
Mark Pont, Assessment Programme Lead

Lyndsey Melbourne
Head of Information and Analysis / Head of Profession for Statistics
Office of Rail and Road
(by email)

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Dear Lyndsey

RAIL STATISTICS

As you are aware, following your request we have recently completed our review of the compliance with the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#) of Office of Rail and Road's (ORR) suite of rail statistics:

- [Passenger rail usage](#)
- [Regional rail usage](#)
- [Freight rail usage and performance](#)
- [Passenger rail service complaints](#)
- [Passenger rail performance](#)
- [Rail fares](#)
- [Rail finance](#)
- [Rail safety](#)
- [Rail infrastructure, assets & environmental](#)

We appreciate yours and your team's positive engagement during this process and the clear commitment shown to the continued development of these statistics. I am pleased to confirm that these statistics should continue to be designated as National Statistics.

We found many positive aspects in the way that ORR produces and presents these statistics and welcome the range of improvements ORR has made since the statistics were last assessed in 2012. We commend the team on the recent development of the [data portal](#) which now brings the statistical releases, data tables and supplementary material into one place and groups related publications by themes. The introduction of interactive graphics on the theme pages adds to the user experience. Additionally, the refreshed statistical releases have added context to aid user interpretation and are more engaging. Other positive aspects include:

- Demonstrating trustworthiness through your comprehensive [Statement of Release Practices](#), [Statement of Confidentiality](#), and a dedicated [User Engagement section](#) within the data portal, all of which help to give users confidence in the data;
- Publishing useful information on the data sources and methodology which helps enhance users' accessibility to and understanding of them;
- Ongoing proactive engagement with data suppliers helping to strengthen each other's understanding of how and why the data are collected;
- Drawing users' attention, where relevant, to other related statistics from different producers to help provide further insight; and
- Showing innovation by making use of data science tools to improve data processing.

We identified some areas where we consider that you may be able to enhance the value of the statistics:

- Consider publishing agenda items and summary information from the quarterly [Rail Statistics Management Group](#) meetings to demonstrate transparency to users, and to help foster wider user engagement;
- Use your upcoming user survey to explore additional needs such as improving the existing accessibility and formatting of data tables;
- Incorporate evidence of data governance arrangements and information about internal quality assurance checks within the existing quality documentation. This would further demonstrate your application of the standards for the quality assurance of administrative data ([QAAD](#));
- Review the use of jargon and acronyms to help all users understand key terms;
- Review the suitability of some of the charts presented to ensure these are the most effective way of aiding users' interpretation of key messages and trends.

We welcome your plans to further enhance the published quality documentation for each of the outputs. As discussed during the recent meeting, my team is happy to provide any further guidance you require during this process.

Our Travel, Transport and Tourism domain lead, Anna Price, will continue to engage with you and your team in the coming months to follow up on the areas for improvement. Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you would like to discuss any aspects of this letter.

Yours sincerely



Mark Pont
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