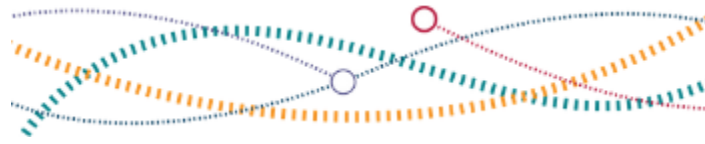# ORR rail statistics

Newsletter

1 October 2020

This is our first newsletter to update our statistics users about changes and improvements we are making over the next few months to the statistics we publish on the ORR data portal. We post this information on our user engagement page, however we'd like to ensure you are kept up to date directly with any changes to statistics you may use.

We hope you find the information useful and welcome any questions or feedback. Please email us at: rail.stats@orr.gov.uk. If you would **not** like to receive this newsletter in future please email us using this unsubscribe link.

User survey – results and implementation plan

Earlier this year we ran a survey to gather feedback on our new data portal. The results of the survey were published in July and now our implementation plan has been published too. This includes information on some improvements we have already implemented, based on the feedback received from our users, and our plans for longer term changes.

Estimates of station usage

We have been working with the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) to gain National Statistics accreditation for our estimates of station usage statistics. Thank you to everyone who provided feedback to OSR, this has been insightful and has been used to develop an improvement plan for these statistics. We hope to have all these improvements implemented for the release of the 2019-20 statistics in December (exact publication date is yet to be confirmed – we will email you once the date is set).

Rail finance

The rail finance statistical release provides details of government support to the rail industry in Great Britain. This includes subsidies / premiums paid between government and train operating companies as well as direct support to Network Rail and the public financing of projects such as Crossrail and HS2. A more detailed breakdown of industry income and expenditure is available in the UK rail industry financials.

Earlier this year we proposed to bring these two annual publications together. This will avoid publishing two sets of finance data at different times of the year, ensure data consistency and allow all industry finance data ORR publishes to be hosted on the data portal. We are also developing an interactive dashboard in PowerBI to publish.

The first combined publication with data up to and including the 2019-20 financial year is scheduled for release in November 2020 (exact publication date is yet to be confirmed – we will email you once the date is set).

For more information on the proposed changes, please see slides 23 to 32 of the RSMG slides from May 2020 or read ORR's blog on rail finance.

Rail usage statistics

Passenger rail usage statistics for 2020-21 Quarter 1 (April-June) are due to be published on 8 October. The source of the statistics is the rail industry's ticketing database (LENNON). Due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic a significant number of rail users applied for ticket refunds, especially season tickets, and the way these are processed in LENNON will impact the accuracy of the statistics presented in our statistical release. Therefore, we will be presenting the statistics with appropriate adjustments so they are as comparable as possible with historic data and we will also use other data to enable the most accurate picture of rail usage to be estimated.

Table numbers

Due to changes in how we categorise data since the launch of our data portal last year (our new themes), we have started to introduce new table numbers for all of our data tables. This should mean that table numbers published under each theme are more coherent. For users who were familiar with the old table numbers, we have produced a spreadsheet detailing all the table number changes.

Accessibility

To comply with new Public Sector Website Accessibility Regulations we have made changes to the data portal and all its contents (i.e. all pdfs and tables). These changes make content more accessible to a wider range of people with disabilities. In addition, we have started publishing all data tables in OpenDocument Spreadsheet (.ods) format rather than Excel. Other formats are available on request.

We have recently rebranded, reformatted and made other changes to the style and content of our statistical releases. Any feedback on those published so far is welcome.

Publication dates

A reminder that the publications dates for all our statistics are available for the next 12 months. For some releases only the month has been set so far, however the exact date will always be set at least 4 weeks in advance of publication.

Regards,
Lyndsey