About this factsheet

This factsheet provides an overview of key statistics on rail in Great Britain. These statistics relate to the national rail network, so do not include underground, light rail and tram systems.

Key Statistics

Rail usage

The number of rail journeys has doubled in the last 20 years.

Performance & Infrastructure

89.7% of trains were ‘on time’ in 2014/15.

There was 15,760 km of rail route in Great Britain in 2014/15, and a total of 2,552 passenger stations on the rail network.

Passenger Numbers & Crowding

The recent growth in rail travel increased the levels of crowding into major cities in England and Wales in 2014.

Finance & Safety

Government support to the rail industry was £4.8 billion, and franchised train operators generated £8.8 billion of passenger revenue.

There were no passenger or staff fatalities due to train accidents in Great Britain in 2014/15 for the eighth year running.

Regional rail usage

The number of rail journeys in the United Kingdom was the second highest of any country in the European Union in 2014. Germany was the only country to record more with a total of 2.7 billion rail journeys.

Sources:

1. Office of Rail and Road (ORR)
2. Eurostat

Last updated: December 2015
Public Performance Measure (PPM)

The Public Performance Measure (PPM)\(^1\) gives the percentage of trains ‘on time’. Trains are deemed to be ‘on time’ if they arrive within 5 minutes of their scheduled destination time, or for long-distance services within 10 minutes.

For 2014/15, 89.7% of trains were ‘on time’ in Great Britain. The proportion of long-distance trains ‘on time’ remains lower than regional and London & South East services.

Following restrictions brought in after the Hatfield crash in October 2000, PPM fell sharply across Great Britain, and it took nearly a decade to recover to previous levels. A national regulatory target of 92.5% is set for Network Rail.

Infrastructure Facts

- The length of route open to all traffic in 2014/15 in Great Britain was 15,760 kilometres.\(^1\)
- In 2014/15, 33.5% of the route was electrified. This compares to only 22.7% in 1985/86.\(^1\)
- There were 2,552 passenger stations in Great Britain in 2014/15.\(^1\)
- In 2014/15, carbon emissions per rail passenger kilometre fell by over 21% compared to 2005/06.\(^1\)
- The average age of rolling stock in Great Britain at the end of 2014/15 was 20.2 years.\(^1\)

Performance comparisons with railways in the rest of Europe are available for the 2012 calendar year.\(^3\)

For regional services (which includes London & South East services for the United Kingdom), 92% of services were ‘on time’. This ranks Great Britain 17th out of 22 countries in the survey.

92% of long-distance services arrived at their final destination within 15 minutes of their scheduled arrival time. This ranks Great Britain 7th out of 22 countries in the survey.

Average age of rolling stock

- The average age of rolling stock in Great Britain at the end of 2014/15 was 20.2 years.\(^1\)

International infrastructure comparison:

The United Kingdom was ranked 16th for quality of railroad infrastructure out of the 104 countries sampled by the World Economic Forum for 2014/15.\(^2\)

The leading countries in the world are Japan, Switzerland and Hong Kong.

Rail Freight

- In recent years, around 8 to 9% of all freight moved in Great Britain was by rail. In 2014/15 the amount of freight moved by rail was 22 billion net tonne kilometres. 29% of the total freight moved by rail in 2014/15 was coal, a decrease from 36% in 2013/14.\(^1\)

Sources:
1. Office of Rail and Road (ORR)
2. World Economic Forum: Global Competitiveness Index 2014/15
The PiXC crowding measure in London over both peaks has increased to 4.1% in 2014 from 3.1% in 2013. This shows the direct impact of the recent growth in rail travel.

Level of crowding on London & South East rail services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>AM Peak (7-10am)</th>
<th>PM Peak (4-7pm)</th>
<th>Total peak PiXC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>8%</td>
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<td>2010</td>
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<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Passengers in Excess of Capacity

AM peak arrivals and crowding for London terminals

AM peak arrivals and crowding for major cities in England & Wales

These statistics present information about rail passenger numbers on trains in several major cities in 2014, as well as levels of crowding. They are based on passenger counts carried out by train operators in autumn 2014. ‘PiXC’ (percentage of passengers in excess of the train’s capacity) is a measure of crowding.

Sources:
1. Department for Transport Rail Statistics
2. Office of Rail and Road (ORR)
In 2014/15, Government support to the rail industry was £4.8 billion. This was mostly comprised of the £3.8 billion grant paid to Network Rail, and a £1.1 billion grant for Crossrail. Train operating Companies paid a premium of £0.8 billion.¹

In 2014/15, franchised train operators received £8.8 billion in revenue from passengers. 31% of this came from off-peak tickets, 28% from anytime/peak tickets, and 24% from season tickets. The remainder came from other ticket types.¹

Government support and Passenger Revenue

National rail fares increased in real terms by 24% between 1995 and 2015, which corresponds to a 117% nominal increase.¹

Regulated fares, such as off-peak and season tickets, increased on average by 7% in real terms between 1995 and 2015. This compares with an increase of 33% for unregulated standard class fares, and 62% for first class fares.¹

Rail fares

Rail has one of the lowest passenger casualty rates of any mode of transport.²

For the eighth year running there were no passenger or staff fatalities in train accidents in 2014/15.²

The number of signals passed at dangers (SPADs) was 298, of which 14 were potentially severe. These figures have remained relatively constant over the past eight years.²

Safety statistics for 2014/15²

Sources:
1. Office of Rail and Road (ORR)  
2. RSSB  
3. European Railways Agency