



Passenger Rail Service Complaints

2019-20 Quarter 4

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Next publication date: 22 October 2020

Background

This release contains information on **complaints made by passengers regarding rail services in Great Britain**. This release focuses on these statistics:






- Complaints rate per 100,000 journeys including by train operator;
- Complaint categories;
- Complaint response time within 20 working days;
- Complainant contact method;
- Appeals made to passenger watchdogs.
- Call made to National Rail Enquiries

The release focuses on **annual** statistics for 2019-20 but also includes summary statistics for 2019-20 Q4 (January to March 2020).

Nationally there were 30.6 complaints per 100,000 journeys in 2019-20, this represents an increase of 0.5% compared to 2018-19.

Punctuality/reliability of rail services remained the largest category of passenger complaint in 2019-20. The largest percentage point (pp) increases in 2019-20 compared with 2018-19, was also related to punctuality/reliability (up 1.8 pp), closely followed by complaints about 'other ticket buying facilities' (such as online ticket sales) (up 1.6 pp to 6.2%).

Figure 1: Top complaint categories, Great Britain, 2019-20

Type of complaint	% of all complaints	Percentage point change compared to 2018-19
 Punctuality/reliability	24%	1.8
 Facilities on board	10%	0.9
 Sufficient room for all passengers to sit/stand	8%	-0.5
 Ticketing & refunds policy	6%	0.3
 Other ticket buying facilities – online ticket sales	6%	1.6



Nationally, 94.7% of complaints were closed within 20 working days in 2019-20. A total of 16 out of 23 train operators met the industry requirement to close 95% or more of their complaints within 20 working days.



Transport Focus closed 827 appeals in 2019-20, an 81.5% decrease compared to 2018-19. The main reason to appeal was related to ticketing and refunds policy, with 29.8% of all appeals.

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1. Rail complaints

Impact of coronavirus pandemic on these statistics.

These 2019-20 quarter 4 (Q4) complaints statistics have been affected by the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic. [Rail passenger journeys](#) were 11.4% lower in 2019-20 Q4 than 2018-19 Q4 due to government's announcement of measures to limit the impact and transmission of the coronavirus pandemic. As this release uses journey information to calculate a complaints rate (complaints per 100,000 journeys), **the 2019-20 Q4 complaints rate figures should be treated with caution.** The impact of coronavirus has a small impact on the other metrics displayed within this release. Please see Annex 1 (page 23) for further information.

2019-20 Annual

A **complaint** in the rail industry is any expression of dissatisfaction by a customer or potential customer about service delivery, or about company or industry policy. All the complaints data contained within this release are sourced directly from the train operating companies. In the complaints rate statistics each communication with the customer is counted as a single complaint, regardless of how many topics are covered in the communication

The **complaints rate** is the volume of complaint correspondences closed per 100,000 passenger journeys. Complaints are normalised by passenger journeys to allow effective comparisons of data between time-periods and train operating companies.

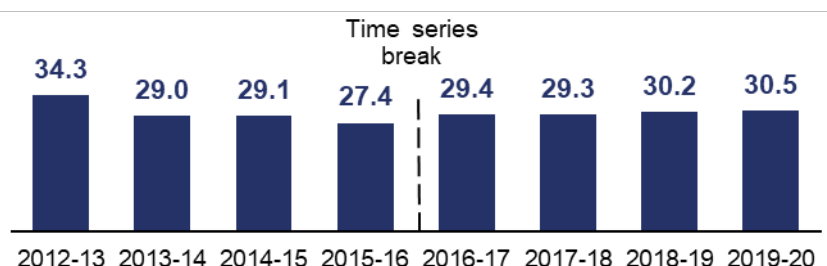
For more information on methodology and quality of these statistics, please see the [quality report](#).

- The **national complaints rate** (both franchised and non-franchised operators) was **30.6 complaints per 100,000 journeys in 2019-20, this is a 0.5% increase compared to 2018-19.**

Overall, the 30.6 national *complaints rate* in 2019-20 represented 534,882 rail passenger complaints. *Complaints by volume* decreased by 0.3% compared with 2018-19 when there were 536,272 complaints in total. The difference between the *complaints rate* change and complaints *volume* change is mainly caused by the 11.4% decline in passenger journeys experienced in 2019-20 Q4 compared to Q4 last year combined with the lag in train operators closing complaints. For more information on these comparisons see Annex 1.

For **franchised operators only**, there were 30.5 complaints per 100,000 journeys for franchised operators in 2019-20. This represents an increase of 1.0% in the complaints rate since 2018-19 when there were 30.2 complaints per 100,000 journeys for franchised operators.

Figure 2: Complaints per 100,000 passenger journeys (franchised operators only), Great Britain, 2012-13 to 2019-20 (Table 14.8)



Note 1: the national complaints rate started in 2015-16, therefore, the franchised complaints rate above has been shown here due to the longer time series. The franchised complaints accounted for 99% of the national complaints in 2019-20.

Note 2: There is a time series break between 2015-16 and 2016-17 since ORR worked with train operators to improve the quality of data collection. For more information, please see the [quality report](#).

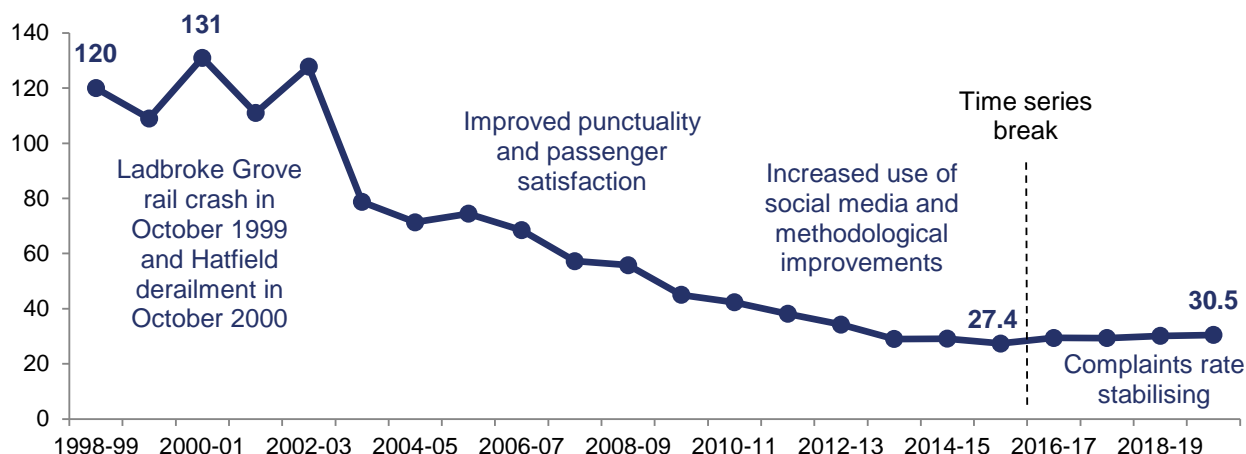
Franchised train operators are train operators who operate under the terms of franchises let by Government. **Non-franchised** operators (open access) hold licenses to provide supplementary services on chosen routes.

- The 2019-20 franchised complaints rate is the highest since 2012-13 when the complaints rate was 34.3 complaints per 100,000 journeys. However, over the past seven years (2013-14 to 2019-20) the complaints rate has been fairly stable, with a complaints rate between 29.0 and 30.5 complaints per 100,000 journeys, except for a drop to 27.4 complaints per 100,000 journeys in 2015-16.
- There were **49.7 complaints per 100,000 journeys for non-franchised operators in 2019-20**, a 36.7% decrease compared to 2018-19. This is the lowest complaints rate for non-franchised operators since the time series began in 2015-16. All three non-franchised operators (Grand Central, Heathrow Express and Hull Trains) experienced a decline in their complaints rate in 2019-20 compared to 2018-19.

Long-term trend since 1998-99 (for franchised operators only)

The complaints rate for franchised operators between 1998-99 and 2002-03 was between 109 and 131 complaints per 100,000 journeys, with the complaints rate peaking in 2000-01. There was then a sharp fall in complaints rate during 2003-04, followed by a long-term downward trend. In recent years, complaints rates have stabilised between 29 and 30 complaints per 100,000 journeys.

Figure 3: Complaints per 100,000 passenger journeys (franchised operators only), Great Britain, 1998-99 to 2019-20 (Table 14.8)



Please see note 2 above for detail on time series break.

Potential reasons for the long term decline in complaints:

- The complaints rate was at its highest between 1998-99 and 2002-03 mainly due to the Ladbroke Grove Rail Crash in October 1999, and the Hatfield derailment in October 2000, and following decline in punctuality across the rail network. Between 2001-02 and 2011-12 the **punctuality/reliability of services improved** which therefore contributed towards a decline in the complaints rate. The Public Performance Measure (PPM)¹ increased from 78% of trains within PPM in 2001-02, to a high of 92% of trains within PPM in 2011-12. Since this peak PPM has declined, and in 2019-20 was 86.2%. The [National Rail Passenger Survey](#) (NRPS) shows that punctuality/reliability is the biggest driver of passenger satisfaction.
- Overall **satisfaction** with the rail network, as measured by the NRPS, increased from a low of 72% satisfaction in the Autumn 2001 survey to a high of 85% satisfaction in the Autumn 2012 survey. Since 2013 overall satisfaction has remained fairly stable (between 80-83%) except for a drop to 79% in Autumn 2018, which was caused by the [May 2018 timetable disruption](#).
- The increased use of **social media** may have caused a decline in the complaints rate. Operators can use social media accounts to interact with customers and therefore resolve issues before they become official complaints. Social media interactions are not included within these statistics.

Social media comments are excluded from these statistics. The number of complaints received via such sources, the definition of a 'complaint', and the resources that each train operator allocates to these social platforms vary significantly, and therefore they are excluded from the published figures.

¹ Public performance measure (PPM) is the proportion of trains arriving at their final destination early or less than five minutes after the scheduled time for London and South East, Regional and Scotland operators, or less than ten minutes for Long Distance operators (table 3.42).

- In recent years, work has been undertaken by ORR to **improve data quality and methodology consistency**² for the complaints data we receive from train operators. Since ORR took over the data collection in 2009-10, we have worked with the industry to standardise definitions and methodology to ensure only actual complaints are included within the data submitted by operators. This may have caused a decrease in complaints rates if operators were previously including general enquiries or delay claims as part of their complaints data.

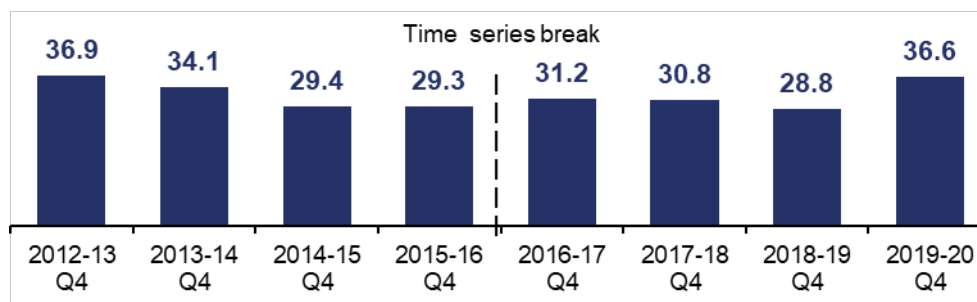
² The latest guidance for train operators can be found here:
https://orr.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/27618/reference-guide-orr-core-data-compliance-monitoring.pdf

2019-20 Quarter 4

The 2019-20 Q4 complaints rates have been affected by the coronavirus pandemic. Please use the 2019-20 Q4 complaints rates with caution. See Annex 1 (page 23) for further information.

- The **national complaints rate** (this includes both franchised and non-franchised train operators) in 2019-20 Q4 was 36.8 complaints per 100,000 journeys, an increase of 27.3% compared to Q4 last year.
- The national complaints rate change of 27.3% between 2019-20 Q4 and Q4 last year is around double the complaint volume change for the same time period. Nationally complaint **volumes** increased by 12.8% in 2019-20 Q4 compared to Q4 last year. The difference between the *complaints rate* change and *complaints volume* change is mainly caused by the 11.4% decline in passenger journeys³ experienced in 2019-20 Q4 compared to Q4 last year combined with the lag in train operators closing complaints. Please see Annex 1 (page 23) for further information.
- There were **36.6 complaints per 100,000 journeys for franchised train operators in 2019-20 Q4**, compared to 28.8 complaints per 100,000 journeys in 2018-19 Q4. This represents a 27.1% increase.

Figure 4. Complaints per 100,000 passenger journeys (franchised operators only), Great Britain, 2012-13 Q4 to 2019-20 Q4 (Table 14.8)



- There were 81.8 complaints per 100,000 journeys for **non-franchised train operators** in 2019-20 Q4, a 69.4% increase compared to the same quarter last year (these operators are Hull Trains, Grand Central and Heathrow Express).

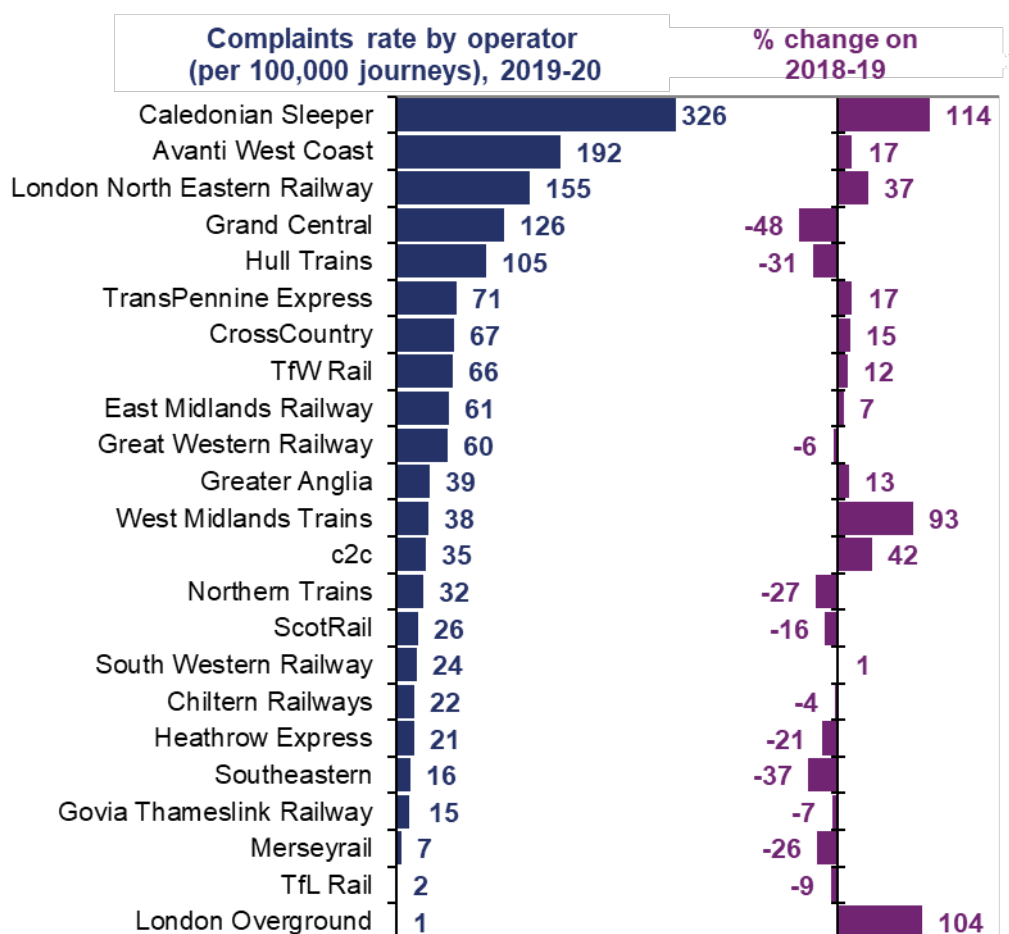
³ Passenger Rail Usage 2019-20 Q4 release: <https://dataportal.orr.gov.uk/media/1740/passenger-rail-usage-2019-20-q4.pdf>

Complaints rate by train operator

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- Caledonian Sleeper had the highest complaints rate in 2019-20 with 326 complaints per 100,000 journeys followed by Avanti West Coast with 192 complaints per 100,000 journeys.
- There were 12 train operators that had a higher complaints rate in 2019-20 compared with 2018-19, and there were 11 train operators that had a lower complaints rate.
- Caledonian Sleeper has seen the largest percentage increase in their complaints rate (up 114%). The delayed introduction of new trains as well as unforeseen problems has meant Caledonian Sleeper has dealt with a larger volume of correspondence in 2019-20 compared to 2018-19.

Figure 5: Complaints per 100,000 passenger journeys by train operator, Great Britain, 2019-20 (Table 14.9)



2019-20 Quarter 4

The 2019-20 Q4 complaints rates have been affected by the coronavirus pandemic. Please use the 2019-20 Q4 complaints rates with caution. See Annex 1 (page 23) for further information.

- Caledonian Sleeper had the highest complaints rate in 2019-20 Q4 with 335 complaints per 100,000 journeys, followed by Avanti West Coast with 253 complaints per 100,000 journeys.

Complaints by category

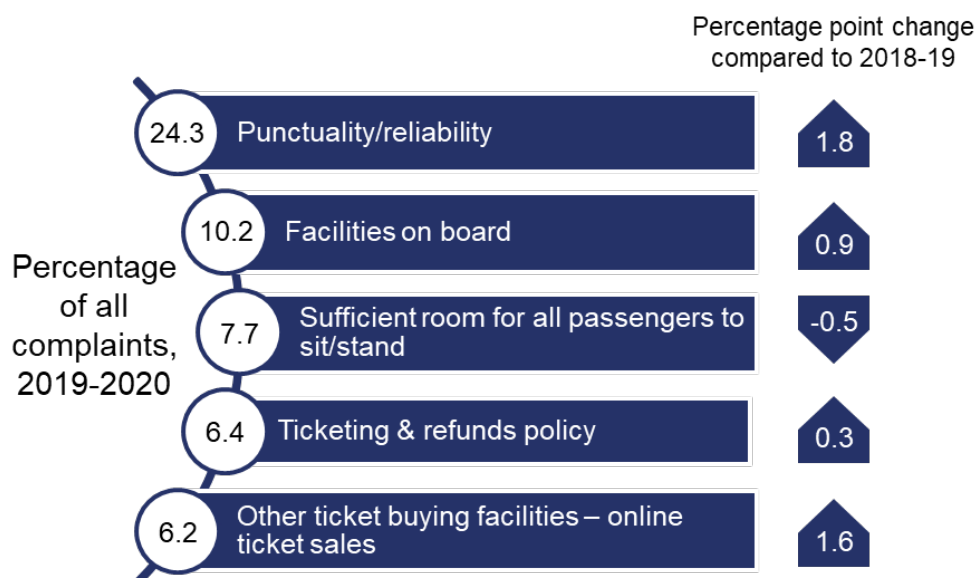
The train operator records the **category** for each complaint correspondence it closes. A single correspondence may contain more than one category and each complaint category should be recorded: For example, a letter covering two complaint areas is counted as two complaints categories, but this would only be recorded as one complaint correspondence within the complaints rate.

There are 71 detailed categories, mostly based on National Rail Passenger Survey (NRPS) satisfaction categories, which make up 14 higher-level complaint categories. Categories on accessibility complaints were expanded to include more detailed categories from 2018-19 onwards.

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- **Punctuality/reliability of rail services was the most common cause to complain to train operators.** Overall, 24.3% of complaints nationally in 2019-20 were about punctuality/reliability, this was a 1.8 percentage point (pp) increase compared with 2018-19.
- Complaints regarding the facilities on board the train remained the second most common cause of complaint in 2019-20, at 10.2% of all complaints (up 0.9 pp from 2018-19). Sufficient room for all passengers to sit/stand remains the third most common cause of complaint, at 7.7% of all complaints, a 0.5 pp decline from 2018-19.

Figure 6: Top complaint categories by percentage, Great Britain, 2019-20 (Table 14.3)



Largest increases/decreases by category between 2018-19 and 2019-20

- The largest annual increase of all the complaint categories was for the punctuality/reliability category, up 1.8 pp from 2018-19. Complaints made about other ticket buying facilities (online ticket sales) had the second biggest annual change (up 1.6 pp to 6.2% of all complaints).
- The largest decrease was for complaints about timetabling. In 2018-19 there was an increase in timetable complaints due to disruption caused by the 20 May 2018 timetable change, which resulted in 46% of train times changing from the previous timetable.

Figure 7: Top 3 increases in complaints category in 2019-20 compared with 2018-19, Great Britain (Table 14.3)













		pp change from 2018-19	2019-20 percentage of all complaints
	Punctuality/reliability	 1.8	24.3%
	Other ticket buying facilities (online ticket sales)	 1.6	6.2%
	Facilities on board	 0.9	10.2%





























Figure 8: Top 3 decreases in complaints category in 2019-20 compared with 2018-19, Great Britain (Table 14.3)

		pp change from 2018-19	2019-20 percentage of all complaints
	Timetabling	 1.4	0.9%
	Complaints not fully addressed/fulfilled by the operator	 0.8	1.2%
	Level of compensation	 0.7	1.1%

List of high-level complaint categories

Each of the 71 detailed categories aggregate to 14 higher-level complaint categories. These 14 high-level complaint categories are shown below with the percentage point changes from the previous year:

Figure 9: Percentage of complaints attributed to each of the 14 high-level complaint categories, Great Britain, 2019-20 (Table 14.3)

	High-level category	2019-20 percentage of all complaints	pp change from 2018-19
	Punctuality/reliability	24.3%	 1.8
	Quality on train	22.0%	 0.0
	Fares & retailing	13.5%	 2.0
	Staff conduct & availability	9.0%	 0.1
	Company policy	7.7%	 0.0
	Delay compensation schemes	7.5%	 0.8
	Complaints handling	4.6%	 1.3
	Provision of information	3.3%	 0.2
	Safety & security	2.1%	 0.1
	Station quality	2.1%	 0.0
	Timetabling & connection issues	1.5%	 1.7
	Accessibility issues	1.2%	 0.0
	Other - miscellaneous	0.9%	 0.2
	Environmental	0.4%	 0.0

Further commentary on annual complaint categories by train operator



Each train operator receives different types of complaints depending on the nature of service it offers and the differing levels of expectations passengers have. This is because each operator's passengers may have different priorities for the service when booking. For example, punctuality/reliability may be a higher priority for passengers on commuter services, while train quality may be a higher priority for passengers on long-distance services. This can be observed if we look at the percentage of complaints attributed to the high-level category regarding quality on the train:

Figure 10: Percentage of complaints attributed to train quality by train operator, Great Britain, 2019-20 (Table 14.5)

Train operators with the highest proportion of complaints attributed to quality on train	Train operators with the lowest proportion of complaints attributed to quality on train
Caledonian Sleeper (59.2%)	c2c (1.9%)
Grand Central (58.0%)	London Overground (3.0%)
London North Eastern Railway (47.4%)	Govia Thameslink Railway (4.6%)
Hull Trains (46.5%)	Merseyrail (5.8%)
CrossCountry (39.7%)	TfL Rail (5.7%)

All the operators in this box are long-distance train operators



The percentage of complaints also can vary for complaints attributed to punctuality/reliability. Nationally, punctuality/reliability accounted for 24.3% of all complaints in 2019-20, but this varies between individual train operators:

Figure 11: Percentage of complaints attributed to punctuality/reliability by train operator, Great Britain, 2019-20 (Table 14.5)

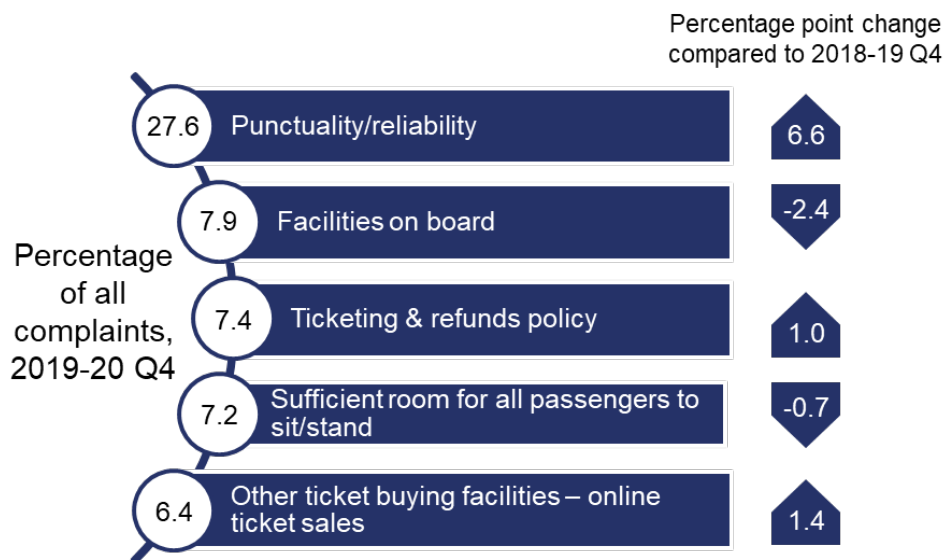
Train operators with the highest proportion of complaints attributed to punctuality/reliability	Train operators with the lowest proportion of complaints attributed to punctuality/reliability
London Overground (51.6%)	London North Eastern Railway (0.5%)
West Midlands Trains (47.6%)	c2c (4.3%)
CrossCountry (42.3%)	Caledonian Sleeper (5.6%)
TfL Rail (41.3%)	Great Western Railway (8.2%)
Northern (39.0%)	Chiltern Railway (8.8%)

A full list of all 71 complaint categories and the percentages attributed to each category is available by train operator on the ORR Data Portal in Table 14.5.

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- Punctuality/reliability of rail services was the most common cause to complain to train operators in 2019-20 Q4 with 27.6% of complaints nationally. This category had the largest percentage point increase in 2019-20 Q4 compared to Q4 last year (up 6.6 pp).
- Complaints about the facilities on board was the second most common cause to complain, with 7.9% of complaints nationally in 2019-20 Q4. This category had the largest percentage point decline in 2019-20 Q4 compared to Q4 last year (down 2.4 pp).
- Following complaints regarding punctuality/reliability, the second largest increase was about delay compensation claims being rejected with 4.9% of all complaints, a 1.8 pp increase from Q4 the previous year.

Figure 12: Top complaint categories by percentage, Great Britain, 2019-20 Q4 (Table 14.3)

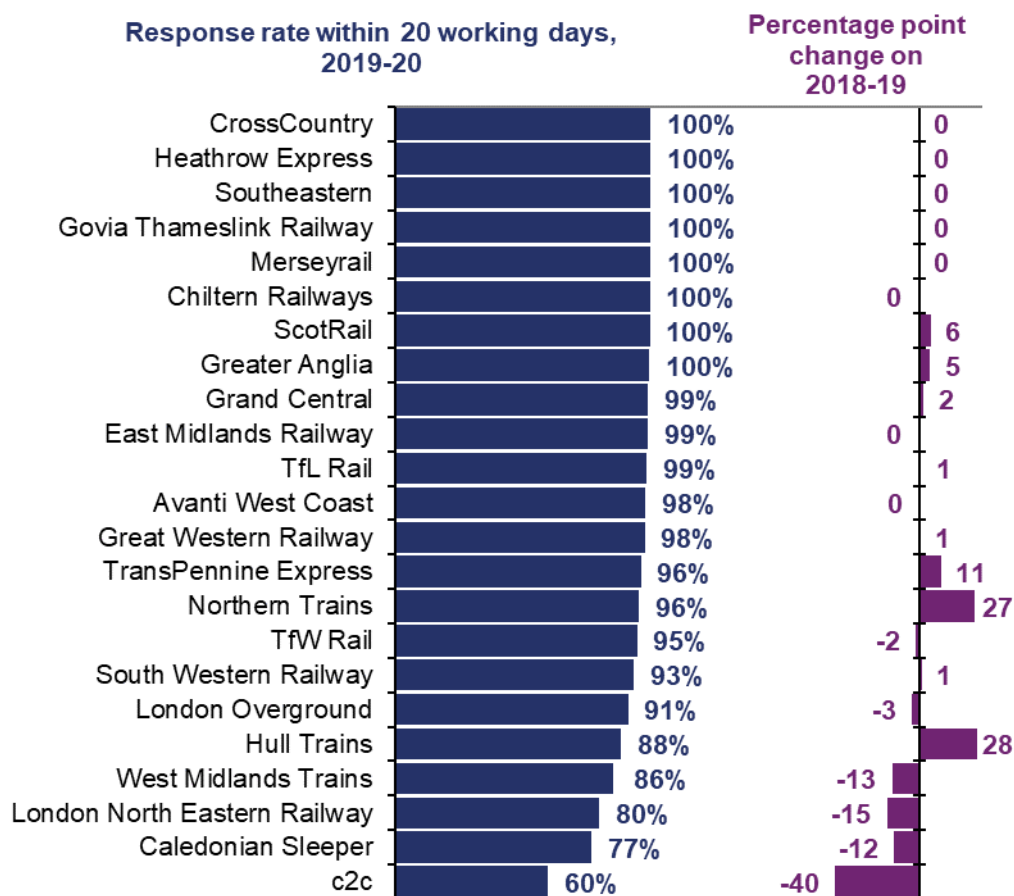


Complaints answered within 20 working days

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- Nationally, 94.7% of complaints were closed within 20 working days in 2019-20. This is 0.4 pp higher than in 2018-19. This is the highest response rate within 20 working days since the time series began in 2015-16.
- In 2019-20, 16 out of 23 train operators met the industry requirement to close at least 95% of their complaints within 20 working days over the year (when rounded to a whole number). In 2018-19, 16 out of 23 train operators also met the industry requirement.
- Hull Trains had the biggest increase in response rate (up 28 pp) closely followed by Northern Trains (up 27 pp) in 2019-20 compared to last year. c2c had the largest decrease (down 40 pp) during 2019-20 compared to the previous year. c2c experienced a decline in the response rate due to an increase in smartcard complaints, this was caused by issues associated with the introduction of a new IT system.

Figure 13: Percentage of complaints answered within 20 working days by train operator, Great Britain, 2019-20 (Table 14.2)



2019-20 Quarter 4

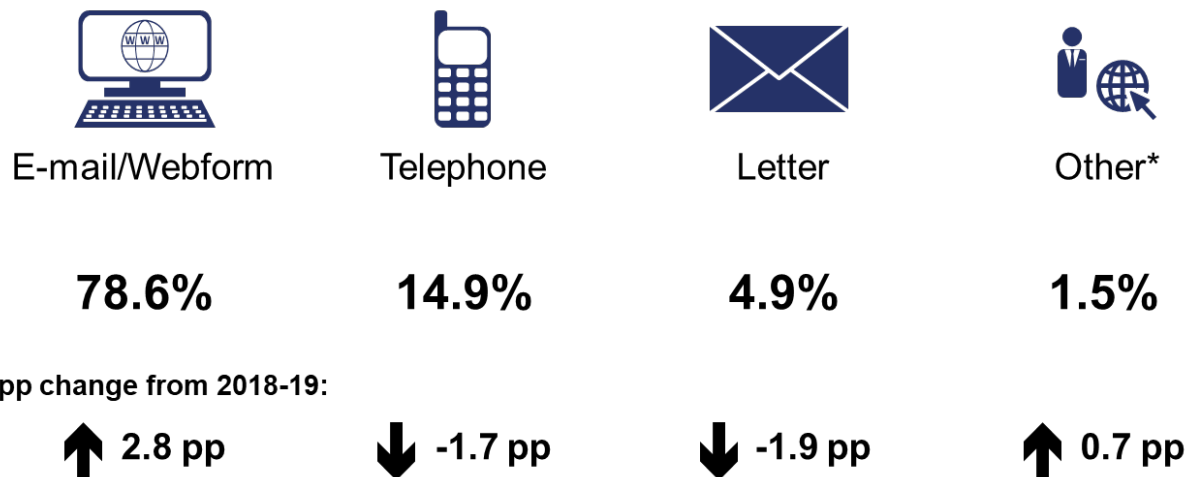
- Nationally, 92.0% of complaints were closed within 20 working days in 2019-20 Q4. This is 3.1 pp lower than in 2018-19 Q4.
- In 2019-20 Q4, 17 out of 23 train operators met the industry requirement to close 95% or more of their complaints within 20 working days. This was two lower than the 19 train operators who met the industry requirement as in 2018-19 Q4.
- Hull Trains had the biggest increase in response rate (up 45 pp) in 2019-20 Q4 compared to the previous year. c2c had the largest decrease (down 54 pp) during 2019-20 Q4 compared to the previous year.

Complaints by contact method

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- Nationally **78.6% of all complaints during 2019-20 were made by e-mail or webform**, a 2.8 pp increase from the previous year:

Figure 14: Percentage of complaints by contact method, Great Britain, 2019-20 (Table 14.6)



* 'Other' includes 'meet the manager' sessions and online forums

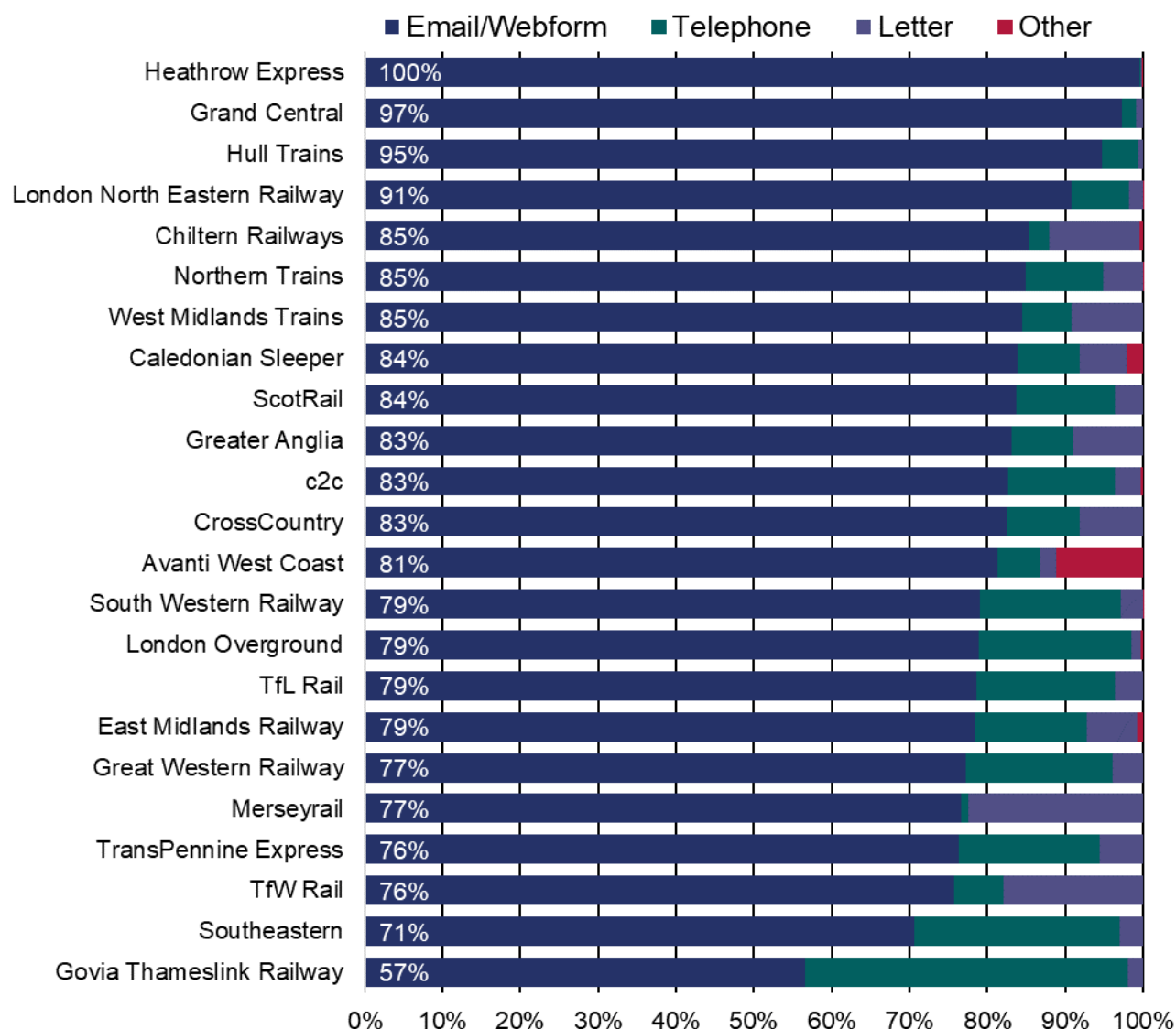
Just over three in four complaints (78.6%) were made through email or by using a webform. The figures from 2019-20 continue the trend of the increasing use of online contact methods to complain to train operators, as opposed to telephone or letter complaints. Between 2016-17 and 2019-20, correspondence using e-mail/webform has increased from 68.4% to 78.6%, a 10.2 pp increase in only 3 years. In the same 3-year time period, correspondence using letters fell from 13.3% in 2016-17, to 4.9% in 2019-20, an 8.4 pp decrease.

Contact method for each train operator in 2019-20

Complaint contact methods vary between train operators – see chart below.

Figure 15: Percentage of complaints by contact method and train operator, Great Britain, 2019-20 (Table 14.6)

The percentage number shown on the chart is that for complaints by e-mail/webform for each operator. **‘Other’** includes ‘meet the manager’ sessions and online forums.



2. Praise

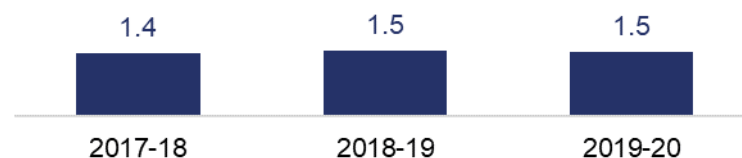
Praise is where a customer expresses satisfaction to the train operator about service delivery, or about company or industry policy. General phrases such “thanks” or acknowledgement or receipt of the TOCs reply should not be counted. This praise correspondence may also be part of a complaint.

The **praise rate** is the volume of praise correspondences closed per 100,000 passenger journeys. Praise is normalised by passenger journeys to allow effective comparisons of data between time-periods and train operating companies.

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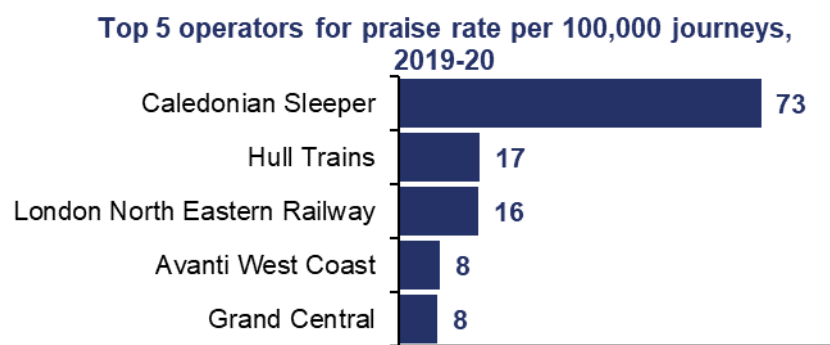
- There were **1.5 praise correspondences per 100,000 journeys** nationally in 2019-20, this represents a 2.2% decrease compared to 2018-19.

Figure 16: Praise correspondences per 100,000 journeys, Great Britain, 2019-20 (Table 14.17)



- Long-distance operators tend to have higher praise rates than other sectors. This is because these long-distance services tend to encourage a higher rate of customer correspondence, for both praise and complaints, and generates more active engagement with customers before and after the journey (for example, e-mail communication and marketing following advanced ticket purchasing).

Figure 17: Top 5 train operators for praise correspondences per 100,000 journeys, Great Britain, 2019-20 (Table 14.17)



For praise rate statistics for all train operators, as well as a quarterly and annual time-series since 2015-16, see [Table 14.17](#)

3. Appeals

When a customer is unhappy with a train operators' response, they can **appeal** against their operators' decisions. This data provides the number of complaint appeals closed by Transport Focus or London TravelWatch for each train operator (including all non-franchised operators) and some other rail bodies. The data also includes the number of appeals in each complaint category where a single appeal can be attributed to a multiple number of complaint categories.

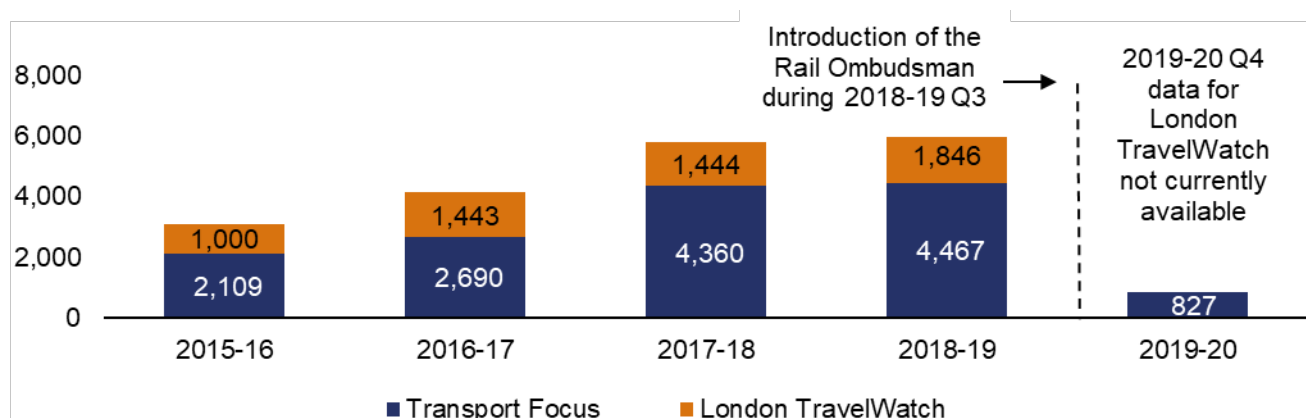
The independent passenger watchdogs may open an appeal on behalf of a rail passenger whose initial complaint to the train operator has not been resolved to their satisfaction. This data does not include appeals made to the Rail Ombudsman.

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Note: The 2019-20 appeals data is provisional as London TravelWatch have been unable to supply their 2019-20 Q4 data. London TravelWatch is the official watchdog organisation representing the interests of transport users in and around the capital. We expect to publish the 2019-20 Q4 data for London TravelWatch with the 2020-21 Q1 statistical release.

- **Transport Focus** closed 827 appeals during 2019-20, this represents a decrease of 81.5% compared with 2018-19.
- Provisional data for **London TravelWatch** for 2019-20 Q1-Q3 only shows there were 235 appeals made, a decrease of 84.4% compared to 2018-19 Q1- Q3.

Figure 18: Appeals closed by passenger watchdogs, Great Britain, 2015-16 to 2019-20 (Table 14.15)



The [Rail Ombudsman](#), which was launched on 26 November 2018 (during 2018-19 Q3), provides a service for unresolved customer complaints within the rail industry. As a result, many appeals are now dealt with by the Rail Ombudsman instead of Transport Focus or London TravelWatch and consequently the number of appeals dealt with by Transport Focus or London TravelWatch has decreased from 2018-19 Q4 onwards.

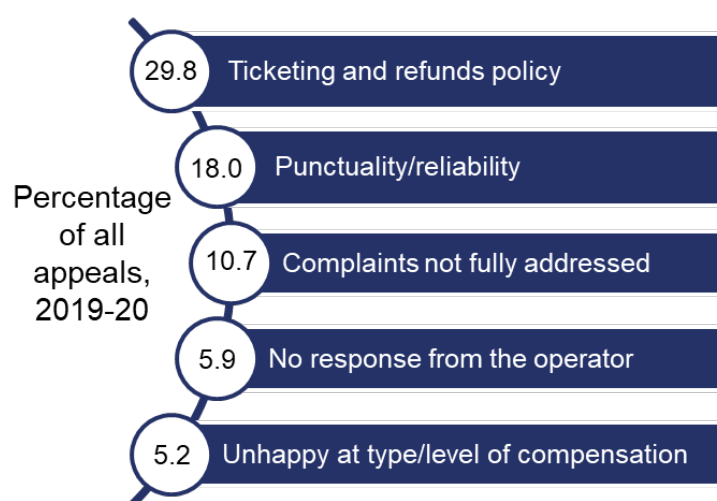
Summary of the trend since 2015-16

- ORR began to collect data from train operators on the number of complainants who were being sign-posted to the passenger watchdogs from 2016-17. This may have incentivised train operators to sign-post more, which contributed towards the number of appeals increasing between 2016-17 and 2018-19.
- There has been a substantial decline in the volume of appeals handled by the passenger watchdogs in 2019-20 due to the introduction of the Rail Ombudsman from 2018-19 Q3. The majority of passenger appeals are now dealt with by the Rail Ombudsman instead of Transport Focus or London TravelWatch.
- Provisional figures provided by the Rail Ombudsman indicate that 2,123 appeals were eligible to be considered by the Rail Ombudsman and were subsequently closed during 2019-20. More information on these figures can be found at the following link:
<https://www.railombudsman.org/about-us/documents>.

Appeals by category (provisional data)

- The type of appeals dealt with by Transport Focus and London TravelWatch have changed since the Rail Ombudsman was introduced. For example, appeals regarding ticketing and refunds policies are 'out of scope' for the Rail Ombudsman so are dealt with by Transport Focus or London TravelWatch, but appeals about the complainant being unhappy at type/level of compensation or punctuality are 'in scope' for the Rail Ombudsman.
Therefore, comparisons of appeal categories with previous years should be treated with caution. Also, please treat 2019-20 data as provisional as it excludes 2019-20 Q4 for London TravelWatch

Figure 19: Top five appeal categories, Great Britain, 2019-20 (Table 14.16)



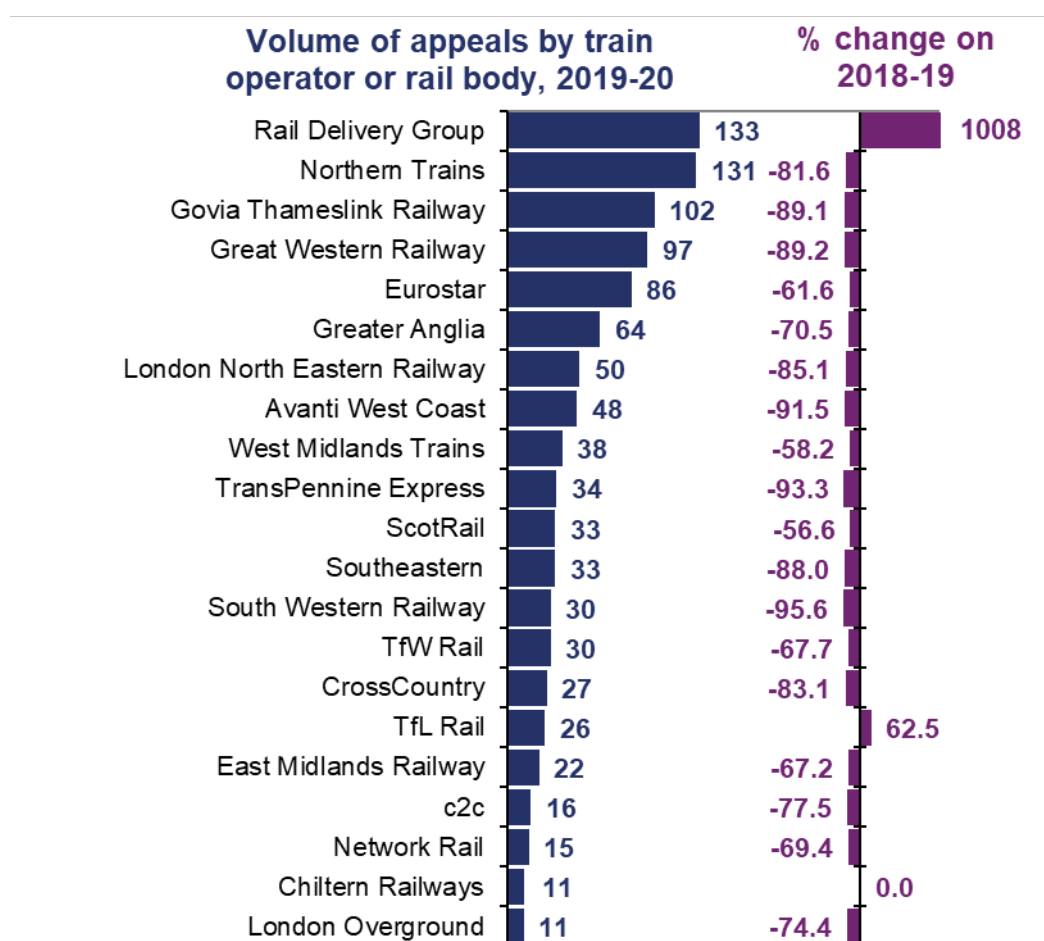
- Appeals about ticketing and refund policies was the most appealed about complaint category with 29.8% of appeals closed being about this category in 2019-20. This was a 14.5 pp increase compared to 2018-19, and this category has overtaken punctuality/reliability of services as the most appealed about complaint category.
- Punctuality/reliability category has seen the largest decline of all appeal categories, with a decrease of 5.2 pp compared to last year. This decrease is due to these appeals being increasingly dealt with by the Rail Ombudsman.

Appeals by train operator or other rail body (provisional)

The number of appeals closed for each train operator or other rail body are given below. Note that **these figures are not normalised by the number of journeys** made by each train operator.

- Rail Delivery Group (RDG) appeals were mainly related to [technical issues experienced with their railcard website](#).

Figure 20: Volume of appeals closed by train operator or other rail body, Great Britain, 2019-20 (Table 14.15)



Note: Only operators or other rail body with 10 or more appeals are shown in the chart above. Please see table 14.15 for the full list.

2019-20 Quarter 4

- **Transport Focus** closed 174 appeals during 2019-20 Q4, a decrease of 80.3% compared with 2018-19 Q4.
- Appeals to Transport Focus have substantially decreased since the introduction of the rail Ombudsman from 2018-19 Q3.

Appeals by category (Transport Focus only)

- Appeals about ticketing and refund policies was Transport Focus most appealed about complaint category in 2019-20 Q4. Overall 85.1% of appeals were about this category, an increase of 70.7 percentage points compared to 2018-19. This category also had the highest percentage point increase out of all appeal categories. This was partly caused by refund requests following technical issues with the RDG railcard website.
- Appeals about punctuality/reliability saw the largest percentage point decrease in 2019-20 Q4, a decrease of 29.7 pp from 2018-19 Q4 to 3.0% of all appeals.

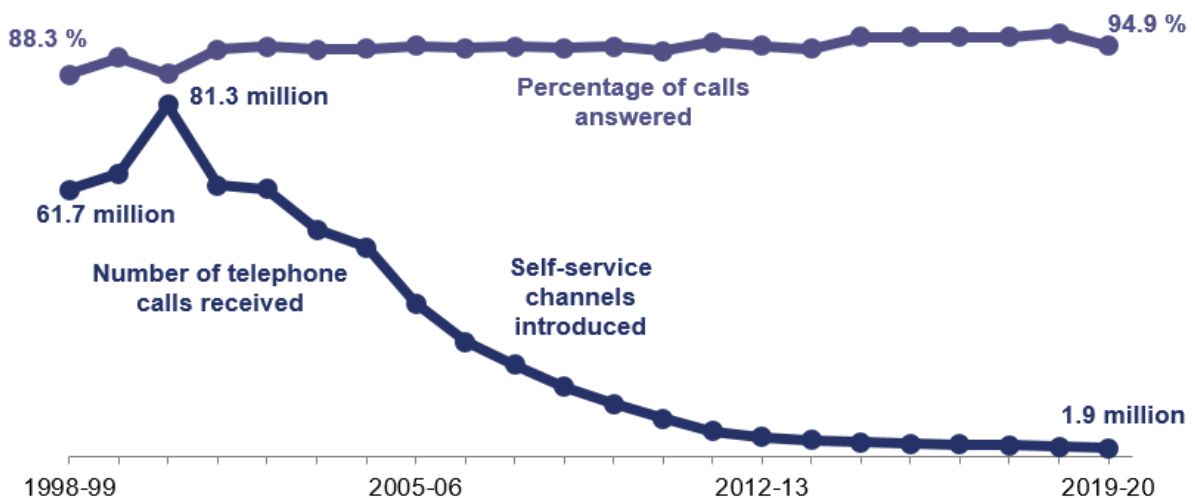
4. National Rail Enquiries telephone service

Enquiries to the National Rail Enquiries (NRE) telephone service can be made through numerous different channels, however the data presented in this statistical release relates to enquiries made through the NRE telephone service only. This data is provided by the Rail Delivery Group (RDG).

2019-20 Annual

- There were 1.9 million calls made to the National Rail Enquiries (NRE) telephone service during 2019-20, a decrease of 13.9% compared to last year. Of those calls made in 2019-20, 94.9% were answered and 5.1% were abandoned.
- Since 2000-01, there has been a long-term decline in the number of calls to the NRE telephone service. This decline has been due to the increased availability of other information sources such as on webpages or more recently by mobile app.

Figure 21: Number of calls made to the National Rail Enquires telephone service and percentage of calls answered, Great Britain, 1998-99 to 2019-20 (Table 14.13)

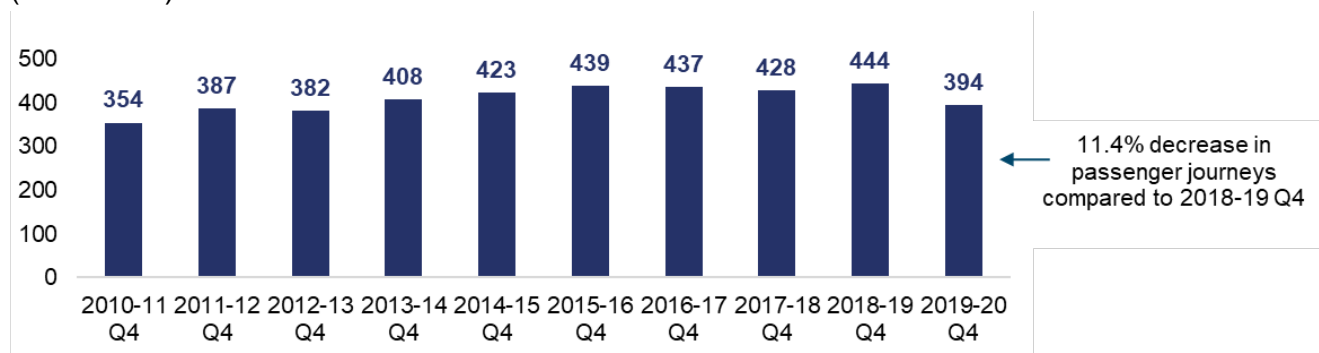


Annex 1 – Further detail on complaint rate changes

Impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on 2019-20 Q4 complaints rates

Rail passenger journeys in Great Britain during 2019-20 Q4 declined by 11.4% compared to Q4 the previous year (see figure 22 below). This was due to measures taken towards the end of March 2020 to limit the impact of coronavirus. [Advice against all unnecessary travel was announced on 16 March](#), with [further guidance on 'staying at home' on 23 March](#) ('lockdown'). For more information, please see the [passenger rail usage statistical release](#).

Figure 22: Quarter 4 passenger journeys (millions), Great Britain, 2010-11 Q4 to 2019-20 Q4 (Table 12.6)



The national complaints rate change of 27.3% between 2019-20 Q4 and Q4 last year is around double the complaint volume change for the same time period. Nationally complaint volumes increased by 12.8% in 2019-20 Q4 compared to Q4 the previous year (see figure 23 below). **The 2019-20 Q4 complaints rate figures, and change compared to Q4 in the previous year should therefore be treated with caution.**

Figure 23: Complaints rate and complaints volume with percentage change, Great Britain, 2018-19 Q4 and 2019-20 Q4 (Table 14.8)

National (GB):	2018-19 Q4	2019-20 Q4	Change (%)
Complaints rate	28.9	36.8	27.3
Complaint volumes	128,934	145,442	12.8

The difference between the *complaints rate* and *complaints volume* change is mainly caused by the 11.4% decline in passenger journeys combined with the lag in train operators closing complaints, i.e. the time between when train operators receive the complaint and closing it. Therefore, when the reduction in journeys occurred towards the end of March 2020, train operators may still have been answering complaints received earlier in March while the rail industry was running a normal timetable.

Comparison by train operator

As noted in the [passenger rail usage](#) statistical release (page 4), train operators providing services in the long distance sector recorded the largest falls in passenger journeys in 2019-20 Q4 compared to Q4 the previous year. Many of these operators also experienced the biggest difference between the complaints rate and complaints volume change over the same time periods.

The table below compares the complaints rate and complaints volume change in 2019-20 Q4 to Q4 last year. The rail journey change for the same time period has also been provided in the far right column.

Figure 24: Complaints and journey change between 2019-20 Q4 and 2018-19 Q4

Train operator	Complaints rate change (%)	Complaints volume change (%)	Rail journey change (%)
Avanti West Coast	65	30	-21
c2c	99	72	-13
Caledonian Sleeper	192	113	-27
Chiltern Railways	4	-11	-14
CrossCountry	77	51	-15
East Midlands Railway	1	-14	-15
Govia Thameslink Railway	21	8	-11
Grand Central	12	-13	-22
Great Western Railway	56	23	-21
Greater Anglia	48	36	-8
Heathrow Express	294	198	*
Hull Trains	46	24	-15
London North Eastern Railway	15	-9	-21
London Overground	352	327	-5
Merseyrail	-63	-63	-1
Northern Trains	18	13	-4
ScotRail	-43	-49	-11
South Western Railway	8	-10	-17
Southeastern	-31	-39	-12
TfL Rail	23	31	7
TfW Rail	62	36	-16
TransPennine Express	94	58	-18
West Midlands Trains	238	208	-9
Grand Total	27	13	-11

* Heathrow journeys are not published in ORR's rail usage tables.

Annex 2 – List of data tables 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 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 service complaints page](#).

Complaints

- Complaints rate – Table 14.8;
- Complaints rate by train operator – Table 14.9;
- Complaints by category – Table 14.3;
- Complaints by category and train operator – Table 14.5;
- Complaints responded to within 10 and 20 working days by operator – Table 14.2;
- Complaints by contact method and train operator – Table 14.6 (*updated annually*);
- Praise rate by train operator – Table 14.17 (*updated annually*);

Appeals

- Appeals closed by Transport Focus and London TravelWatch by operator – Table 14.15;
- Complaint categories for appeals closed by Transport Focus and London TravelWatch – Table 14.16.

National Rail Enquiries

- National Rail Enquiry telephone service – Table 14.13 (*updated annually*);

Other related data

- Passenger satisfaction with complaints handling by train operator – Table 14.18;
- Passenger satisfaction with complaints handling – Table 14.19;
- Passenger satisfaction survey by train operator and quarter – Table 14.20.

Statistics on passenger satisfaction with complaints handling are not designated as National Statistics as they have not been assessed by the Office for Statistics Regulation

Revisions

Complaints rates (table 14.8 and 14.9): Complaints rates have been revised between 2018-19 Q3 to 2019-20 Q3 due to revised passenger journey numbers for CrossCountry, Great Western Railway, Northern Trains and Transport for Wales Rail. This has also affected the 2018-19 annual figures for total franchised and Great Britain.

Complaints response rates (table 14.2): West Midland Trains and London Overground data have been revised between 2019-20 Q1 to Q3. This has also revised the franchised and Great Britain figures.

Complaint categories (table 14.3 and 14.5): Scotrail and West Midland Trains data have been revised between 2019-20 Q1 to Q3.

Further details on historic revisions to the data can be found in the [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 3 – Related data

Statistics on rail delay compensation

One of the complaint categories in this release relates to delay compensation schemes. Statistics published on delay compensation claims were collected from 2018-19 onwards, and have been published in a factsheet alongside this statistical release since 2018-19 Q2.

The statistics include the volume of delay compensation claims received, closed and approved, as well as the percentage of claims which were responded to within 20 working days. All these measures are provided at national (Great Britain) level as well as by each individual train operator.

■ Rail delay compensation claims - Table 17.01

Note these statistics are not designated as National Statistics as they have not been assessed by the Office for Statistics Regulation.

Measuring Up – Annual rail consumer report

'Measuring Up' is ORR's annual rail consumer report focusing on the performance of train companies and Network Rail in the consumer areas we regulate. This includes:

- ticket retailing
- passenger information
- assisted travel
- complaints and redress

■ Measuring Up report – <https://orr.gov.uk/rail/consumers/annual-rail-consumer-report>

Annex 4

Statistical Releases

This publication is part of ORR's [National Statistics](#) accredited statistical 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

The ORR data portal provides a list of [publication dates](#) for the next twelve months.

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. In addition, 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. OSR identified some areas that we could consider that may enhance the value of the statistics further and we are working on these.

For more information on how we adhere to the Code please see our [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.



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