

Network Rail CAN do more to improve poor service performance, say ORR

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Research from the [Office of Rail and Road \(ORR\)](#) has revealed that fewer trains are arriving on time and there has been an increase in cancellations compared to the start of this financial year.

The assessment of [Network Rail's](#) delivery of train service performance gave a damning view of service delivery, revealing that the percentage of trains arriving on time at stations was 70.2% in September 2022, compared to 72.6% in April 2022.

Freight performance is also at its lowest point in the past five years.

Although the ORR recognise that factors such as extreme weather, issues with operator staffing and industrial action have impacted the network beyond Network Rail's control, elements that can be attributed to Network Rail have also increased in all five regions.

ORR chief executive John Larkinson said: "Passengers and freight are suffering from poor train performance, with issues extending across all of Network Rail's regions.

“There are of course factors beyond Network Rail’s control to delivering good train performance, including further industrial action and potential extreme weather events.

“And there are areas such as trespass and theft where Network Rail has worked hard to reduce delays. But it can nevertheless do more.

“It is essential that the company now delivers on the specific interventions we have set out today. We will continue to scrutinise delivery and will take further action if there is insufficient progress.”

To deliver better performance for passengers and freight, ORR has identified five areas where Network Rail can help improve the service:

- In the Wales and Western region, poor performance is in part due to poor reliability of railway infrastructure, in particular its track assets. The regulator required the region to produce an improvement plan and is actively monitoring its delivery. ORR will step in if the planned improvements are not delivered.
- Track asset reliability also needs to improve in the North West and Central region.
- The Eastern region needs to improve the resilience of its overhead lines to prevent failure and subsequent disruption to passengers and freight.
- Renewal of track on the Thameslink ‘core’, the lines that carry trains between north and south London in the Southern region is needed following several infrastructure failures during the summer that led to a high volume of significant incidents, cancellations and delays.
- Delivery of performance improvement plans in Scotland need to continue to bring performance levels back to acceptable levels.