



# Freight Rail Usage

## 2018-19 Q2 Statistical Release

Publication date: 18 December 2018

Next publication date: 7 March 2019

### Background

This release contains information on rail freight usage in Great Britain with the latest quarterly data referring to July, August and September of 2018.

The statistics cover **freight moved** (disaggregated by seven commodities), **freight lifted**, **freight delays per 100 train km**, and **freight train km by operator**.

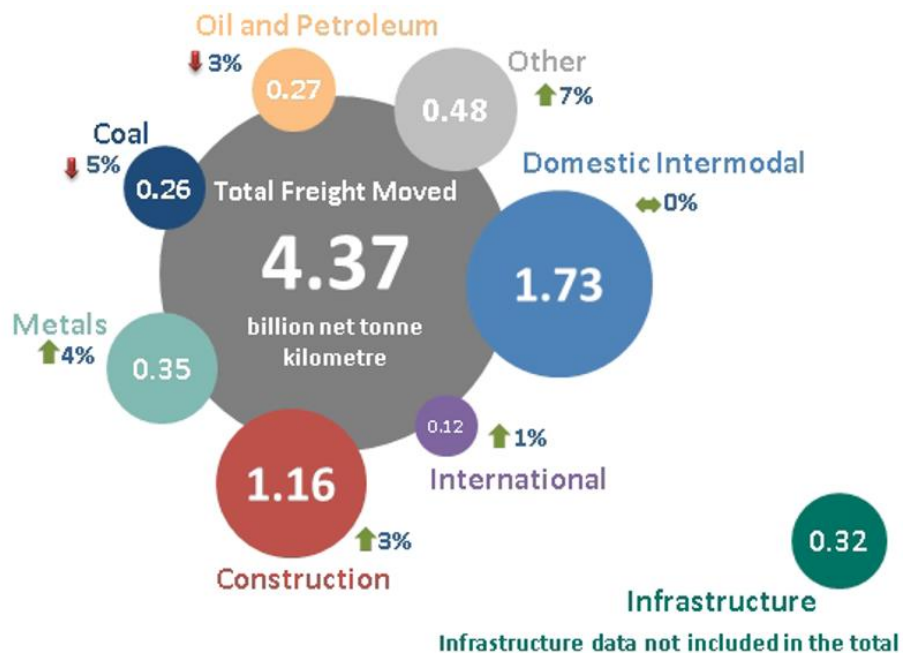
Data are sourced from Network Rail, Freight Operating Companies (FOCs), and the Department for Transport (DfT).

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**Total rail freight moved has increased compared to 2017-18 Q2, but freight lifted has dropped to its lowest level recorded in the time series.**

### Freight moved by commodity, Great Britain, 2018-19 Q2



The total volume of rail **freight moved** in 2018-19 Q2 increased by 2% compared to 2017-18 Q2 to 4.4 billion net tonne kilometres. Despite the continued fall in Coal and Oil & Petroleum, the increases in Metals, Construction and Other contributed to the overall increase.

The total amount of **freight lifted** in 2018-19 Q2 was 18.2 million tonnes, a decrease of 1% on the same quarter last year. This is the lowest quarterly total for freight lifted since the start of the time series in 1996-97.

**Normalised freight delay** in 2018-19 Q2 dropped to 11.5 minutes per 100 train kilometres, a 3% decrease compared to 2017-18 Q2.

Total **freight train kilometres** run was at 8.5 million kilometres, approximately the same distance travelled in 2017-18 Q2 and 2016-17 Q2.

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# 1. Freight moved



**Freight moved** data, measured in net tonne kilometres, shows the amount of freight which is moved on the railway network, taking into account the weight of the load and the distance carried.

Freight moved is disaggregated by seven commodities which are also summed to provide an overall total freight moved. The seven commodities are coal, metals, construction, oil and petroleum, international, domestic intermodal and other.

In addition to the seven commodities listed above the amount of goods used for railway engineering work is also reported, under the 'infrastructure' category. This is not included in the totals published in the freight moved tables and charts.

## 2018-19 Quarter 2 Results

In 2018-19 Q2, total freight moved was 4.4 billion net tonne kilometres, an increase of 2% on 2017-18 Q2. This is the highest quarterly total recorded since 2016-17 Q4.

Five out of the seven commodities recorded an increase in Q2 in comparison with the same quarter last year.

The highest percentage increase was in the 'Other' commodity, which recorded an increase of 7% (33 million net tonne kilometres) compared to Q2 last year. The Other commodity consists of many smaller categories including biomass, parcels/mail and domestic waste. An increase in waste travelling by rail freight could be attributed to new traffic travelling between Manchester and Leeds as mentioned in the interim business report from Network Rail<sup>1</sup>.

The sharpest decrease was for coal, which has dropped by 5% compared to 2017-18 Q2. The 2018-19 Q2 level is now only 13% of that recorded in 2013-14 Q2, after which the numbers began to fall steeply. This reduction in coal moved by rail is a consequence of the government's plans to eradicate coal consumption in the UK by 2025<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> <https://cdn.networkrail.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Interim-Business-Performance-Report-December18.pdf> (page 34-35)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-34851718>

Figure 1.01: The volume of rail freight moved (billion net tonne km), Great Britain, 1998-99 Q2 to 2018-19 Q2 ([Table 13.7](#))

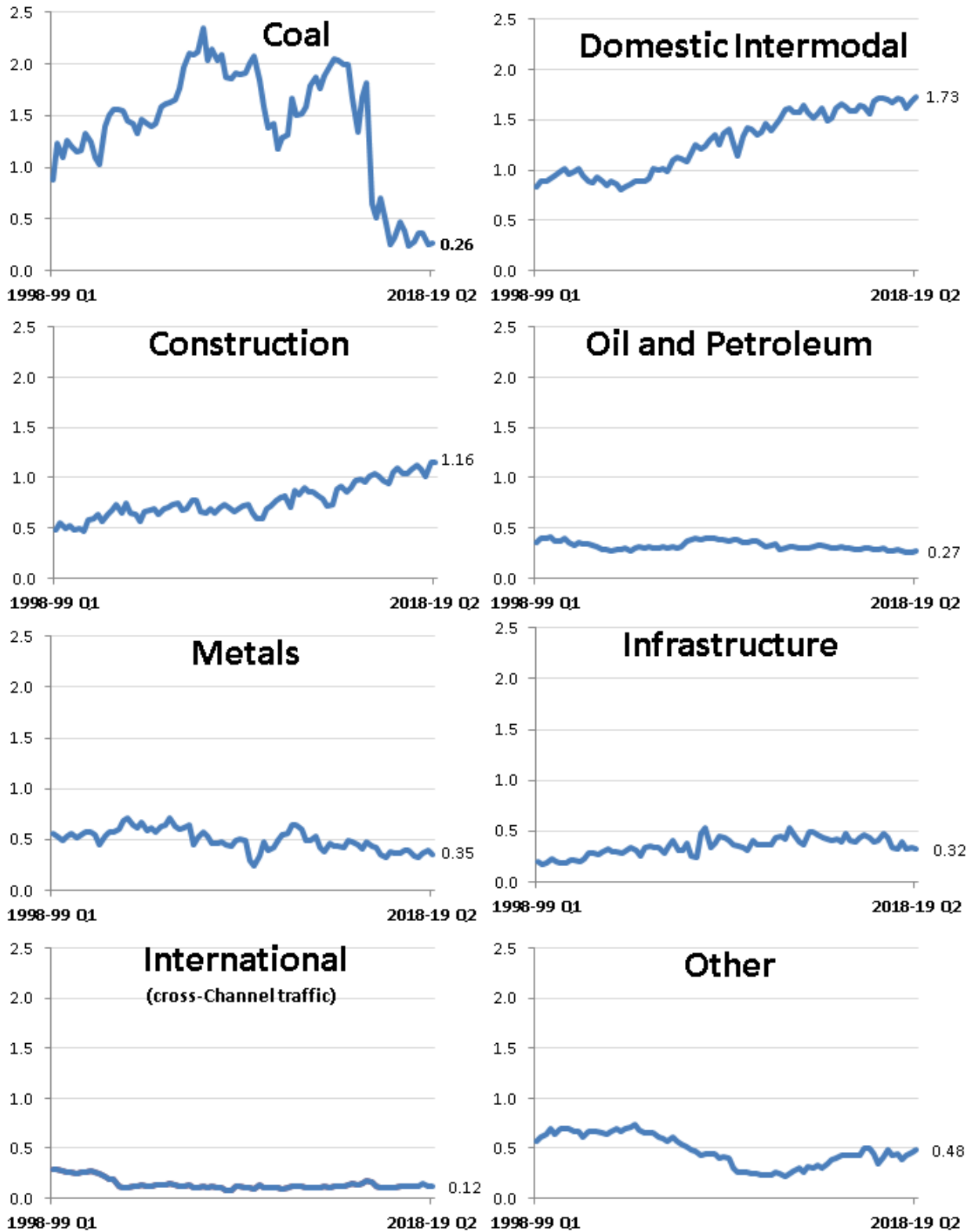
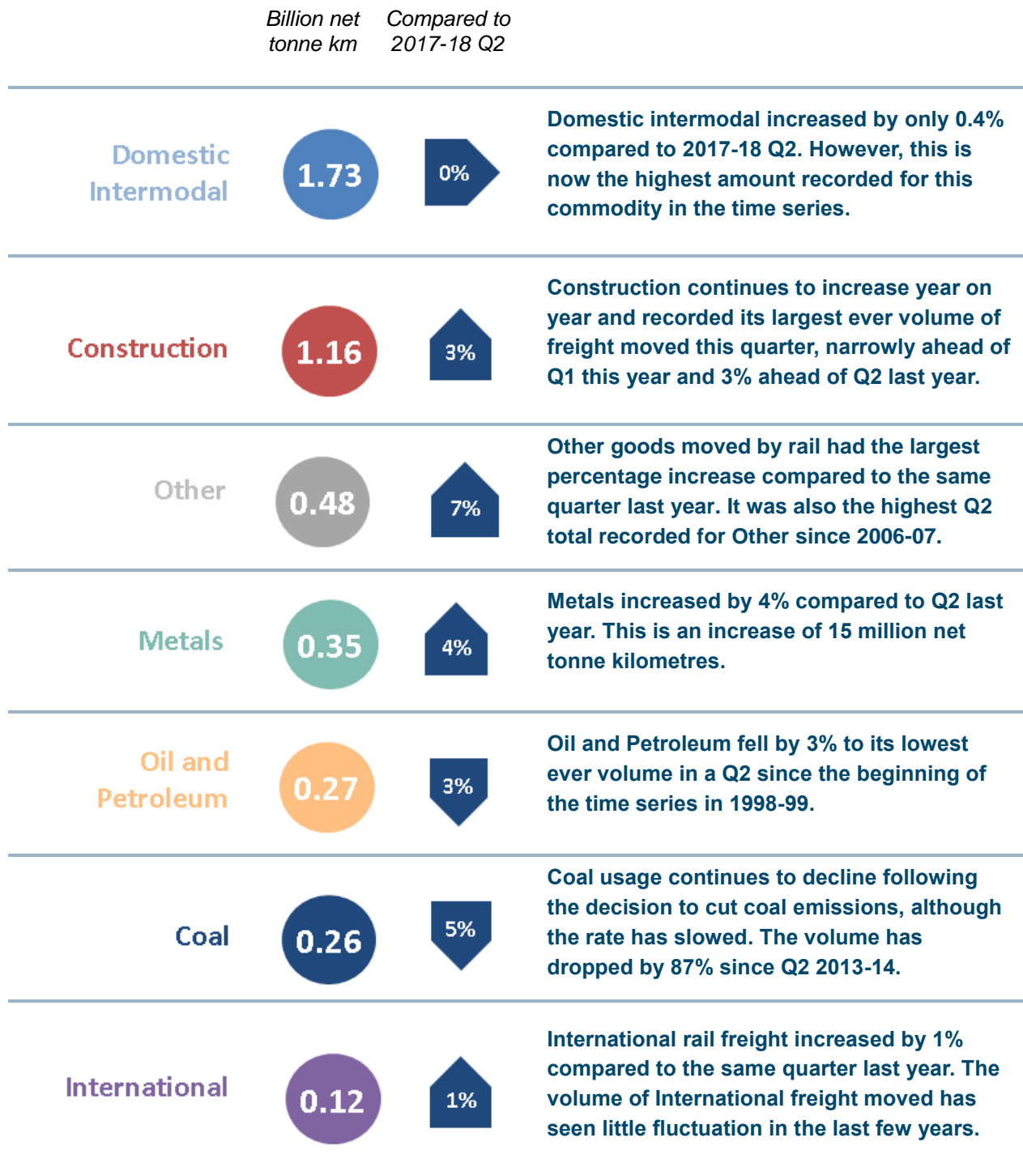


Figure 1.02: The volume of rail freight moved (billion net tonne km), 2018-19 Q2 compared to 2017-18 Q2 ([Table 13.7](#))



## 2. Freight lifted

### 2018-19 Quarter 2 Results



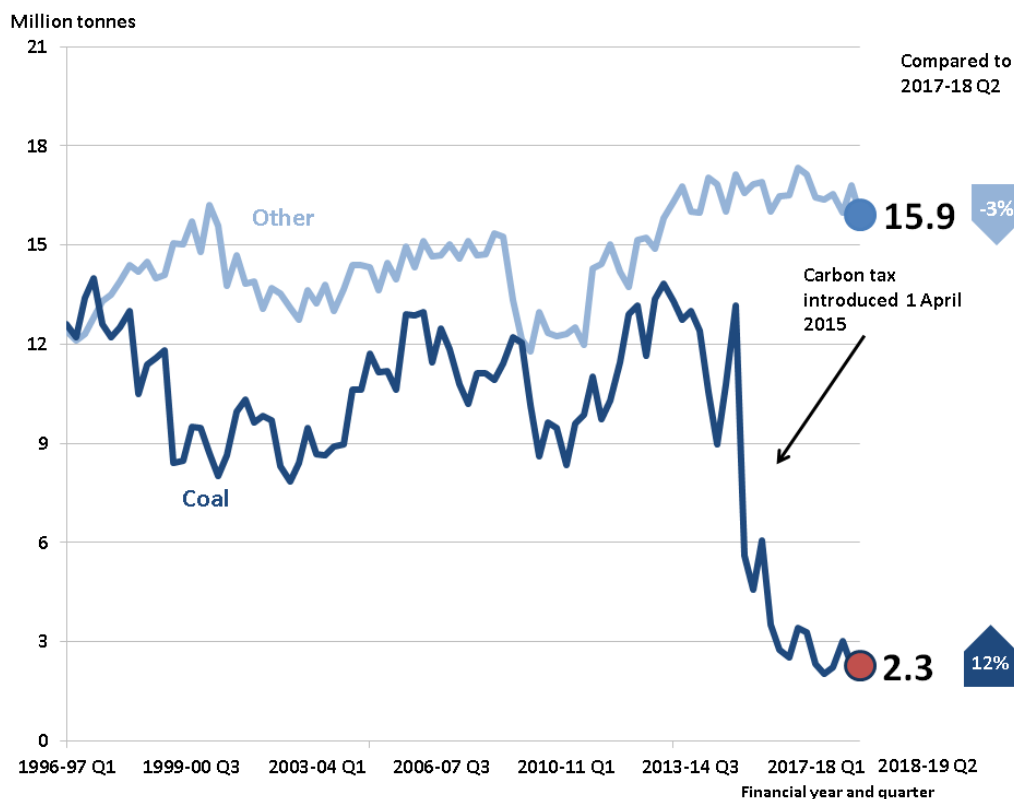
The total amount of freight lifted in 2018-19 Q2 was 18.2 million tonnes, a decrease of 1% compared to 2017-18 Q2. This is the lowest quarterly total recorded for freight lifted since the start of the time series in 1996-97 Q1.

The amount of coal lifted in 2018-19 Q2 was 2.3 million tonnes, an increase of 0.2 million tonnes (up 12%) compared to the same quarter last year. This was offset by the 3% decrease in other freight lifted (all other commodities combined), a fall of 0.5 million tonnes.

**Freight lifted** is the mass of goods (tonnes) carried on the rail network, excluding the weight of the locomotives and wagons. Unlike freight moved it takes no account of the distance travelled.

Freight lifted data is sourced from the four major FOCs: DB Cargo UK, Freightliner Ltd, Direct Rail Services (DRS) and GB Railfreight.

Figure 2.01: Freight lifted (million tonnes), Great Britain, 1996-97 Q1 to 2018-19 Q2 ([Table 13.6](#))



### 3. Freight delay per 100 train kilometres



**Freight delay per 100 train kilometres** is a normalised measure of delay experienced by FOCs. The measure is calculated from the total delay experienced by all GB freight operators divided by their train mileage. This dataset is provisional as delay data can be revised as part of the delay attribution process.

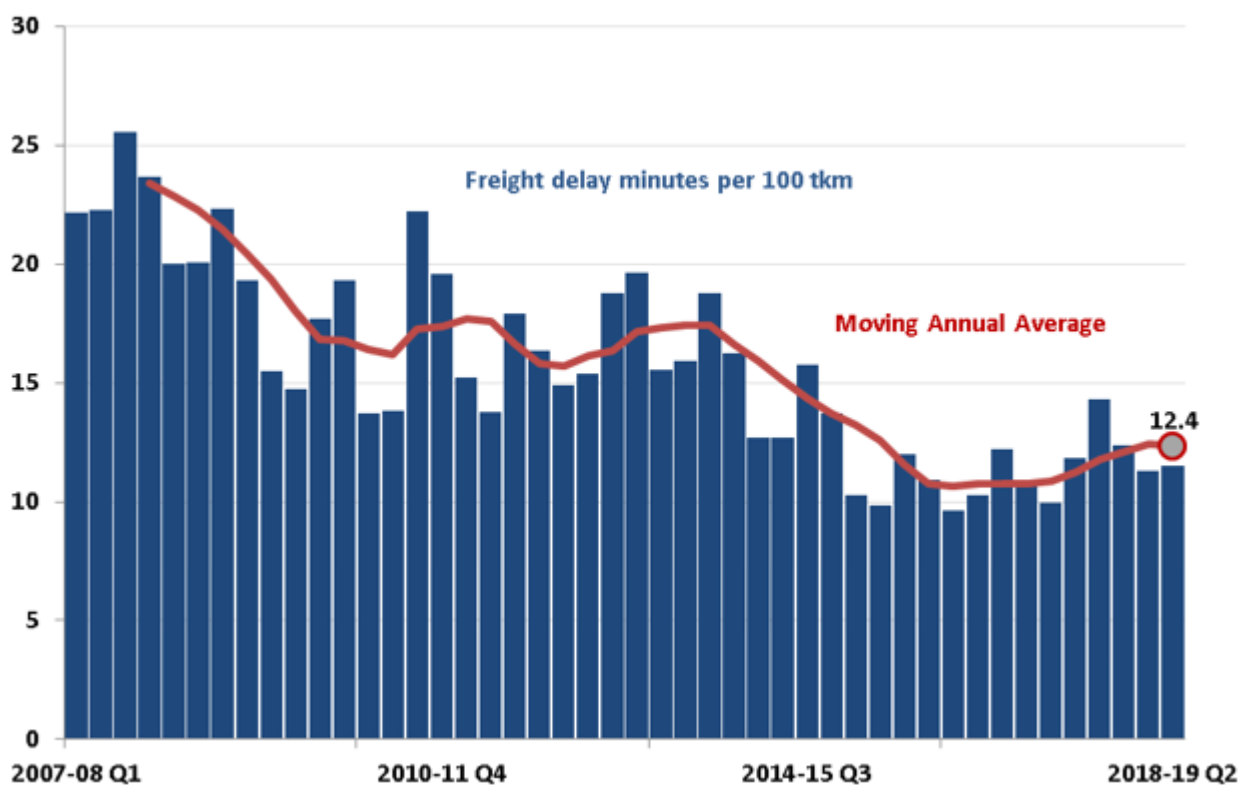
Freight train mileage can fluctuate depending on demand so a normalised measure allows for comparison over time regardless of changing levels of freight traffic on the network. Freight delay per 100 train kilometres tends to peak in Q3 and Q4 each year, coinciding with the expected periods of adverse weather, during autumn and winter.

The **Freight Delivery Metric (FDM)** is another measure of freight train delay. It is based on the percentage of freight trains that arrive at their destination within 15 minutes of their scheduled arrival time. Results and more information can be found in the quarterly [Passenger and Freight Rail Performance statistical release](#).

#### 2018-19 Quarter 2 Results

Freight delay decreased by 3% compared to the same quarter last year to 11.5 minutes per 100 train kilometres.

Figure 3.01: Normalised freight delay per 100 train kilometres, Great Britain, 2007-08 Q1 to 2018-19 Q2 ([Table 13.5](#))



## 4. Freight train kilometres by operator

### 2018-19 Quarter 2 Results

In 2018-19 Q2, total freight train kilometres run was 8.5 million, approximately equal to the total run in the same quarter last year.

The largest freight operator (DB Cargo) fell by 9% from 3.5 to 3.2 million kilometres in 2018-19 Q2, meaning their overall share dropped from 41% to 38%.

The third largest operator's share (GB Railfreight) increased from 17% in 2017-18 Q2 to 21% in Q2 this year, as their total increased by 24% to 1.7 million kilometres.

The three largest operators, DB Cargo, Freightliner Intermodal and GB Railfreight, accounted for 86% of all freight train kilometres travelled in 2018-19 Q2.

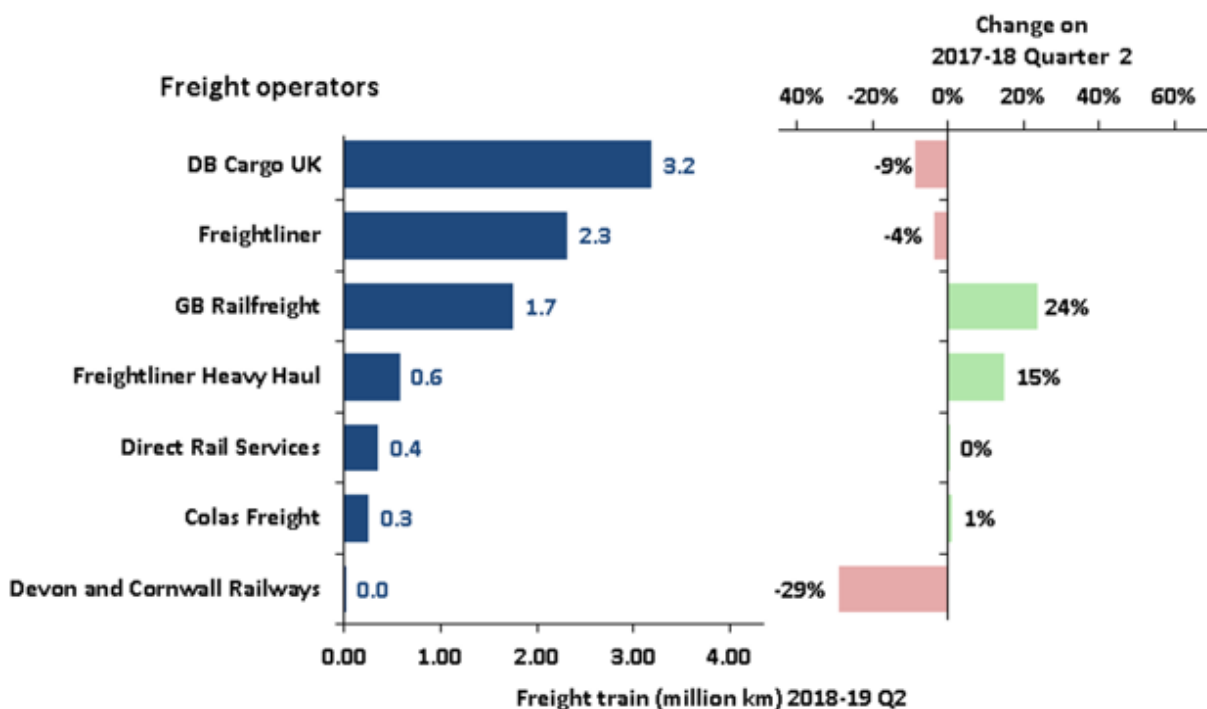
**Freight train kilometres** is the actual mileage in kilometres operated by FOCs on Network Rail infrastructure

The data is sourced from Network Rail's Track Access Billing System (TABS) and covers only the mileages charged through TABS.

Competition between freight operators means we would expect a greater level of variation in mileage from year to year than in the passenger market.

Not all freight operators have been in operation throughout the time-series, therefore total year on year comparison should be treated with caution.

Figure 4.01: Freight train kilometres by FOC, Great Britain, 2018-19 Q2 ([Table 13.25](#))



# Annex 1 – List of pre-created reports available on the Data Portal

All data tables can be accessed on the [data portal](#) free of charge. The data portal provides on screen data reports, as well as the facility to download data in Excel format and print the report. We can provide data in csv format on request.

## Freight moved

- Freight moved, 1982-83 to 2017-18 (annual), 1998-99 Q1 to 2018-19 Q2 (quarterly) – [Table 13.7](#)

## Freight lifted

- Freight lifted, 1982-83 to 2017-18 (annual), 1996-97 Q1 to 2018-19 Q2 (quarterly) – [Table 13.6](#)

## Freight delay minutes per 100 train kilometres

- Normalised freight delay, 2007-08 to 2017-18 (annual), 2007-08 Q1 to 2018-19 Q2 (quarterly) – [Table 13.5](#)

## Freight train kilometres by operator

- Freight train kilometre, 2010-11 to 2017-18 (annual), 2010-11 Q1 to 2018-19 Q2 (quarterly) – [Table 13.25](#)

## Freight market indicators (Q4/annual publications only)

- Number of freight train movements, 2003-04 to 2017-18 – [Table 13.10](#)
- Impact on rail haulage, 2004-05 to 2016-17 – [Table 13.8](#)
- Rail market share, 1998 to 2016 – [Table 13.12](#)

**Revisions:** There have been no revisions to the previously published dataset. Further details on historic revisions to the data set can be found on the [Revisions Log](#).

**Methodology:** For more information on data collection and the methodology used to calculate the statistics in this release please see the accompanying [Quality Report](#).



## Annex 2 – Statistical Releases

This publication is part of ORR's [National Statistics](#) accredited statistical releases which consist of annual and quarterly themed releases:

### Annual

- Rail Finance
- Rail Fares Index;
- Rail Safety Statistics;
- Rail Infrastructure, Assets and Environmental;
- Regional Rail Usage;
- *Estimates of Station Usage (not National Statistics).*

### Quarterly

- Passenger and Freight Rail Performance;
- Freight Rail Usage;
- Passenger Rail Usage;
- Passenger Rail Service Complaints.

A full list of publication dates for the next twelve months can be found in the [release schedule](#) on the ORR website.

## National Statistics

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority 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 Official Statistics.

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It is ORR'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.

For more details please contact the Statistics Head of Profession Lyndsey Melbourne on 020 7282 3978 or contact [rail.stats@orr.gov.uk](mailto:rail.stats@orr.gov.uk).

The Department for Transport (DfT) also publishes a range of rail statistics which can be found at [DfT Rail Statistics](#). They also publish road freight statistics which can be found at [Road freight: domestic and international statistics](#), which includes statistics on freight transported between road and rail.



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