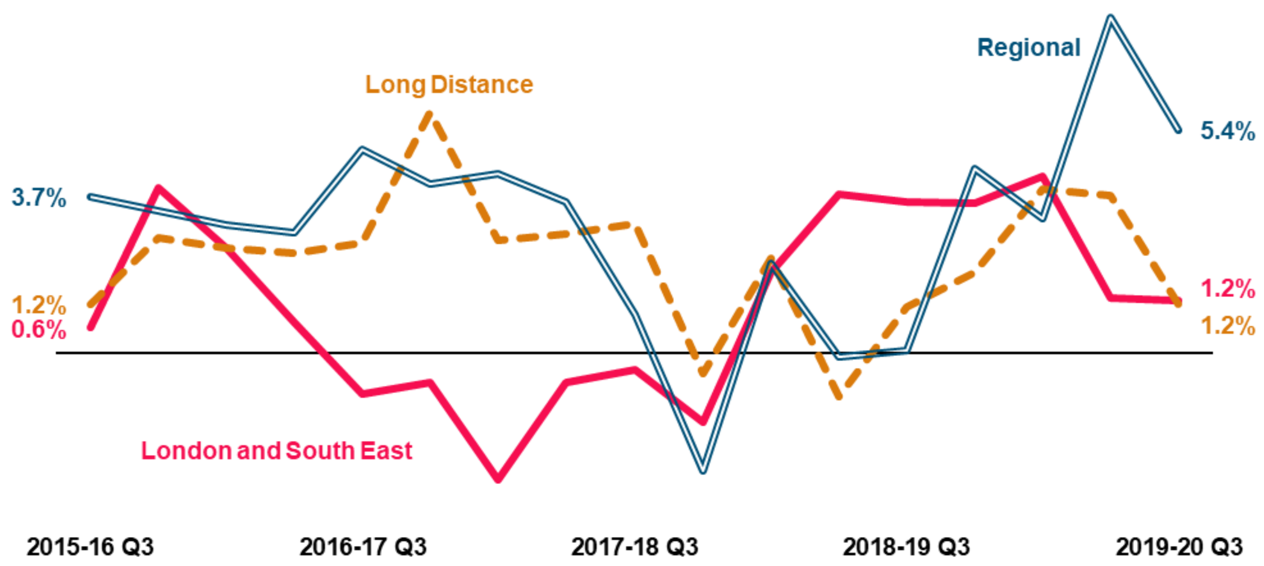
A time series of aggregate annual data from 1947 is also available in Table 12.2.

2019-20 Q3

- The number of passenger kilometres increased by 359 million (2.1%) in Great Britain in 2019-20 Q3 compared with 2018-19 Q3 to reach 17.5 billion kilometres.
- The Regional sector had the largest growth of passenger kilometres this quarter at 5.4%. This was the highest growth for Q3 since 2011-12. The London and South East sector and Long Distance sector also grew (both up 1.2%) this quarter.
- Franchised passenger kilometres using season tickets fell by 125 million (3.0%) to record the lowest Q3 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 Q3 to 2019-20 Q3

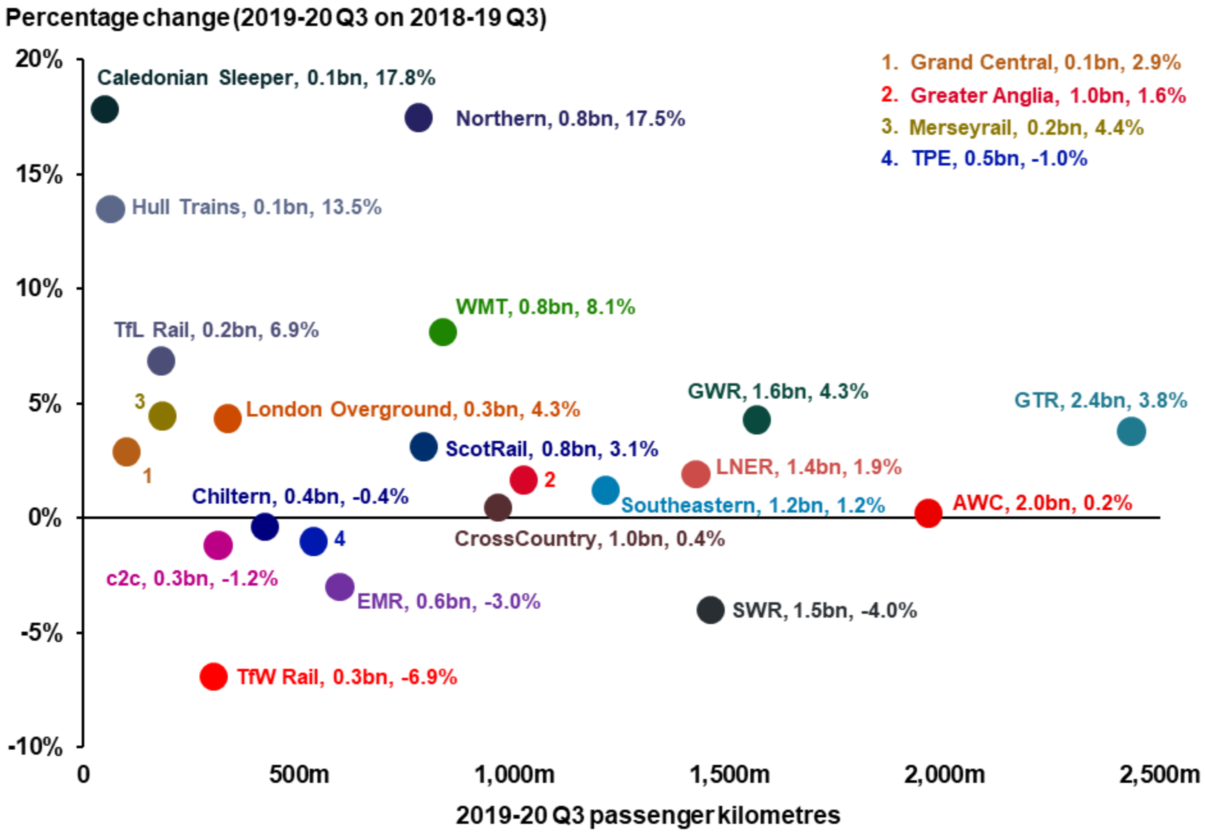


The growth in passenger kilometres (2.1%) in Great Britain was lower than the growth for passenger journeys (2.6%). For the Regional sector, however, the growth in passenger kilometres (5.4%) was greater than the growth in passenger journeys (5.0%). The 5.4% growth in Regional passenger kilometres was the highest Q3 growth since 2011-12 (9.0%).

Northern (up 17.5%) and West Midlands Trains (up 8.1%) both experienced substantial growth in passenger kilometres in 2019-20 Q3. 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 Q3 (1.2%) compared with a year earlier (3.6%). The increase in passenger kilometres was lower than the increase in passenger journeys (2.0%). The Long Distance sector also recorded growth of 1.2% in 2019-20 Q3, which was up from 1.1% in 2018-19 Q3.

Figure 2.2: Passenger kilometres by TOC, 2019-20 Q3, and percentage change compared with 2018-19 Q3

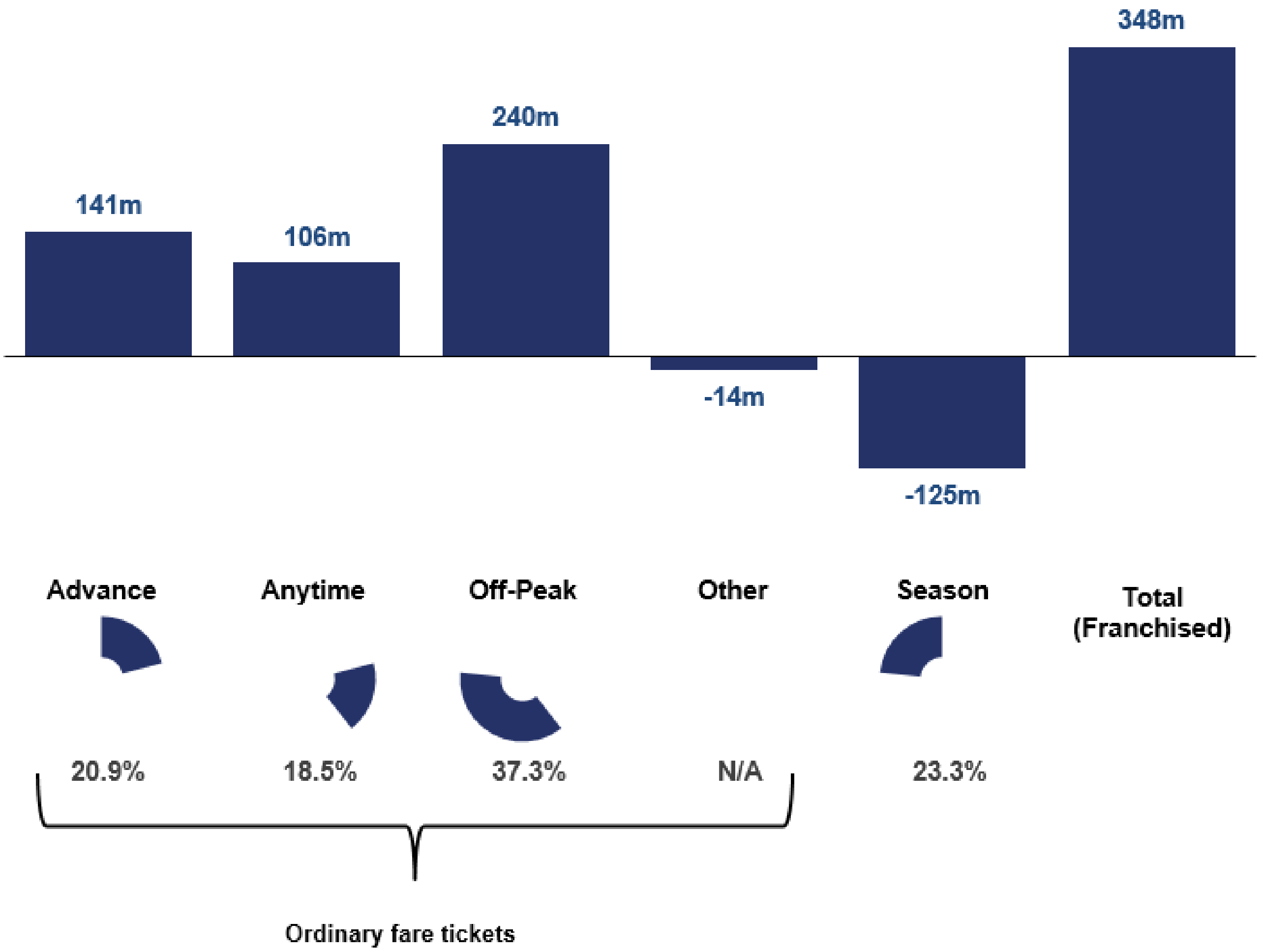


Passenger kilometres by ticket type

Franchised passenger kilometres using ordinary tickets increased by 473 million (3.7%) in 2019-20 Q3 compared with 2018-19 Q3. This included a 240 million (3.8%) increase in kilometres made using off-peak tickets. The 4.1 billion kilometres made using season tickets in 2019-20 Q3 was down 125 million (3.0%) compared with 2018-19 Q3. It is the lowest number for Q3 since 2011-12. As well as the general trend away from season tickets, the fall in kilometres in 2019-20 Q3 may also be due to the industrial action on South Western Railway.

Of the 17.3 billion franchised passenger kilometres made in 2019-20 Q3, 76.5% were made using ordinary[5] fare tickets. The remaining 23.5% of journeys were made using season tickets and this is the lowest share recorded by season tickets for Q3 since the time series began in 1994-95.

Figure 2.3: Change in franchised passenger kilometres by ticket type, 2019-20 Q3 compared with 2018-19 Q3, and market share percentage, 2019-20 Q3



[5] 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.

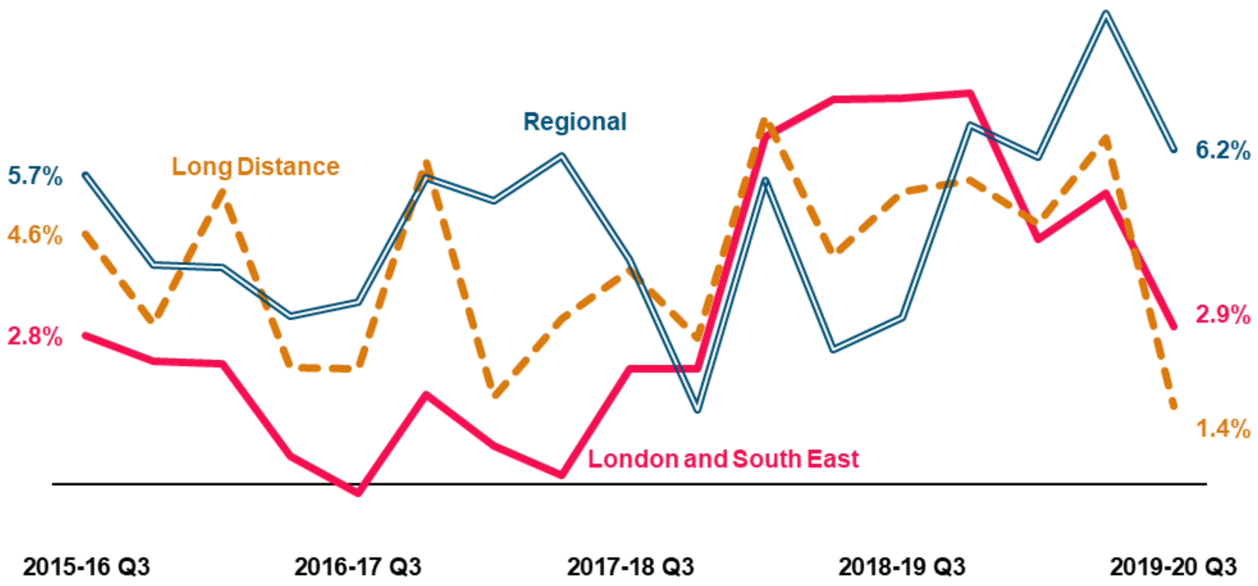
Quarterly data **by ticket type** (including inflation adjusted figures) are available from 1996-97 Q1 and annual data are available from 1986-87 onwards in Table 12.9.

2019-20 Q3

- Passenger revenue increased by £77 million (2.9%) in Great Britain in 2019-20 Q3 compared with 2018-19 Q3 to reach £2.7 billion.
- The Regional sector had the largest growth this quarter at 6.2% compared with 2018-19 Q3. This was the highest Q3 growth in Regional revenue since 2014-15.
- Franchised passenger revenue from ordinary tickets increased by 4.2% in 2019-20 Q3 compared with 2018-19 Q3.
- Revenue per passenger kilometre for franchised operators in 2019-20 Q3 was 15.44p, while revenue per passenger journey for franchised operators was £5.80 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 Q3 to 2019-20 Q3



Passenger revenue was £2.7 billion in Great Britain in 2019-20 Q3. This was up 2.9% compared 2018-19 Q3. The London and South East sector, which accounts for around half of passenger revenue, recorded growth of 2.9% in 2019-20 Q3. This was down from the Q3 growth of 7.1% in 2018-19. **Note:** The 2.9% growth this quarter was inflated by 2019-20 Q3 including one more week of TfL contactless data (around £6.2 million of revenue) than was included in 2018-19 Q3.

Passenger revenue in the Regional sector was up 6.2% in 2019-20 Q3 compared with 2018-19 Q3. This was up from 3.1% a year ago and is the highest Q3 growth since 2014-15. The Long Distance sector recorded growth of 1.4% in 2019-20 Q3, which was down from 5.4% a year earlier and is the lowest growth for any quarter since 2012-13 Q4.

Revenue for non-franchised operators (Hull Trains and Grand Central only) increased by 3.3% to £20.5 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 £87 million (4.2%) in 2019-20 Q3 compared with 2018-19 Q3. This was down from 6.8% recorded a year ago. Passenger revenue from advance tickets was £439 million in 2019-20 Q3. Whilst this was up 4.4% compared with 2018-19 Q3, this represents the lowest Q3 growth since 2015-16. This may be due, in part, to the industrial action on South Western Railway during 2019-20 Q3.

Of the £2.7 billion franchised passenger revenue recorded in 2019-20 Q3, 79.9% came from ordinary fare tickets. The remaining 20.1% of revenue came from season tickets and this is the lowest share recorded by season tickets for Q3 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 Q3 was 15.44p, an increase of 0.9% compared with 2018-19 Q3. The growth rate was down from 3.8% a year earlier. The rate of growth for revenue per passenger kilometre for advance tickets fell from 6.1% in 2018-19 Q3 to 0.3% in 2019-20 Q3.

Revenue per passenger journey for franchised operators reached £5.80, an increase of 0.3% on 2018-19 Q3. The growth rate was down from 2.9% a year earlier. For advance tickets, revenue per passenger journey fell by 2.0% to £21.62 in 2019-20 Q3. A year earlier, a growth of 2.4% was recorded.

4. Passenger train kilometres by TOC

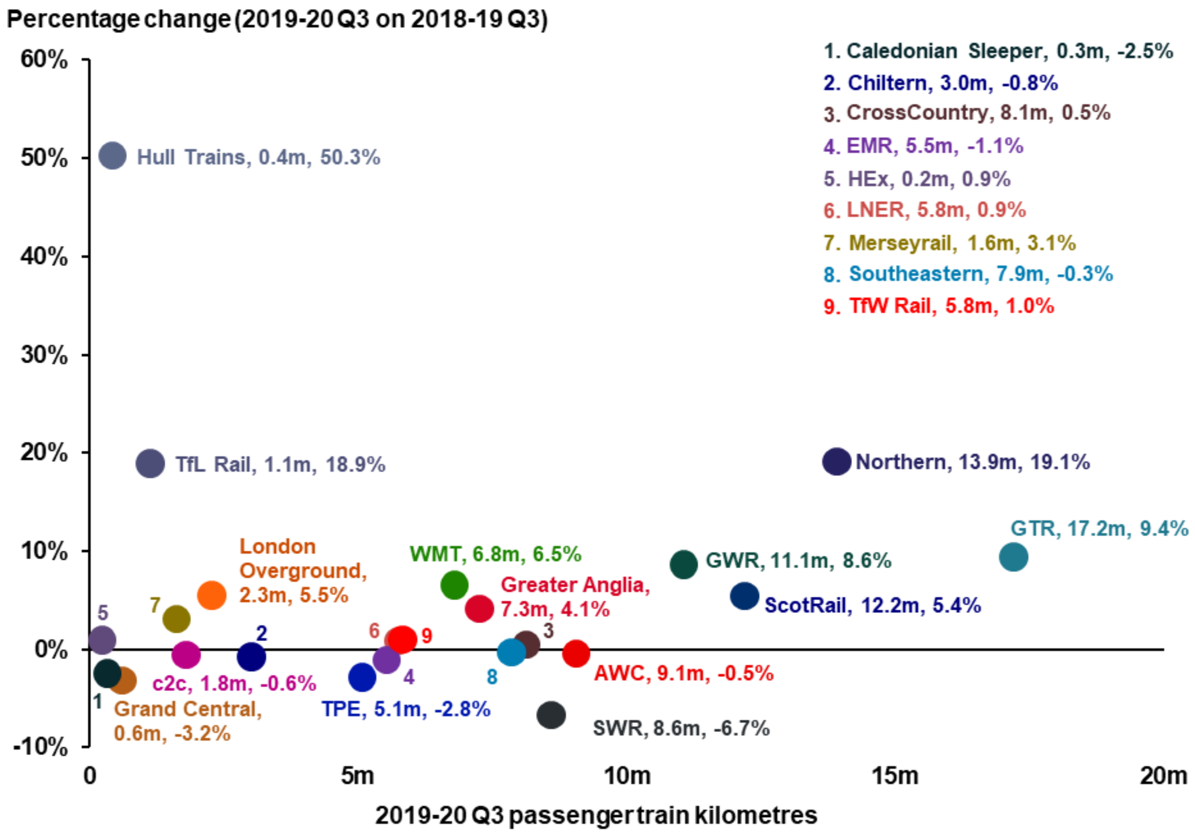
Passenger train kilometres refers to the number of train kilometres (million) travelled by revenue earning passenger trains, sourced from Network Rail's Track Access Billing System (TABS). Only kilometres run on Network Rail infrastructure are included in the data. For further information, please see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

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

2019-20 Q3

- Passenger train kilometres increased by 4.3% in Great Britain in 2019-20 Q3 compared with 2018-19 Q3.
- Non-franchised operator Hull Trains recorded a 50.3% increase in train kilometres this quarter following a reduced number of services in 2018-19 Q3 due to train faults.

Figure 4.1: Passenger train kilometres by TOC, 2019-20 Q3, and percentage change compared with 2018-19 Q3



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

There have been no revisions to the previously published dataset. 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.

Recent changes to Train Operating Companies

Avanti West Coast replaced Virgin Trains West Coast as the operator of the InterCity West Coast franchise on 8 December 2019. For this and future releases, the train operator will be referred to as Avanti West Coast.

Northern Trains, which is a publicly owned company, replaced Northern (Arriva) as the operator of the Northern franchise on 1 March 2020. As this release only includes data before this date, this train operator remains as Northern in this release. From 2019-20 Q4, the train operator will be referred to as Northern Trains.

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.