

Freight rail usage and performance

April to June 2026

22 September 2026

Background:

This quarterly statistical release contains information on the usage and performance of rail freight in Great Britain.

It also contains more detailed information by freight operator.

Numbers presented in this release are rounded.

Sources: Network Rail, freight operators, Department for Transport

Latest quarter: 1 April to 30 June 2026

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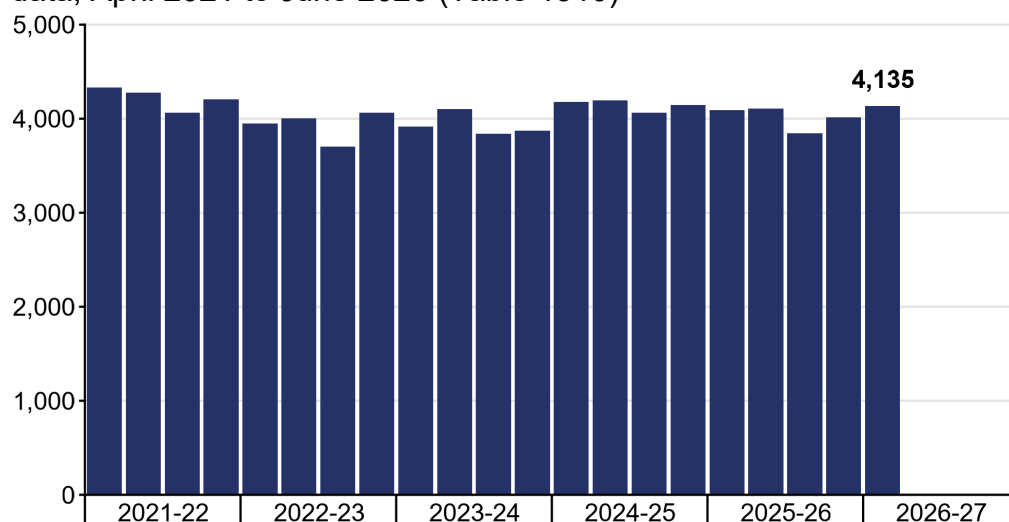
Next publication:

15 December 2026

In the latest quarter (April to June 2026), total **freight moved** was **4,135 million net tonne kilometres**. This was up 1% compared with the same quarter last year. Of this, by commodity, intermodal maritime had the largest impact on the overall increase.

Figure 1 Freight moved increased compared with the same quarter the previous year

Freight moved (million net tonne kilometres), Great Britain, quarterly data, April 2021 to June 2026 (Table 1310)



Total **freight lifted** was **17.6 million tonnes** in the latest quarter, a decrease of 1% compared with the same quarter in the previous year.

Freight cancellations was **1.1%** in the latest quarter. This was 0.1 percentage points higher (i.e. worse) than the same quarter in the previous year.

We are proposing changes to this publication. Details can be found on page 2. For feedback or questions, please email rail.stats@orr.gov.uk.

All data tables, a quality and methodology report and an interactive dashboard associated with this release are published on the [Freight rail usage and performance page](#) on the ORR data portal.

Context

Proposed changes to these statistics

We propose the following changes to the freight rail usage and performance statistics from the Quarter 2 (July to September 2026) publication onwards:

- Remove content relating to **freight delay per 100 train kilometres**. There has been a shift away from the use of freight delay per 100 train kilometres in the rail industry, with freight cancellations considered the primary measure of freight performance. The existing data table on freight delay per 100 train kilometres (Table 1325) has a low number of downloads. We are therefore proposing to remove this table from the data portal and exclude this section in future statistical releases.
- Remove Table 1320: Freight Delivery Metric and Table 1324: Freight Delivery Metric by Region (FDM-R) – updates to these tables were ceased after March 2024.

Please provide any feedback on this proposal by contacting us at rail.stats@orr.gov.uk by 31 October 2026.

In the previous quarterly release, we proposed to remove content relating to **freight cancellations and lateness (FCaL)** from this publication. Following user feedback, we have retained this within the freight cancellations section of this release.

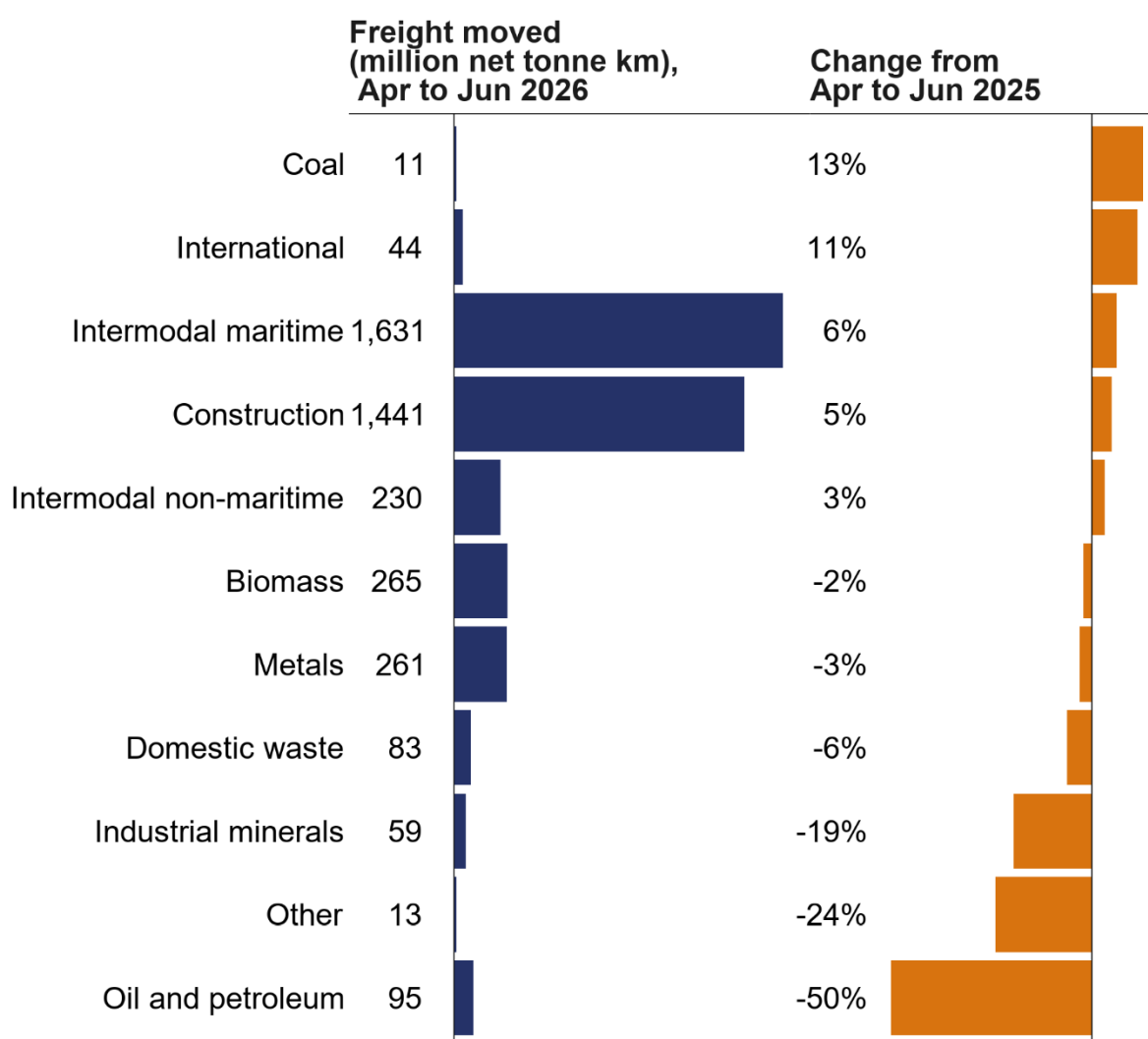
1. Freight moved

Freight moved measures the amount of freight moved on the railway network, taking into account the weight of the load and the distance carried, measured in net tonne kilometres.

In the latest quarter, total freight moved was 4,135 million net tonne kilometres. This was an increase of 1% compared with the same quarter in the previous year.

Figure 1.1 Intermodal maritime and construction both increased this quarter

Freight moved (million net tonne kilometres) by commodity, Great Britain, April to June 2026 and percentage change (rounded) from April to June 2025 (Table 1310)



Freight moved increased for five commodities compared with the same quarter in the previous year. Of this, intermodal maritime (up 6%) had the largest impact on the overall increase. This was also the highest April to June quarter for intermodal maritime freight since 2010. This can be attributed in part to the high load utilisation of services at the

London Gateway deep sea container port due to the [terminal's constraints on total train numbers](#).

There was also a notable increase in the movement of construction freight (up 5%). This was the highest April to June quarter since the start of the time series in 1998. This reflects the [continued building of HS2](#) and the [construction of Sizewell C nuclear power station](#). There was increased urban residential and commercial activity in the Midlands and North West indicative of the reported [increase in construction sector confidence](#).

Freight moved decreased for six commodities compared with the same quarter in the previous year. This includes oil and petroleum (down 50%) which had the largest percentage reduction. This follows the [closure of the Lindsey Oil Refinery](#) which has led to the cessation of more freight services related to this commodity. As a result, this was the lowest quarter for oil and petroleum since the time series began.

More information on the commodity groups can be found in the [Freight quality and methodology report](#).

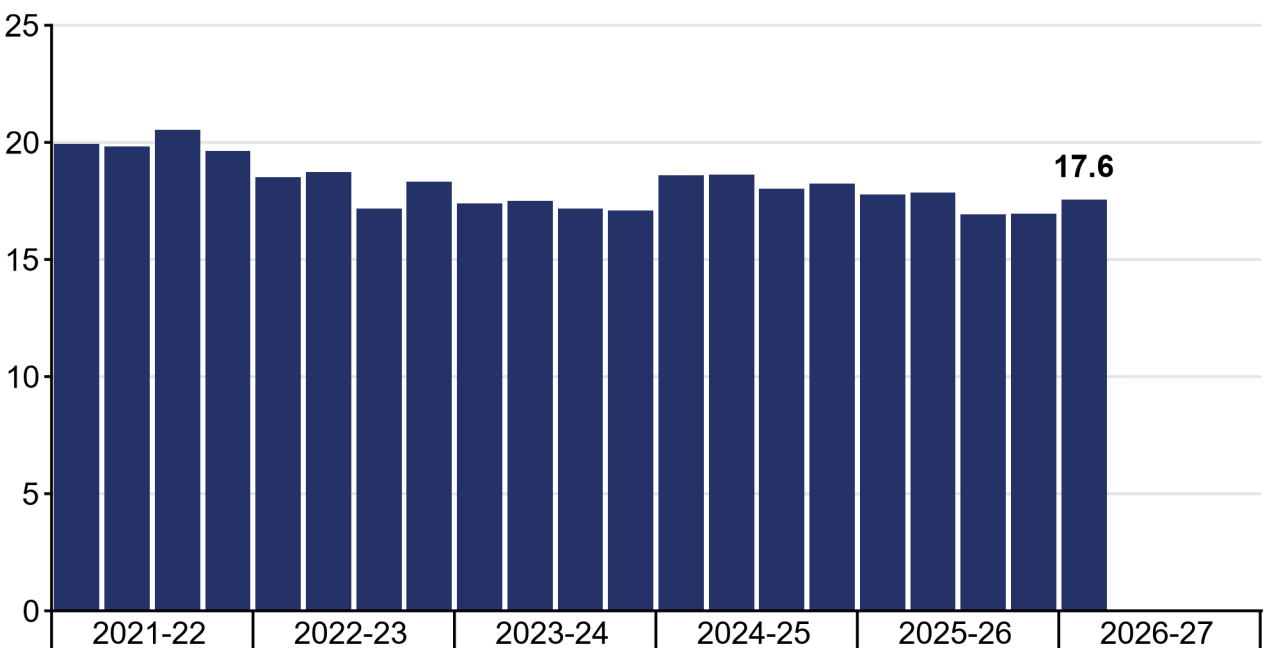
2. Freight lifted

Freight lifted is the mass of goods carried on the rail network measured in tonnes, excluding the weight of the locomotives and wagons.

The total amount of freight lifted in the latest quarter was 17.6 million tonnes. This was down 1% compared with the same quarter in the previous year.

Figure 2.1 Freight lifted was the lowest April to June quarter since 2023

Freight lifted (million tonnes), Great Britain, quarterly data, April 2021 to June 2026 (Table 1315)



Of total freight lifted, 1.1 million tonnes was coal, which was down 0.1% compared with the same quarter in the previous year. The remaining 16.5 million tonnes was other commodities. This was down 1% compared with the previous year.

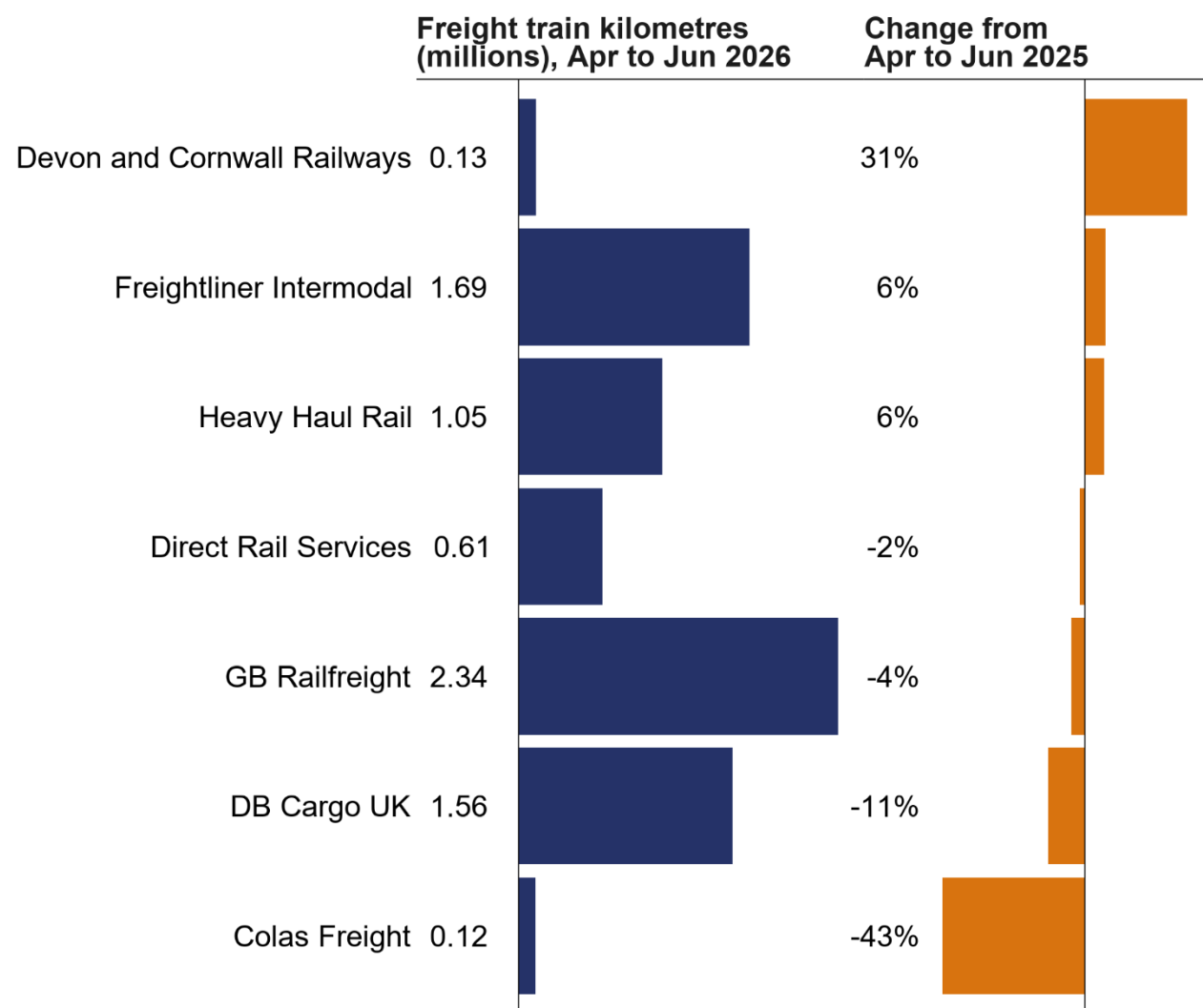
3. Freight train and vehicle kilometres

Freight train kilometres is the actual kilometres travelled by freight operators on all mainline infrastructure, terminals and yards.

In the latest quarter, freight operators recorded 7.5 million train kilometres. This was down 3% compared with the same quarter in the previous year. It was the second lowest April to June quarter since the start of the time series in 2010 (the lowest was during the pandemic in 2020).

Figure 3.1 Colas Freight had the largest percentage decrease in train kilometres compared with the previous year

Freight train kilometres (millions) by operator, Great Britain, April to June 2026 and percentage change (rounded) from April to June 2025 (Table 1333)

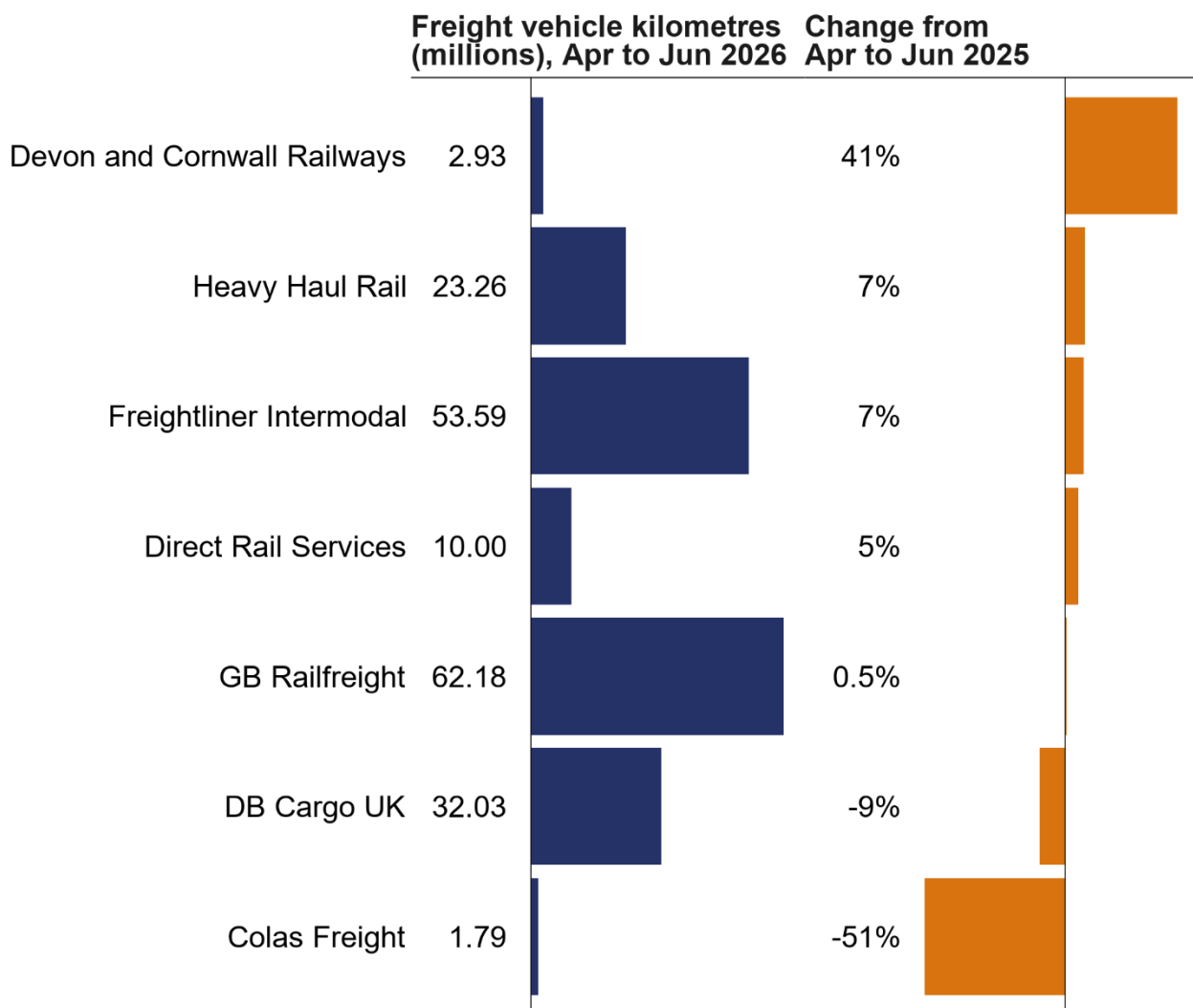


Freight vehicle kilometres is the actual vehicle kilometres travelled by freight operators on all mainline infrastructure, terminals and yards. This is calculated by multiplying the number of rail vehicles (e.g. coaches) by the distance travelled.

A total of 185.8 million freight vehicle kilometres was recorded in the latest quarter. This was up 1% compared with the same quarter in the previous year.

Figure 3.2 Freight vehicle kilometres increased for most operators compared with the previous year

Freight vehicle kilometres (millions) by operator, Great Britain, April to June 2026 and percentage change (rounded) from April to June 2025 (Table 1343)



In the latest quarter, the freight operator with the largest percentage increase in train and vehicle kilometres was Devon and Cornwall Railways. It had the highest train and vehicle kilometres of any quarter since the time series began in 2010. There was also an increase in both train and vehicle kilometres for Freightliner Intermodal and Heavy Haul Rail. For all these operators, the increase in vehicle kilometres was larger than in train kilometres,

which suggests there were more vehicles (i.e. longer trains) in the latest quarter compared with the same quarter in the previous year.

Direct Rail Services and GB Railfreight had a decrease in train kilometres, alongside an increase in vehicle kilometres. They both had the highest vehicle kilometres of any quarter since the start of the time series.

Meanwhile, freight train and vehicle kilometres decreased for Colas Freight and DB Cargo UK. This was the lowest train kilometres of any quarter recorded by DB Cargo UK since the time series began.

Data broken down by traction type (electric or diesel) is available on the [data portal](#). Table 1333 shows the breakdown for freight train kilometres and Table 1343 shows the breakdown for freight vehicle kilometres.

4. Freight market indicators

Rail freight impact on road haulage (April 2024 to March 2025 annual)

There were 5.63 million lorry journeys avoided in April 2024 to March 2025 through transporting freight by rail rather than road.

Between April 2024 to March 2025, the number of lorry kilometres which would be required to transport the volumes of freight moved by rail was 1.42 billion kilometres, a 9% increase compared with the previous year.

Rail freight market share (2024)

Figure 4.1: Rail accounted for 8% of freight moved by all transport modes

Rail freight moved market share, Great Britain, annual data, 2024 (Table 1350)

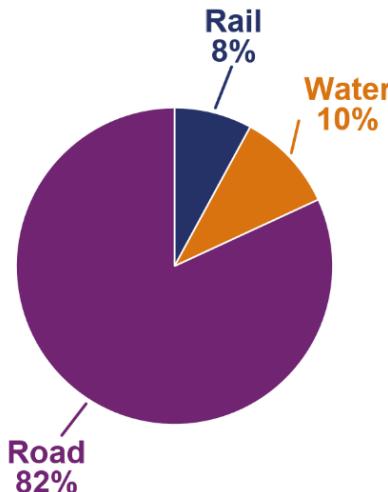
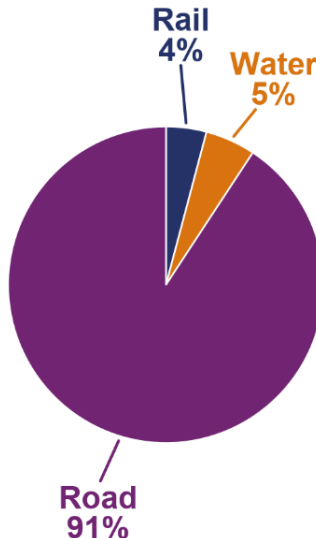


Figure 4.2: Rail accounted for 4% of freight lifted by all transport modes

Rail freight lifted market share, Great Britain, annual data, 2024 (Table 1350)



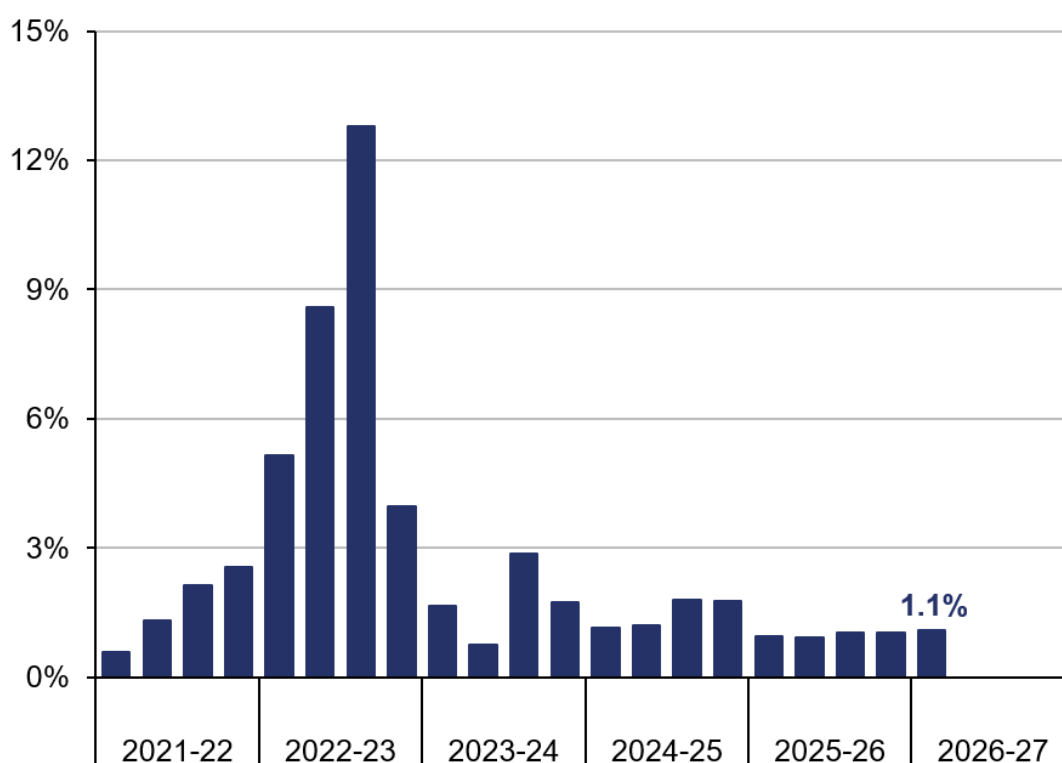
5. Freight cancellations

Freight cancellations measures the percentage of commercial freight services that are cancelled by the infrastructure manager or another operator that is not a commercial freight operator.

In the latest quarter, freight cancellations was 1.1%. This was up 0.1 percentage points (i.e. worse) compared with the same quarter in the previous year.

Figure 5.1 Freight cancellations has increased compared with the same quarter in the previous year

Freight cancellations (percentage), Great Britain, quarterly data, April 2021 to June 2026 (Table 1355)

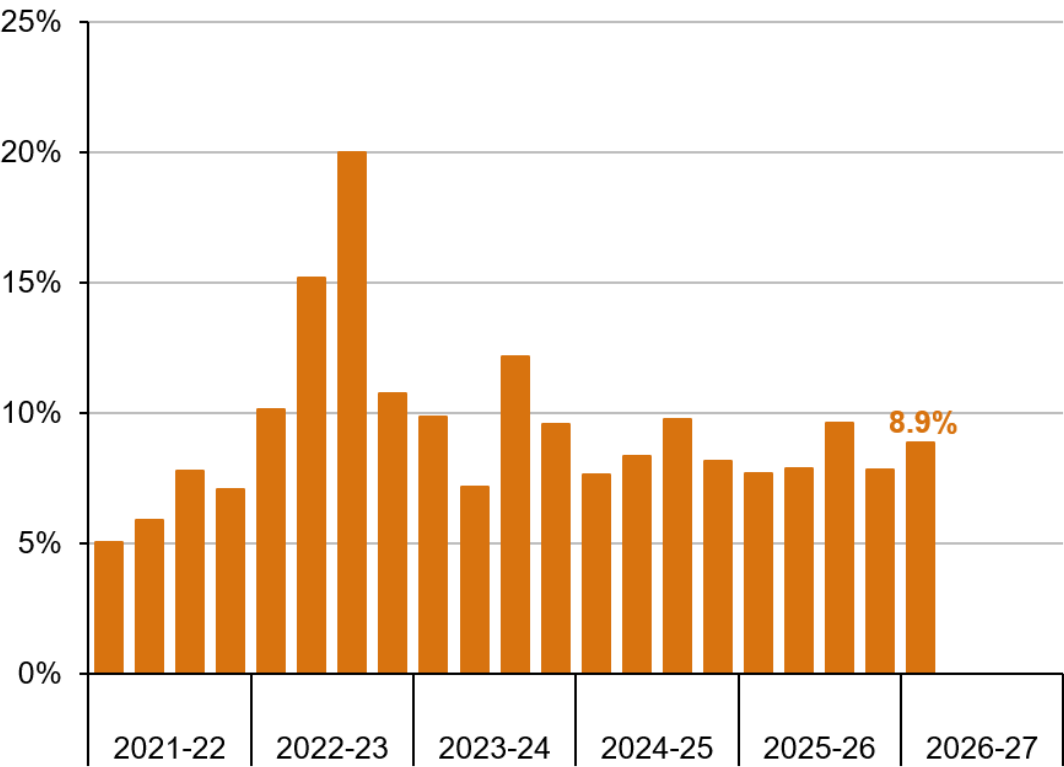


Freight cancellations and lateness (FCaL) is the percentage of commercial freight services that are either: cancelled by the infrastructure manager or another operator that is not a commercial freight operator; or arrive at their planned destination 15 minutes or more after their booked arrival time with 15 minutes or more delay caused by the infrastructure manager or another operator that is not a commercial freight operator.

In the latest quarter, the proportion of freight trains cancelled or arriving after 15 minutes was 8.9% (FCaL). This was up 1.2 percentage points (i.e. worse) compared with the same quarter in the previous year. This was the highest April to June quarter for FCaL since 2023.

Figure 5.2 Freight cancellations and lateness (FCaL) has also increased

FCaL (percentage), Great Britain, quarterly data, April 2021 to June 2026 (Table 1365)



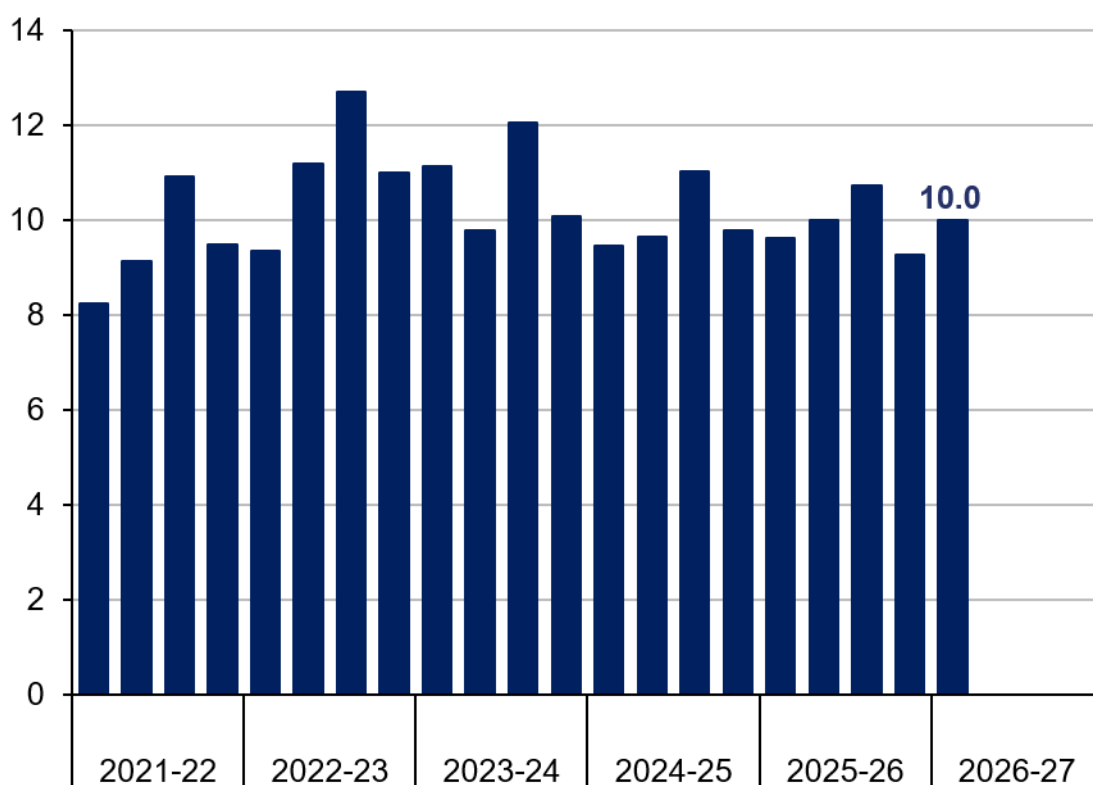
6. Freight delay per 100 train kilometres

Freight delay per 100 train kilometres is a normalised measure of delay experienced by freight operators. It is calculated from the total delay experienced by all Great Britain freight operators divided by their train mileage.

In the latest quarter, freight operators experienced 10.0 minutes of delay per 100 train kilometres. This was 4% higher (i.e. worse) than the same quarter the previous year. It was the highest April to June quarter since 2023.

Figure 6.1 Freight delay has increased compared with the same quarter in the previous year

Freight delay per 100 train kilometres (minutes), Great Britain, quarterly data, April 2021 to June 2026 (Table 1325)



7. Annexes

Annex 1 – Definitions

- **Freight moved** measures the amount of freight moved on the railway network, taking into account the weight of the load and the distance carried. It is measured in net tonne kilometres. It is based on the contracted distance, which is the number of kilometres agreed upon between Network Rail and the freight operator, regardless of whether a train is diverted onto a route with a different distance.
- **Freight lifted** is the mass of goods carried on the rail network measured in tonnes, excluding the weight of the locomotives and wagons. Unlike freight moved it takes no account of the distance travelled.
- **Freight train kilometres** is the actual kilometres travelled by freight operators on all mainline infrastructure, terminals and yards. The data in the table covers electric, diesel and all traction. Competition between freight operators means we would expect a greater level of variation in mileage from year to year than in the passenger market.
- **Freight vehicle kilometres** is the actual vehicle kilometres travelled by freight operators on all mainline infrastructure, terminals and yards. This is calculated by multiplying the number of rail vehicles (e.g. coaches) by the distance travelled. A train with a locomotive and four carriages travelling one kilometre will generate one **train kilometre** and five **vehicle kilometres**. The data in the table covers electric, diesel and all traction. Competition between freight operators means we would expect a greater level of variation in mileage from year to year than in the passenger market.
- **Freight cancellations** measures the percentage of commercial freight services that are cancelled by the infrastructure manager or another operator that is not a commercial freight operator. *A lower score indicates better performance.* **Moving annual average (MAA)** reflects the proportion of freight cancellations in the past 12 months. In the final quarter of the year (January to March), the MAA also represents the freight cancellations for the financial year.

- **Freight cancellations and lateness (FCaL)** is the percentage of commercial freight services that are *either*: cancelled by the infrastructure manager or another operator that is not a commercial freight operator; *or* arrive at their planned destination 15 minutes or more after their booked arrival time with 15 minutes or more delay caused by the infrastructure manager or another operator that is not a commercial freight operator. *A lower score indicates better performance.* **Moving annual average (MAA)** reflects the FCaL performance in the past 12 months. In the final quarter of the year (January to March), the MAA also represents the FCaL percentage for the financial year.
- **Freight delay per 100 train kilometres** is a normalised measure of delay experienced by freight operators. It is calculated from the total delay experienced by all Great Britain freight operators divided by their train mileage. Freight train mileage can fluctuate depending on demand so a normalised measure allows for comparison over time regardless of changing levels of freight traffic on the network. *A lower score indicates better performance.*

The remaining measures are updated on the data portal annually and usually included in the January to March quarter statistical release and associated data tables.

- **Freight train movements** measures the number of freight trains run on the mainline rail network. The data is sourced from Network Rail annually and covers only trains that are chargeable. Each freight train is designated into a chargeable or non-chargeable category. Non-chargeable categories include empty trains to/from depots, operators moving equipment to/from site for Network Rail engineering work and unplanned train schedules (i.e. last minute).
- Rail freight impact on road haulage is measured using two metrics:
 - **Rail freight lorry kilometres equivalent** measures the distance that road vehicles (HGVs) would need to travel to move the volumes of freight carried on rail.
 - **Avoided lorry journeys** measures the number of road vehicle trips that would need to be made to move freight carried on rail.
- **Rail freight market share** compares the volumes of freight lifted (tonnes) and freight moved (net tonne kilometres) on road (HGVs), waterways and rail. These shares are calculated using Department for Transport's annual figures published in [Transport Statistics Great Britain](#).

Further information on each of these measures and other definitions can be found in the [Freight quality and methodology report](#).

Annex 2 – Quality and methodology

Data sources and methodology

Most of the quarterly data, and annual data on freight train movements, is sourced from Network Rail, with the exception of freight lifted data. This data is sourced directly from the seven largest freight operators (DB Cargo UK, Freightliner Intermodal, Heavy Haul Rail, GB Railfreight, Direct Rail Services, Colas Freight, and Devon and Cornwall Railways).

Annual data used to calculate rail freight impact on road haulage and rail freight market share is sourced from Department for Transport. This is included in the final quarter of the financial year (January to March) releases only.

Due to a methodology change, data calculated using Department for Transport's domestic road freight statistics pre-2021 and post-2021 is not directly comparable. We have continued to present the full time series within our supporting data tables (tables 1340 and 1350) but have marked the relevant years with a series break to indicate that data pre and post series break should not be compared. For more details on the change, please see [Department for Transport's methodology note](#).

To provide more comprehensive coverage of the freight market, estimates of freight lifted have been calculated for Colas Freight (April 2010 to March 2020) and Devon and Cornwall Railways (April 2011 to March 2024). From April 2020 Colas Freight are providing actual freight lifted data, and from April 2024 Devon and Cornwall Railways are also providing actual freight lifted data. The estimates were based on calculating the number of freight train movements in a quarter for each operator (estimated from their actual train mileage data) and multiplying that by the average tonnes lifted per train for the latest full year, at a national level.

Network Rail provides data to ORR within 21 days of the end of each of the 13 railway reporting periods (each period lasts four weeks). The quarterly data in this release sourced from Network Rail are derived by splitting the periodic data according to the number of days of the period that fall within each quarter.

The latest freight train kilometres data, freight vehicle kilometres data and freight delay per 100 train kilometres data should be treated as provisional. Freight operators can provide Network Rail with additional data (e.g. cancellations) and Network Rail may re-attribute delays over time.

Further development of these statistics

Our freight lifted statistics are currently disaggregated between Coal and Other. Following the slowdown in Coal traffic, this split has limited value. We investigated the possibility of

providing a more disaggregated set of commodities in future, however we have been unable to source the required data.

Revisions

Data presented in this release is correct at the time of publication but may change due to subsequent revisions.

There have been revisions to previously published data:

- Table 1310: Quarterly data has been revised from April 2010 onwards due to a calculation error.
- Table 1315: Data has been revised for 2024-25 and 2025-26 due to refreshed data from two freight operators.
- Table 1340: Data for April 2023 to March 2024 have been revised for Rail freight lorry kilometres equivalent due to revisions in freight moved data. Data for Avoided lorry journeys has also been revised for the same year due to revisions in freight lifted data by one operator.
- Table 1350: Water freight lifted data has been revised for January to December 2021, resulting in a small change in the market share value. Rail freight moved data has been revised for January to December 2023 following receipt of refreshed data from one freight operator.

Details of previous revisions can be found in the [revisions log](#).

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

How these statistics can be used



- Measuring rail freight volumes and market share by commodity over time
- Comparing distances run by freight operators over time
- Monitoring the impact of Network Rail and passenger operator caused delay on freight reliability
- Comparing the size of the rail freight market relative to other modes

How these statistics cannot be used



- Using freight trains ran as an indication of freight volumes due to [train lengthening schemes](#) and more efficient use of the network
- Using freight train kilometres by operator as a proxy for market share of volumes due to the variation in freight train distances
- Identifying origin and destination of freight flows
- Estimating freight revenues (refer to [rail industry finance](#))
- Estimating freight emissions (refer to [rail environment](#))

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 [Freight rail usage and performance page](#).

Freight usage

- Freight moved by commodity (quarterly) – Table 1310
- Freight moved by Network Rail region (periodic) – Table 1311
- Freight moved by commodity (periodic) – Table 1314
- Freight lifted (quarterly) – Table 1315
- Freight trains run (annual) – Table 1330
- Freight train kilometres by operator (quarterly) – Table 1333
- Rail freight impact on road haulage (annual) – Table 1340
- Freight vehicle kilometres by operator (quarterly) – Table 1343
- Rail freight market share (annual) – Table 1350

Freight performance

- Freight delays per 100 train kilometres (quarterly) – Table 1325
- Freight cancellations by Network Rail region (periodic) – Table 1351
- Freight cancellations by Network Rail route (periodic) – Table 1352
- Freight cancellations (quarterly) – Table 1355
- Freight cancellations and lateness by Network Rail region (periodic) – Table 1361
- Freight cancellations and lateness by Network Rail route (periodic) – Table 1362
- Freight cancellations and lateness (quarterly) – Table 1365

Other related statistics

Passenger rail usage statistics are published on the [Passenger rail usage page](#) on the data portal.

Passenger rail performance statistics are published on the [Passenger rail performance page](#) on the data portal.

Estimates of passenger and freight energy consumption and carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) emissions are published on the [Rail environment page](#) on the data portal.

The Department for Transport (DfT) also publishes some [multimodal freight statistics](#) as part of the [Transport Statistics Great Britain publication](#).

European comparisons

Due to differences in how freight punctuality is measured in other countries, opportunities to make direct comparisons with statistics in this release are limited. Data from other European countries is published in the [IRG-Rail Fourteenth Annual Market Monitoring Report](#), including comparable traffic volume data based on freight train kilometres.

Annex 4 – ORR’s statistical publications

Our statistical practice is regulated by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR). OSR sets the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#) that all producers of official statistics should adhere to. You are welcome to contact us directly with any comments about how we meet these standards by emailing rail.stats@orr.gov.uk. Alternatively, you can contact OSR by emailing regulation@statistics.gov.uk or via the OSR website.

Statistical releases

This publication is part of ORR’s ‘[accredited official statistics](#)’, which consist of seven annual publications: **Estimates of station usage; Rail industry finance (UK); Rail fares index; Rail safety; Rail infrastructure and assets; Rail environment; Regional rail usage**; one biannual publication: **Passenger rail service complaints**; and three quarterly publications: **Passenger rail performance; Freight rail usage and performance; Passenger rail usage**.

ORR also publishes a number of other official statistics, which consist of five annual publications: **Common Safety Indicators; Passenger satisfaction with complaints handling; Train operating company key statistics; Occupational health; Rail trends (formerly Rail statistics compendium)**; one biannual publication: **Passenger lifts at stations** (official statistics in development); and four quarterly publications: **Signals passed at danger (SPADs); Delay compensation claims; Disabled Persons Railcards (DPRC); Passenger assistance**.

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

Accredited official statistics

Accredited official statistics are called National Statistics in the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007. They are official statistics that have been independently reviewed by the Office for Statistics Regulation and found to comply with the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the Code of Practice for Statistics.

The majority of our [statistical releases were independently reviewed by the OSR in June 2012](#). They comply with the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#) and are labelled accredited official statistics.

Since our review 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 accredited official 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 [independently reviewed by OSR](#) in November 2020 and [their accreditation was confirmed](#) on 1 December 2020.

For more information on how we adhere to the Code please see our [compliance statements](#).

If you have any feedback or questions please email rail.stats@orr.gov.uk.



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