Rail passenger assists and bookings
## Rail periods 5 to 7
21 July to 12 October 2024

16 January 2025

In rail periods 5 to 7 (21 July 2024 to 12 October 2024), there were 430,450 passenger assists requested, up 18% on the same rail periods in the previous year and the highest level recorded for these rail periods since the time series began in 2012. The data presented in this factsheet only covers **pre-booked assistance**.

Figure 1   Requested passenger assists have increased to the highest recorded levels

Number of requested passenger assists, Great Britain, rail periods 5 to 7 since April 2012 (Table 4210)
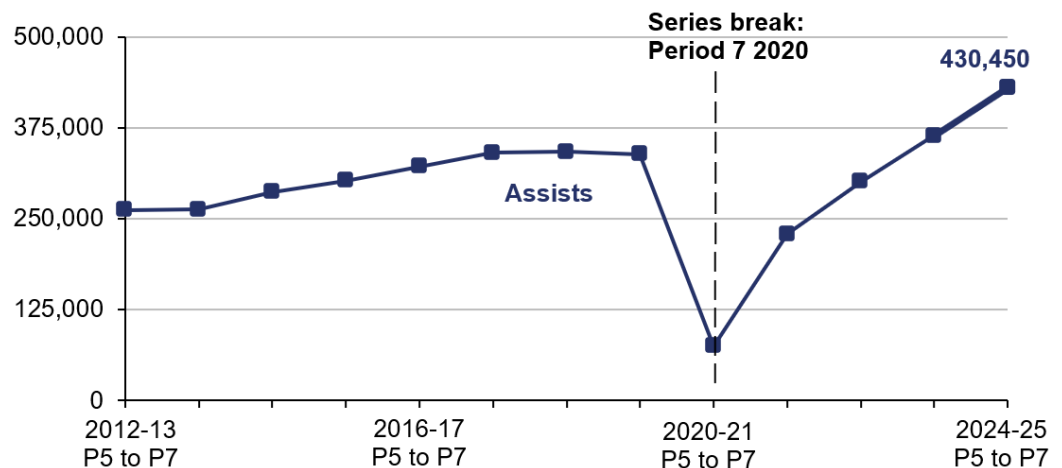
Note: Before period 7 2020-21, an existing booking could not be edited. Any changes required a new booking to be created resulting in duplication. Other changes over time which affect the comparability of the data are given on page 4.

It is not possible to provide the total number of passenger bookings for the three periods combined, as bookings can relate to assists in more than one period. Data for bookings relating to the assists in each of the three periods can be found in Table 4210.

All data tables, a quality and methodology report and an interactive dashboard associated with this factsheet are published on the Passenger assistance page of the ORR data portal. Key definitions are at the end of this factsheet.

Each passenger assist requested is attributed to the **station facility owner (SFO)** that manages the station where the assist takes place. Data is presented here for Network Rail and 19 train operators (Caledonian Sleeper, CrossCountry, Grand Central, Hull Trains and Lumo do not manage any stations). Network Rail currently manages 20 stations, which include many of the busiest stations in Great Britain. Data is also prese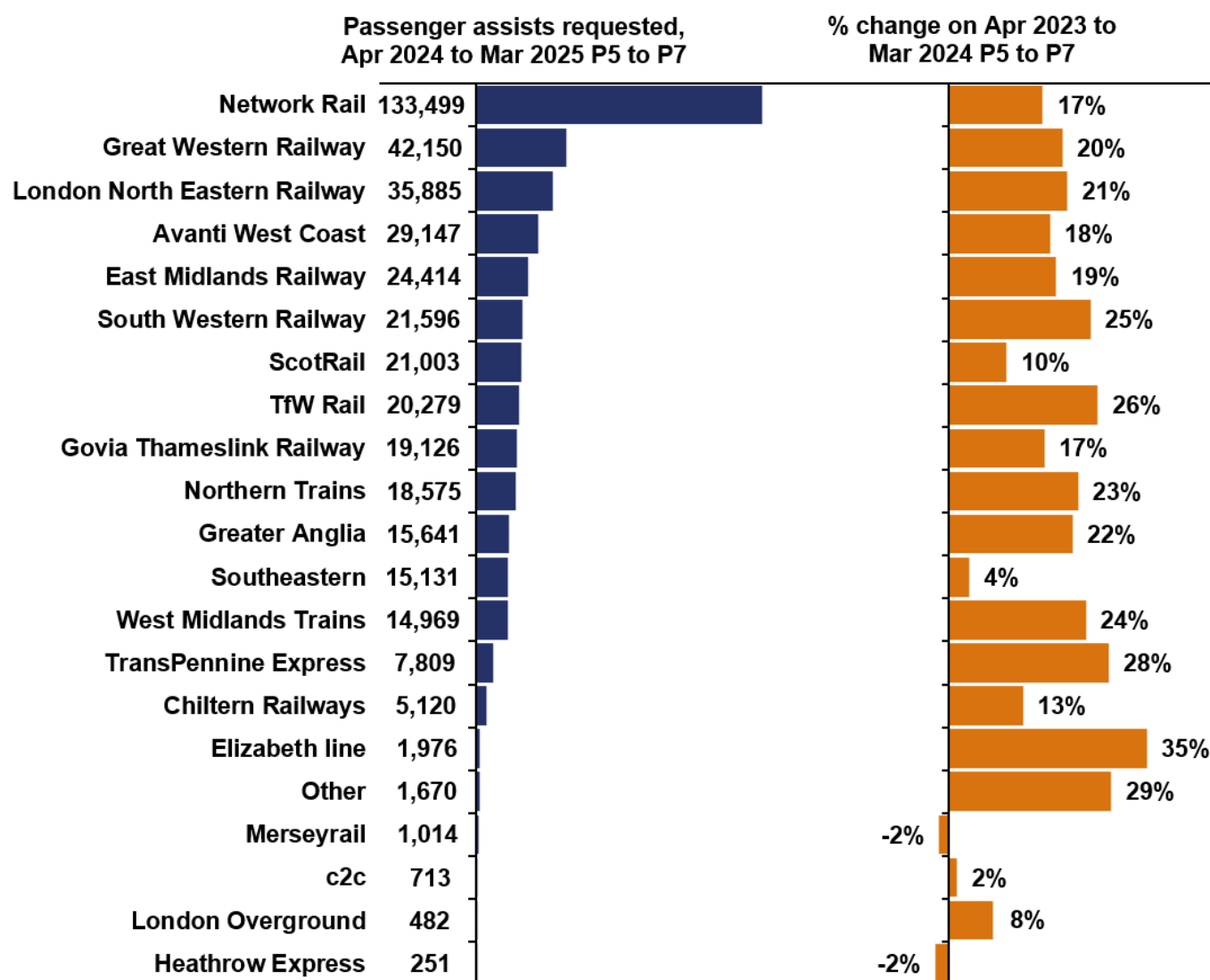nted for "Other" SFOs, which include London Underground. **The SFO may be different to the train operator that the passenger travels with. Furthermore, there are some stations where the assistance is delivered by staff of a train operator that is not the SFO.**

During rail periods 5 to 7, Network Rail managed stations accounted for 31% (133,499) of all passenger assists. Stations managed by the remaining SFOs accounted for the other 69% (296,951) of passenger assists.

Figure 1.1   Requested passenger assists increased for all but two SFOs

Number of requested passenger assists by station facility owner, rail periods 5 to 7 and change compared with the previous year (Table 4213)


	Passenger assists requested, Apr 2024 to Mar 2025 P5 to P7	% change on Apr 2023 to Mar 2024 P5 to P7
Network Rail	133,499	17%
Great Western Railway	42,150	20%
London North Eastern Railway	35,885	21%
Avanti West Coast	29,147	18%
East Midlands Railway	24,414	19%
South Western Railway	21,596	25%
ScotRail	21,003	10%
TfW Rail	20,279	26%
Govia Thameslink Railway	19,126	17%
Northern Trains	18,575	23%
Greater Anglia	15,641	22%
Southeastern	15,131	4%
West Midlands Trains	14,969	24%
TransPennine Express	7,809	28%
Chiltern Railways	5,120	13%
Elizabeth line	1,976	35%
Other	1,670	29%
Merseyrail	1,014	-2%
c2c	713	2%
London Overground	482	8%
Heathrow Express	251	-2%

Rail passenger assists and bookings, rail periods 5 to 7 (21 July to 12 October 2024)

Periodic time series

Viewing the data by railway period allows the seasonality of the data to be seen. Assists are at their highest during the summer periods, especially during rail period 6 (mid-August to mid-September) and at their lowest during the winter periods, especially during rail period 11 (early January to early February).

There has been a consistent increase in the Moving Annual Average (MAA) of assists since the pandemic. The MAA is the average number of assists over the most recent 13 rail periods.

Figure 1.2   The Moving Annual Average for assists has increased since the pandemic

Number of requested passenger assists, Great Britain, periodic data and Moving Annual Average (MAA), April 2019 to October 2024 (Table 4210)
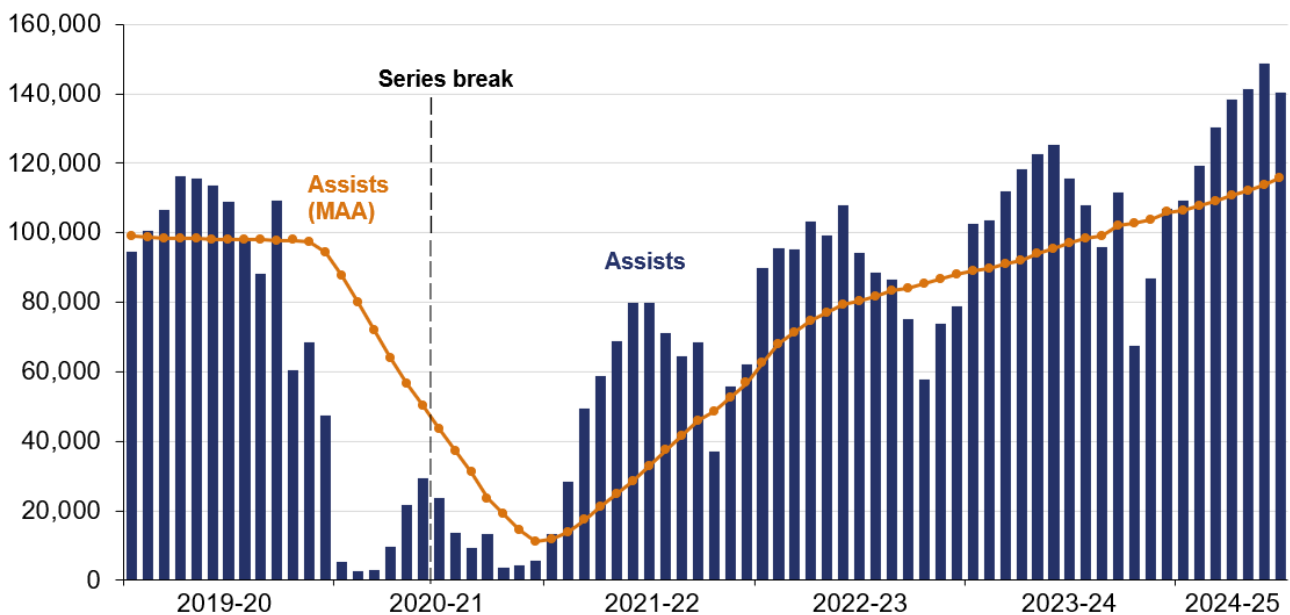
Note: Before period 7 2020-21, an existing booking could not be edited. Any changes required a new booking to be created resulting in duplication. Other changes over time which affect the comparability of the data are given on page 4.

Definitions

- **Passenger assists:** The number of assists that have been requested through the National Passenger Assistance Booking System. This includes assists that were booked and then subsequently cancelled or not fulfilled. An assist is the help provided at one station. This may include assistance getting on or off the train or help with luggage. The data from April 2020 to March 2021 period 7 onwards are based on journey leg information. Two assists are recorded per journey leg. One assist is counted at the origin station and one assist is counted at the destination station. Where a change of trains is required, two assists are counted at the interchange station. This results in the total number of assists always being an even number. Where an operator offers booked assistance less than two hours prior to travel the system treats this as unbooked and therefore these are not included in the booked assistance data presented in this factsheet.
- **Passenger bookings:** The number of bookings made through the National Passenger Assistance Booking System. One booking will have at least one journey leg and, therefore, at least two assists. The data presented here are the number of bookings that had assists requested for a given period or year. A booking made on 30 March 2023 for a journey taking place on 2 April 2023 will be counted in the data for 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 rather than the data for 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023. The annual number of bookings for a year cannot be calculated from the period data as bookings can relate to assists in more than one period. The number of bookings does not equate to the number of journeys as one booking can include a return journey, while passengers may make separate bookings for individual journey legs.

Changes over time

There have been changes over time which affect the comparability of the passenger assist data. These are:

- From April 2020 to March 2021 period 1, requirements were introduced to allow passengers to book assistance up until 22:00 the day before travel. Prior to April 2020, operators could require a notice period of up to 24 hours before travel.
- From April 2020 to March 2021 period 7, there was a change of booking system. Prior to this an existing booking could not be amended; any changes required a new booking to be created resulting in duplication. In addition, the data from the new system is based on journey leg information which results in two assists recorded per journey leg meaning that the total assist numbers are even.
- From April 2021 to March 2022 period 1, requirements were introduced to allow passengers to book assistance up until six hours prior to travel. In addition, the passenger assistance app was launched.

- From April 2022 to March 2023 period 1, requirements were introduced to allow passengers to book assistance up until two hours prior to travel.

Data tables

Table 4210 - *Passenger assists and bookings* and Table 4213 - *Passenger assists by station operator* can be accessed on the [Passenger assistance](#) page of the ORR data portal free of charge in OpenDocument Spreadsheet (.ods) format and in csv format on request.

Related research

Since 2017, [annual research on booked passenger assistance](#) has been conducted on behalf of ORR, surveying passengers to measure performance and satisfaction levels at an industry and operator level.

The interactive dashboard published on the [Passenger assistance](#) page includes data from the survey. From 31 October 2024, this dashboard is updated on a quarterly basis.

Revisions

There have been no revisions to previously published data.

For more information on the scale of the revisions, please see the [revisions log](#).