Scottish Transport Statistics 2023

Rail

Contents

Introduction

This chapter provides information on rail services, such as the numbers of passenger journeys of various types, passenger receipts, punctuality and passenger satisfaction, the amount of freight lifted by origin, destination and commodity, lines open for traffic, number of stations, railway accidents, and some statistics about the Glasgow Subway.

For simplicity, the Scottish passenger rail operator is referred to throughout as ScotRail. From 31 March 1997 to 16 October 2004, it was operated by National Express, under the name ScotRail; between 17 October 2004 and 31 March 2015, it was operated by First Group, under the name First ScotRail. From 1 April 2015 Abellio and Serco began operating ScotRail and Caledonian Sleeper services respectively. ScotRail is now in public ownership and the Scottish Government took control on 1 April 2022. Scottish Rail Holdings (SRH) were appointed to run the ScotRail service initially in April 22. Caledonian Sleeper was added to the SRH portfolio in March 23..

ScotRail introduced a new methodology which better estimates Strathclyde Zonecard journeys from 2009/10. To allow meaningful year on year comparisons to be made passenger figures from 2003/04 onwards have been revised. Note that Office of Rail and Road figures are compiled on a different basis and do not adjust for this.

> **Rail travel in Scotland was profoundly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, with restrictions on travel and daily activity in place for large parts of 2020. Comparisons with 2020 and 2021 should therefore be treated with caution.**

Key Points

- **There were 64 million passenger journeys on ScotRail services in 2022-23, an increase of 36% from 2021-22**
- **As of the end of 2021/22 Scotland had 2,730 kms of rail network and 360 stations.**

Main Points

Journeys and Trends

Although passenger journeys on ScotRail services were significantly affected by the coronavirus pandemic they have been recovering and have now increased by 36%

to 64 million in the 2022-23 financial year. This is still 34% less than 2019 (pre-panemic) *(Table 7.1)*.

There were 49 million rail passenger journeys originating in Scotland in the 2021-22 financial year. Recovering from the Covid pandemic this was 228% more than the previous year. Following a fall in the early 1990's, passenger numbers increased in every year after 1994-95, to 64.9 million in 1999-2000. However, they fell by 0.1 million in 2000-01 due to the effects on rail services of the speed restrictions, imposed following the accident at Hatfield in October 2000 (e.g. the Edinburgh/Glasgow daytime frequency was halved for about two months, and some sleeper services did not run for about five months). There were falls of 0.2 million in 2001-02 and 0.6 million in 2002-03 due to the effects on services of the ScotRail drivers' pay dispute, including some one day strikes and a special timetable (involving a reduction of about a quarter in weekday services) from January to May 2002. Subsequently, patronage recovered, with increases from 2004-05 onwards. (*Table H1*) *(Table 7.2)*

ORR data also show 3.7 million cross-border passenger journeys originating outwith Scotland in 2021-22, 3.0 million more than in 2020-21. Cross-border passenger journeys originating outwith Scotland have been increasing since 1994-95 (2.1 million). However, they fell slightly in 2000-01 and 2002-03 due to the reasons referred to above. *(Table 7.2)*

Passenger revenue from journeys originating *in* Scotland was £345 million in 2021-22 of which cross-border journeys originating in Scotland accounted for £144 million. A similar amount (£144 million) of passenger revenue was generated from passenger journeys originating *outwith* Scotland and ending in Scotland. *(Table 7.2)*

Journey Stages and Distances

Tables 7.4 to 7.8 show passenger journeys as recorded by ORR. Of the 53 million passenger journeys to/from/within Scotland and England in 2021-22, 86% were solely within Scotland. London, the North West and North East of England were the main origins/destinations of cross-border passenger journeys with around 2 million journeys each *(Table 7.4)*.

In 2021-22, there were 45.1 million passenger journeys, wholly within Scotland. Forty three per cent of start and end points were in Glasgow and 11% were in Edinburgh. There were 7.4 million cross border journeys starting or finishing in Scotland. Of these, 58% started or finished in Edinburgh and 23 per cent started or finished in Glasgow. *(Table 7.6a and 7.6c)*

Table 7.6c shows travel between Local Authorities in 2021-22. Of the journeys wholly within Scotland, 18.2 million (40%) start and finish in Glasgow. 1.6 million are made between Glasgow and North and South Lanarkshire. *(Table 7.6c)*

Stations

In 2022-23, Glasgow Central was the busiest national rail station in Scotland, with 21 million passenger journeys. Edinburgh Waverley was used by 18 million passengers, Glasgow Queen Street by 12 million, Paisley Gilmour Street by 3 million, Haymarket by 2.3 million, Partick by 2.1 million, Aberdeen by 2.0 million and Stirling was 1.9 million. Including those already listed, there were 51 stations for which half a million or more passenger journeys each were recorded in the national ticketing system. *(Table 7.7)*

Of the stations in Scotland which have opened (or re-opened) since 1970, Exhibition Centre (1,157,900), Argyle Street (809,900), Livingston North (808,300), Bathgate (769,500), Bridgeton (500,300), Edinburgh Park (395,600), Uphall (358,100), Alloa (355,300) and Musselburgh (350,300) had the largest passenger volumes in 2022-23*. (Table 7.8)*

Punctuality and Service

In 2022-23, 89.0% of ScotRail services, 81.7% of London North Eastern Railway, 80.8% of Cross Country, 69.2% of Avanti West Coast and 86.8% of Caledonian Sleeper trains arrived on time. For GB long-distance operators and GB regional operators it was 79.7% and 84.5% respectively. *(Table 7.9)*

In 2022-23, 94.4% of ScotRail trains arrived within 10 minutes of the scheduled arrival time, 1.6% arrived 20 or more minutes late, and 2.4% were cancelled.   *(Table 7.10)*

Transport focus are going to be using a 'full new' GB rail survey planned to start in April 2024. In the meantime the results shown for 2022 come from a 'Your Rail Journey' (field trials) survey done in March 2022 . However results should be treated with considerable caution. The data have not been weighted and the sample sizes are 200 or more. In 2022, 84% of ScotRail passengers were either *satisfied* or said *good* when asked their opinion of their overall journey. The table shows ScotRail passengers' ratings of 7 aspects of service: in 2022, there were 6 for which at least 72% of those surveyed were satisfied, or said good and 4 above 80%. *(Table 7.11)*

The Scottish Household Survey also collects data from Scottish households on satisfaction with rail services. In 2021, around 78-97% were satisfied with train services offered, their timeliness, cleanliness, safe/secure day/evening and ability to

find out about tickets and routes. There were noticeable differences in those who felt safe on the train during the day and in the evening (day: 97%, evening: 78%). 'Fares are good value' had the lowest agreement rate for trains with 54% of respondents doing so. The question will be asked in alternate years from 2019. *(Table 7.20)*

Rail Freight

In 2022-23, 4 million tonnes of freight was lifted in Scotland by rail, 5% less than the previous year. *(Table 7.12)*

Railway Network

The total route length of the railway network in Scotland is 2,730 kilometres, of which 890 kilometres is electrified. These figures do not represent the total length of railway track: a kilometre of single-track and a kilometre of double-track both count as one kilometre of route length. *(Table 7.14)*

The number of passenger stations has increased from 340 in 2003-04 to 360 in 2021-22. *(Table 7.15)*

The local authorities which had the largest numbers of stations located in their areas in 2021-22 were Glasgow (61) and Highland (59). Since the completion of the Borders Railway Project in 2015 there are now 4 stations in the Midlothian and 3 in the Scottish Borders council areas, see here for more information Borders Railway Line | Edinburgh | Tweedbank | ScotRail *(Table 7.16)*

Subway

On the Glasgow Subway, recovering from the Covid 19 pandemic the number of passenger journeys increased by 47 per cent between 2021-22 and 2022-23. Passenger receipts (excluding other revenue) were £18.8 million in 2022-23, 47% more in cash terms, but 31% more in real terms, than in the previous year*. (Table 7.17)*

Accidents

The number of railway accidents fell from 44 to 29 in 2022. Injuries from accidents on trains increased from 118 to 142 between 2021 and 2022. Injuries from accidents in train stations increased from 371 in 2021 to 471 in 2022. The total number of deaths fell from 24 to 20 between 2021 and 2022. The overall number of injuries relating to railways rose from 678 in 2021 to 782 in 2022. (Table 7.18)

One death was attributed to a level crossing user, one to a passenger and 18 to suicides in 2022. (Table 7.19)

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