

ORR: Rail passenger number recovery continued despite Omicron restrictions

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Omicron restrictions from October to December failed to halt an upward trend in people going back to the railways.

The Office of Rail and Road (ORR) says that passenger journeys increased to 285 million during this time and the increase in passengers seen across 2021-2022 was not halted.

The numbers were the highest since January to March 2020.

ORR's figures show rail usage averaged 62% of pre-pandemic numbers between October and December 2021.

Estimates published by the Department for Transport show rail use peaked at 72% in November 2021 but fell to around 33% between Christmas and New Year. The most recent stats published by DfT show journeys at around 70% of pre-pandemic figures.

The recovery continues to be stronger across long-distance journeys, compared to regional journeys and

journeys made in London and the South East.

New open-access operator, Lumo – which operates between London and Edinburgh – had around 100,000 passengers use its service since its launch in October 2021.

Journeys made with advance tickets reached 95% of pre-pandemic usage during this period, while off-peak tickets (up 47 percentage points) and anytime/peak tickets (up 36 percentage points) also had a substantial increase in usage compared with a year ago.

The share of journeys made using season tickets fell from 34% in 2019 to just 17% in 2021.

Total passenger revenue in Great Britain between 1 October and 31 December 2021 was £1.7 billion, with franchised passenger revenue per journey £5.98