

ORR data confirms the scale of the financial challenge the rail industry faces

December 15, 2022



A report released by the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) has revealed total passenger revenue between July and September was 71 per cent for the same quarter three years ago and passenger usage was 80.3 per cent.

In response to the figures, Rail Partners' Chief Executive Andy Bagnall said: "The latest ORR passenger usage statistics underline the financial challenges facing the rail industry from the pandemic and the current industrial action."

The full ORR report can be found [here](#). It showed that:

- Total passenger revenue was £2.2 billion in the latest quarter (1 July-30 September). This is 71.0% of the £3.1 billion for the same quarter three years ago (when adjusted for inflation).
- Passenger usage remains considerably lower than it was before the pandemic with 395 million journeys during July to September 2022, equating to 80.3% of the 448 million journeys recorded in the same quarter in 2019.

Rail Partners responds to ORR's passenger usage statistics

In response to ORR's passenger usage statistics, Rail Partners' Chief Executive, Andy Bagnall, said: "The latest ORR passenger usage statistics underline the financial challenges facing the rail industry from the pandemic and the current industrial action.

"It's encouraging to see passenger numbers are improving, but to secure the long-term sustainability of the railway and in turn the jobs and economic benefits it supports, the contractual model must now evolve to accelerate recovery.

"Operators must be given the commercial freedoms to attract customers back and make rail an attractive, sustainable and reliable choice for people up and down the country."

A Rail Delivery Group spokesperson said: "This data confirms the scale of the financial challenge the industry faces as it recovers from the pandemic and the pressing need for reform to put it on a sustainable footing.

"Passenger numbers are still well below the pre-pandemic level - with fare revenue in the latest quarter just 71% of what it was in 2019.

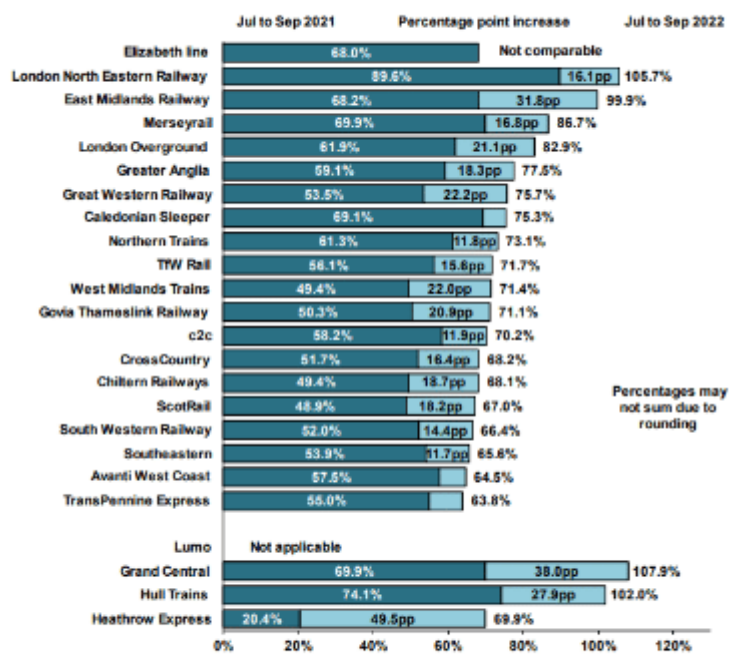
"We want to give our people a pay rise, We are disappointed the RMT leadership has not accepted our very fair offer of an 8% increase in 22/23 pay packets which could have ended this dispute.

"Instead of further undermining the recovery of the industry, we need the unions to work with us to deliver long overdue reforms to outdated working practices which will improve services and secure the long-term future of the railway and its workforce."

London North Eastern Railway (LNER) continues to have the largest recovery of franchised operators as customers return to rail, topping the table for the sixth consecutive quarter.

The data shows that LNER has continued to welcome more customers onboard than compared with pre pandemic times, with passenger journeys now at 105 per cent when compared with the same period for 2019. LNER data shows that so far this year more than 21 million passenger journeys have been made on LNER services.

Passenger journeys by operator, July to September 2021 and 2022 as a percentage of journeys in 2019 (Table 1223)



Passenger rail usage July to September 2022

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Source: ORR (Office of Rail and Road)

David Horne, Managing Director at LNER said: “We are delighted to be welcoming more and more people back to rail and we continue to work hard to attract even more people to travel with us by transforming the rail experience.

“We’ve added new destinations to our route, including our direct services between Middlesbrough and London King’s Cross which are celebrating their first anniversary. Our award-winning app makes it simpler and smarter for customers to find best value fares, reserve their seats and sign up for live journey updates and rewards by joining our popular LNER Perks loyalty scheme.

“We’ve invested more than £800,000 in our station waiting rooms and opened the first Family Waiting Room at London King’s Cross where families can relax, further enhancing our customer experience.”

Customers travelling in Standard are able to order refreshments to be delivered directly to their seat using LNER’s ‘Lets Eat At Your Seat Service’ while customers in First can enjoy a complimentary selection of locally produced food and drink.

In addition to LNER’s ongoing investment and digital innovations, Easter tickets have already been put on sale, enabling more customers to plan ahead and book their Easter escape.

Photo credit: LNER