Rail transport, 2021-2022

Main Points

Rail transport services in 2021-22 (1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022) continued to be affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in Wales, although less so than in 2020-21. Please see page 2 for further detail.

- In 2021-22, there were 17.7 million rail passenger journeys which either started or ended in Wales. This was more than triple the number in the previous year, but a 41% decrease compared to 2019-20.
- Over two-thirds (64%) of these journeys were within Wales (Figure 1).

Rail passenger journeys within Wales increased to 11.3 million in 2021-22.

- Rail passenger journeys within Wales more than tripled compared to 2020-21, but were only just over half the number in 2019-20.

- Cardiff was the most common destination for within-Wales journeys (4.4 million passenger journeys), accounting for 38.9% of all journeys.

In 2022 there were 8 railway fatalities, 6 of which were suicides.

- Suicides have accounted for the majority of rail fatalities since 2012 (Figure 4).

In 2021-22, offences on Welsh railways increased by 35% compared to the previous year, but were similar to the number in 2019-20.

- There were 1,440 notifiable offences reported on Welsh railways in 2021-22, an increase of 377 from the previous year (Figure 5).

About this bulletin

This annual statistical bulletin reports information on rail passenger journeys, punctuality, accidents, fatalities and crime on the rail network. The tables of underlying data are available on the StatsWales website.

In this bulletin

Passenger journeys -

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, and these effects continued, though to a lesser extent, into 2021-22. In Wales, the number of rail passenger journeys in 2020-21 decreased by 82.8% when compared to 2019-20. The number increased in 2021-22, but not to Figures seen pre-pandemic.

Rail passenger journeys, Wales

In 2021-22, there were 17.7 million rail passenger journeys recorded which either started or ended in Wales more than triple the number of journeys in 2020-21 (5.1 million), , but a 41% decrease on 2019-20 levels. 64.0% of these journeys were within Wales and 36.0% were between Wales and other regions outside Wales (Figure 1). Despite the increases in passenger journeys the numbers remain below the pre-pandemic levels.

The number of rail passenger journeys increased annually between 1995-96 and 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.

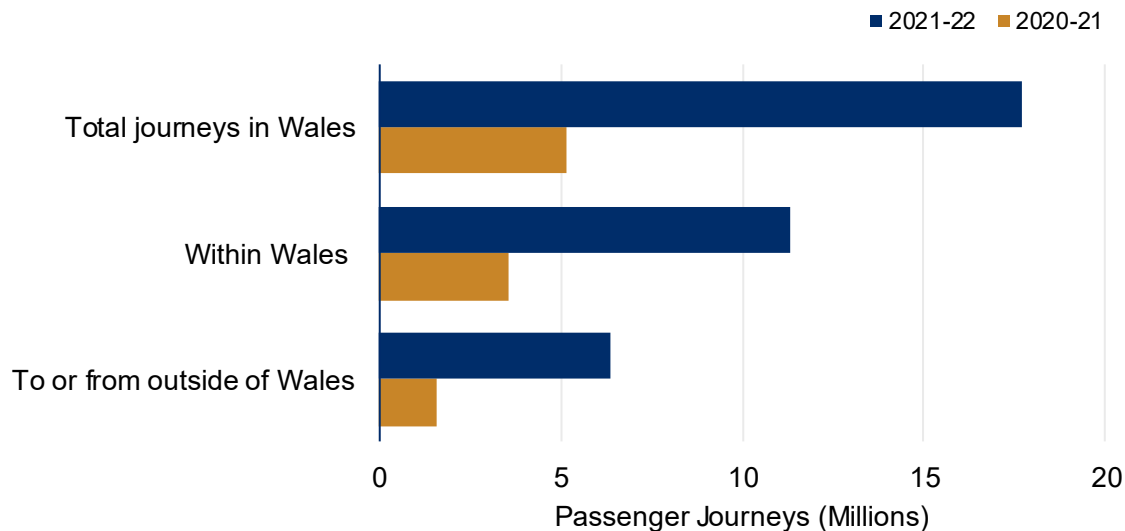## Figure 1: Rail passenger journeys by direction 2001- 02 to 2021- 22
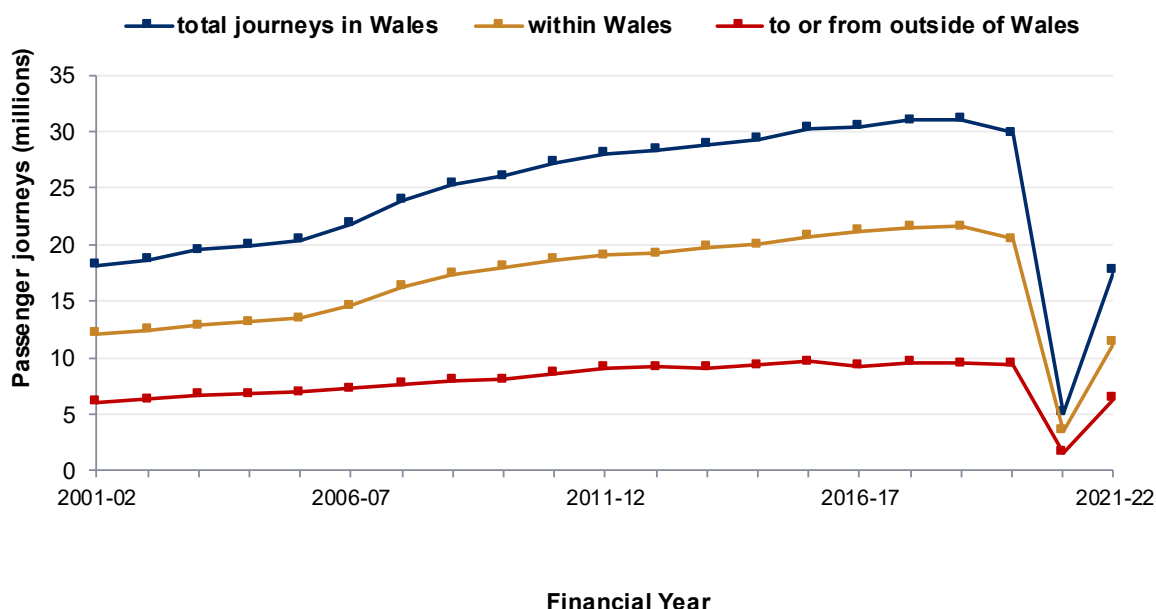
Source: WG analysis of ORR, National Rail Trends, Regional usage profiles

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

Rail journeys within Wales and journeys 'to or from outside of Wales' more than tripled between 2020-21 and 2021-22 (Figure 2). Total journeys in Wales includes all journeys that are within Wales and all journeys across GB regions that either begin/end in Wales.

**Figure 2: Rail passenger journeys, Wales 2020-21 and 2021-22**

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 (2 million), Wales and North West (1.5 million) and Wales and London (1.4 million). The journeys between Wales and these three regions represent 76% of all outside journeys 'to and from outside of Wales' in 2021-22 (Figure 3).

Total rail passenger journeys in Wales accounted for less than 2% of all journeys in Great Britain in 2021-22.

Figure 3: Rail passenger journeys 'to or from outside of Wales' 2021-22
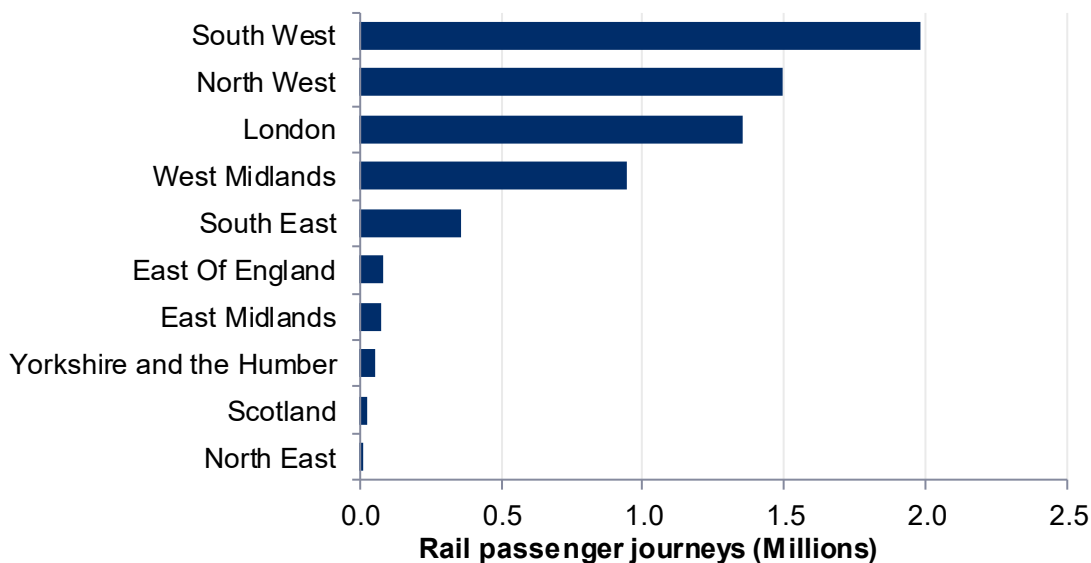
Source: WG analysis of ORR data, National Rail Trends, Regional usage profiles

Punctuality

Punctuality measures train reliability to passengers in its operations against their planned timetable. A higher percentage of trains arriving within 1 or 3 minutes indicates good punctuality while a lower percentage of cancellations indicates better reliability on all train journeys.

On average over the four quarters in 2021-22, 83% of Transport for Wales trains arrived within 3 minutes of scheduled arrival time and 67% of them within 1 minute of the scheduled time. During the same year 4% of trains were cancelled. (Table 1)

Table 1: Arrival times and cancellations, 2019-20 to 2021-22

			per cent and number
Arrival within	**2019-20 (c)**	**2020-21 (c)**	**2021-22**
1 mins (%)	60%	81%	67%
3 mins (%)	79%	92%	83%
15 mins (%)	98%	99%	98%
Cancelled (%)	3%	2%	4%
Trains planned (number)	338,262	218,328	259,457

Source: WG analysis of ORR data

Notes:

(a) Rates used are average of quarterly ratings per financial year

(b) Cancelled rates are moving average per quarter for each financial year

(c) Numbers have been corrected compared to previous versions

The time series in table 1 covers 3 years due to a change in measures. A longer time series is published by the Office for Road and Regulation.

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 52.9% in the number of incidents recorded in 2022 compared with 2021. Rail incident numbers are relatively volatile and there is no discernible long-term trend that can be ascertained. There were 26 recorded incidents in 2022 comprising of 18 obstructions, 2 fires and 6 missile incidents (definition of incidents).

Table 2: Train incidents, Wales, 2018 to 2022

|					Number
Train incidents	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**
Collisions	0	0	0	0	0
Derailments	0	0	0	0	0
Obstructions	29	26	14	9	18
Fires	4	1	1	6	2
Missiles	2	5	3	2	6
Total	**35**	**32**	**18**	**17**	**26**

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

Note:

All numbers for previous years have been revised compared to last published data

Railway fatalities are where death occurs within one year of an incident on the rail network. In 2022 there were 8 fatalities on the rail network in Wales, 6 of which were suicides. Suicides have accounted for the majority of rail fatalities since 2012.

Figure 4: Railway fatalities, Wales 2014 to 2022
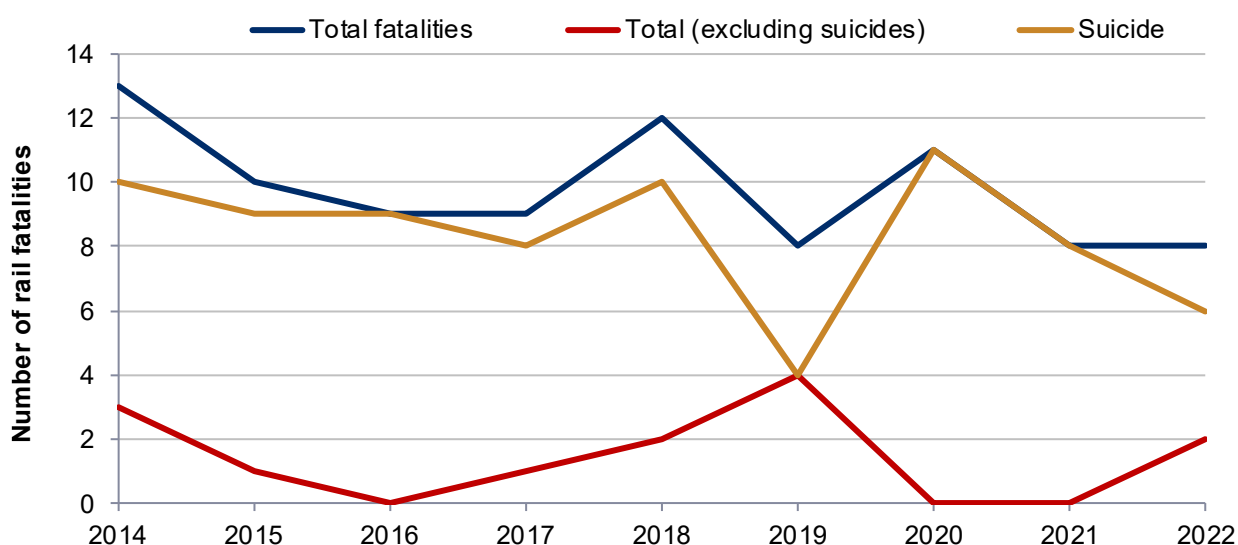
Source: WG analysis of RSSB data provided by the ORR

Notes:

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

5

Rail crime

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

In 2021-22, there were a total of 1,440 recorded notifiable offences in Wales, an increase of 377 (35%) compared with the previous year and a similar number compared to 2019-20 (Figure 5). Since 2013-14, the number of offences in Wales had been relatively stable before increasing in 2017-18. In 2020-21 the number of offences in Wales decreased by 27%, which is likely a reflection of reduced rail passenger journeys as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

The largest categories of recorded offences were violence against the person (420), public order (295) and criminal damage/malicious mischief (240), which accounted for 66% of all offences.

Figure 5: Rail network notifiable crime/offences in Wales, 2013-14 to 2021-22
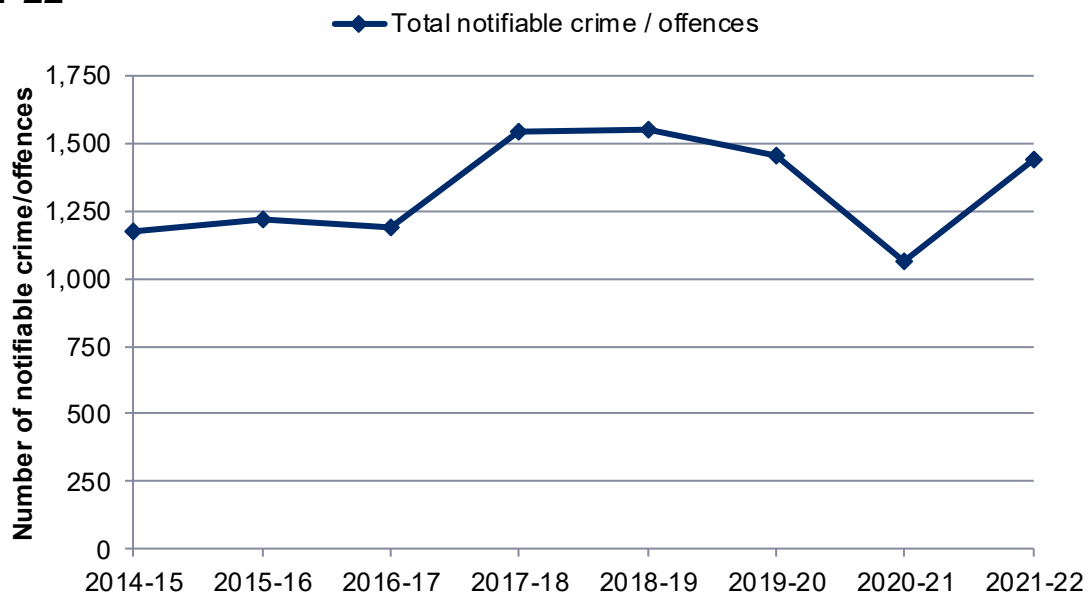
Source: WG analysis of the British Transport Police Statistical Bulletin

Compared to 2019-20, criminal damage/malicious mischief in 2021-22 increased by 34%, Violence against the person increased by 32% and sexual crimes increased by 23%.

Figure 6: Rail notifiable crime/offences in Wales, 2019-20 to 2021-22
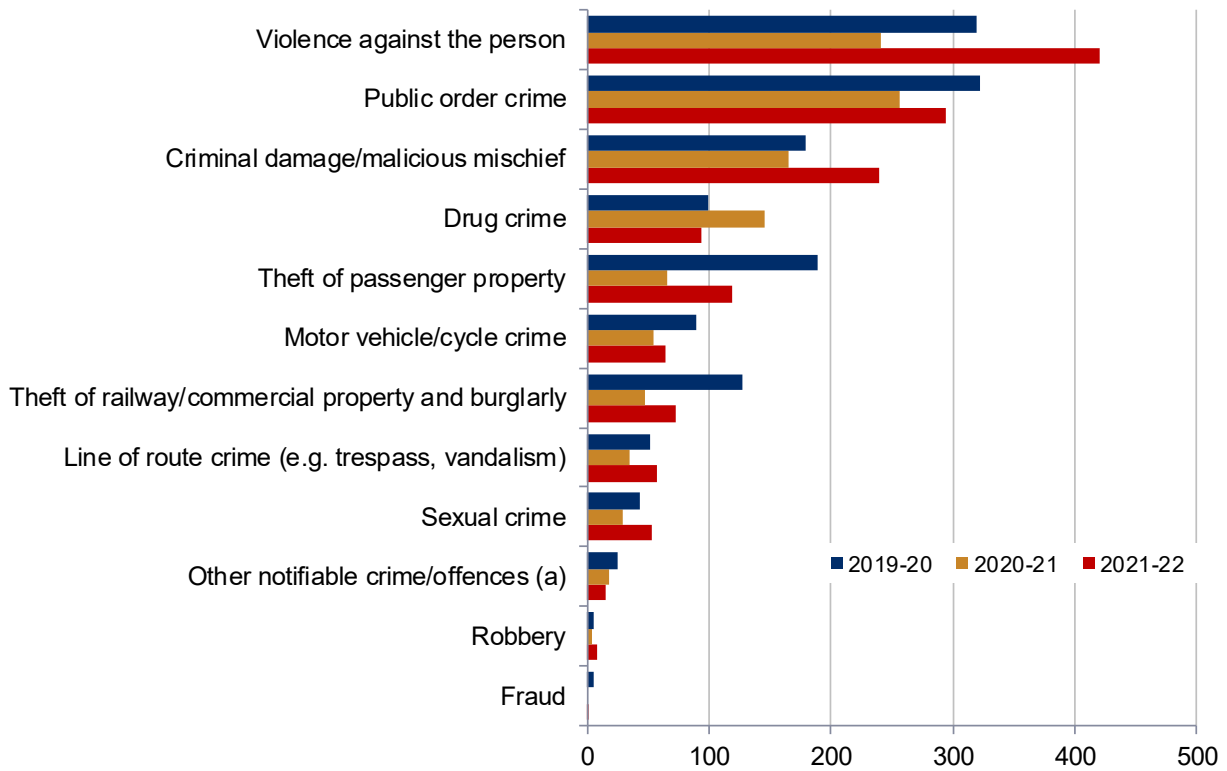
Source: WG analysis of the British Transport Police Statistical Bulletin

Note:
(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.

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. A similar release focussing on rail station entries and exits in Wales is also produced every year and can be accessed here [Rail Station Usage Statistical Bulletin](#)

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 2021-22 – 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.

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.

Train incidence

Incident	Definition
Collisions	Collisions between trains, with road vehicles, with a buffer stop or with members of the public
Derailments	Train derailment by self or in collisions with another train
Obstructions	Train striking animal, level crossing gate/ Striking level crossing barrier or other objects
Fires	Mainly incidents of train fires
Missiles	Events when a train is struck by missiles/stone(s) and/or other objects being thrown at a train.

Passenger satisfaction

The passenger satisfaction survey carried out by Transport focus has been discontinued as of 2020 so is no longer included within this release. Historic information on passenger satisfaction is published on StatsWales and previous versions of this statistical bulletin.

2.4 Timeliness and punctuality

The statistics in this bulletin relate to passenger journeys and crime up to the 2021-22 financial year, accidents and fatalities up to 2021.

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

These Rail Transport statistics are comparable with trends in other nations within Great Britain. See section 1.1 for additional information.

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 Figures 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 wellbeing assessments and local wellbeing plans.

5 Further details

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

6 Next update

March 2024 (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

8 Open Government Licence

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