

Passenger Rail Usage 2020-21 Quarter 3

11 March 2021

Background:

This quarterly statistical release contains information on passenger rail usage in Great Britain. It covers **passenger journeys, passenger kilometres, passenger revenue, and passenger train kilometres**.

Statistics are presented by **ticket type, sector, and train operator**.

Sources: LENNON ticketing and revenue system, train operators, and Network Rail

Latest quarter: 2020-21 Q3 (October to December 2020).

Contents:

Passenger journeys – p2
Passenger kilometres – p7
Passenger revenue – p11
Passenger train km – p13
Annexes - p14

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3 June 2021

Passenger rail usage during the third quarter of 2020-21 continued to be affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. An alternative methodology has been used to estimate usage with some ticket types in 2020-21. There is more uncertainty around the estimates for 2020-21 Q1, Q2 and Q3 compared with previous quarters.

A total of 140 million **rail passenger journeys** were made in Great Britain in 2020-21 Q3. Usage remains considerably lower than it was before the pandemic with the 140 million journeys this quarter equating to 30.2% of the 463 million journeys recorded in 2019-20 Q3.

Passenger journeys, Great Britain, 2018-19 Q1 to 2020-21 Q3



The **London and South East** sector recorded 106 million journeys this quarter. This equates to 33.4% of usage in 2019-20 Q3, higher than the **Regional** sector (24.0%) and the **Long-distance** sector (21.4%).

Total passenger revenue in Great Britain was £641 million in 2020-21 Q3. This equates to 23.8% of the £2.7 billion in 2019-20 Q3.

All data tables, a quality and methodology report and an interactive dashboard associated with this release are published on the [passenger rail usage page](#) of the ORR data portal. Key definitions are in annex 1 of this release and information on the methodology change is in annex 2.

1. Passenger journeys

Impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic

The statistics presented in this release are estimates derived from ticket sales data. In March 2020, travel restrictions imposed to limit the spread of the coronavirus resulted in a large number of season ticket refunds. An alternative methodology was applied in 2020-21 to estimate season ticket usage as well as the number of refunds (and therefore journeys not made). The methodology has been refined this quarter to improve the estimates of usage by train operator and sector. However, there remains more uncertainty around the estimates for 2020-21 Q1, Q2 and Q3 relative to previous years. For further information on the methodological changes and revisions to 2020-21 Q1 and Q2, please see annex 2.

ORR estimated for 2020-21 Q1 (April to June 2020) that the 35 million passenger journeys in Great Britain represented [the lowest level of passenger usage since the mid-nineteenth century](#). This unprecedented fall in usage was attributed entirely to the [measures taken to limit the impact of the coronavirus pandemic](#). By the beginning of 2020-21 Q2 (July to September 2020), the [incidence of coronavirus had fallen considerably across the UK](#). ORR estimated that 134 million journeys were made in the quarter following the easing of travel restrictions. Nevertheless, this was still less than 30% of the usage in 2019-20 Q2.

Cases of coronavirus were increasing again by the start of 2020-21 Q3 (October to December 2020). Local restrictions were introduced in areas where the virus was most prevalent. This included the [three tiers of restrictions introduced in England](#). [Wales introduced a two-week "firebreak"](#) at the end of October, whilst a [four-week 'lockdown' in England](#) was in place during November. [Tougher travel restrictions were also imposed in areas of Scotland with higher rates of the virus](#). While restrictions were eased at the beginning of December, plans to allow travel during the Christmas holiday were scaled back or cancelled completely. The alternative methodology used to estimate usage in 2020-21 includes estimates for the number of refunded tickets. However, given the level of travel restrictions put in place during October to December 2020, on some occasions at very short notice, the estimates of usage for 2020-21 Q3 presented in this publication may overstate the actual level of usage.

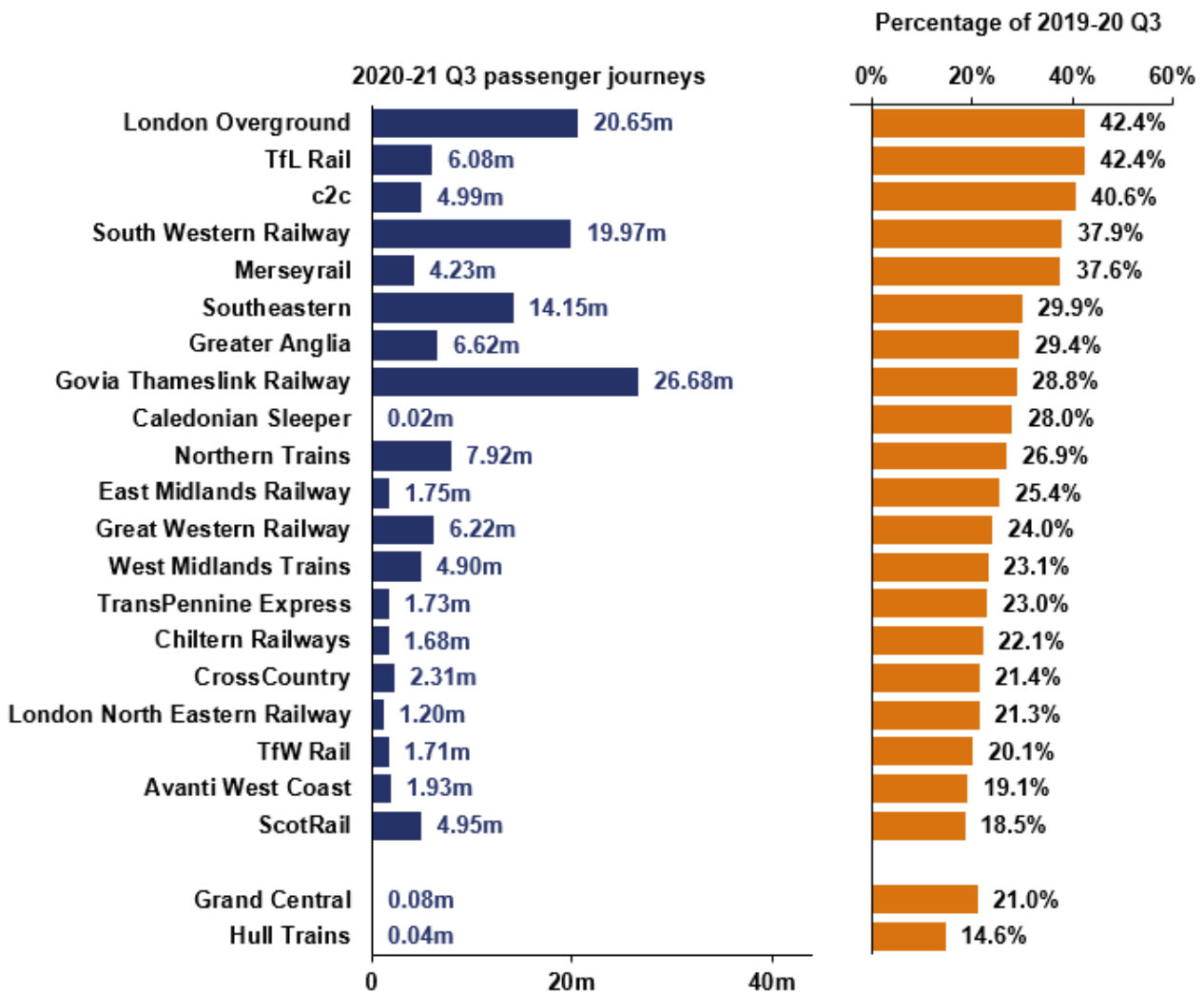
[Estimates published by the Department for Transport \(DfT\)](#) indicate that relative passenger rail usage in Great Britain began the quarter at 34%. Usage fell to around 23% during November before returning to around a third of normal levels in the middle of December. By the end of December, relative usage had fallen to 12%. The [methodology used by the DfT](#) counts all future journeys associated with a season ticket at the date of purchase. By contrast, the methodology used in this publication distributes those same journeys across the validity of the ticket resulting in a more accurate usage estimate.

Passenger journeys by sector and operator

The London and South East sector recorded 106 million journeys in 2020-21 Q3. This equates to 33.4% of the 316 million journeys in 2019-20 Q3 and is the highest relative usage of the three sectors. London Overground, TfL Rail (both 42.4%) and c2c (40.6%) recorded the highest usage this quarter as a proportion of journeys made in 2019-20 Q3. The TfL Rail figures can be attributed in part to the [transfer of London Paddington to Reading stopping services to TfL Rail from Great Western Railway on 15 December 2019](#). By contrast, Chiltern Railways recorded 22.1% of the journeys made in 2019-20 Q3.

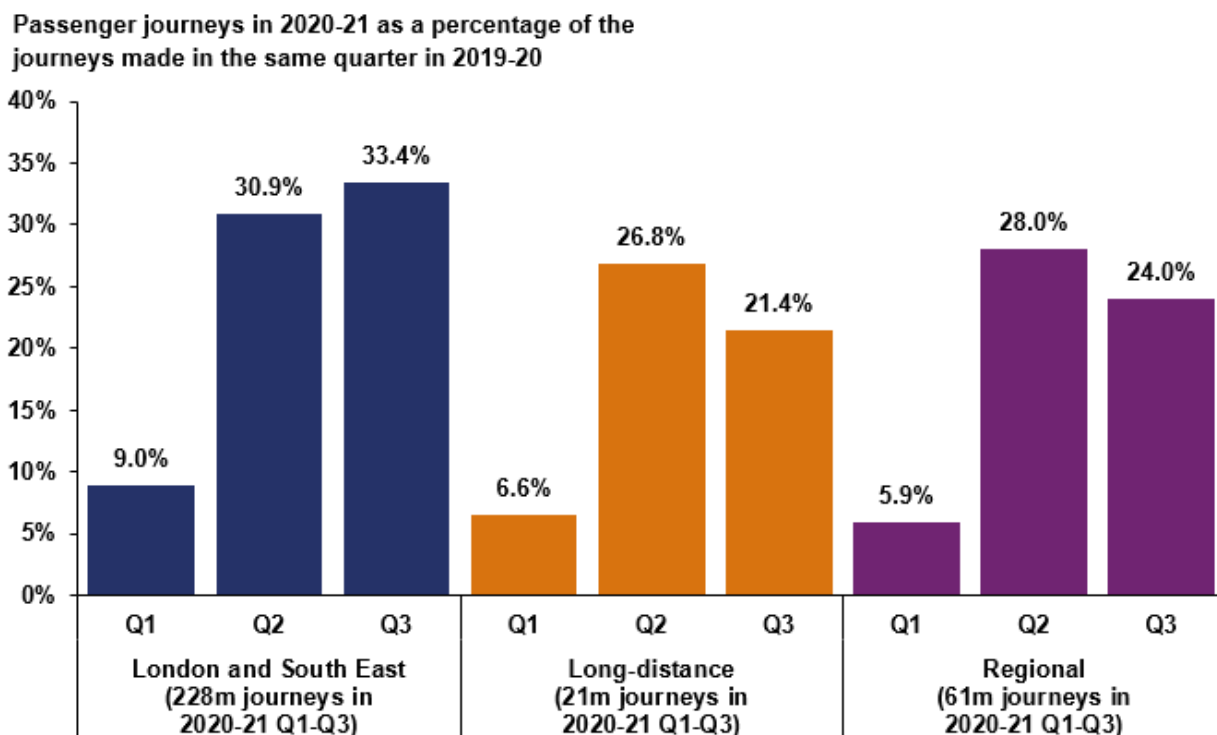
The Regional sector recorded 26.0 million journeys in 2020-21 Q3 (which is 24.0% of journeys made in 2019-20 Q3) with usage ranging from 37.6% (Merseyrail) to 18.5% (ScotRail). The Long-distance sector recorded 8.2 million journeys this quarter (21.4% of journeys made in 2019-20 Q3). Relative usage ranged from 25.4% (East Midlands Railway, including usage on Regional services), to 19.1% (Avanti West Coast).

Figure 1.1: Passenger journeys by operator, 2020-21 Q3, and percentage of 2019-20 Q3 (Table 1223)



For the three franchised sectors, Figure 1.2 shows the change in relative usage during the first three quarters of 2020-21. In each quarter, the London and South East sector has recorded the highest usage relative. Whilst all three sectors experienced an increase in usage in 2020-21 Q2, only the London and South East sector continued to grow in Q3. This may be due in part to tighter restrictions to combat the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic being in place earlier in areas outside of the South East of England. However, it should be noted that [London was placed in Tier 2 as early as 17 October 2020](#).

Figure 1.2: Passenger journeys in 2020-21 by sector as a percentage of the journeys made in the same quarter in 2019-20 (Table 1221)



Of the 20 franchised operators, four recorded a higher relative usage this quarter than they did in 2020-21 Q2. All four are part of the London and South East sector. South Western Railway recorded 20.0 million journeys in 2020-21 Q3. This equates to 37.9% of the 52.7 million journeys made in 2019-20 Q3 and represents an 11.6pp increase in relative usage compared with 2020-21 Q2. This may have been partly due to the [industrial action on South Western Railway in December 2019](#), which suppressed usage in 2019-20 Q3. Nevertheless, South Western Railway had the fourth highest relative usage this quarter, 8.0pp more than Southeastern (29.9%). London Overground (up 4.3pp), c2c (up 2.0pp) and Southeastern (up 0.6pp) also recorded higher relative usage in 2020-21 Q3 compared with 2020-21 Q2.

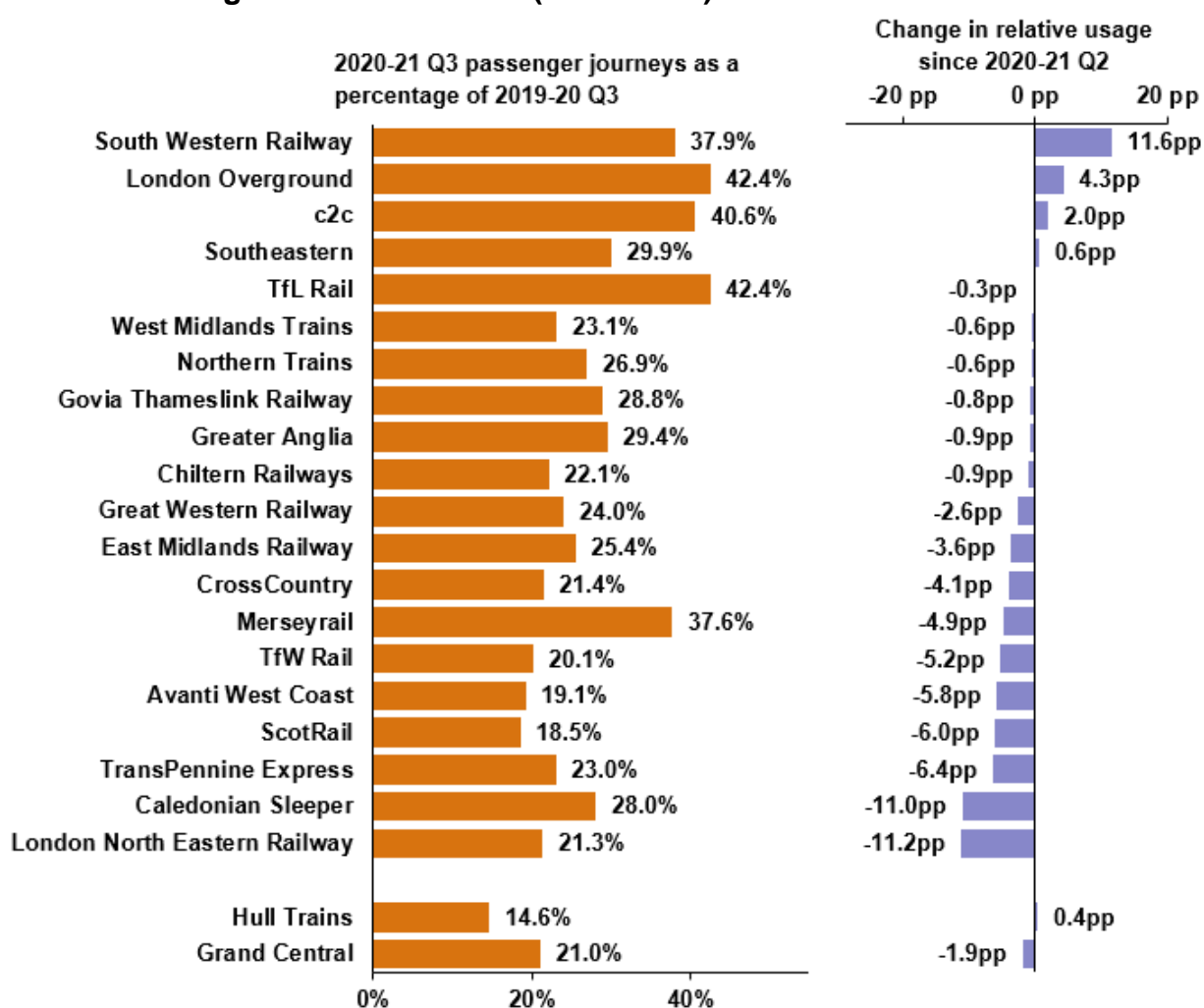
London North Eastern Railway recorded a relative usage of 21.3% in 2020-21 Q3. This was down 11.2pp compared with 2020-21 Q2, the largest fall of any operator. Engineering

works may have contributed to this decrease. [Works in August 2019](#) may have inflated the relative usage reported in 2020-21 Q2 and [works in December 2020](#) may have curbed usage in 2020-21 Q3. The other Long-distance operators recorded more moderate decreases in relative usage ranging from a fall of 5.8pp at Avanti West Coast to a fall of 2.6pp at Great Western Railway (including Regional and London and South East usage).

Caledonian Sleeper (down 11.0pp) recorded the largest fall in usage among operators in the Regional sector. This decrease is likely to have been due to a fall in discretionary travel as a result of [restrictions introduced in Scotland](#) at the beginning of November. Decreases in the rest of the sector ranged from a fall of 6.4pp at TransPennine Express to a fall of 0.6pp at West Midlands Trains (including London and South East usage).

The non-franchised operator Hull Trains recorded a 0.4pp increase in relative usage. It should be noted, however, that Hull Trains ran trains on 58 days of 2020-21 Q3 compared with 39 days of 2020-21 Q2.

Figure 1.3: Passenger journeys by operator in 2020-21 Q3 as a percentage of journeys in 2019-20 Q3 and the percentage point change in relative usage since 2020-21 Q2 (Table 1223)

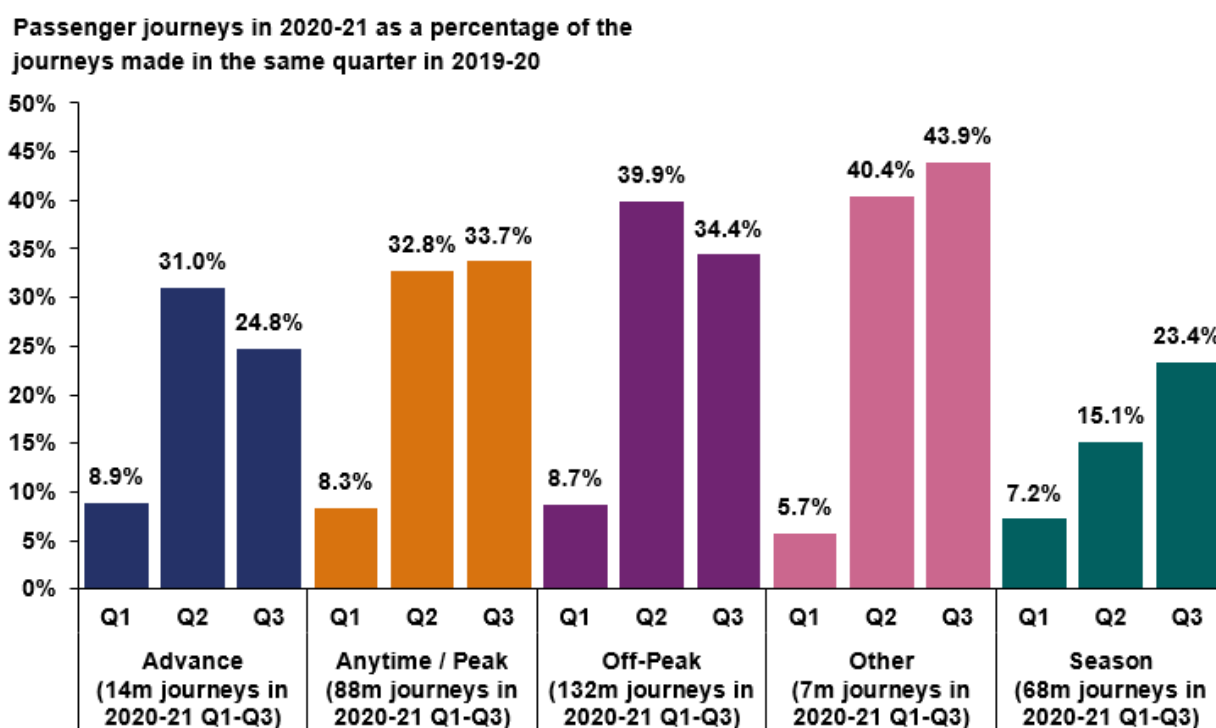


Franchised passenger journeys by ticket type

There were 103 million franchised passenger journeys made using ordinary tickets (i.e. non-season tickets) in 2020-21 Q3. This is equivalent to 33.7% of the 306 million journeys made in 2019-20 Q3 and represents a 2.9pp decrease in relative usage on 2020-21 Q2.

Figure 1.4 shows the change in relative usage by ticket type during the first three quarters of 2020-21. Following substantial growth in relative usage for all four ordinary ticket types in 2020-21 Q2, only other tickets (up 3.5pp) and anytime/peak tickets (up 0.9pp) recorded an increase in 2020-21 Q3. It should be noted that there is more uncertainty around journeys made using ordinary tickets due to the alternative methodology applied for estimating refunds (see Annex 2 for further details).

Figure 1.4: Passenger journeys in 2020-21 by ticket type as a percentage of the journeys made in the same quarter in 2019-20 (Table 1222)



There were 36 million franchised journeys made using season tickets in 2020-21 Q3. This equates to 23.4% of the 156 million journeys in 2019-20 Q3 and was up 8.3pp compared with 2020-21 Q2. There may be a number of reasons for this increase. One is that schools and colleges were open for much of 2020-21 Q3. It may also suggest that there was a more regular return to work for some commuters.

2. Passenger kilometres

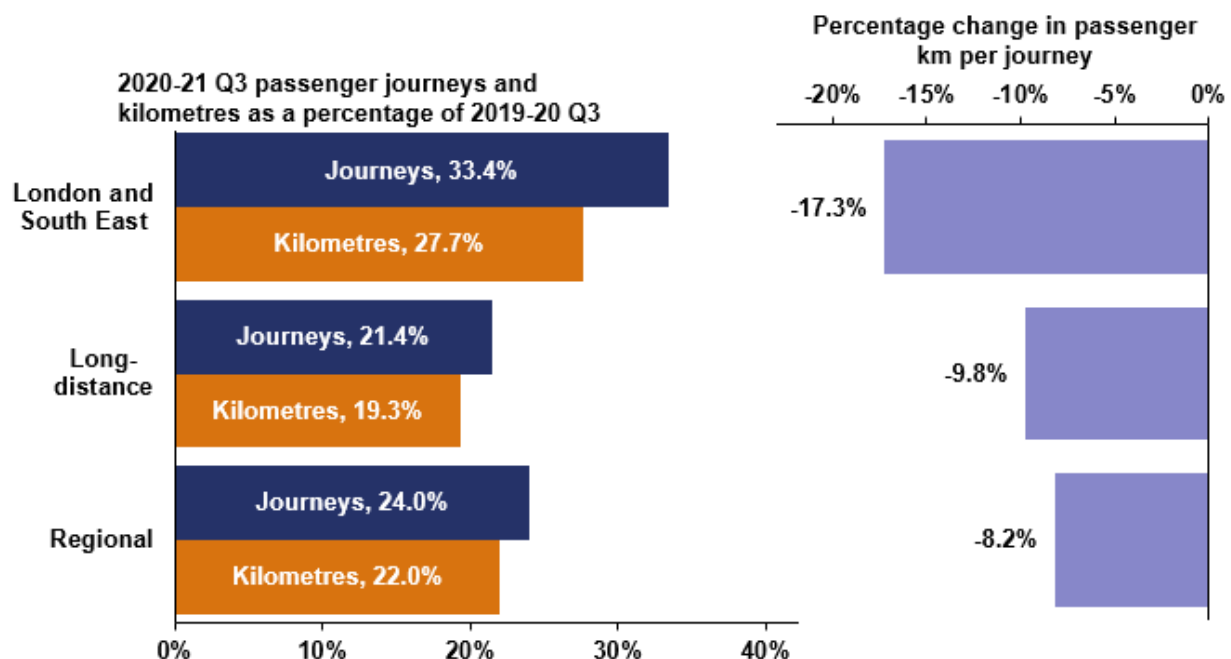
Passenger kilometres by sector and operator

A total of 4.1 billion passenger kilometres were recorded in Great Britain in 2020-21 Q3. This equates to 23.7% of the 17.5 billion kilometres in 2019-20 Q3. Passenger kilometres per journey fell from 37.8 in 2019-20 Q3 to 29.6 in 2020-21 Q3.

As with passenger journeys, the London and South East sector recorded the most passenger kilometres in both absolute and relative terms. The 2.2 billion kilometres recorded in 2020-21 Q3 equates to 27.7% of the 8.0 billion kilometres recorded in 2019-20 Q3. The Long-distance sector had 1.1 billion kilometres this quarter (19.3% of the 5.7 billion in 2019-20 Q3), while the Regional sector recorded 0.8 billion kilometres in 2020-21 Q3 (22.0% of the 3.6 billion kilometres in 2019-20 Q3).

The London and South East sector recorded relatively more passenger journeys (33.4% of 2019-20 Q3) than kilometres (27.7%) in 2020-21 Q3. Consequently, passenger kilometres per journey in the sector fell from 25.4 to 21.0, a fall of 17.3%. Kilometres per journey in the Long-distance sector decreased from 150 to 136, a decrease of 9.8%, while in the Regional sector they decreased from 33.2 in 2019-20 Q3 to 30.5 in 2020-21 Q3, a decrease of 8.2%.

Figure 2.1: Passenger journeys and kilometres by sector, 2020-21 Q3 as a percentage of 2019-20 Q3, and percentage change in passenger kilometres per journey (Tables 1221, 1231)

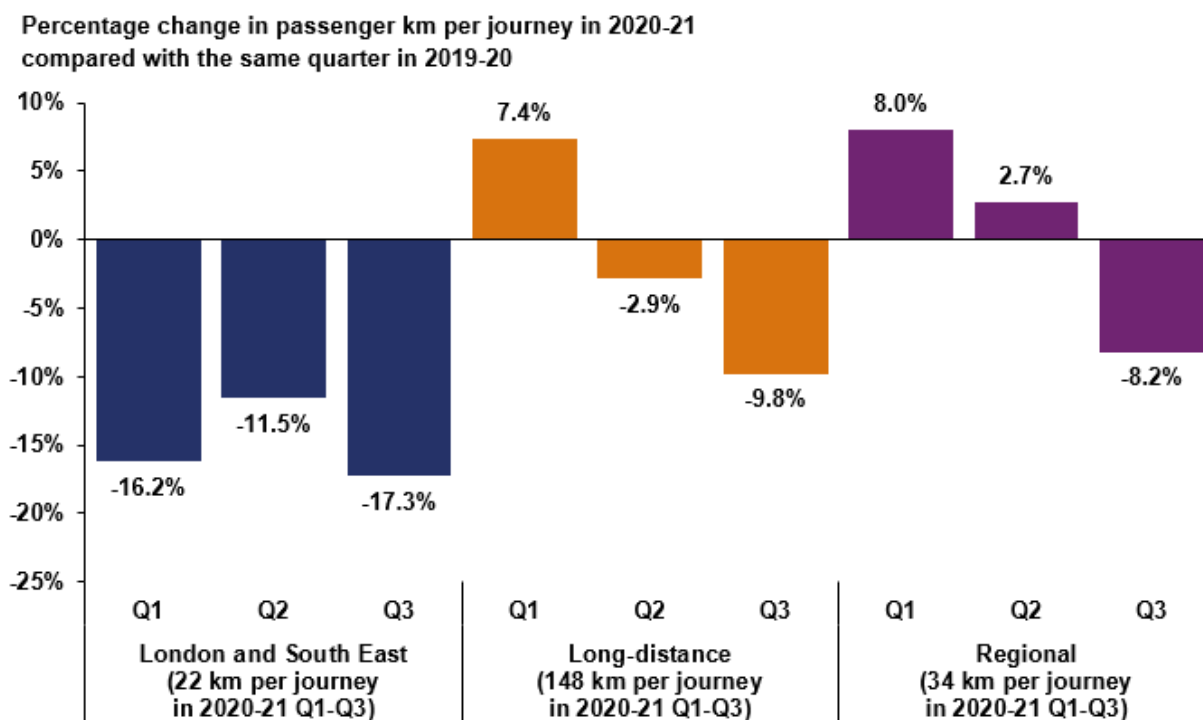


For the three franchised sectors, Figure 2.2 shows the change in average journey length (passenger kilometres per journey) during the first three quarters of 2020-21. In 2020-21 Q1, the London and South East sector recorded a 16.2% fall in average journey length. In contrast, the Long-distance (up 7.4%) and Regional (up 8.0%) sectors, recorded an increase in average journey lengths in 2020-21 Q1. As usage increased in 2020-21 Q2, all three sectors recorded average journey lengths closer to those recorded a year earlier.

Despite recording a higher relative usage in 2020-21 Q3, the average journey length in the London and South East sector fell more this quarter than it did in 2020-21 Q2. The fall of 17.3% was greater than the fall of 16.2% recorded in 2020-21 Q1 when usage was much lower. The Long-distance sector recorded a 9.8% fall in average journey length this quarter, whilst the Regional sector recorded a decrease of 8.2%.

The fall in relative journey lengths in 2020-21 Q3 may have been due to commuting accounting for a greater share of journeys than in 2020-21 Q2.

Figure 2.2: Percentage change in passenger kilometres per journey in 2020-21 by sector compared with the same quarter in 2019-20 (Tables 1221, 1231)



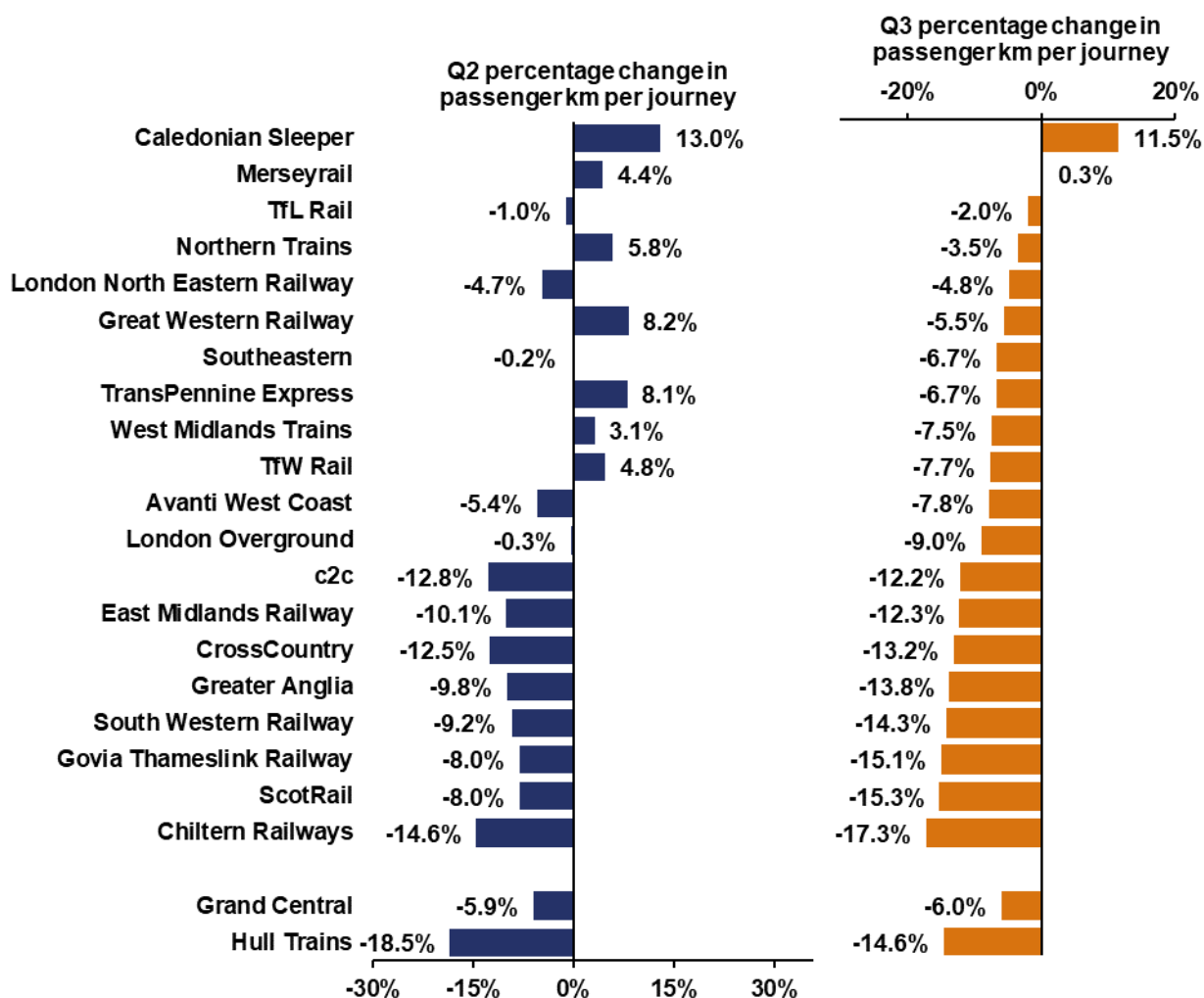
Four of the five franchised operators with the largest percentage falls in average journey length in 2020-21 Q3 were from the London and South East sector. Govia Thameslink Railway, which accounted for nearly 20% of franchised journeys this quarter, recorded a fall of 15.1%. This was nearly double the fall of 8.0% recorded in 2020-21 Q2 and more than the 14.3% decrease that occurred in 2020-21 Q1. These figures are consistent with

the fall in journeys within London being smaller than the fall in journeys into and out of London.

Caledonian Sleeper (up 11.5%) and Merseyrail (up 0.3%) were the only two operators to record increases in average journey length this quarter. Both of these operate in the Regional sector. ScotRail (down 15.3%) recorded the largest fall in average journey length in 2020-21 Q3 for operators in the Regional sector.

London North Eastern Railway (down 4.8%) recorded the smallest fall in average journey length for operators in the Long-distance sector. Great Western Railway recorded a decrease of 5.5% in 2020-21 Q3 compared with a rise of 8.2% in 2020-21 Q2 (these figures include usage in all three sectors). CrossCountry (down 13.2%) recorded the largest fall in average journey length in the Long-distance sector this quarter.

Figure 2.3: Percentage change in passenger kilometres per journey by operator compared with the equivalent quarter the year before, 2020-21 Q2 and Q3 (Tables 1223, 1233)

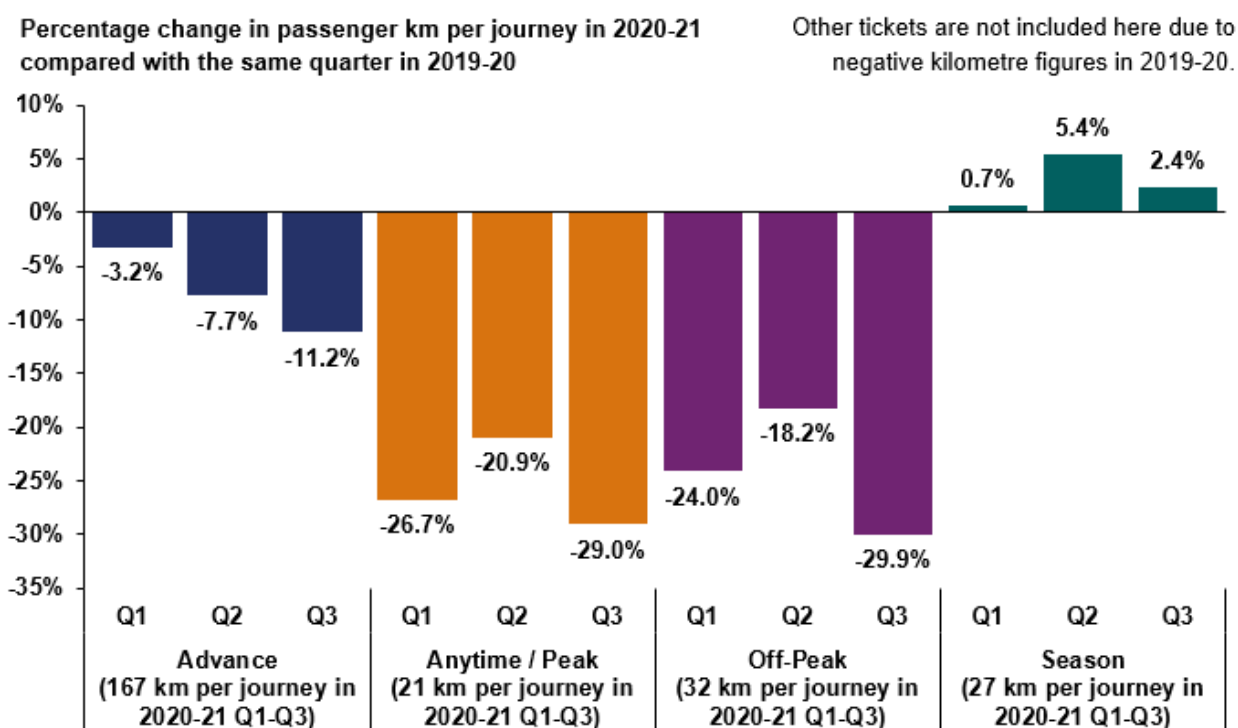


Passenger kilometres by ticket type

There were 3.1 billion franchised passenger kilometres travelled using ordinary tickets in 2020-21 Q3. This equates to 23.7% of the 13.3 billion kilometres travelled on such tickets in 2019-20 Q3 and represents a 6.5pp decrease in relative usage from Q2. Season tickets accounted for 975 million franchised passenger kilometres in 2020-21 Q3. This gives a relative usage of 24.0%, an increase of 8.0pp on last quarter. Journeys made on season tickets averaged 26.8 kilometres in 2020-21 Q3, which was up 2.4% on 2019-20 Q3. This was lower than the 5.4% increase recorded in 2020-21 Q2 but still higher than the 0.7% increase recorded in 2020-21 Q1.

The three ordinary ticket types for which comparisons are possible (other tickets cannot be compared due to negative values in the kilometre data) all recorded a decrease in average journey distance this quarter. Furthermore, the decreases in 2020-21 Q3 were all larger than the decreases recorded in 2020-21 Q1 and Q2. Journeys made on advance tickets in 2020-21 Q3 averaged 160 kilometres in length. This was down 11.2% compared with 2019-20 Q3. Anytime/peak and off-peak tickets have recorded larger percentage decreases in average journey length. Whilst both ticket types recorded smaller decreases in 2020-21 Q2 compared with 2020-21 Q1, this was reversed in 2020-21 Q3. Journeys made on anytime/peak tickets in 2020-21 Q3 averaged 19.3 kilometres in length. This was down 29.0% on 2019-20 Q3. Journeys made on off-peak tickets averaged 28.6 kilometres this quarter. This was down 29.9% compared with 2019-20 Q3.

Figure 2.4: Percentage change in passenger kilometres per journey in 2020-21 by ticket type compared with the same quarter in 2019-20 (Tables 1222, 1232)



3. Passenger revenue

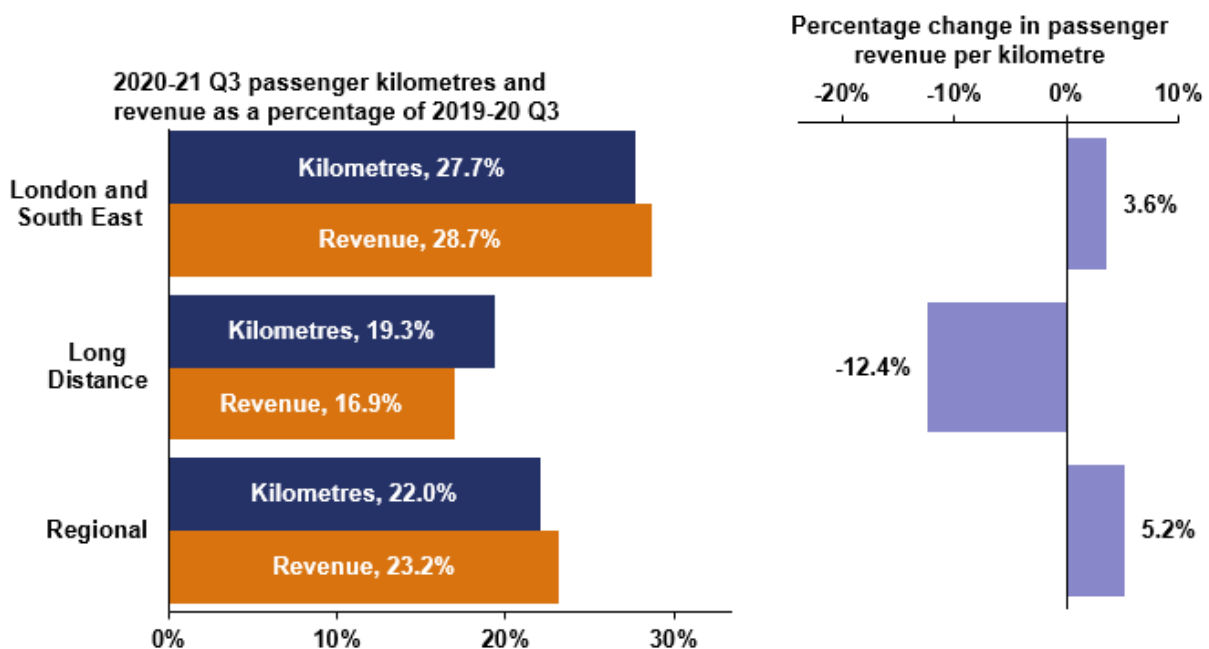
Passenger revenue by sector

Total passenger revenue in Great Britain was £641 million in 2020-21 Q3. This equates to 23.8% of the £2.7 billion in 2019-20 Q3. Franchised passenger revenue per journey fell from £5.80 in 2019-20 Q3 to £4.57 in 2020-21 Q3. This was mostly due to a decrease in average journey length.

Franchised passenger revenue per kilometre in Great Britain was 15.5p in 2020-21 Q3, which was up from 15.4p in 2019-20 Q3. The Regional sector generated 12.8p for every passenger kilometre in 2020-21 Q3. This was up 5.2% compared with 2019-20 Q3. The London and South East sector recorded 17.3p per passenger kilometre this quarter. This was up 3.6% compared with 2019-20 Q3.

The Long-distance sector generated less revenue per passenger kilometre in 2020-21 Q3 compared with the same quarter a year earlier. The 13.8p per kilometre in 2020-21 Q3 was down 12.4% compared with 2019-20 Q3.

Figure 3.1: Passenger kilometres and revenue by sector, 2020-21 Q3 as a percentage of 2019-20 Q3, and percentage change in passenger kilometres per journey (Tables 1211, 1231)



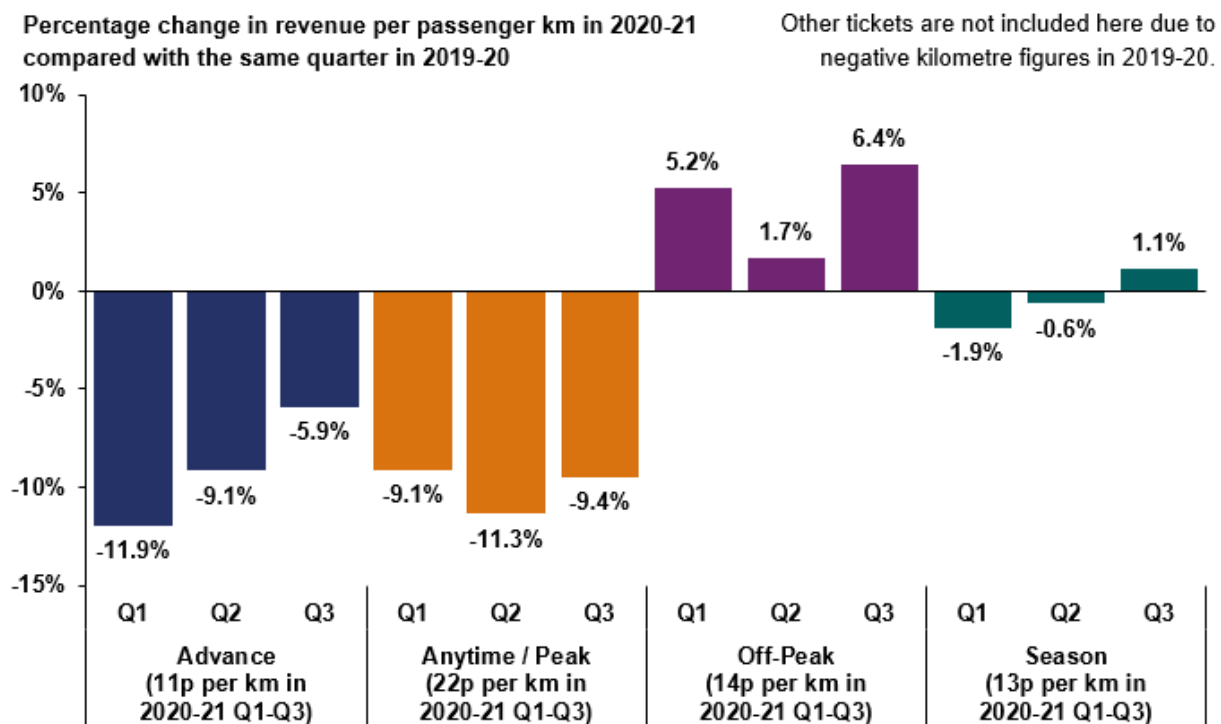
Passenger revenue by ticket type

Ordinary tickets accounted for £508 million of franchised passenger revenue in 2020-21 Q3. This equates to 23.7% of the £2.1 billion generated on such tickets in 2019-20 Q3 and represents a 5.0pp decrease in relative earnings from Q2. Season tickets accounted for £130 million of franchised passenger revenue in 2020-21 Q3. This gives relative earnings of 24.2%, an increase of 8.4pp on last quarter.

Season tickets generated 13.4 pence per passenger kilometre in 2020-21 Q3; which was up 1.1% on the 13.2 pence recorded in 2019-20 Q3. Season ticket journeys had generated slightly less revenue per kilometre in the first two quarters of 2020-21 compared with the same time in 2019-20. Off-peak tickets generated 6.4% more revenue per passenger kilometre in 2020-21 Q3 compared with 2019-20 Q3. This higher than the increases recorded in both 2020-21 Q1 (5.2%) and 2020-21 Q2 (1.7%).

Anytime/peak tickets continue to generate substantially less revenue per franchised passenger kilometre compared with the same quarter last year. Anytime/peak tickets generated 9.4% less revenue per passenger kilometre in 2020-21 Q3 compared with 2019-20 Q3. This was a smaller decrease compared with 2020-21 Q2 (11.3%), but still greater than the decrease in 2020-21 Q1 (9.1%). Advance tickets recorded 5.9% less revenue per passenger kilometre in 2020-21 Q3 compared with 2019-20 Q3. This was lower than the fall of 9.1% recorded in 2020-21 Q2. These decreases have contributed to the decline in revenue per passenger kilometre in the Long-distance sector.

Figure 3.2: Percentage change in passenger revenue per kilometre in 2020-21 by ticket type compared with the same quarter in 2019-20 (Tables 1212, 1232)

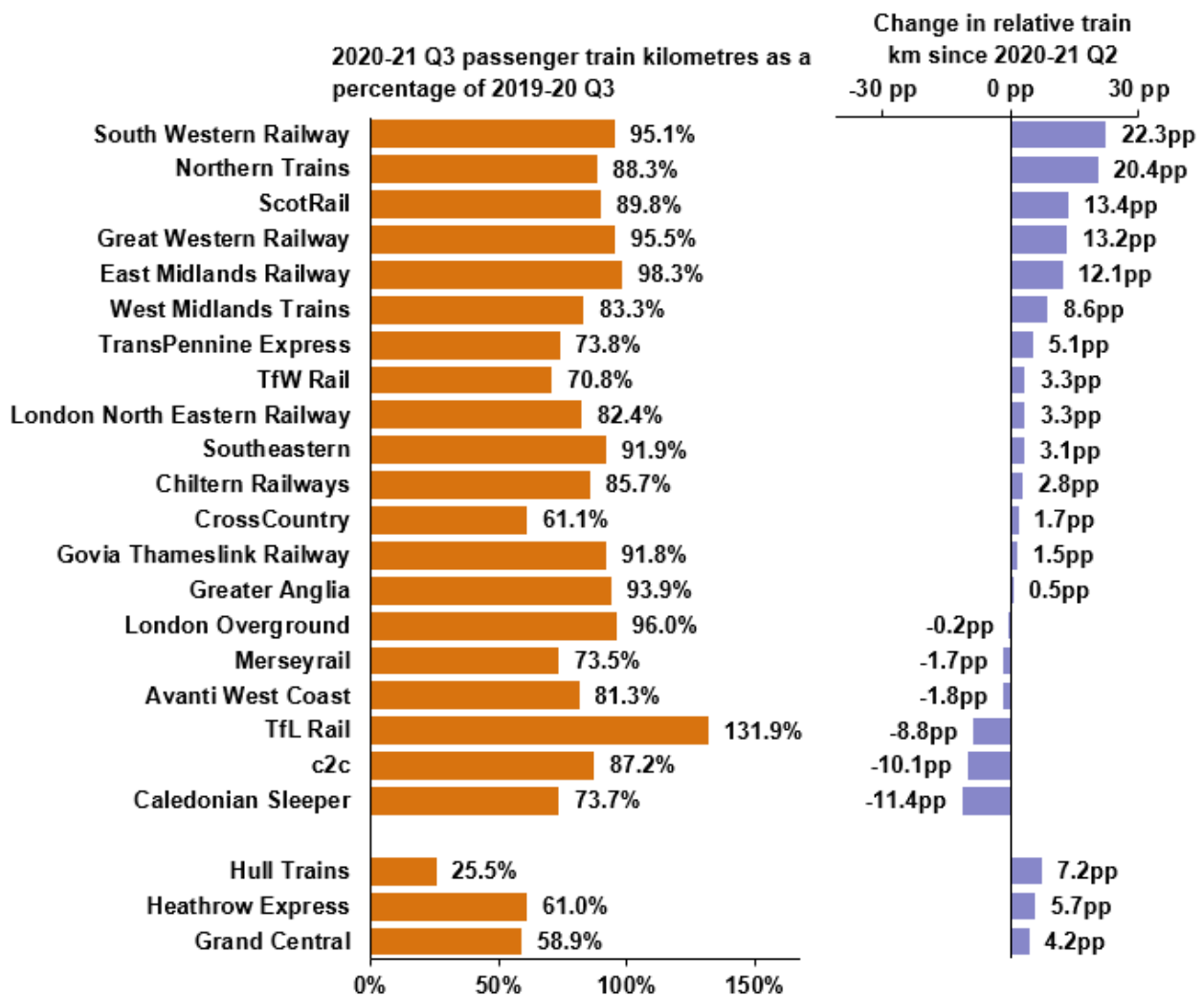


4. Passenger train kilometres

Passenger train kilometres fell to 84 million in 2020-21 Q1 following the [introduction of a reduced timetable](#) at the start of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. This equated to 60.4% of the train kilometres operated in 2019-20 Q1. Services have since increased. A total of 118 million train kilometres were recorded in 2020-21 Q3, 86.8% of the 136 million recorded in 2019-20 Q3.

TfL Rail recorded 1.49 million train kilometres this quarter, which was up 31.9% compared with 2019-20 Q3. This can be attributed to the [transfer of London Paddington to Reading stopping services to TfL Rail from Great Western Railway on 15 December 2019](#). For the other franchised operators, train kilometres as a proportion of 2019-20 Q3 ranged from 98.3% for East Midlands Railway to 61.1% for CrossCountry.

Figure 4.1: Passenger train kilometres by operator in 2020-21 Q3 as a percentage of journeys in 2019-20 Q3 and the percentage point change in relative train kilometres since 2020-21 Q2 (Table 1243)



5. Annexes

Annex 1 – Definitions

- **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. For example, a journey from Leicester to Manchester would be classed as two journeys due to the need to change trains. This differs from the definition used in the [Regional Rail Usage](#) statistical release, which would class this example as one journey.
- **Passenger kilometres** are calculated by multiplying the number of passenger journeys on a particular flow by the number of corresponding track kilometres between stations.
- **Passenger revenue** statistics include all ticket revenue and miscellaneous charges associated with passenger travel on national railways.
- **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). It replaced timetabled train kilometres in 2015-16 Q3. Train kilometres run on other infrastructure, such as London Overground, are not included. TABS still covers the Core Valley Lines, which were [transferred to Amey Keolis Limited \(AKIL\) on 28 March 2020](#), so data remain comparable over time.
- The data presented in this release are for **mainline operators** in Great Britain. The data do **not** include Eurostar, London Underground, light rail, heritage and charter services. **Franchised operators** run services as part of contracts awarded by government. Data for such operators are also presented for three **sectors**:
 - **London and South East** – based on the British Rail Network South East services, this sector includes commuter trains in the London area and inter-urban services in South East England. It extends as far west as Bristol and Exeter (both South Western Railway) and as far northwest as Kidderminster (Chiltern Railways). All Greater Anglia services are included in this sector for passenger rail usage purposes. Southeastern high speed services are included too.
 - **Long-distance** – based on the British Rail InterCity services, this sector covers Long-distance services on the East Coast, West Coast, Midland, and Great Western mainlines. CrossCountry services are also included.

- **Regional** – based on the British Rail Regional Railways services, this sector covers other services. This includes both the ScotRail and TfW Rail¹ franchises. TransPennine Express and Caledonian Sleeper are included in this sector for passenger rail usage purposes.
- **Non-franchised (open access) operators** – licenced by the ORR to run services on specific routes. The datasets that accompany this publication contain data for such operators: **Grand Central**, **Heathrow Express** (passenger train kilometres only), **Hull Trains**, and **Wrexham & Shropshire** (ceased trading 28 January 2011).
- **Ticket types:**
 - **Advance** (ordinary ticket) – single one-way tickets for a specific train. They are usually cheaper than other ticket types.
 - **Anytime/peak** (ordinary ticket) – fully flexible tickets that can be used on most trains and at most times. They are usually more expensive.
 - **Off-Peak** (ordinary ticket) – cheaper than anytime fares, but cannot be used during busier times of day.
 - **Other** (ordinary ticket) – includes usage on regional products, rover tickets, some group tickets, and package products (e.g. includes accommodation and/or onward travel with other forms of transport). Non-travel income (e.g. car parking) is also included in this category for passenger revenue, as too are **refunds**, which can result in this category showing negative numbers.
 - **Season** – allow unlimited travel between two locations for a specified period (from a week up to a year). Such tickets are generally cheaper than daily return tickets for those travelling more than three times a week. The number of journeys estimated for a season ticket varies by the length of the period. For example, 480 journeys are assumed to have been made for each annual season ticket sold.

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic necessitated the use of an alternative methodology for estimating usage with season tickets in 2020-21. This is described on the next page.

Further information on the operators in each of the three sectors as well as the journey factors for the main season tickets can be found in the quality and methodology report on the [passenger rail usage page](#).

¹ Includes journeys made on TfW Rail services operated on the Core Valley Lines.

Annex 2 – Quality and methodology

Primary data source – LENNON system

Most of the data contained within this statistical release are sourced from the rail industry's LENNON (Latest Earnings Networked Nationally Over Night) ticketing and revenue system. The statistics presented here use the post-allocation dataset within LENNON that distributes passenger journeys, kilometres and revenue to the train operators. Where travel includes one or more changes of train, each train used is counted as one journey. This is different to [Regional rail usage](#) that uses the pre-allocation dataset. For that release, 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 in this Passenger Rail Usage statistical release.

LENNON is primarily an accounting tool, which inevitably faces limitations for estimating usage precisely. Due to the way LENNON is structured and updated, it is possible that errors are made by users when inputting data into the system. Whilst we make every effort to quality assure the data we are using to estimate usage, we are unable to validate each and every entry in LENNON due to the size and complexity of the dataset. For further information on the limitations of the data, please see the [Passenger rail usage quality and methodology report](#).

Impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic

In response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the UK government issued [advice against all unnecessary travel was announced on 16 March 2020](#), with [further guidance on 'staying at home' on 23 March 2020 \('lockdown'\)](#). This in turn resulted in a large number of refund applications for both ordinary and season tickets. The LENNON system does not remove existing records when a refund is processed. Instead, a negative item of usage is created to offset the original usage. These records are categorised in the "other" ticket category.

When a monthly or annual season ticket is purchased, the estimated usage is distributed in the post-allocation dataset over the period for which the ticket is valid. For example, an annual season ticket purchased on 6 January 2020 will contribute usage through to 5 January 2021. Refunds for such season tickets are distributed in LENNON in the same way as the original season ticket. However, they are only done so from the point at which the refund is issued. Moreover, there will be unused tickets for which refunds were not claimed.

Given that the coronavirus pandemic affected usage towards only the end of the quarter, no changes were made to the methodology for the [2019-20 Q4 passenger rail usage release](#) with an acknowledgment that usage was likely to have been slightly overstated due to many expected refunds having not been issued. However, had the regular

methodology been used in its entirety in 2020-21, a more substantial overestimate of usage for each quarter would have resulted. The estimates for usage with advance, anytime, and off-peak tickets were made in the usual way as such tickets are very likely to have been purchased within 2020-21. These were supplemented with estimates for usage with season and other tickets using alternative methodologies.

For both season tickets and other tickets there is more uncertainty around the estimates in 2020-21 compared with previous years. The number of journeys using season tickets was estimated using a combination of pre-allocation (sales) data, which attributes all expected usage to the point of purchase, and weekly season ticket usage in the post-allocation data, which splits usage by train operator. The methodology was refined for the 2020-21 Q3 release to provide a better estimate of the distribution of journeys made with season tickets between train operators and sectors. The new methodology was applied to 2020-21 Q1 and Q2 with the estimates revised (see below for details).

Usage with other ticket types includes an estimate for refunds that were not related to tickets purchased before the start of the pandemic. This was done by assessing refund rates against train service reliability. It should be noted that the refund estimates for **2020-21 Q3** are likely to underestimate the actual extent to which purchased tickets were **not** used. The increase in the prevalence of the coronavirus during the quarter resulted in more restrictions on movement around Britain. In particular, plans to allow travel during the Christmas holiday were scaled back or abandoned completely. Even where refunds were made available, such as [in England for passengers who had booked rail travel during the Christmas travel window](#), the limitations of the LENNON system mean that it was not possible to quantify the level of refunds due to new travel restrictions.

Other data sources

The passenger journey and kilometre data from LENNON are supplemented by data provided directly to the ORR from five train operators as LENNON does not contain all journeys and associated passenger kilometres. These include journeys made on tickets such as operator specific tickets and PTE multi-modal tickets. Most of the revenue associated with such journeys is captured by the LENNON system.

The estimates for London Overground passenger journeys and kilometres are adjusted to align with data captured by the operator's train load weight system.

Data for the actual passenger train kilometres are sourced from Network Rail's Track Access Billing System (TABS).

Revisions

Revisions have been made to 2020-21 Q1 and Q2 estimates for usage among train operators and sectors. This was the result of an improvement to the methodology for

distributing season ticket usage by operator and sector. This change in methodology only applies to the usage estimates for 2020-21. The total number of passenger journeys and associated kilometres and revenue are not affected by the revision. Figures for usage by ticket type are also unaffected.

The table below shows the percentage change in the three sectors for the three metrics. It also shows the three largest percentage increases and decreases among the train operators for passenger journeys and kilometres. The revisions also affect the figures in Table 1210 (revenue per passenger kilometres and per passenger journey); however, the changes are negligible as the table shows data for all franchised operators.

Metric and Table	2020-21 Q1: change due to revision	2020-21 Q2: change due to revision
Passenger journeys – Table 1221 Table 1223	London and South East: -1.7% Long-distance: +3.5% Regional: +7.4% Merseyrail: +39.7% West Midlands Trains: +20.8% Greater Anglia: +16.2% TfL Rail: -7.4% London Overground: -7.1% TfW Rail: -6.7%	London and South East: -1.0% Long-distance: +1.2% Regional: +2.8% Merseyrail: +9.7% West Midlands Trains: +8.0% Northern Trains: +5.6% TfL Rail: -4.0% London Overground: -3.5% TfW Rail: -1.9%
Passenger kilometres – Table 1231 Table 1233	London and South East: -0.7% Long-distance: +0.3% Regional: +1.5% Merseyrail: +35.6% Greater Anglia: +16.3% West Midlands Trains: +7.4% London Overground: -18.4% TfL Rail: -12.9% TfW Rail: -6.1%	London and South East: -0.6% Long-distance: +0.2% Regional: +1.1% Merseyrail: +10.0% Greater Anglia: +6.7% West Midlands Trains: +4.2% London Overground: -13.3% TfL Rail: -8.7% TfW Rail: -2.3%
Passenger revenue – Table 1211	London and South East: +0.1% Long-distance: 0.0% Regional: -0.3%	London and South East: -0.1% Long-distance: +0.1% Regional: +0.1%

Further details on historic revisions can be found in the [Revisions log](#).

Further information on data sources, quality and the methodology used to calculate the data within this release can be found in the [Passenger rail usage quality and methodology report](#).

Annex 3 – List of data tables associated with this release and other related statistics

Data tables

All data tables can be accessed on the [ORR data portal](#) free of charge in OpenDocument Spreadsheet (.ods) format. We can also provide data in csv format on request.

All tables associated with this release can be found under the Data tables heading at the bottom of the [Passenger rail usage page](#).

Passenger journeys

- Passenger journeys (franchised only) - annual – Table 1220
- Passenger journeys by sector - quarterly – Table 1221
- Passenger journeys by ticket type - quarterly – Table 1222
- Passenger journeys by operator - quarterly – Table 1223

Passenger kilometres

- Passenger kilometres (franchised only) - annual – Table 1230
- Passenger kilometres by sector - quarterly – Table 1231
- Passenger kilometres by ticket type - quarterly – Table 1232
- Passenger kilometres by operator - quarterly – Table 1233

Passenger revenue

- Passenger revenue by sector - quarterly – Table 1211
- Passenger revenue by ticket type - quarterly – Table 1212
- Revenue per passenger kilometre and per passenger journey (franchised only) - quarterly – Table 1210

Passenger train kilometres

- Passenger train kilometres by operator - quarterly – Table 1243

Other related data

The [Department for Transport \(DfT\)](#) also publishes some [rail statistics](#). For example, [rail passenger numbers and overcrowding on weekdays in major cities](#).

The [DfT](#) also publishes [statistics on public transport](#) including [statistics on the usage of the Channel Tunnel](#).

For more information on COVID-19 impacts see:

- [Transport use during the COVID-19 pandemic \(Department for Transport\)](#)
- [All Change? Travel tracker \(Department for Transport\)](#)
- [Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain \(Office for National Statistics\)](#)
- [Public transport journeys by type of transport \(Transport for London\)](#)

European comparisons

Comparisons with railways in the rest of Europe are available [between 1990 and 2018 for passenger kilometres](#) and [between April 2018 and September 2020 for passenger journeys](#).

Annex 4 – ORR’s statistical publications

Statistical Releases

This publication is part of ORR’s [National Statistics](#) accredited releases, which consist of seven annual publications: **Estimates of Station Usage; Rail Industry Finance (UK); Rail Fares Index; Rail Safety Statistics; Rail Infrastructure and Assets; Rail Emissions; Regional Rail Usage**; and four quarterly publications: **Passenger Rail Performance; Freight Rail Usage and Performance; Passenger Rail Usage; Passenger Rail Service Complaints**.

In addition, ORR also publishes a number of Official Statistics, which consist of three annual publications: **Train Operating Company Key Statistics; Rail Statistics Compendium; Occupational Health**; and four quarterly publications: **Signals passed at danger (SPADS); Delay Compensation Claims; Disabled Person’s Railcard (DPRC); Passenger assistance**.

All the above publications are available on the [ORR data portal](#) along with a list of [publication dates](#) for the next 12 months.

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**.

The majority of these [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. Estimates of Station Usage statistics were assessed in 2020.

For more information on how we adhere to the Code please see our [compliance statements](#). For more details or to provide feedback, please contact the Statistics Head of Profession (Lyndsey Melbourne) at rail.stats@orr.gov.uk.



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