Access rights planning and use factsheet

Subsidiary Change Date (SCD) on 17 May 2026

28 September 2026

1. Key Messages

- Passenger train operators made 26 applications for capacity use (track access) for the May 2026 timetable change date (SCD 2026) to deliver improved or continued services. While ORR assessed and approved these applications ahead of the timetable change, the timing of applications and the duration of access rights supported by Network Rail continued to present challenges.

- Network Rail could not agree access for 3 (out of 26) passenger applications, containing 166 rights (approximating to 166 train services). The remaining 23 (out of 26) passenger applications were supported by Network Rail.

- Around half of the applications Network Rail supported provided rights for 12 months or less, while the remainder extended beyond 12 months, including some across multiple timetable periods.

- Timeliness remained a significant issue, with 20 of the 26 applications submitted after the date passengers should be able to buy tickets (12 weeks before services start in the timetable, 'D12'). This risks services not having the rights to use the network so passengers cannot access those services.

- As of 7 June 2026, passenger operators planned to use 96% of the total contracted rights (capacity) allocated in the period since the PCD 2025 timetable change.

- West Midlands Trains and Hull Trains continued to have lower rights usage (in terms of services planned and ran). We expect these operators to work with Network Rail to ensure their contracts accurately reflect the rights required.

- Two of the operators that had the highest planned rights usage changed. Previously the "top three" were TransPennine, GTS (Elizabeth Line) and c2c. It is now TransPennine, GTS (Elizabeth Line) and First Rail London. These operators should also work with Network Rail to ensure their contracts accurately reflect the rights required.

- Applications increased to secure missing contractual rights for services already operating and to correct contract errors, particularly from West Midlands Trains, Merseyrail and TransPennine in the North West & Central region.

- Accurate contract management will become increasingly important through rail reform, providing a reliable picture of existing access rights and network use to support future capacity decisions.

- Between 14 December 2025 and 17 May 2026 (PCD 2025 and SCD 2026), ORR approved the amendment of station and depot access agreements to enable nationalisation of WM Trains Limited. This enabled the Secretary of State sponsored transfer scheme to proceed to timeline.

- In the same period, ORR approved new access agreements for stations and depots to enable First Rail London Limited to take over the London Overground concession on 3 May 2026.

- The timetable monitoring production data published by ORR is useful for comparing when operators had access rights in place against when Network Rail offered the timetable to industry at D26 (26 weeks before the timetable change). The final data from SCD 2026 (and current data for PCD 2026) will be on ORR's website in autumn 2026.

2. Context

Overview

The regulatory access dashboard provides management information on access rights planning and use. It includes:

- track access applications made by freight and passenger operators of rail services in Great Britain;
- the submission and approval timescales for passenger track applications against the timetable production milestones of the Network Code; and
- information on the use of access rights by passenger operators.

ORR approves or directs the granting of access rights and monitors the timing of Network Rail and train operators' applications. It is important to compare the time when an application is made against the Network Code timescales because:

- passengers can have greater confidence that timetabled services will run because they are supported by a contract;
- an operator has a contractual priority giving greater certainty its related services will run as planned in the timetable; and
- the greater certainty supports better operational planning for trains and crew.

Network Rail is responsible for producing the timetables for passenger and freight services to run. The main timetable changes are made twice a year, in May and December. New timetables must be published 12 weeks in advance; this milestone is referred to as D12.

Train operators must have contractual access rights to use the network to run their trains. They apply for these access rights to secure capacity and priority for inclusion in the timetable. The Network Code sets out the process and contractual timescales for producing the main timetable changes. These timescales underpin the Network Rail licence requirement to produce a timetable "not less than 12 weeks" before services run, and also enable train operators to meet their commitment to make tickets available for sale 12 weeks in advance of travel.

ORR is required to publish the information contained in access contracts on the public register. This factsheet presentation of that data provides a holistic overview of the contracted capacity across the network and how it is used in the timetable by passenger operators.

Access rights dashboard

Data tables and an interactive dashboard associated with this factsheet are published on the ORR website. Key definitions are contained within a glossary on that same webpage.

Currently, the data focuses primarily on passenger train service data. The access rights and timetable data contained in the dashboard is provided by train operators and Network Rail. The time of submission to ORR and approval is ORR management information data.

All the access rights in this dashboard were approved by ORR for SCD 2026 (17 May). It is valid to compare access rights from SCD 2026 up to the Principal Change Date (PCD) on 13 Dec 2026. However, the rights data is most accurate at the beginning of the timetable period because rights applications will be submitted and approved after 17 May, thereby updating rights held before PCD 2026.

Congested infrastructure

Network Rail did not declare any infrastructure as congested between PCD 2025 and SCD 2026.

Network Rail publishes all Declarations and Early Indicators of Congested Infrastructure on its website: Information for operators - Network Rail.

As outlined in Network Rail's Code of Practice for the management of congested infrastructure, a declaration does not preclude any party from making an access application in that area, and any such application must still be considered and engaged with (and may be accommodated) by the infrastructure manager. However, it does permit Network Rail to set priority criteria for the allocation of any existing capacity.

In addition to this, Network Rail published one Early Indicator of Congested Infrastructure for the North London Line (all lines) on 13 February 2026. Network Rail concluded that the route was operating at a sustained capacity allocation of more than 90%, and that any further growth across the route could have a disproportionate detrimental impact on performance and operational resilience. Unlike a formal Declaration, an Early Indicator is advisory and non-binding and does not trigger the associated regulatory requirements. ORR will continue to monitor the position and, if necessary, seek more clarity from Network Rail on the next steps it intends to take.

Recent changes to train operators

The Passenger Railway Services (Public Ownership) Act 2024 received Royal Assent in November 2024, allowing passenger train operators with contracts with the Department for Transport (DfT) to be brought into public ownership.

On 1 February 2026, West Midlands Trains transferred into public ownership when its contract with DfT expired. This followed the earlier transfers of South Western Railway, c2c and Greater Anglia in 2025.

The next operator due to transfer back into public ownership was Govia Thameslink Railway on 31 May 2026.

The next operators to transfer are Chiltern Railways on 20 September 2026, followed by Great Western Railways on 13 December 2026. DfT plans to return all passenger services operating under DfT contracts to public ownership by the end of 2027 and this will be done when each contract expires, as set out in their press release.

In addition to the above, the operator of the London Overground also changed on 3 May 2026, with First Rail London Limited now operating these services. ORR approved and directed the novation of the contract from the former operator, Arriva Rail London Limited, to First Rail London.

Further information on individual operators, including route maps, can be found via the Rail Delivery Group website.

Further information

The access rights data dashboard will be updated in February 2027 for the timetable commencing from PCD 2026.

For more information on dashboard terminology please view the glossary.

For further information on the content of this factsheet or the regulatory access dashboard, please contact the Head of Passenger Track Access: track.access@orr.gov.uk.

3. Passenger applications for track access (capacity) from SCD 2026

Applications received

When Network Rail and operators finalise contracts, it indicates the level of industry preparedness and provides transparency of capacity use. This supports industry and passenger certainty over the length of the contracts.

Passenger train operators made a total of 26 applications for the May 2026 timetable change (SCD 2026). Three of these were submitted as unsupported by Network Rail. Of the remaining applications, 21 were submitted as supported requests for additional or amended capacity use (track access) requiring ORR's specific approval ahead of the timetable change on 17 May 2026, while two were submitted under ORR's general approval provisions. Two further applications were subsequently withdrawn before being formally submitted to ORR. Data table 3 contains details on each supported application submitted for the SCD 2026 timetable change.

The number of applications submitted to ORR remained broadly consistent with previous SCD timetable changes, with only one fewer application submitted than for SCD 2025. This was accompanied by a reduction in the reliance on ORR's general approval provision. The reasons for using general approvals vary, including operators not identifying their capacity requirements sufficiently far in advance and instances where longer-term agreement with Network Rail has not been reached ahead of the timetable change. Operators will need to consider the implications of reliance on this process under the future Great British Railways (GBR) regime.

Comparison to previous timetable changes

Table 1: ORR specific approval supported applications for SCD 2024 (June) through to the PCD 2025 by Network Code milestone* NB – four planned applications were withdrawn prior to submission and so do not have a submission date

Timetable period	After D12		Before D12		Before D26		Before D40		Total
SCD 2024	10	37%	17	63%	0	0%	0	0%	27
PCD 2024	26	65%	10	25%	2	5%	2	5%	40
SCD 2025	21	88%	0	0%	3	12%	0	0%	24
PCD 2025	21	53%	11	28%	2	5%	6	15%	40

Timetable period	After D12		Before D12		Before D26		Before D40		Total
SCD 2026	20	87%	3	13%	0	0%	0	0%	23

**Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number*

The [competing applications process](#) which started in 2024 brought forward applications by a common deadline to establish demand for capacity. Between this point and PCD 2025 Network Rail tended to support access for 12 months or less.

The number of supported applications for SCD 2026 was marginally lower than for SCD 2025, with 23 applications submitted for SCD 2026 compared with 24 for SCD 2025. In SCD 2026, the duration of the rights sought varied. Around half of the applications Network Rail supported provided rights for 12 months or less, while the remainder extended beyond 12 months, including some across multiple timetable periods. The majority of applications continued to be submitted after the timetable publication deadline for passenger operators of 22 February 2026 (12 weeks in advance of 17 May).

Application timescales for SCD 2026

ORR ensured that all supported applications requiring specific approval were complete before the timetable started. However, 20 of the 23 applications (87%) were submitted to ORR after the timetable publication deadline for passenger operators of 22 February 2026. This is in comparison to 21 applications (88%), submitted after the same deadline for SCD 2025. Late submission meant changes to access rights continued to be progressed after passengers should have had certainty about the services available to them. Although this represents a marginal improvement on the prior year, ORR expects operators and Network Rail to submit applications earlier in the timetable development process to provide greater certainty for the industry and passengers.

Submitting applications for ORR to approve less than 12 weeks before the timetable starts, and services run, means that those services are at risk of not having contractual rights in place. This could negatively impact on operator train or crew planning and on passengers who have bought tickets in advance, reducing confidence in the timetable.

The timeliness of applications therefore remains a concern. Unlike previous timetable changes, the competing applications process had concluded before SCD 2026. This should have provided greater certainty regarding access requirements. ORR would therefore have expected a more significant improvement in the timely submission of applications.

For supported applications for SCD 2026, no part of Network Rail submitted all its applications requiring specific approval before the 12-week milestone (D12).

- Eastern region submitted three applications for this timetable change, all of which were submitted after the D12 date. The latest submission, submitted by Grand Central, was submitted just 10 days before SCD 2026. This represents a deterioration compared with PCD 2025, when 50% of applications for the region were submitted by D12, compared with none for SCD 2026.

- Scotland's Railway submitted only one application for SCD 2026. The application, submitted by ScotRail, was received one day after the D12 date.

- Southern region submitted three applications for SCD 2026, with two of these submitted to ORR after the D12 date. The latest application, from South Western Railway, was submitted only five weeks prior to SCD 2026. This represents a deterioration in performance compared with PCD 2025, when the majority of the region's applications were submitted before D12.

- Wales & Western region submitted three applications for SCD 2026, two of them after D12. The latest of these applications was submitted by Great Western Railway with only four weeks until SCD 2026. Of the remaining applications, one Great Western Railway application was submitted by D12, while a Transport for Wales application was submitted around seven weeks before SCD 2026.

- North West & Central region submitted 10 applications for SCD 2026. Nine were submitted after D12. The latest applications were from West Midlands Trains and Avanti West Coast and were received with only three weeks remaining until SCD 2026.

- FNPO submitted one application for SCD 2026, from CrossCountry, which was submitted after D12.

The regulatory access dashboard provides detail on submitted applications by Network Rail region and operators for users to analyse themselves.

Our monitoring has identified an increase in applications updating contracts to ensure rights are in place for services already running or to correct errors in contracts. While examples were identified across the network, these applications were concentrated in the North West & Central region, particularly among West Midlands Trains, Merseyrail and TransPennine. Such applications indicate that the necessary contractual rights had not been secured before services started operating, reflecting weaknesses in planning and contract management.

Accurate contract management is important for both the infrastructure manager and operators, as it ensures transparency and accurate information on network use. This can provide insight into the capacity being used and, equally, capacity that may be available for new services. It also underpins contractual performance incentives, helping to ensure Network Rail and operators are financially accountable where performance falls below expected levels. As the industry moves through rail reform, maintaining accurate contractual information will be increasingly important in providing a reliable picture of existing access rights and network use, and in supporting future decisions for capacity.

4. Use of passenger access rights

Overview

Comparing the approved (and published) access rights by ORR with the planned timetable and the services which actually operated allows ORR, Network Rail, funders, industry and passengers to understand the use of the railway network.

We have compared the contracted access rights for each passenger operator by service group (how an operator groups different train services to related destinations), to the published timetable. This data, for planned timetables and for services which actually operated, provides metrics on contractual compliance as well as the use of allocated capacity on the network. These metrics and usage data can be analysed through the online regulatory access dashboard.

Following the ORR determination on a Regulation 32 appeal by Virgin Management Limited in July 2025, the affected passenger operators should now have carried out full reviews of the rights within their contracts and should be in a position to explain any discrepancies. We expect Network Rail to share information on the outputs from its planned Rights Review Meetings transparently on its website so that industry has visibility of this.

We also continue to engage Network Rail on the recommendation made in the determination that Network Rail review its internal guidance, published guidance and published templates to align with Part J of the Network Code. The recommendation also states that Network Rail should work with industry to ensure its guidance and templates are fit for purpose, that processes are clear and explicit, it ensures network capacity is used and allocated efficiently and that unused capacity is relinquished in an open, transparent and non-discriminatory manner. Since July 2025, we have worked constructively with Network Rail to encourage it to comply with its obligation to publish Part J notices. It has responded positively by publishing missing notices and to concerns we raised about its handling of some processes. We will now monitor this on a proportionate basis.

At publication of this factsheet, our dashboard contains data for this timetable change from 18 May 2026 up to and including 7 June 2026.

- During this period, operators planned to use 92% of the access rights held in their contracts for the timetable which operates until PCD 2026.

- During the same period, 86% of the access rights held by operators resulted in services in operation for passengers.

The dashboard reflects the rights that were in place as of 17 May 2026. If contracts have been updated since then, these edits will not be reflected within the dashboard. The data used for services planned and ran is based on Network Rail data from the timetable agreed at 22:00 the night before services run, which therefore includes Short Term Planning services.

The use of access rights in the timetable can be reduced by various factors including: whether Network Rail could accommodate the rights in the timetable; engineering works by Network Rail (particularly over the May bank holiday weekend); industrial action; funder decisions on service provision; and train operator service decisions. These factors mean it is most useful to compare operators in similar geographical areas and/or time periods which are not affected by industrial action/engineering work to understand these factors.

It is important to remember that access rights grant the right to a slot in the timetable, not a specific time slot. Also, some operators may hold contingent rights which receive lower priority when Network Rail produces the timetable and are therefore more likely to not be accommodated when there are conflicts.

The contracted access rights in place from SCD 2026 onwards are appropriate for comparison against the planned 2026/27 working timetable (the period from 17 May 2026 to 12 December 2026).

Accuracy adjustments

Most access rights are represented in the timetable by one train service. The following operators have train services which correspond to more than one access right: CrossCountry, Caledonian Sleeper, Scotrail, LNER and Transport for Wales. For these services we have adjusted the number of rights held to accurately reflect their use in the planned timetable and the services which operated. For example, one CrossCountry service has seven access rights, so for an accurate reflection of rights usage we mapped this service to one access right. The other adjustments are contained in Annex A below.

The accuracy adjustments mean that only the level of contingent rights, engineering access, industrial action or non-use of rights should impact on the rights usage reported. The ORR-approved access rights held by each operator are available to download via the data tables on our [dashboard webpage](#).

Rights usage

This timetable period has seen a shift in the operators that had the highest planned rights usage from those with the same in the PCD 2025 timetable period. The previous “top three” were TransPennine, GTS (Elizabeth Line) and c2c and it is now TransPennine, GTS (Elizabeth Line) and First Rail London. While factors influencing access utilisation might be expected to have a disproportionate impact on operators with a smaller number of rights, this is not reflected in the data. GTS (Elizabeth Line) has the second-highest planned rights usage despite holding a large number of rights.

West Midlands Trains, Transport for Wales Rail and Lumo (East Coast) were the three operators with the lowest planned usage of rights in the SCD 2026 timetable data. This differs from the PCD 2025 timetable period, in which West Midlands Trains, Transport for Wales and Hull Trains had the lowest planned rights usage.

Where operators are consistently running significantly fewer services than the rights that they hold, we expect Network Rail to work with them to ensure contracts reflect an efficient use of capacity. Network Rail and operators can use a Part J notice or a supplemental agreement to amend their capacity use.

The majority of operators (19 out of 23) planned to use a higher percentage of rights in the SCD 2026 timetable change, when compared with PCD 2025. The remaining four saw a reduction in planned rights in this timetable period. In PCD 2025, 17 planned to use a lower percentage of rights, and six planned an increase.

There was considerable variation between operators in planned rights usage between PCD 2025 and SCD 2026. The largest increases were recorded by TransPennine, GTS (Elizabeth Line), First Rail London, Caledonian Sleeper and LNER, while Transport for Wales, Grand Central and Lumo (East Coast) recorded the most notable decreases.

Some operators, along with Network Rail, have an inadequate understanding of their contracted capacity use, shown by services not being reflected in their contracts correctly. Inaccurate and unclear supplemental agreements from operators for SCD 2026 required, in some cases, corrections with further applications. The most serious cases of this were by West Midlands Trains and CrossCountry.

The data presented suggests that several operators planned to use services in excess of their contractual rights, including TransPennine (139%), GTS (Elizabeth Line) (126%), First Rail London (108%), c2c (104%), LNER (104%) and Chiltern (101%). However, this position is not always reflected when the data is examined at service level group, where under-utilisation in some groups can offset apparent over-utilisation in others. This demonstrates the importance of the industry having a clear understanding of how contractual rights are used within the timetable, rather than relying solely on aggregate measures. To encourage greater transparency and improve the quality of information available, we selected a three-week period (18 May to 7 June 2026) for detailed analysis. The two sections below provide further detail.

Operators with more than 110% of planned or ran services against rights

Between the specified dates some service groups for the following operators show that they either planned to run or ran more (or both) than 110% of services for which they hold the rights: TransPennine; GTS (Elizabeth Line); First Rail London; LNER; Northern Trains; and East Midlands Rail.

In some instances, such as with TransPennine, First Rail London, LNER, Northern Trains and East Midlands Rail, these anomalies relate to disruption caused by engineering work and bus services being used where blockades were in place on the route. This can result in one train being recorded as two services because it is operated in two parts, despite its only having one right. TransPennine also cited significant disruption as part of the Transpennine Route Upgrade as a factor during the specified time period.

Some other anomalies relate to the way the rights are represented in the contracts when compared with how they are categorised in train service codes, for instance in the cases of Transport for Wales and GTS (Elizabeth Line). These types of anomalies may not necessarily mean they actually ran more services than they held rights for.

Operators with less than 60% of planned or ran services against rights

Between the specified dates, some service groups for the following operators also show that they either planned to run or ran (or both) less than 60% of services for which they hold the rights: Transport for Wales and West Midlands Trains.

We sought clarity from these operators on the reasons for low rights usage in some service groups. For many, this was due to engineering works and specific route upgrades, station closures, restrictions of use and blockades, infrastructure failure, or adverse weather conditions. One or more of these factors affected the rights usage for First Rail London, TransPennine, GTS (Elizabeth Line), LNER, Northern Trains and East Midland Railway.

West Midlands Trains stated that it is currently re-evaluating the rights in its contract to better align them with the actual timetable, which should result in an improvement in its figures going forward. However, engineering works were a significant factor in its low rights usage over this period also.

The time period chosen for analysis also included the May Bank Holiday, when many operators run reduced services and major engineering works are often undertaken. This can lead to a reduction in the number of rights being used or able to be operated. This appears to account for a number of the operators identified in the analysis.

Figure 1: Planned services as a percentage of rights used: 17 May 2026 to 7 June 2026.

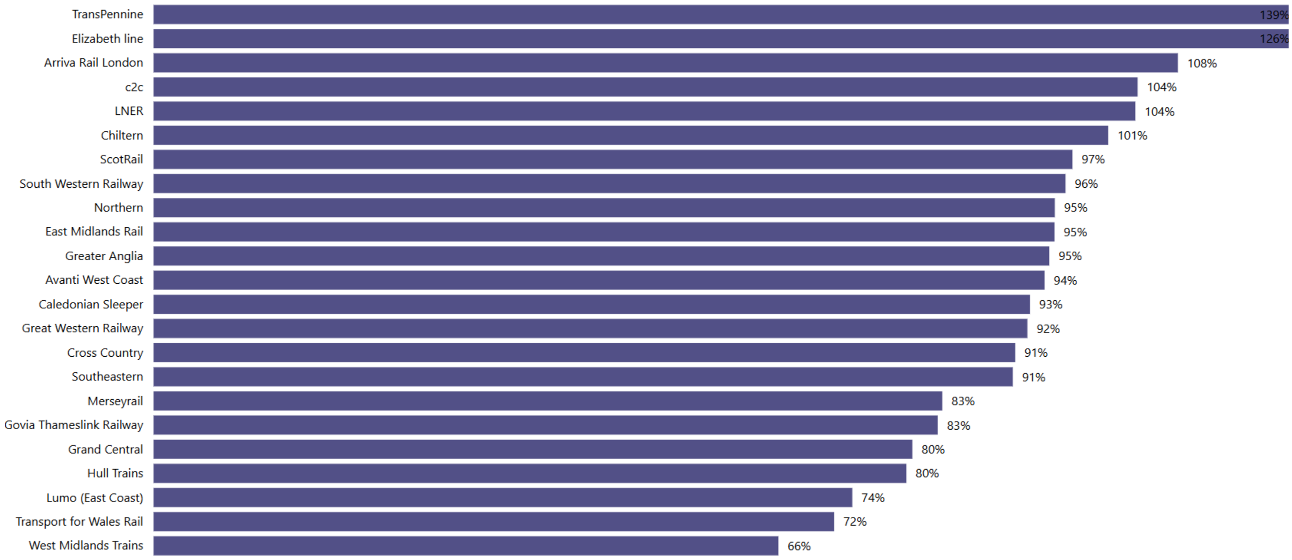
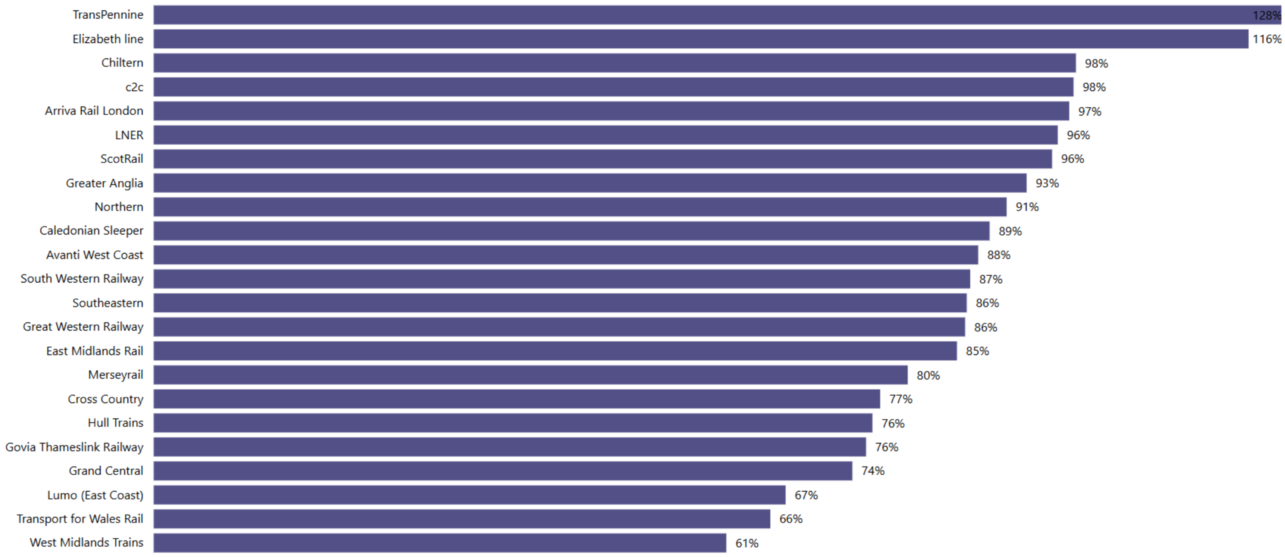


Figure 2: Services ran as a percentage of rights used: 17 May 2026 to 7 June 2026.



Uses for the data

The reasons listed above will impact the percentage of services that ran. However, this data set is also useful to compare against the planned use of rights to assess factors which materialised after the planned timetable was established.

Together, the two data comparisons should support operators in identifying the impact of different factors on capacity use. It should also provide a starting point for discussion between infrastructure manager and operator on unused access or better use of capacity. Where an operator does not intend to use access rights in the future it could be a potential opportunity for other operators to use capacity differently. It is important that operators ensure that all their current operations have the correct contractual framework in place to provide transparency to realise these opportunities.

5. Freight, stations, depots and Licensing

Freight

ORR received 6 supplemental agreements under general approval ahead of the timetable change date on SCD 2026, mostly with the aim of converting Train Operator Variation Requests (TOVRs) to short-term contingent rights. There are a number of applications in process for firm rights, and the SCD 2026 applications sought to provide a level of assurance to industry until that process is concluded.

We are pleased to note that the freight industry makes good use of Part J of the Network Code for the relinquishment and transfer of rights between operators as contracts change between operators, sometimes at short notice. This is done transparently and requires very little regulatory oversight.

During this timetable period we approved a further track access contract extension for Loram, providing comfort to industry for long-term planning and investment in a transitional industry environment and ensuring that fair access to the network is available to all access beneficiaries.

Whether large-scale construction, minerals or niche operations, UK Rail freight typically replaces between 45 (London short-hall services by DCRail) and 129 (Freightliner's jumbo services) lorry trips per train, demonstrating freight's significant environmental and economic benefits.

We continue to work with Network Rail and freight operators to ensure the contractual position is accurate in comparison to the operational timetable as Train Operator Variation Requests (TOVRs) are converted to firm rights. This process will be managed by the submission of supplemental agreements under Section 22 of the Railways Act and will help prepare the ground for the transition of Network Rail to Great British Railways (GBR), as capacity commitments will be factored into new timetable development and financial settlements on mileage will be accurate.

Stations and Depots

ORR's role under the Railways Act 1993 is to regulate access to stations and light maintenance depots by approving access agreements and any amendments to them. Depending on their nature, some new agreements and amendments may be automatically approved under a general approval. Any amendment, or purported amendment, to an access agreement shall be void unless approved by the ORR.

Between PCD 2025 and SCD 2026, ORR approved or directed (as appropriate) 182 amendments to existing Station and Depot Access Agreements. Of these, 65 required ORR's specific approval and/or direction.

In addition to amendments to existing agreements, 27 new agreements were submitted to ORR. Of these, 23 were processed under the relevant General Approval, and 4 required ORR's direction.

ORR continues to support operators and DfT in ensuring that existing station and depot access agreements are amended where necessary to enable their inclusion in a Secretary of State-sponsored transfer scheme. West Midlands Trains Limited was the only operator nationalised between PCD 2025 and SCD 2026.

In total, 35 amendments relating to the nationalisation of West Midlands Trains Limited required ORR's approval to remove provisions that would otherwise have caused the agreements to lapse at the end of the franchise.

ORR also supported the mobilisation of the new London Overground concession operator, First Rail London Limited. 19 new station and depot access agreements were submitted to ORR to ensure contractual continuity as the concession transferred. One of these required ORR's specific approval because it contained bespoke provisions that fell outside the scope of the General Approval for Depots (2017).

Licensing

ORR continues to issue licences to operators of mainline trains under the Railways (Licensing of Railway Undertakings) Regulations 2005 ("the 2005 Regulations") and operators of other railway assets under Section 6 of the Railways Act 1993. Licences help ensure operators are 'fit and proper' to run a railway - applicants must satisfy requirements as to good repute, professional safety competence, financial fitness and insurance cover for civil liabilities. ORR has also continued to issue licence exemptions where we consider, in light of our duties, that an operator does not need to participate in standard industry arrangements.

Between SCD 2025 and PCD 2025, ORR issued four operator licences to GTS Rail Operations Limited (Railway Undertaking Passenger licence and Statement of National Regulatory Provisions, non-passenger and station licence) for operation of the Elizabeth Line, Locomotive Services (TOC) Limited (Railway Undertaking Freight licence and Statement of National Regulatory Provisions), DB Cargo (UK) Ltd (Railway Undertaking Passenger (Charter) licence and Statement of National Regulatory Provisions) and First

Rail Stirling Limited (non-passenger licence) to support driver training in advance of commencing passenger services in 2026.

ORR has also supported the transfer of Train Operating Companies into public ownership by ensuring the conditions within licences originally issued to DfT Operator Limited in 2020 have been met in advance of the transfers taking place. These were South Western Railway Limited on 25 May 2025, c2c Railway Limited on 20 July, GA Trains Limited on 12 October 2025 and WM Trains Limited on 1 February 2026. ORR will continue to support future transfers to ensure services run by DfT Operator Limited continue to be licensed appropriately.

Annex A: Data sources and methodology

Data sources

Data sources include applications submitted by train operators and Network Rail to ORR; performance data supplied solely by Network Rail and data collated by ORR.

As part of track access applications Network Rail and operators submit documentation that ORR Access Executives process through the lifecycle of a case. This forms our casework data.

We have collated data from Schedule 5 of the Track Access Contract between an operator and Network Rail. This schedule sets out the firm and contingent access rights agreed between the parties. We have collated this onto a workbook and displayed the day and service group to determine how many trains have access rights on the network.

We receive data from Network Rail on how many services were planned to run in the timetable and how many services did run. We have compared the service group data to our Schedule 5 access rights data. We work with stakeholders across industry to quality assure this data.

Methodology

Most track access rights held in contracts across industry correspond to one train service, known as a head code in the timetable. This underpins the methodology we have used to create our planned use and actual use reporting within our regulatory information tool. There are a small number of operators where this is not the case and there are multiple access rights all tied to a single head code. In some cases, these head codes have an access right for different portions of the journey. Currently we are unable to compare multiple rights on head codes to actual train running data.

In order to present a more accurate reflection of how these operators are exercising their contracted access rights we have accounted for this in the data that feeds our model. We have done this by subtracting the excess rights and matching the rights figure to the head code figure. GTS (Elizabeth Line) has multiple rights both Peak and Off-Peak. To reflect the service and usage, these have been combined.

The data refers to the working timetable period of 14 December 2025 to 16 May 2026 (inclusive).

Table 2: Adjustments made to base rights data, by service group, where required for comparison against planned and ran data.

		Base			Adjusted			
Operator	**Service Group**	**Weekday**	**Saturday**	**Sunday**	**Weekday**	**Saturday**	**Sunday**	**Revised Total**
Cross Country	EH01	343	333	253	125	115	95	335
Caledonian Sleeper	ES01	10	3	7	7	2	6	15
Scotrail	HA01	347	343	127	338	333	126	797
Scotrail	HA02	299	306	150	298	305	149	752
Scotrail	HA03	71	68	20	70	67	20	157
Scotrail	HA04	124	112	45	117	105	45	257
Scotrail	HA06	414	397	216	412	395	216	1023
Scotrail	HA07	191	191	78	190	190	76	456
LNER	HB02	104	99	85	81	68	53	202

Annex B: Related information

Data tables

Table 1: Total Number of track access rights, by operator and flow in each service code, for weekday and weekends, Great Britain, biannual data, May 2026 timetable

Table 2: Total Number of track access rights in each service code, by operator, Great Britain, biannual data, May 2026 timetable

Table 3: Passenger track access applications, Great Britain, May 2026 timetable

Other related documents

Dashboard glossary

Network Code - Network Rail

ORR track access guidance

ORR guidance on access to regulated networks