

Regulator's Annual Assessment sees Network Rail's Southern region deliver improved train performance

Network Rail's Southern region has delivered improved passenger train performance over the last year and performed well against efficiency and safety targets, according to a new report published by the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) today (2 July).

The rail regulator's annual assessment of Network Rail found that delays to passenger trains attributed to its Southern region – which serves rail passengers and freight operators from Devon in the West, to Kent in the East – were lower than expected, with 2.68 minutes of delay per 100km of train travel, against the forecast level of 2.90 minutes delay per 100km of train travel.

Passenger train performance was strong in Kent and Sussex but weaker on the Wessex route – most notably on South Western Railway – and cancellations across the region were high owing to factors such as trespass, fatalities and industrial action. Network Rail is taking action to address issues within their power on the Wessex route and the ORR will monitor its impact.

The Southern region's contribution to freight performance also fell sharply at the end of the year, which it attributes to a freight train derailment and infrastructure failures following heavy rainfall. ORR will monitor freight performance in the region as services return to a steady state following the impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

The ORR found that the region delivered its planned renewals work while meeting its target to deliver £76m of efficiency savings. This contributed to Network Rail delivering more than £385m efficiency improvements across its regions in the first year of CP6.

The Southern region also performed well in safety, with improvements made in both workforce safety and on plans to make safety improvements to level crossings.

According to Network Rail's own measures of overall performance, its Southern region was the best performing of its five regions.

John Larkinson, Chief Executive of ORR, said:

“Network Rail's Southern region has delivered strongly in the first year of its five-year plan, delivering its renewals work while making efficiency savings – good news for taxpayers and passengers.

“The region has also made good progress in reducing delays to passenger services. However, it must now bring performance in its Wessex route up to the required level and focus on reducing cancellations, which are frustrating for passengers.

“We set Network Rail nationally a £3.5bn efficiency improvement challenge over five years. The Southern region has made a good start in contributing to these savings by meeting its target to deliver more efficiently this past year.”

NOTES TO EDITORS:

1. [Network Rail Annual Assessment](#)

2. The Office of Rail and Road holds Network Rail to account for its management of the GB rail network, monitoring how it operates the network to keep trains running on time, and how it keeps the network safe and in good condition.

3. Efficiency numbers relate to operations, maintenance and renewals work and do not include enhancements.

4. Cancellations versus target by operator, 2019-20:

- Govia Thameslink Railway: 4.5% (target 3.2%)
- Southeastern 2.5%: (target 2.2%)
- South Western Railway: 3.7% (target 1.7%)