



## Rail transport, 2020-2021

23 March 2022

SB 6/2022

### Key Points

Rail transport services in 2020-21 (1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021) were significantly affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. In Wales, the number of rail passenger journeys saw a significant decrease when compared to the previous year (2019-20). Please see page 2 for further detail.



- In 2020-21, there were 5.1 million rail passenger journeys which either started or ended in Wales, a decrease of 82.8% compared with the previous year. Over two-thirds (69.0%) of these journeys were within Wales ([Chart 1](#)).

### Rail passenger journeys within Wales decreased to 3.5 million in 2020-21, a decrease of 82.7% on 2019-20.

- Cardiff was the most common destination for within-Wales journeys, accounting for 37.4% of all journeys.

### In 2021 there were 8 railway fatalities, all of which were suicides.

- Over the last five years there have been between 4 and 11 suicides annually and between 0 and 4 other fatalities ([Chart 4](#)).

### In 2020-21, offences on Welsh railways decreased by 27.1%.

- There were 1,063 notifiable offences reported on Welsh railways in 2020-21, a decrease of 396 from the previous year ([Chart 5](#)).

### About this bulletin

This annual statistical bulletin reports on rail transport in Wales. The tables of underlying data are available on the [StatsWales website](#).

This bulletin presents information about rail passenger journeys, punctuality, passenger satisfaction, accidents, fatalities and crime on the rail network.

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# Impact of COVID-19 on rail transport

Rail transport services in 2020-21 (1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021) were significantly affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Across Great Britain, the number of passenger journeys decreased by 78.1% compared to the previous year.

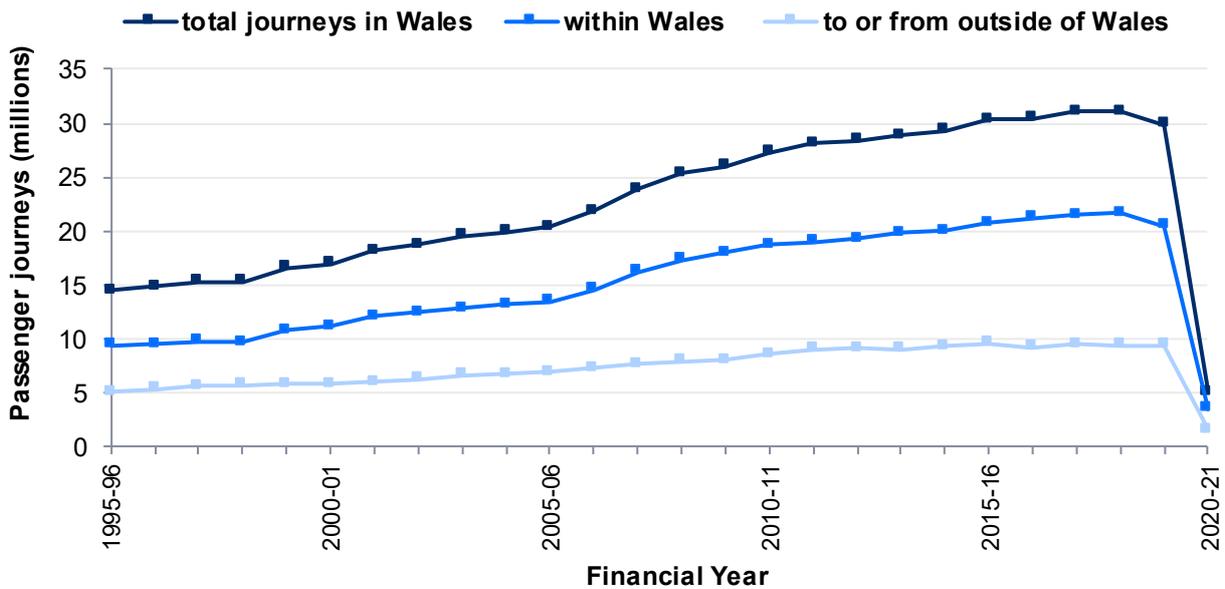
In Wales, the number of rail passenger journeys decreased by 82.8% when compared to the previous year (2019-20). This is the highest decrease in rail journeys in Wales since records began.

## Rail passenger journeys, Wales

Rail passenger journeys had increased year on year since 1995-96 until 2018-19, reaching a high of 31.1 million in 2018-19. In 2020-21 travel restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic contributed to an 82.8% decrease in rail passenger journey in Wales. Of these rail passenger journeys, 69.0% were within Wales and 31.0% were between Wales and other regions.



**Chart 1: Rail passenger journeys by direction 1995-96 to 2020-21**

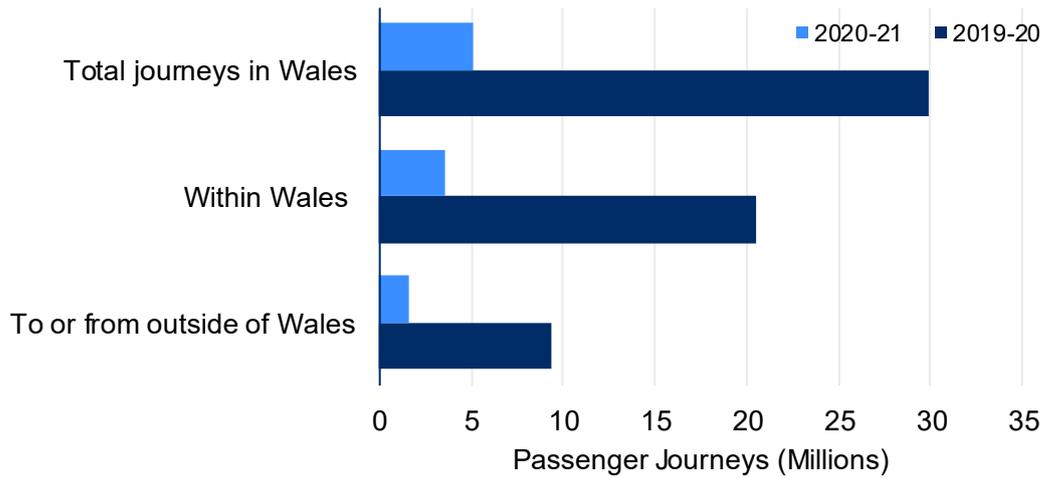


Source: WG analysis of ORR, National Rail Trends, Regional usage profiles

**Note:** To or from outside of Wales includes any journeys across GB that begin or end in Wales

In 2020-21, rail journeys within Wales decreased by 82.7% and journeys 'to or from outside Wales' fell by 83.1% when compared to previous year (Chart 2). Total journeys in Wales includes all journeys that are within Wales and all journeys across GB regions that either begin/end in Wales.

## Chart 2: Rail passenger journeys, Wales 2019-20 and 2020-21

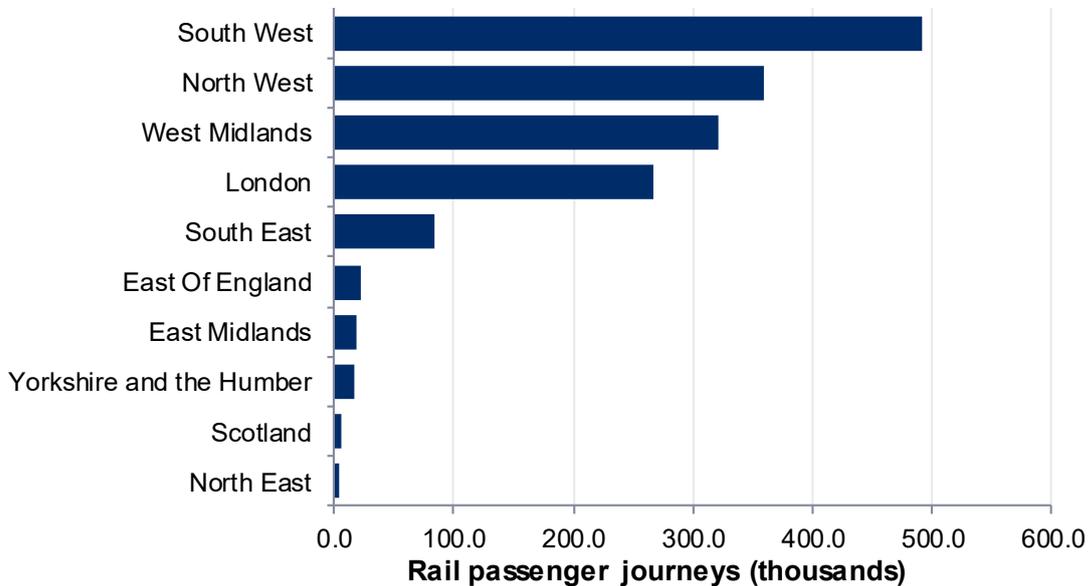


Source: WG analysis of ORR, National Rail Trends, Regional usage profiles

**Note:** To or from outside of Wales includes any journeys across GB that begin or end in Wales

Journeys ‘to and from outside of Wales’ are dominated by those between Wales and the South West of England (490 thousand), Wales and North West (359 thousand) and Wales and West Midlands (322 thousand). The journeys between Wales and these regions represent 73.7% of all outside journeys ‘to and from outside of Wales’ in 2020-21 (Chart 3). Total rail passenger journeys in Wales accounted for 1.5% of all journeys in Great Britain in 2020-21.

## Chart 3: Rail passenger journeys ‘to or from outside of Wales’ 2020-21



Source: WG analysis of ORR data, National Rail Trends, Regional usage profiles

**Note:** due to the decrease in the number of rail passenger journeys in 2020-21, we have changed the scale of this graph to thousands. Please consider this if comparing to graphs from previous bulletins.

## Punctuality



Punctuality measures train reliability to passengers in its operations against their planned timetable. A higher percentage within 1 or 3 minutes indicates good punctuality as it shows a higher proportion of trains arriving within these time slots. However, with regard to cancellations a lower percentage indicates better reliability on all train journeys.

Trains in Wales were operated by Arriva Trains Wales from 2003 until October 2018 and the performance target for punctuality was for 88.8 per cent of all trains to arrive within 5 minutes of the scheduled arrival time. Transport for Wales took over as the operator of trains in Wales in October 2018. ORR has updated the performance measures for railway service providers to all trains to arrive within 3 minutes of scheduled arrival time (Table 1). Late trains refer to delays to train journeys experienced by passengers due to disruptions.

**Table 1: Train Punctuality, arrival times and train planned, 2016-17 to 2020-21**

	<i>per cent and number</i>				
<b>Arrival within</b>	<b>2016-17</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-21</b>
1 mins (%)	61.2%	63.4%	62.8%	65.0%	80.0%
3 mins (%)	81.8%	82.9%	82.0%	81.7%	91.5%
15 mins (%)	98.4%	98.4%	98.3%	98.0%	98.8%
<i>Significantly late (%)<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>3.0%</i>	<i>3.1%</i>	<i>3.1%</i>	<i>4.3%</i>	<i>2.6%</i>
Cancelled (%)	1.7%	1.8%	2.1%	2.3%	2.4%
Trains planned (number)	328,145	329,834	329,944	338,262	218,328

Source: WG analysis of ORR data

**Notes:**

(a) Significantly late includes trains cancelled or arriving at their final destination more than 30 minutes later than planned.

## Rail incidents



Information about safety on the mainline rail network comes from the Rail Safety and Standards Board (RSSB). Table 2 shows there was an increase of 17.6% in the number of incidents recorded in 2021 compared with 2020. Rail incident numbers are relatively volatile and there is no discernible long term trend that can be ascertained. There were 20 recorded incidents in 2021 comprising of 11 obstructions, 7 fires and 2 missile incidents.

**Table 2: Train incidents, Wales, 2017 to 2021**

Train incidents	Number				
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Collisions	0	0	0	0	0
Derailments	0	1	0	0	0
Obstructions	16	28	31	14	11
Fires	3	5	3	1	7
Missiles	3	3	4	2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>20</b>

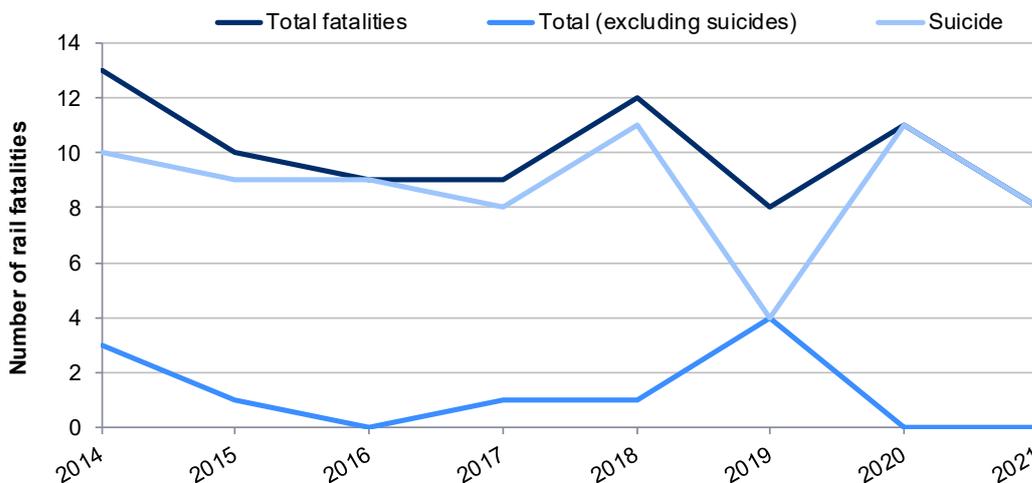
Source: WG analysis of RSSB data provided by the Office of Rail Regulation (ORR)

**Note:**

In 2015 there were changes in the way that the ORR receive train incidents data from the RSSB, meaning that data prior to 2015 are not directly comparable with data from 2015 onwards. Data from 2015 are regarded as of lower quality than pre-2015 data.

Railway fatalities are where death occurs within one year of an incident on the rail network. In 2021 there were 8 fatalities on the rail network in Wales, all of which were suicides. There have been between 4 and 11 suicides annually for each of the past 5 years, and between 0 and 4 fatalities resulting from other causes. Suicides have accounted for the majority of rail fatalities since 2012.

**Chart 4: Railway fatalities, Wales 2014 to 2021**



Source: WG analysis of RSSB data provided by the ORR

**Notes:**

(a) Fatalities include passengers, staff, trespassers and other persons

## Rail crime

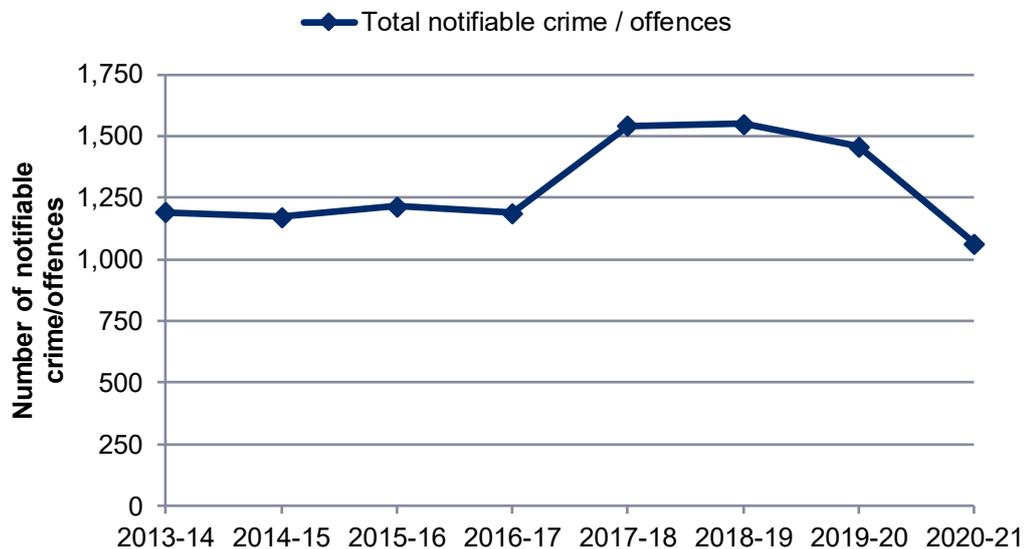
Information about crime on the rail network comes from the British Transport Police's computerised crime reporting system, CRIME.



In 2020-21, there were a total of 1,063 recorded notifiable offences in Wales, a decrease of 396 (27.1%) compared with the previous year (Chart 5). Since 2013-14, the number of offences in Wales had been relatively stable before increasing in 2017-18 and again in 2018-19. The number of offences in Wales has seen a decrease in the last 2 years of the time series although some of these decreases may reflect reduced rail passenger journeys as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic

The largest categories of recorded offences were violence against the person (341), public order (257) and criminal damage/malicious mischief (166), which accounted for 65.7% of all offences.

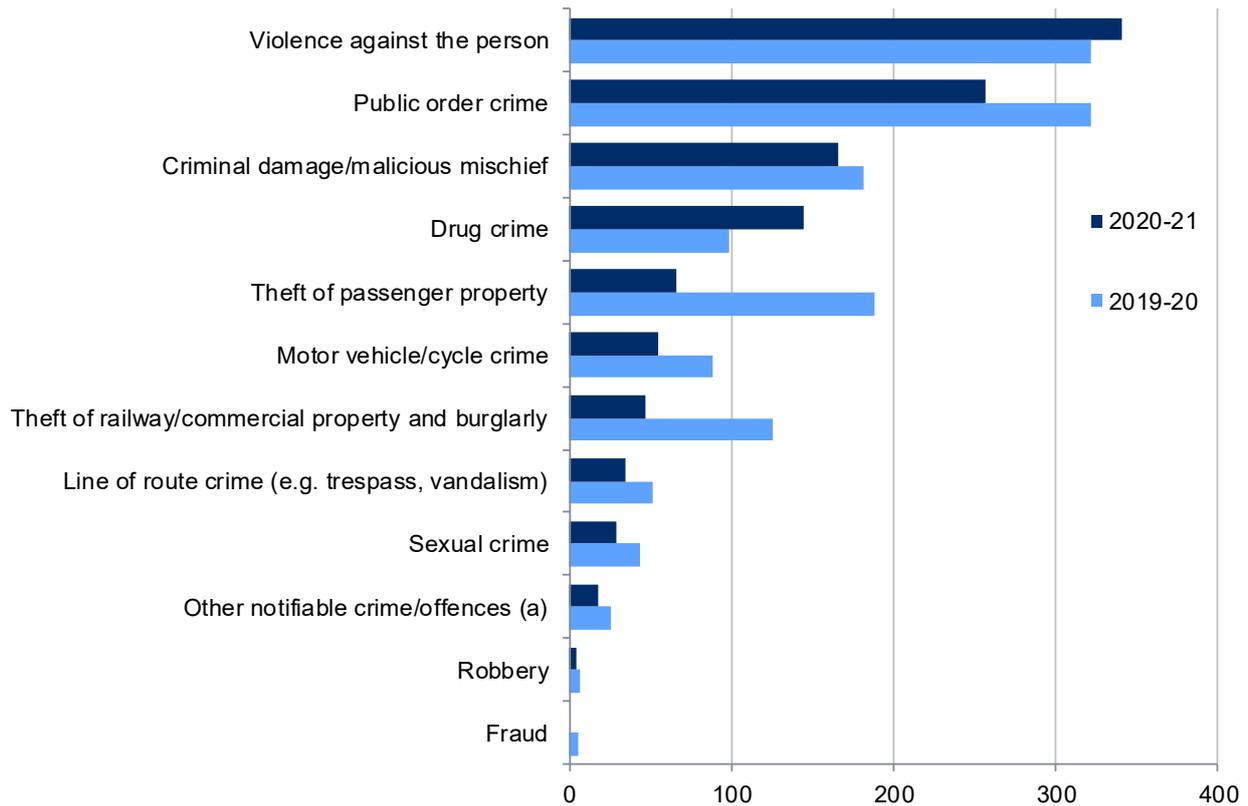
**Chart 5: Rail network notifiable crime/offences in Wales, 2013-14 to 2020-21**



Source: WG analysis of the British Transport Police Statistical Bulletin

Out of the 12 notifiable offence categories, there were reductions in numbers reported in 10 of these categories in 2020-21 and increases in 2 (drug crime and violence against the person). Proportionally, the largest increase was in drug crime (46.5%) with the other increase seen in violence against the person (5.9%). In 2020-21, there was no crime on fraud reported in 2020-21 and the largest decrease in crime was seen in 'theft of passenger property' (down 64.9%) ([Chart 6](#)).

**Chart 6: Rail notifiable crime/offences in Wales, 2019-20 and 2020-21**



**Note:** Source: WG analysis of the British Transport Police Statistical Bulletin  
 (a) Includes: Handling/reset, Other firearms offences, Proceeds of crime (excl. drugs), Other theft and Other offences

As well as the notifiable offences described, some less serious, non-notifiable offences also occur but they are no longer recorded by British Transport Police in a way that supports reliable statistical reporting.

**Passenger satisfaction**

Information about passenger satisfaction with train services and station facilities previously came from the [National Rail Passenger Survey](#) carried out by Transport Focus, an independent passenger watchdog.



Due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the passenger satisfaction survey carried out by Transport focus is no longer completed. Historic information on passenger satisfaction is published on [StatsWales](#) and [previous versions of this statistical bulletin](#).

[Transport Focus](#) have been running weekly COVID Insight Surveys online to understand how people feel about using Rail Transport in the light of the pandemic.

# Notes

## 1 Context

### 1.1 Related Publications

The Department for Transport produces a series presenting [statistical information on the national rail system in Great Britain](#).

Transport Scotland produces an annual publication entitled [Scottish Transport Statistics](#) which includes a chapter on Rail Services.

## 2 Key Quality Information

### 2.1 Relevance

These statistics are used within and outside the Welsh Government to monitor trends in rail transport and as a baseline for further analysis.

### 2.2 Accuracy

The information in this bulletin is based on a range of surveys and administrative data.

### 2.3 Coverage

In Wales, as in England and Scotland, passenger train services are operated by a number of companies, referred to as Train Operating Companies (TOCs), normally on the basis of regional franchises awarded by the Department for Transport. There are 4 TOCs operating services to/from/within Wales during 2020-21 – Transport for Wales (TfW) (Arriva Trains Wales operated the Wales and Borders franchise until October 2018); Great Western Railway (which operates services between Swansea and London with a summer weekend service to Pembroke Dock); Cross-country Trains (which operates a service from Cardiff to Nottingham via Newport and Chepstow); and Avanti West Coast (previously Virgin Trains, which operates services from Holyhead to London Euston), with one train a day from Wrexham General to London Euston. Station usage estimates are based on ticket sales regardless of which TOC is providing the journey. The estimate for 2018-19 covers the period when the Wales and Border rail franchise changed from Arriva Trains Wales to Transport for Wales.

### Train reliability

**Cancellations** measures the amount of trains that are cancelled as a percentage of trains planned as confirmed by the operator and Network Rail at 22:00 on the previous evening.

A train is classed as a part cancellation if:

- It ran at least half but not all of its planned journeys length, or
- It completed its whole journey length but failed to stop at one or more of its planned stations

**Cancellations and significant lateness (CaSL)** the percentage of passenger trains cancelled or arriving at their final destination more than 30 minutes later than planned. [Passenger performance quality report](#)

## **Rail passenger numbers**

These are compiled by the Office of Rail Regulation (ORR). ORR data are available via the National Rail Trends (NRT) [Data Portal](#), an online interface for ORR's database of rail statistics:

## **Rail safety**

Data are taken from the Rail Safety and Standards Board's (RSSB) Safety Management Information System (SMIS). Its scope is generally limited to incidents that occur at stations, on trains, or elsewhere on Network Rail managed infrastructure, such as the track and trackside. However, workforce fatalities that occur away from these locations, but occur during working time, are also included. For more information about the SMIS see the [RSSB website](#).

Rail crime Information comes from the British Transport Police's (BTP) computerised crime reporting system, CRIME. The Home Office introduced a National Crime Reporting Standard (NCRS) that all police forces across England and Wales were required to adopt. BTP adopted this standard on 1 April 2002. The basic principles of NCRS are that if on the balance of probability a crime has been committed, it is recorded as a crime. The standard has made crime recording more victim focused. Crime statistics are not always accurate indicators of risk. Police activity to target particular offences, changes in reporting patterns and other factors can affect reported crime figures. For more information see the [BTP's Statistical Bulletin](#).

## **Passenger satisfaction**

Figures are collected through the National Passenger Survey (NPS) which provides a picture of customers' satisfaction with rail travel. Passenger opinions of train services are collected twice a year from a representative sample of passenger journeys. Passengers' overall satisfaction and satisfaction with 30 specific aspects of service can therefore be compared over time. The survey covers the Arriva Trains Wales routes of Cardiff and Valleys, Mid Wales and Borders, Interurban, North Wales and Borders, South Wales and Borders and West Wales.

Questionnaires are handed out at stations to passengers about to board a train, with a reply paid envelope provided for returning questionnaires. Fieldwork is carried out each spring (principally in February/March) and in the autumn (principally in September/October) over an 11 week period.

Quotas for returned questionnaires, and weighting for the survey results, are set overall and by weekday/weekend, journey purpose and station size based on information from each Train Operating Company (TOC). This sample design and weighting ensures that data is representative of all passenger journeys made on each TOC. National results are constructed by combining data for all TOCs together, weighting by number of journeys.

Approximately 33% of questionnaires that are given out are returned each survey. Returned questionnaires are checked to confirm that details provided are for a real journey and then the questionnaire response is assigned to the appropriate Train Operating Company (TOC).

[Details of the compliance of this survey with National Statistics standards.](#)

The survey itself can be found on the [Transport Focus website](#).

In the latest year due to the COVID-19 pandemic this survey is no longer completed, historic values for passenger satisfactions can be found on [Stats Wales](#) and [older releases of this bulletin](#). Transport Focus who usually conduct the survey have been completing [COVID Insight Surveys](#) online to see how people feel about using Rail Transport in the light of the pandemic.

Passenger satisfaction statistics are no longer considered National Statistics due to the survey only being carried out in the spring and autumn and also because they only ask respondents about their last journey, and not their broader satisfaction with the operator

## **2.4 Timeliness and punctuality**

The statistics in this bulletin relate to passenger journeys and crime up to the 2017-18 financial year, accidents and fatalities up to 2017 and passenger satisfaction up to autumn 2018.

## **2.5 Accessibility and clarity**

This statistical bulletin is pre-announced and then published on the Statistics & Research website and all the data in this bulletin as well as other years is available on the [StatsWales website](#).

## **2.6 Comparability and coherence**

See section 1.1.

## **3 National Statistics status**

The [United Kingdom Statistics Authority](#) has 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 Statistics](#).

National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value.

All official statistics should comply with all aspects of the Code of Practice for Statistics. They are awarded National Statistics status following an assessment by the UK Statistics Authority's regulatory arm. The Authority considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate.

The statistics underwent a [full assessment against the Code of Practice](#) in 2011.

It is Welsh Government's responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected of National Statistics. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, we will discuss any concerns with the Authority promptly. National Statistics status can be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained, and reinstated when standards are restored.

Since the assessment in 2011 we have continued to comply with the Code of Practice for Statistics, and have made the following improvements:

- Added to and refined information about dimensions of quality and described links to policy.
- Improved our understanding of the various data sources, their strengths and limitations.

- Made the statistics more accessible by making much of the underlying data available via our online data portal [StatsWales](#).
- Improved presentation within the statistical bulletin by drawing out key features visually, and improved visuals by de-cluttering and standardising charts and tables.

## 4 Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFG)

The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales. The Act puts in place seven wellbeing goals for Wales. These are for a more equal, prosperous, resilient, healthier and globally responsible Wales, with cohesive communities and a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. Under section (10)(1) of the Act, the Welsh Ministers must (a) publish indicators (“national indicators”) that must be applied for the purpose of measuring progress towards the achievement of the wellbeing goals, and (b) lay a copy of the national indicators before Senedd Cymru. Under section 10(8) of the Well-being of Future Generations Act, where the Welsh Ministers revise the national indicators, they must as soon as reasonably practicable (a) publish the indicators as revised and (b) lay a copy of them before the Senedd. These national indicators were laid before the Senedd in 2021. The indicators laid on 14 December 2021 replace the set laid on 16 March 2016.

Information on the indicators, along with narratives for each of the wellbeing goals and associated technical information is available in the [Wellbeing of Wales report](#).

Further information on the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#).

The statistics included in this release could also provide supporting narrative to the national indicators and be used by public services boards in relation to their local well-being assessments and local well-being plans.

## 5 Further details

The document is available at <https://gov.wales/rail-transport>

## 6 Next update

April 2023 (Provisional)

## 7 We want your feedback

We welcome any feedback on any aspect of these statistics which can be provided by email to: [stats.transport@gov.wales](mailto:stats.transport@gov.wales)

## 8 Open Government Licence

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