Passenger rail service complaints
April 2025 to September 2025

**5 February 2026**

There were **164,809 complaints closed** by train operators in the latest six months (1 April 2025 to 30 September 2025), an increase of 4% from the same six months in the previous year. The increase in the number of complaints coincided with an 8% increase in passenger journeys.

The increase in journeys meant that the complaint rate fell from 19 complaints per 100,000 journeys (1 April 2024 to 30 September 2024) to 18 complaints per 100,000 journeys (1 April 2025 to 31 September 2025).

Figure 1   **The volume of complaints in the latest six months was higher than the same period in the previous year**

Complaint volumes closed, Great Britain, biannual data, April 2020 to September 2025 (Table 4100)
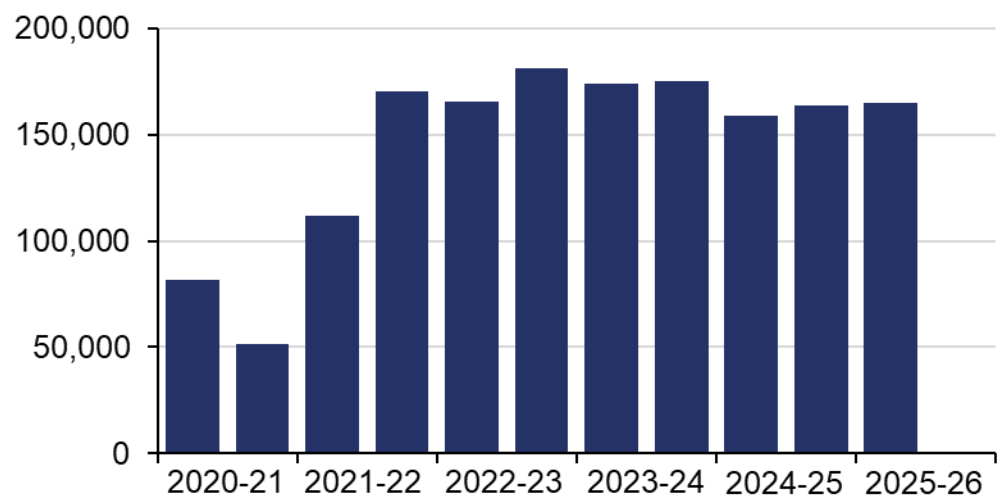
Overall, **97.6% of complaints were closed within 20 working days** in the latest six months.

All data tables, a quality and methodology report and an interactive dashboard associated with this release are published on the Passenger rail service complaints page of the ORR data portal. Key definitions are in Annex 1 of this release.

1. Complaint rates

Overall, there were 18 complaints per 100,000 journeys **in the latest six months,** between 1 April 2025 and 30 September 2025, which is 4% lower than the same six months in the previous year (19 complaints per 100,000 journeys). The complaint rate in the latest six months was at the lowest level since the series began in April 2016.

Figure 1.1   The complaint rate dropped to a record low

Complaint rates, Great Britain, biannual data, April 2020 to September 2025 (Table 4110)
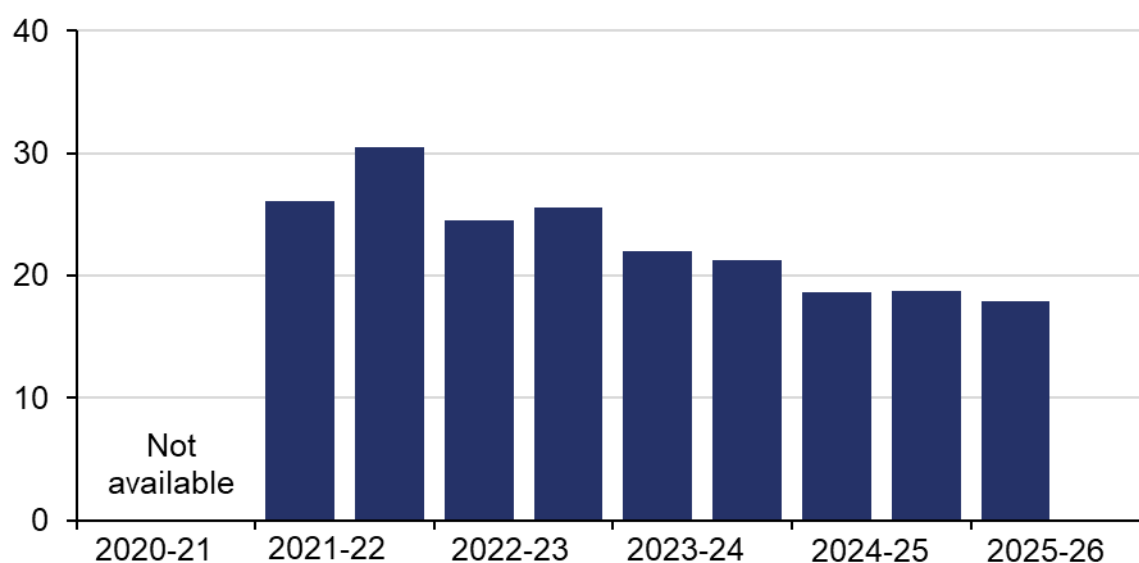
Complaint rates were not published during April 2020 to September 2021. This was due to the impact of the pandemic on passenger rail usage which meant that passenger journeys were not a suitable normaliser to calculate a reliable complaint rate for each operator.

Complaint rate data from April 2020 is provisional. ORR is working with the Rail Delivery Group (RDG) to improve the published estimates of passenger journeys by incorporating an adjustment for split ticketing to more accurately reflect the actual number of journeys made (see Passenger rail usage for further information). The likely reduction in the number of journeys estimated from April 2020 will result in an increase in the complaint rate. The impact of the revisions will vary by operator.
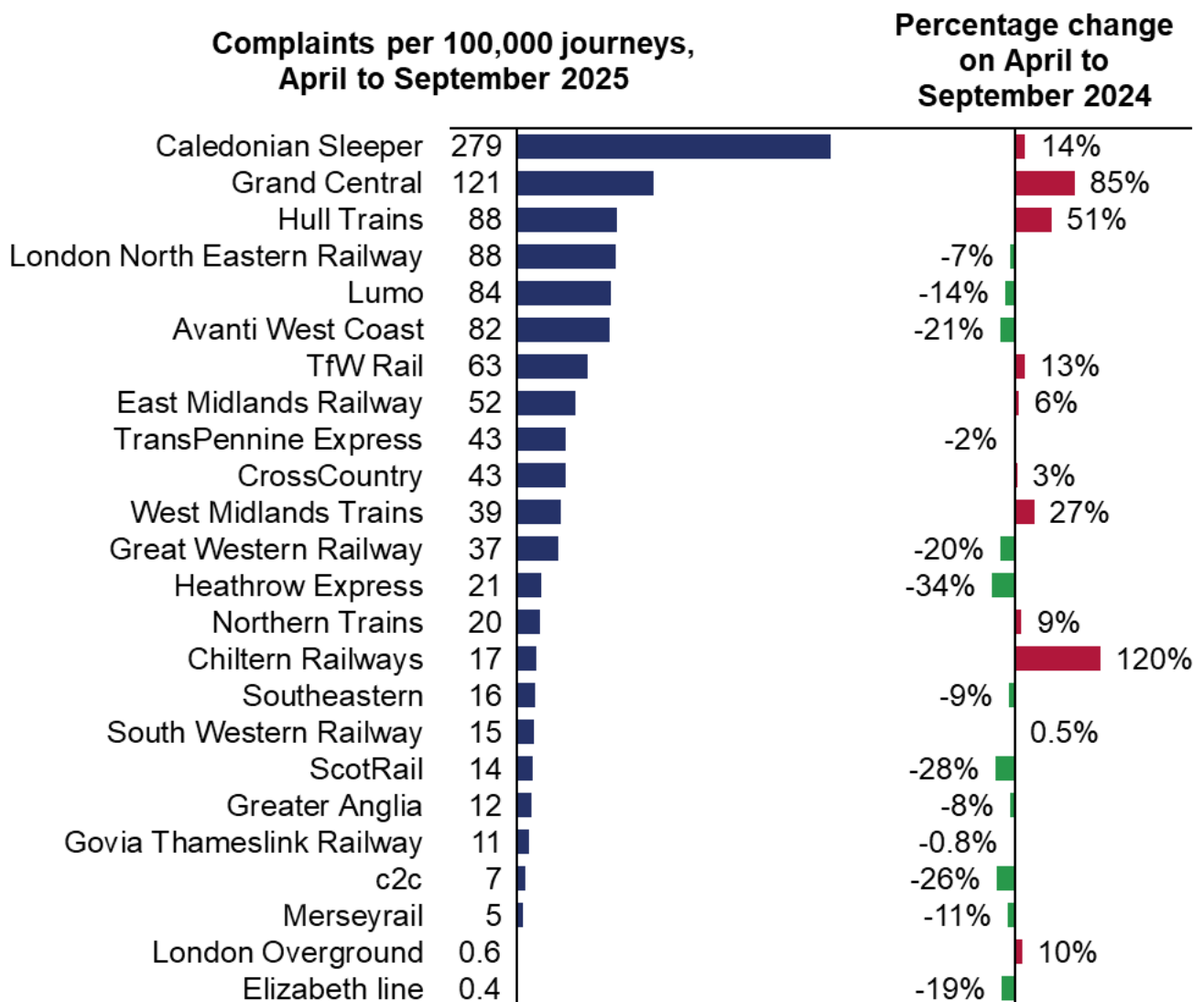
Complaint rates by train operator

Eleven operators recorded an increase in their complaint rate in the latest six months compared with the same six months in the previous year, with Chiltern Railways (up 120% to 17 complaints per 100,000 journeys), Grand Central (up 85% to 121 complaints per 100,000 journeys) and Hull Trains (up 51% to 88 complaints per 100,000 journeys) seeing the largest increases in complaint rate.

Thirteen operators recorded a decrease in their complaint rate compared with the same six months in the previous year. Five operators recorded a decrease in their complaint rate of 20% or more, with Heathrow Express (down 34% to 21 complaints per 100,000 journeys) and Scotrail (down 28% to 14 complaints per 100,000 journeys) recording the largest decreases in complaint rate.

Figure 1.2 Complaint rates were lower for 13 operators in the latest six months compared with the previous year

Complaint rates by train operator, April 2025 to September 2025 and change compared with April 2024 to September 2024 (Table 4113)

Operator	Complaints per 100,000 journeys, April to September 2025	Percentage change on April to September 2024
Caledonian Sleeper	279	14%
Grand Central	121	85%
Hull Trains	88	51%
London North Eastern Railway	88	-7%
Lumo	84	-14%
Avanti West Coast	82	-21%
TfW Rail	63	13%
East Midlands Railway	52	6%
TransPennine Express	43	-2%
CrossCountry	43	3%
West Midlands Trains	39	27%
Great Western Railway	37	-20%
Heathrow Express	21	-34%
Northern Trains	20	9%
Chiltern Railways	17	120%
Southeastern	16	-9%
South Western Railway	15	0.5%
ScotRail	14	-28%
Greater Anglia	12	-8%
Govia Thameslink Railway	11	-0.8%
c2c	7	-26%
Merseyrail	5	-11%
London Overground	0.6	10%
Elizabeth line	0.4	-19%

Passenger rail service complaints, April 2025 to September 2025

2. Complaints by category

Punctuality and reliability was the most common cause of complaint to train operators in the latest six months (1 April 2025 to 30 September 2025), accounting for 17.5% of all complaints. This was 0.1 percentage points (pp) lower than the same six months in the previous year.
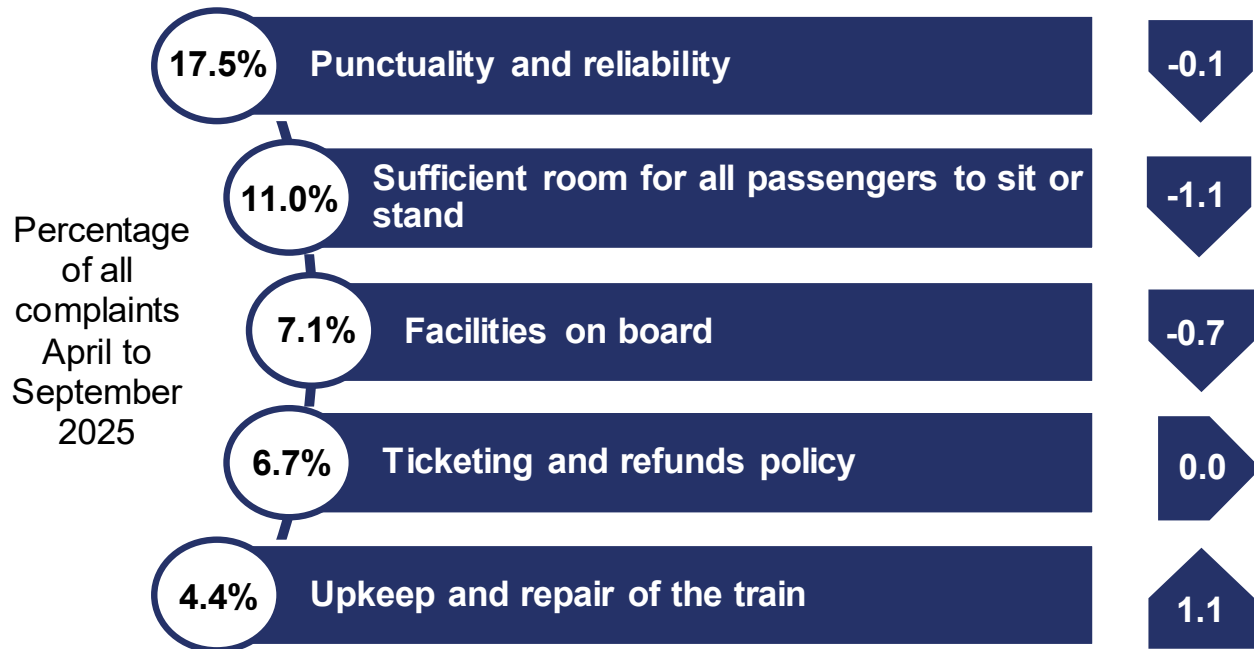
Complaints about sufficient room for all passengers to sit or stand was the second most common cause of complaint, with 11% of all complaints (down 1.1pp compared with the same six months in the previous year).

The third most common cause of complaint was regarding the facilities on board of trains, accounting for 7.1% of all complaints (down 0.7pp compared with the same six months in the previous year).

Complaint categories by individual train operator are published in Table 4133 on the ORR data portal.

Figure 2.1   Punctuality and reliability was the most common cause of complaint

Top five complaint categories by percentage, Great Britain, April 2025 to September 2025 and percentage point change compared with April 2024 to September 2024 (Table 4130)

Percentage of all complaints April to September 2025

17.5%	**Punctuality and reliability**	-0.1
11.0%	**Sufficient room for all passengers to sit or stand**	-1.1
7.1%	**Facilities on board**	-0.7
6.7%	**Ticketing and refunds policy**	0.0
4.4%	**Upkeep and repair of the train**	1.1

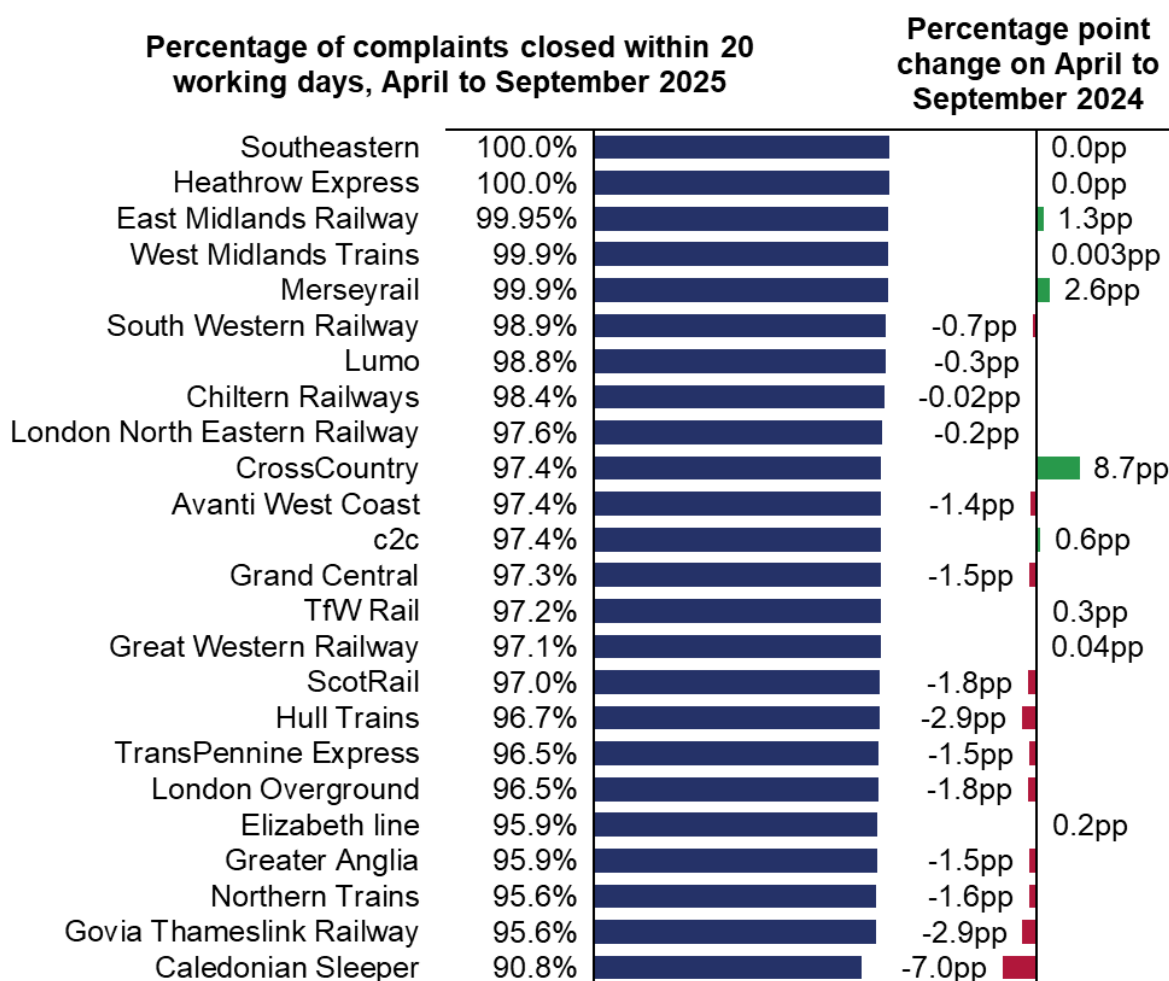# 3. Complaints responded to within 20 working days

Overall, 97.6% of complaints closed were responded to within 20 working days in the latest six months (1 April 2025 to 30 September 2025). This represents a decrease of 0.3pp compared with the same six months in the previous year.

Eight operators saw an increase in their response rates, with CrossCountry (up 8.7pp to 97.4%) and Merseyrail (up 2.6pp to 99.9%) seeing the largest increases. Heathrow Express and Southeastern recorded a response rate of 100%.

Fourteen operators recorded a decrease in their response rates, with Caledonian Sleeper (down 7.0pp to 90.8%) seeing the largest decrease.

Figure 3.1   Heathrow Express and Southeastern responded to 100% of complaints within 20 working days

Percentage of complaints responded to within 20 working days by train operator, April 2025 to September 2025 and change compared with April 2024 to September 2024 (Table 4153)

	Percentage of complaints closed within 20 working days, April to September 2025	Percentage point change on April to September 2024
Southeastern	100.0%	0.0pp
Heathrow Express	100.0%	0.0pp
East Midlands Railway	99.95%	1.3pp
West Midlands Trains	99.9%	0.003pp
Merseyrail	99.9%	2.6pp
South Western Railway	98.9%	-0.7pp
Lumo	98.8%	-0.3pp
Chiltern Railways	98.4%	-0.02pp
London North Eastern Railway	97.6%	-0.2pp
CrossCountry	97.4%	8.7pp
Avanti West Coast	97.4%	-1.4pp
c2c	97.4%	0.6pp
Grand Central	97.3%	-1.5pp
TfW Rail	97.2%	0.3pp
Great Western Railway	97.1%	0.04pp
ScotRail	97.0%	-1.8pp
Hull Trains	96.7%	-2.9pp
TransPennine Express	96.5%	-1.5pp
London Overground	96.5%	-1.8pp
Elizabeth line	95.9%	0.2pp
Greater Anglia	95.9%	-1.5pp
Northern Trains	95.6%	-1.6pp
Govia Thameslink Railway	95.6%	-2.9pp
Caledonian Sleeper	90.8%	-7.0pp

Note: From 1 April 2023, operators are no longer permitted to 'stop the clock' when calculating response times. However, some operators were unable to implement this change ahead of the deadline (see Annex 2 for details).

4. Annexes

Annex 1 – Definitions

- **Complaints:** In the rail industry a complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction by a customer or potential customer about service delivery or about company or industry policy.

- **Complaint volumes:** The volume of complaint correspondence closed. Each communication with the customer is counted as a single complaint, regardless of how many topics are covered in the communication. Complaint volumes are based on complaints which have had a first full substantive response only.

- **First full substantive response:** The rail company's first substantive response which in its view, reasonably provides a full response to the consumer's complaint. This does not include an acknowledgement or holding response.

- **Complaint rate:** The volume of complaint correspondence closed per 100,000 passenger journeys. Each communication with the customer is counted as a single complaint, regardless of how many topics are covered in the communication.

- **Complaints by category:** The type of complaint received, where each complaint category within the correspondence should be recorded. For example, a letter covering two complaints is counted as two complaints categories. However, this would only be recorded as one complaint correspondence within the complaints volumes and complaint rate.

- **Appeals:** When a customer is unhappy with a train operator's response, they can appeal against the operator's decisions to the Rail Ombudsman. For information on the Rail Ombudsman, please see the quality and methodology report. If the complaint is out of scope for the Rail Ombudsman, the customer may be signposted on to another body such as the passenger watchdogs (Transport Focus or London TravelWatch). ORR publishes the volume of appeals closed by Transport Focus and London TravelWatch by category (Table 4160) and by operator (Table 4163).

Annex 2 – Quality and Methodology

Data sources

The complaints data contained within the Passenger rail service complaints statistical release and data tables is sourced from administrative data submitted by train operators. Appeals data is sourced from passenger watchdogs (Transport Focus and London TravelWatch) and National Rail Enquiries data is sourced from the Rail Delivery Group (RDG). Appeals data is included in statistical releases for the final six months of the financial year (October to September) only.

Train operators record information on complaints they receive within their own internal complaints management systems. ORR collects this aggregated data every rail period (i.e. every 4 weeks). In order to ensure consistency between train operators we issue technical guidance and a standard data collection template which can both be found on the [core complaints data page](#).

Social media comments

Complaints within social media comments are not included in these statistics. However, there may be circumstances in which the feedback on social media lends itself to further investigation. The train operator will then assist the complainant in making a formal complaint which will then be dealt with in accordance with the licence holder's Complaints Handling Procedures (CHP). For example, this may involve signposting the complainant to a webform or providing an email address at which they can log a formal complaint. This complaint will then be in scope to be included within these statistics.

Complaints by category

There are 81 detailed categories, mainly based on previous National Rail Passenger Survey (NRPS) satisfaction categories, which make up 14 high-level complaint categories. A full list of all complaint categories and the percentages attributed to each is available on the [data portal](#) in Table 4130. This data is available by individual train operator in Table 4133.

Response times to complaints

For each rail period, train operators provide ORR with the percentage of complaint correspondences they have closed within 20 working days. The CHP licence requirement is for train operators to close 95% of complaints within 20 working days. From July 2015, we have also collected data on the percentage of complaints responded to within 10 working days, as well as the percentage responded to within the operators' internal target. From July 2023, we have also collected data on the percentage of complaints responded to within 30 working days. The response times reported are based on the first full substantive response only.

Stop the clock

Prior to 1 April 2023, operators were able to 'stop the clock' (STC) in the calculation of complaints handling response times. Where further information was required from the complainant, operators could pause the timer with it resuming when the information was received. As of 1 April 2023, operators are no longer permitted to use STC. For further information on the process in place, please see the core data guidance available on the [core complaints data page](#).

The removal of STC from train operator complaint systems has required technical changes to be applied. For some operators, it was not possible to make all the necessary changes by 1 April 2023. The table below provides details of the use of STC prior to 1 April 2023 and the date on which operators ceased using STC.

Operator	Did they use STC before 1 July 2023?	When did they stop using STC?
Avanti West Coast	Yes	1 April 2023
c2c	Yes	26 June 2024
Caledonian Sleeper	Yes	1 April 2023
Chiltern Railways	Yes	1 April 2023
CrossCountry	Yes	1 April 2023
East Midlands Railway	No	Not applicable
Govia Thameslink Railway	Yes	28 May 2023
Grand Central	Yes	28 May 2023
Great Western Railway	Yes	1 April 2023
Greater Anglia	Yes	25 June 2023
Heathrow Express	Yes	1 April 2023
Hull Trains	Yes	1 April 2023
London North Eastern Railway	Yes	1 April 2023
London Overground	Yes	1 April 2023
Lumo	Yes	1 April 2023
Merseyrail	Yes	1 April 2023
Northern	Yes	30 April 2023
ScotRail	Yes	25 June 2023
South Western Railway	Yes	10 November 2024
Southeastern	Yes	1 April 2023
Elizabeth line	Yes	1 April 2023
TfW Rail	Yes	1 April 2023
TransPennine Express	Yes	1 April 2023
West Midlands Trains	Yes	28 May 2023

Southeastern

Before 1 April 2023, data for Southeastern included some responses to complaints that had already been closed. It is estimated that such responses account for less than 10% of the total number closed by Southeastern and less than 1% of the number closed nationally. From 1 April 2023 onwards, data for Southeastern is correctly limited to complaints closed.

Complaints per 100,000 journeys

Complaint rates were not published for the year 1 April 2020 to 31 September 2021. This was due to the impact of the pandemic on passenger rail usage which meant that passenger journeys were not a suitable normaliser for complaint volumes. An alternative measure of complaint volumes continues to be provided in Table 4100.

Appeals

This data provides the number of complaint appeals closed by Transport Focus or London TravelWatch for each train operator and some other rail bodies.

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.

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 or level of compensation are 'in scope' for the Rail Ombudsman. Therefore, comparisons on appeal categories with previous years should be treated with caution.

A full list of all appeal categories and the percentage attributed to each is available on the data portal in Table 4160. This table is updated annually with the statistical releases for the final six months of the financial year (October to March), although the data is presented by quarters.

Recent changes to train operators

The following changes to train operators occurred between 1 April 2025 and 30 September 2025:

- On 25 May 2025, South Western Railway was transferred to public control.

- On 20 July 2025, c2c was transferred to public control.

Further information on individual operators, including route maps, can be found via the Rail Delivery Group website.

Revisions

Revisions have been made to four tables:

- Fares and retailing ticket buying facilities ticket office and ticket vending machine annual and quarterly data have been revised for Southeastern for April 2024 to March 2025 in the annual and quarterly data. This was due to data being reported under the wrong category which has now been corrected (Tables 4130 and 4133). The largest change was an increase of 0.57pp (Southeastern data, April to June 2024).

- Elizabeth line complaint category data has been included for April to June 2015. The April 2015 to March 2016 annual data for Elizabeth line has also been revised as a result (Table 4133). The largest change was a 1.4pp decrease for Punctuality and reliability.

- Lumo data for April to June 2021 and July to September 2021 was incorrectly showing as zeros. This has been updated to [z] to reflect the operator was not in service during this time (Table 4133).

- For April 2016 to March 2017, additional data was incorrectly included in the Great Britain figures for the percentage of complaints responded to within 10 and 20 working days. This has been removed and as a result the annual and quarterly data has been revised (Table 4150). The largest change was an increase of 0.22pp for the percentage of complaints responded to within 10 working days (October to December 2016).

- April 2024 to March 2025 annual data has been revised for the percentage of South Western Railway complaints responded to within 30 working days. This is due to a calculation error that has now been corrected (Tables 4150 and 4153). The revision is an increase of 60.8 percentage points for South Western Railway and an increase of 4.5pp for Great Britain.

- The percentage closed within handling target for London Overground for April to June 2017 is now included having previously been omitted in error. This has also led to a revision for April 2017 to March 2018 annual data (Table 4153). The revision is an increase of 47.9 percentage points.

- A review of the handling targets was conducted which has resulted in these being revised for several operators over multiple time periods in the annual and quarterly data from April 2015 until March 2023 (Table 4153). The changes range from an increase of five days to a fall of 15 days. Where complaints handling targets change within the quarter, figures have been updated to show both. This affects April to June 2017 for Caledonian Sleeper and October to December 2020 for Avanti West Coast. Their respective annual complaints handling targets are also affected (Table 4153).

Details of previous revisions can be found in the revisions log.

How these statistics can be used

- Comparing complaint volumes over time
- Comparing complaint rates by train operators and over time
- Comparing the proportion of complaints responded to within 10, 20 and 30 working days by train operator and over time
- Comparing complaint contact methods by train operators and over time
- Comparing what rail passengers complain about over time

How these statistics cannot be used

- Comparing complaint volumes by train operators (due to differences in passenger usage)
- Comparing appeal volumes by train operators (due to differences in passenger usage)
- Using the complaint rates for April 2020 to September 2021 (due to the pandemic's effect on rail usage)

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 service complaints page](#). The format of these tables was changed in January 2023 to improve accessibility.

Complaint volumes

- Complaints closed by operator – Table 4100

Complaints per 100,000 journeys

- Complaints per 100,000 journeys – Table 4110
- Complaints per 100,000 journeys by operator – Table 4113

Complaint categories

- Complaints categories – Table 4130
- Complaints categories by operator – Table 4133

Complaint response rate

- Complaints responded to within 10, 20 and 30 working days – Table 4150
- Complaints responded to within 10, 20 and 30 working days by operator – Table 4153

Complaints by contact method

- Complaints by contact method and train operator – Table 4143 (updated annually)

National Rail Enquiries

- National Rail Enquiry telephone service – Table 4180 (updated annually)

Appeals

- Appeals closed by Transport Focus and London TravelWatch by operator – Table 4163 (updated annually)
- Appeals categories closed by Transport Focus and London TravelWatch – Table 4160 (updated annually)

Other related statistics

Delay compensation claims

One of the complaint categories in this release relates to delay compensation schemes. Statistics on [Delay compensation claims](#) were collected from April 2018, and are published in a factsheet and data table alongside this statistical release each six months.

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 for Great Britain as well as each individual train operator.

Passenger satisfaction with complaints handling

ORR also publishes annual statistics about [passenger satisfaction with complaints handling](#).

Rail Ombudsman

The [Rail Ombudsman](#) provides a service to help sort out unresolved customer complaints about service providers within the rail industry.

Rail Customer Experience Survey

The Rail Customer Experience Survey (RCXS) launched in 2025. This is an industry-wide survey and is a collaboration between Rail Delivery Group, Department for Transport, Transport Focus, Network Rail and the Customer and Revenue Growth Team (formerly part of the Great British Railways Transition Team).

A [summary of the results](#) and [respondent-level data](#) are available at the Rail Data Marketplace. [Quarterly scorecards](#) are available from Transport Focus. In Spring 2026, Transport Focus will publish its first half-yearly report and data tables for rail periods 8 to 13 of the financial year April 2025 to March 2026.

Historic data

Between 1999 and 2020, Transport Focus conducted the [National Rail Passenger Survey](#). Before the COVID-19 pandemic, passenger opinions of train services were collected twice a year from a representative sample of journeys. The [final wave of the survey](#) was published on 2 July 2020. Since then, Transport Focus conducted the [Rail User Survey](#) asking passenger about their experiences of travelling by rail and how satisfied they were with their most recent train journey. The [final wave of the survey](#) was published on 29 July 2025.

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 ORR 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 September 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 April 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.