

Rail station usage in Wales, 2018-19

19 February 2020
SB 5/2020

Summary

There was a 9.4 per cent increase in the number of station entries and exits in Wales in 2018-19 compared with the previous year, the largest year on year percentage increase since 2007-08. ([Table 1](#)).

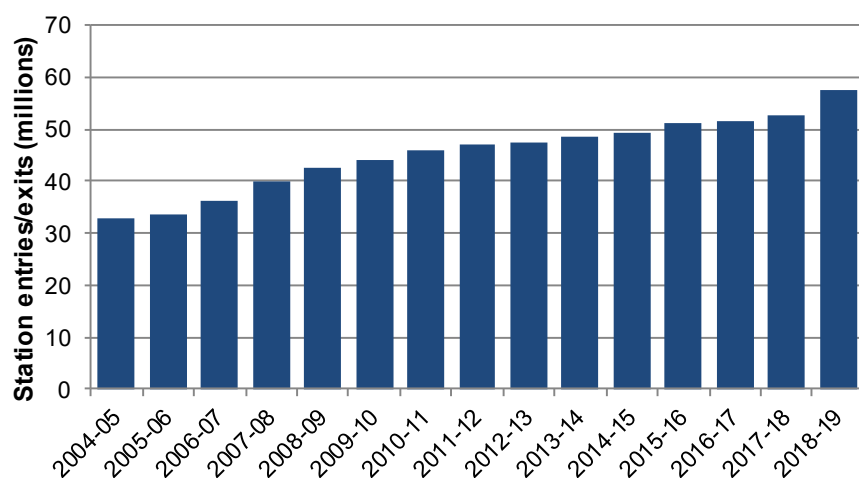
A number of factors are likely to have contributed to this increase. During this period the Wales and Borders rail franchise changed from Arriva Trains Wales to Transport for Wales (TfW), although TfW did not make any significant timetable changes until after 2018-19.

Most of the largest increases in 2018-19 occurred in South East Wales, especially on the City Line in Cardiff, and at stations on the Valleys Line close to or in Cardiff. Between the year ending March 2018 and March 2019, the [level of employment](#) in Cardiff increased by over 13,000 people.

The number of station entries and exits in Wales has risen every year since 2004-05, and by 75 per cent over that period.

Cardiff Central remains the busiest station in Wales with 25 per cent of all station entries/exits. Of the 20 busiest stations in Wales, more than half are part of the Valley Lines network (not including Cardiff Central and Cardiff Queen Street) and two are in North Wales at Rhyl and Bangor ([Table 1](#)).

Chart 1: Station entries and exits in Wales, 2004-05 to 2018-19



Source: Welsh Government (WG) analysis of ORR estimates of station usage

About this bulletin

This bulletin reports on the usage of rail stations in Wales. Information covers stations in Wales from 2004-05 to 2018-19 and the UK for 2018-19. The bulletin is based on the annual station usage report published by the Office of Rail and Road (ORR). This report includes a spreadsheet which gives estimated station entries and station exits based on ticket sales for each station on the UK rail network.

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Quality note

Estimates of rail station usage are based on ticket sales data for all rail stations in Wales, regardless of which train operating company provides the journey (for example, Transport for Wales, Great Western Railway or Cross Country). Ticket sales are not always an accurate reflection of usage for some stations. For example, some tickets are sold to the end of the line or as far as a fare price will allow, and not to the actual journey destination. Consequently, some stations marking the end of lines or fare prices appear busier than they are and other stations along those lines appear less busy than they are.

Additionally, numbers are estimates and subject to error. Volatility in the estimates is more common when numbers are low.

The Office for Road and Rail also produces estimates of [Passenger Rail Use](#), which provides usage estimates for each train operating company rather than for individual stations. These estimates show a 3.7 per cent increase in passenger rail use on Transport for Wales services in 2018-19 compared with the previous year. The estimate for 2018-19 covers the period when the Wales and Border rail franchise changed from Arriva Trains Wales to Transport for Wales.

Busiest stations in Wales

In 2018-19 the total number of entries and exits at Welsh stations increased by 9.4 per cent on the previous year, the largest year on year percentage increase since 2007-08. Most of the largest increases in 2018-19 occurred in South East Wales, especially on the City Line in Cardiff, and at stations on the Valleys Line close to or in Cardiff.

These large increases could therefore be due to changes in the timetables and ticketing options, resulting from the franchise changing from Arriva Trains Wales to Transport for Wales.

25 per cent of all entries and exits in Wales (14.2 million) occurred at Cardiff Central station.

Of the 20 busiest Welsh rail stations in 2018-19:

- Cardiff Central was the busiest station and was 4 times busier than the next busiest station, Cardiff Queen Street. The number of entries and exits at Cardiff Central rose by 9.7 per cent when compared with 2017-18
- Of the top 20 stations, all but one saw increases in the numbers of entries and exits in 2018-19
- Of these, Radyr had the largest percentage increase (up 36.6 per cent) compared with the previous year
- Rhyl was the only one of these stations that saw a decrease in entries and exits, and that was a very small fall.

Table 1: 20 busiest stations in Wales by station entries/exits, 2017-18 to 2018-19*number and percentage*

Rail Station	2017-18 Entries & Exits	2018-19 Entries & Exits	Percentage change	
Cardiff Central	12,951,746	14,204,684	▲	9.7
Cardiff Queen Street	2,912,364	3,431,518	▲	17.8
Newport (Gwent)	2,696,620	2,846,440	▲	5.6
Swansea	2,158,886	2,204,216	▲	2.1
Bridgend	1,526,622	1,636,296	▲	7.2
Cardiff Bay	1,302,676	1,720,744	▲	32.1
Cathays	946,274	1,159,088	▲	22.5
Caerphilly	771,930	811,826	▲	5.2
Pontypridd	864,294	934,160	▲	8.1
Barry Island	753,404	867,598	▲	15.2
Trefforest	752,308	790,574	▲	5.1
Neath	816,748	882,106	▲	8.0
Bangor (Gwynedd)	662,060	667,382	▲	0.8
Penarth	626,950	739,030	▲	17.9
Aberdare	571,746	581,388	▲	1.7
Radyr	538,692	735,734	▲	36.6
Barry	533,732	579,554	▲	8.6
Rhyl	520,198	520,124	▼	0.0
Port Talbot Parkway	516,610	547,228	▲	5.9
Merthyr Tydfil	512,754	515,868	▲	0.6
Other Welsh stations	19,585,590	21,108,366	▲	7.8
All Welsh stations	52,522,204	57,483,924	▲	9.4

Source: WG analysis of ORR estimates of station usage

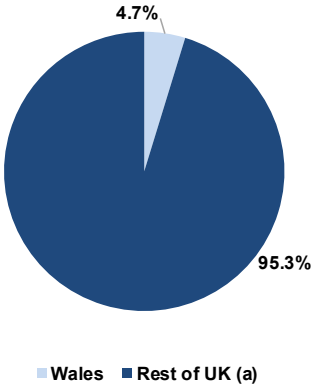
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has been stable in recent years and shows that rail travel is less prevalent in Wales than across the UK in general, with Wales accounting for 4.7 per cent of the UK population ([Chart 2](#))

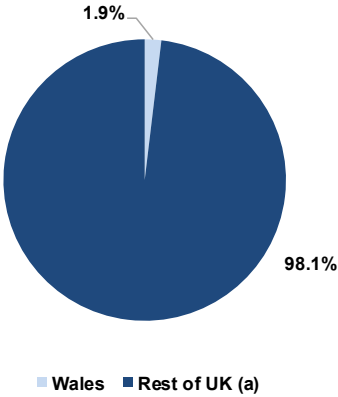
The number of rail stations changes very little from year to year. Since 2013-14 the number of stations in Wales increased by 3 to 222 and in the UK it increased by 28 to 2,563.

Chart 2: Population and station entries/exits in Wales, comparison with the UK, 2018-19

Wales population as a proportion of the UK



Wales entries and exits as a proportion of the UK



Source: WG analysis of ORR estimates of station usage

(a) Rest of the UK = total number minus Wales numbers

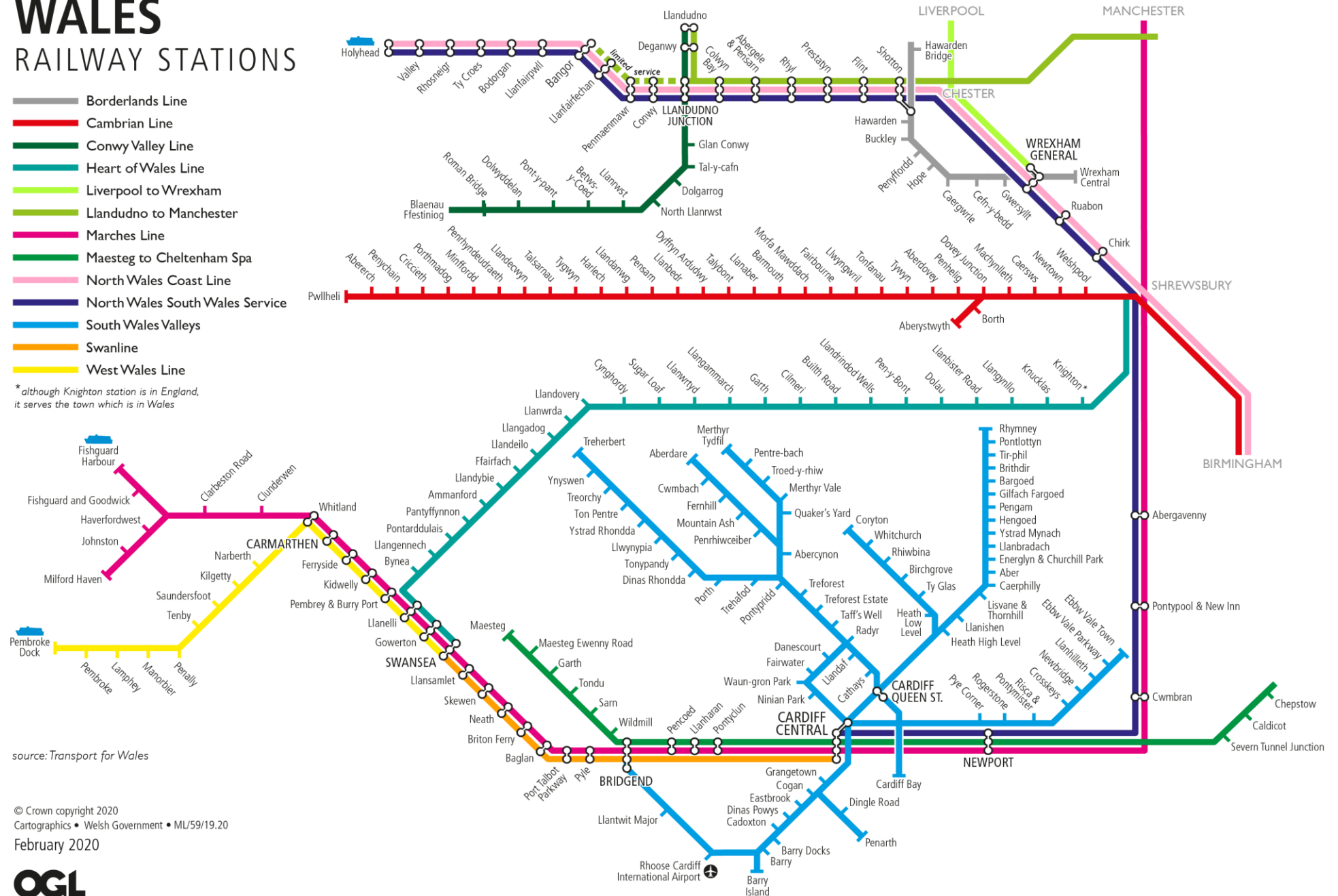
Map 1: Rail station in Wales 2018-19

WALES

RAILWAY STATIONS

- Borderlands Line
- Cambrian Line
- Conwy Valley Line
- Heart of Wales Line
- Liverpool to Wrexham
- Llandudno to Manchester
- Marches Line
- Maesteg to Cheltenham Spa
- North Wales Coast Line
- North Wales South Wales Service
- South Wales Valleys
- Swanline
- West Wales Line

* although Knighton station is in England, it serves the town which is in Wales



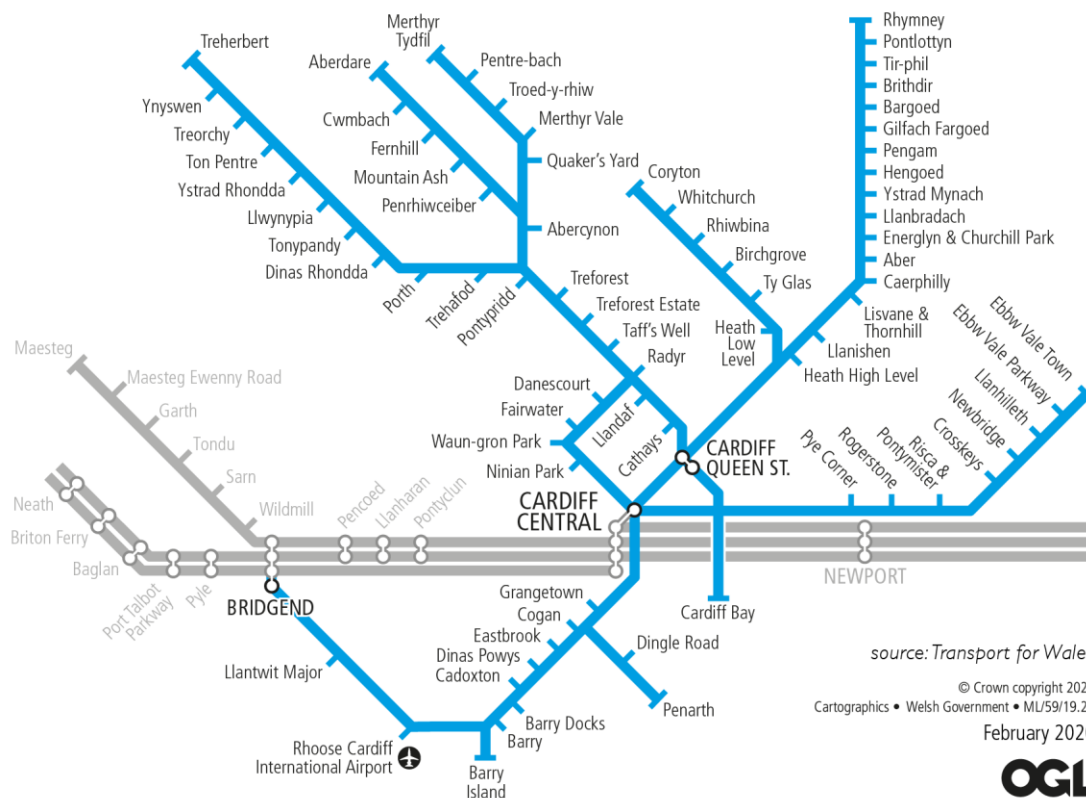
source: Transport for Wales

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Valley lines

The Valley Lines are a network of suburban rail lines connecting the major communities in South East Wales with Cardiff via Cardiff Central, Cardiff Queen Street and Cathays Stations. The lines provide an important role carrying commuter traffic to and from Cardiff. The lines also link up several universities and carry a significant number of people travelling for shopping and leisure purposes. The figures shown are for entries and exits at all stations along these lines – the figures at ‘interchange’ stations (e.g. Cardiff Central, Cardiff Queen Street) are for users of all lines, not just the lines presented in this section.



Butetown line

The Butetown line consists of just two stations at either end of the short link between Cardiff Queen Street and Cardiff Bay. In 2018-19, there was a 22.2 per cent rise in entries and exits on the Butetown line, to 5.2 million.

Table 2: Butetown Line station usage, 2017-18 to 2018-19

<i>Number and percent</i>			
Station	2017-18 Entries & Exits	2018-19 Entries & Exits	Percentage change
Cardiff Queen Street	2,912,364	3,431,518	▲ 17.8
Cardiff Bay	1,302,676	1,720,744	▲ 32.1
Total	4,215,040	5,152,262	▲ 22.2

Source: WG analysis of ORR Estimates of Station Usage

City line

The City Line runs from Radyr to Coryton linking a number of suburban stations with Cardiff Central and Cardiff Queen Street. In 2018-19:

- There was a rise in entries and exits at all stations along the line.
- Rhiwbina had the largest percentage increase in entries and exits at 51.1 per cent when compared with 2017-18.
- There were also increases of over 40 per cent at Heath Low Level and Birchgrove.
- Excluding Cardiff Central and Cardiff Queen Street, there was an increase in station entries and exits of 26.6 per cent on this line compared with 2017-18.

Table 3: City Line station usage, 2017-18 to 2018-19

<i>Number and percent</i>			
Station	2017-18 Entries & Exits	2018-19 Entries & Exits	Percentage change
Cardiff Central	12,951,746	14,204,684	▲ 9.7
Cardiff Queen Street	2,912,364	3,431,518	▲ 17.8
Radyr	538,692	735,734	▲ 36.6
Ty Glas	207,020	228,362	▲ 10.3
Coryton	194,556	217,090	▲ 11.6
Rhiwbina	102,770	155,298	▲ 51.1
Ninian Park	126,512	135,292	▲ 6.9
Danescourt	108,278	132,758	▲ 22.6
Waun-Gron Park	96,760	126,844	▲ 31.1
Fairwater	89,250	102,376	▲ 14.7
Heath Low Level	68,490	96,742	▲ 41.2
Birchgrove	54,570	76,678	▲ 40.5
Whitchurch (South Glamorgan)	25,406	33,700	▲ 32.6
Total, excluding Cardiff Central and Cardiff Queen Street	1,612,304	2,040,874	▲ 26.6
Total	17,476,414	19,677,076	▲ 12.6

Source: WG analysis of ORR Estimates of Station Usage

Vale of Glamorgan line

The Vale of Glamorgan lines link Cardiff to Penarth, Barry and Bridgend. In 2018-19:

- All stations along the line saw a rise in station entries and exits
- Dingle Road had the largest increase in entries and exits at 37.8 per cent while Cadoxton registered the lowest increase at 3.0 per cent
- Excluding Cardiff Central there was an increase in station entries/exits of 11.6 per cent on this line compared with 2017-18.

Table 4: Vale of Glamorgan Line station usage, 2017-18 to 2018-19

<i>Number and percent</i>			
Station	2017-18 Entries & Exits	2018-19 Entries & Exits	Percentage change
Cardiff Central	12,951,746	14,204,684	▲ 9.7
Bridgend	1,526,622	1,636,296	▲ 7.2
Barry Island	753,404	867,598	▲ 15.2
Penarth	626,950	739,030	▲ 17.9
Barry	533,732	579,554	▲ 8.6
Cogan	310,002	345,644	▲ 11.5
Llantwit Major	298,418	331,038	▲ 10.9
Cadoxton	282,098	290,578	▲ 3.0
Barry Docks	245,760	276,652	▲ 12.6
Grangetown (South Glamorgan)	197,244	223,930	▲ 13.5
Rhose (Cardiff Int Airt)	178,334	197,434	▲ 10.7
Eastbrook	167,798	196,020	▲ 16.8
Dingle Road	139,000	191,552	▲ 37.8
Dinas Powys	93,374	100,154	▲ 7.3
Total, excluding Cardiff Central	5,352,736	5,975,480	▲ 11.6
Total	18,304,482	20,180,164	▲ 10.2

Source: WG analysis of ORR Estimates of Station Usage

Merthyr line

The Merthyr line links Cardiff Central station with Merthyr Tydfil via Pontypridd and Abercynon. In 2018-19:

- There were increases in the entries and exits at 13 of the 15 stations along the route, with Radyr, Llandaf and Cathays showing the largest rises.
- The number of station entries and exits at Merthyr Vale fell by 5.0 per cent and Pentre-Bach fell by 1.8 per cent.
- Excluding Cardiff Central and Queen Street, there was an increase in station entries and exits of 14.9 per cent on this line compared with 2017-18.

Table 5: Merthyr Line station usage, 2017-18 to 2018-19

<i>Number and percent</i>			
Station	2017-18 Entries & Exits	2018-19 Entries & Exits	Percentage change
Cardiff Central	12,951,746	14,204,684	▲ 9.7
Cardiff Queen Street	2,912,364	3,431,518	▲ 17.8
Cathays	946,274	1,159,088	▲ 22.5
Pontypridd	864,294	934,160	▲ 8.1
Trefforest	752,308	790,574	▲ 5.1
Radyr	538,692	735,734	▲ 36.6
Llandaf	482,822	603,722	▲ 25.0
Merthyr Tydfil	512,754	515,868	▲ 0.6
Taffs Well	363,874	428,572	▲ 17.8
Abercynon	298,358	329,532	▲ 10.4
Trefforest Estate	83,696	86,142	▲ 2.9
Quaker's Yard	65,990	71,210	▲ 7.9
Merthyr Vale	49,550	47,068	▼ -5.0
Troed-y-Rhiw	38,798	42,674	▲ 10.0
Pentre-Bach	27,002	26,526	▼ -1.8
Total, excluding Cardiff Central and Cardiff Queen Street	5,024,412	5,770,870	▲ 14.9
Total	20,888,522	23,407,072	▲ 12.1

Source: WG analysis of ORR Estimates of Station Usage

Aberdare line

The Aberdare line follows much of the same route as the Merthyr Line, branching off to Aberdare to the north of Abercynon. In 2018-19:

- While the number of station entries and exits saw an increase overall along this line, one station, Penrhiwceiber, saw reductions in entries and exits. Excluding Cardiff Central and Queen Street, there was an annual increase in station entries and exits of 14.7 per cent on this line compared with 2017-18.

Table 6: Aberdare Line station usage, 2017-18 to 2018-19

<i>Number and percent</i>			
Station	2017-18 Entries & Exits	2018-19 Entries & Exits	Percentage change
Cardiff Central	12,951,746	14,204,684	▲ 9.7
Cardiff Queen Street	2,912,364	3,431,518	▲ 17.8
Cathays	946,274	1,159,088	▲ 22.5
Pontypridd	864,294	934,160	▲ 8.1
Trefforest	752,308	790,574	▲ 5.1
Radyr	538,692	735,734	▲ 36.6
Llandaf	482,822	603,722	▲ 25.0
Aberdare	571,746	581,388	▲ 1.7
Taffs Well	363,874	428,572	▲ 17.8
Abercynon	298,358	329,532	▲ 10.4
Mountain Ash	99,694	100,126	▲ 0.4
Trefforest Estate	83,696	86,142	▲ 2.9
Penrhiwceiber	44,846	44,140	▼ -1.6
Cwmbach	27,422	30,514	▲ 11.3
Fernhill	26,148	24,030	▼ -8.1
Total, excluding Cardiff Central and Cardiff Queen Street	5,100,174	5,847,722	▲ 14.7
Total	20,938,136	23,459,894	▲ 12.0

Source: WG analysis of ORR Estimates of Station Usage

Rhondda line

The Rhondda Line follows much of the same route as the Merthyr Line, branching off north of Pontypridd to Trehafod and further stations terminating at Treherbert. In 2018-19:

- 12 of the 19 Rhondda Line stations had increases in entries and exits. The largest was at Radyr, up 36.6 per cent.
- Excluding Cardiff Central and Queen Street, there was a 12.4 per cent increase in station entries and exits on this line compared with 2017-18.

Table 7: Rhondda Line station usage, 2017-18 to 2018-19

Station	Number and percent		
	2017-18 Entries & Exits	2018-19 Entries & Exits	Percentage change
Cardiff Central	12,951,746	14,204,684	▲ 9.7
Cardiff Queen Street	2,912,364	3,431,518	▲ 17.8
Cathays	946,274	1,159,088	▲ 22.5
Pontypridd	864,294	934,160	▲ 8.1
Trefforest	752,308	790,574	▲ 5.1
Radyr	538,692	735,734	▲ 36.6
Llandaf	482,822	603,722	▲ 25.0
Treherbert	485,964	464,124	▼ -4.5
Taffs Well	363,874	428,572	▲ 17.8
Porth	355,330	372,876	▲ 4.9
Treorchy	169,948	158,984	▼ -6.5
Tonypandy	110,928	104,742	▼ -5.6
Trefforest Estate	83,696	86,142	▲ 2.9
Ton Pentre	79,880	75,472	▼ -5.5
Llwynypia	61,724	55,692	▼ -9.8
Ystrad Rhondda	52,532	52,602	▲ 0.1
Dinas (Rhondda)	52,822	52,000	▼ -1.6
Trehafod	38,416	40,254	▲ 4.8
Ynyswen	12,766	11,600	▼ -9.1
Total, excluding Cardiff Central and Cardiff Queen Street	5,452,270	6,126,338	▲ 12.4
Total	21,316,380	23,762,540	▲ 11.5

Source: WG analysis of ORR Estimates of Station Usage

Rhymney line

The Rhymney line links Cardiff Central with Rhymney via a number of stations in the Caerphilly local authority area. In 2018-19:

- 16 of the 18 stations along the line saw increases in entries and exits
- Excluding Cardiff Central and Queen Street, there was an increase in station entries and exits of 11.5 per cent compared with 2017-18
- Energlyn & Churchill Park had the largest increase (up 28.7 per cent), Gilfach Fargoed saw a 14.6 per cent decrease in entries and exits

Table 8: Rhymney Line station usage, 2017-18 to 2018-19

<i>Number and percent</i>			
Station	2017-18 Entries & Exits	2018-19 Entries & Exits	Percentage change
Cardiff Central	12,951,746	14,204,684	▲ 9.7
Cardiff Queen Street	2,912,364	3,431,518	▲ 17.8
Caerphilly	771,930	811,826	▲ 5.2
Heath High Level	441,148	513,242	▲ 16.3
Pengam	461,066	507,024	▲ 10.0
Ystrad Mynach	376,976	410,388	▲ 8.9
Llanishen	269,568	334,372	▲ 24.0
Aber	251,108	283,894	▲ 13.1
Lisvane and Thornhill	216,444	263,906	▲ 21.9
Bargoed	226,342	232,414	▲ 2.7
Rhymney	180,586	191,726	▲ 6.2
Hengoed	164,574	185,782	▲ 12.9
Energlyn & Churchill Park	101,362	130,490	▲ 28.7
Llanbradach	98,714	110,688	▲ 12.1
Tir-Phil	23,572	25,214	▲ 7.0
Pontlloftyn	18,230	18,700	▲ 2.6
Brithdir	14,408	13,226	▼ -8.2
Gilfach Fargoed	5,150	4,396	▼ -14.6
Total, excluding Cardiff Central and Cardiff Queen Street	3,621,178	4,037,288	▲ 11.5
Total	19,485,288	21,673,490	▲ 11.2

Source: WG analysis of ORR Estimates of Station Usage

Maesteg line

The Maesteg line links Cardiff Central to Maesteg via a route along the South Wales Main Line to Bridgend where the line branches off to Maesteg. In 2018-19:

- All stations but one (Maesteg) on this line saw an increase in 2018-19
- Excluding Cardiff Central, there was an increase in station entries and exits of 9.9 per cent on this line compared with 2017-18
- Garth (Mid-Glamorgan) saw the largest proportional increase, with the number of entries and exists increasing by over 50 per cent from 2017-18 to 2018-19

Table 9: Maesteg Line station usage, 2017-18 to 2018-19

<i>Number and percent</i>			
Station	2017-18 Entries & Exits	2018-19 Entries & Exits	Percentage change
Cardiff Central	12,951,746	14,204,684	▲ 9.7
Bridgend	1,526,622	1,636,296	▲ 7.2
Pontyclun	305,836	365,524	▲ 19.5
Pencoed	238,180	281,706	▲ 18.3
Llanharan	175,652	204,208	▲ 16.3
Maesteg	191,530	187,836	▼ -1.9
Sarn	58,826	63,344	▲ 7.7
Tondu	48,888	51,514	▲ 5.4
Wildmill	26,250	31,436	▲ 19.8
Garth (Mid-Glamorgan)	12,472	18,782	▲ 50.6
Maesteg (Ewenny Road)	5,494	6,600	▲ 20.1
Total, excluding Cardiff Central	2,589,750	2,847,246	▲ 9.9
Total	15,541,496	17,051,930	▲ 9.7

Source: WG analysis of ORR Estimates of Station Usage

Ebbw Valley line

The Ebbw Valley line links Cardiff Central to Ebbw Vale Town. In 2018-19:

- Excluding Cardiff Central, there was an increase in station entries and exits of 5.4 per cent compared with 2017-18.
- The 30.0 per cent increase at Pye Corner is a continuation of the growth seen since the station opened in December 2014
- Ebbw Vale Town station opened in June 2015 and has since caused significant decreases in passengers at Ebbw Vale Parkway. In 2018-19 the combined number of entries/exits at Ebbw Vale Parkway and Ebbw Vale Town decreased by 0.2 per cent compared with 2017-18.

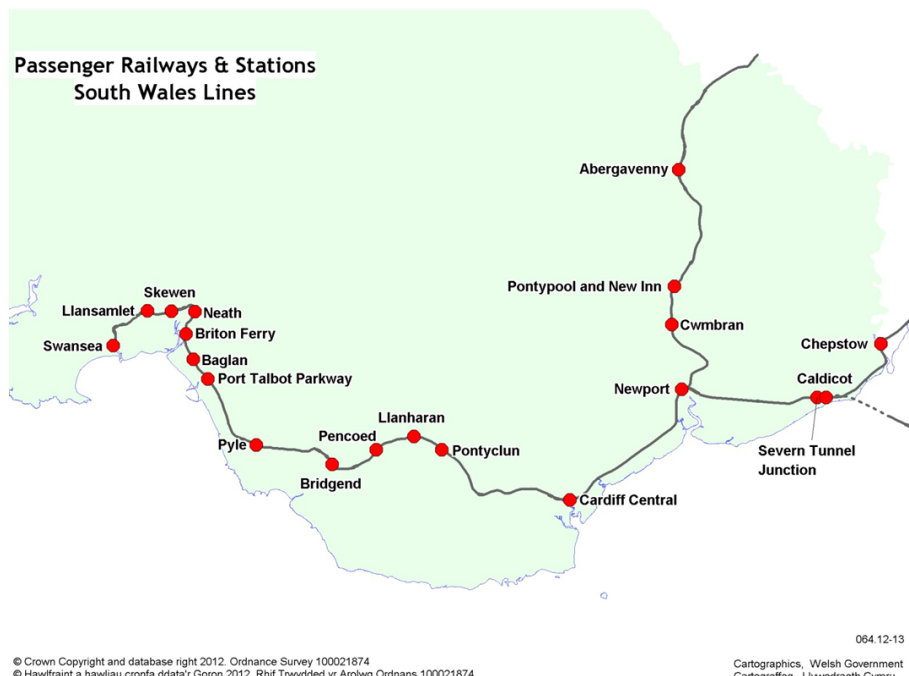
Table 10: Ebbw Valley Line station usage, 2017-18 to 2018-19

			Number and percent	
Station	2017-18 Entries & Exits	2018-19 Entries & Exits	Percentage change	
Cardiff Central	12,951,746	14,204,684	▲	9.7
Ebbw Vale Town	244,590	256,042	▲	4.7
Newbridge	134,570	141,822	▲	5.4
Pye Corner	96,698	125,692	▲	30.0
Crosskeys	122,656	121,350	▼	-1.1
Risca and Pontymister	99,326	101,516	▲	2.2
Rogerstone	90,610	100,266	▲	10.7
Llanhilleth	84,284	87,674	▲	4.0
Ebbw Vale Parkway	53,218	41,210	▼	-22.6
Total, excluding Cardiff Central	925,952	975,572	▲	5.4
Total	13,877,698	15,180,256	▲	9.4

Source: WG analysis of ORR Estimates of Station Usage

South Wales lines

This section reports on the station usage along the Great Western Main Line (Newport to Swansea), the lines connecting Newport with Chepstow and Abergavenny and the Swaneline (Cardiff to Swansea), as illustrated on the map. These lines and routes carry a variety of passengers: commuters, longer distance business travellers and some leisure travellers too.



Great Western Main Line

The Great Western Main Line (also referred to as the South Wales Main Line) links Newport to Swansea and calls at major stations. In 2018-19:

- All stations on this line saw an increase in 2018-19.
- There was an increase in station entries and exits of 8.0 per cent along this line compared with 2017-18.

Table 11: Great Western Main Line station usage, 2017-18 to 2018-19

<i>Number and percent</i>			
Station	2017-18 Entries & Exits	2018-19 Entries & Exits	Percentage change
Cardiff Central	12,951,746	14,204,684	▲ 9.7
Newport (Gwent)	2,696,620	2,846,440	▲ 5.6
Swansea	2,158,886	2,204,216	▲ 2.1
Bridgend	1,526,622	1,636,296	▲ 7.2
Neath	816,748	882,106	▲ 8.0
Port Talbot Parkway	516,610	547,228	▲ 5.9
Total	20,667,232	22,320,970	▲ 8.0

Source: WG analysis of ORR Estimates of Station Usage

Newport to Chepstow

The Newport to Chepstow line runs on to Gloucester and is also used as a relief line when the Severn Tunnel is shut for services to and from South Wales. In 2018-19:

- The number of stations entries and exists on this route was broadly similar to 2017-18.

Table 12: Newport to Chepstow station usage, 2017-18 to 2018-19

<i>Number and percent</i>			
Station	2017-18 Entries & Exits	2018-19 Entries & Exits	Percentage change
Newport (Gwent)	2,696,620	2,846,440	▲ 5.6
Chepstow	253,466	270,346	▲ 6.7
Severn Tunnel Junction	266,916	239,790	▼ -10.2
Caldicot	101,248	111,438	▲ 10.1
Total	3,318,250	3,468,014	▲ 4.5

Source: WG analysis of ORR Estimates of Station Usage

Newport to Abergavenny

The line north of Abergavenny runs onto Hereford and lines to the Midlands, Northern England and North and Mid-Wales via Shrewsbury. In 2018-19:

- All of the stations along this line saw increases, with the highest increase recorded at Pontypool and New Inn (44.3 per cent).
- There was an increase in station entries and exits of 8.9 per cent on this route compared with 2017-18.

Table 13: Newport to Abergavenny station usage, 2017-18 to 2018-19

<i>Number and percent</i>			
Station	2017-18 Entries & Exits	2018-19 Entries & Exits	Percentage change
Newport (Gwent)	2,696,620	2,846,440	▲ 5.6
Abergavenny	437,016	507,782	▲ 16.2
Cwmbran	399,760	466,380	▲ 16.7
Pontypool and New Inn	77,030	111,188	▲ 44.3
Total	3,610,426	3,931,790	▲ 8.9

Source: WG analysis of ORR Estimates of Station Usage

Swanline

Swanline services run along the South Wales Main Line, calling at major and minor stations along the route between Cardiff Central and Swansea. In 2018-19:

- All twelve stations saw increases in entries and exits with Pontyclun recording the highest increase (up 19.5 per cent)
- Excluding Cardiff Central there was an increase of 6.6 per cent in station entries and exits on this line compared to 2017-18.

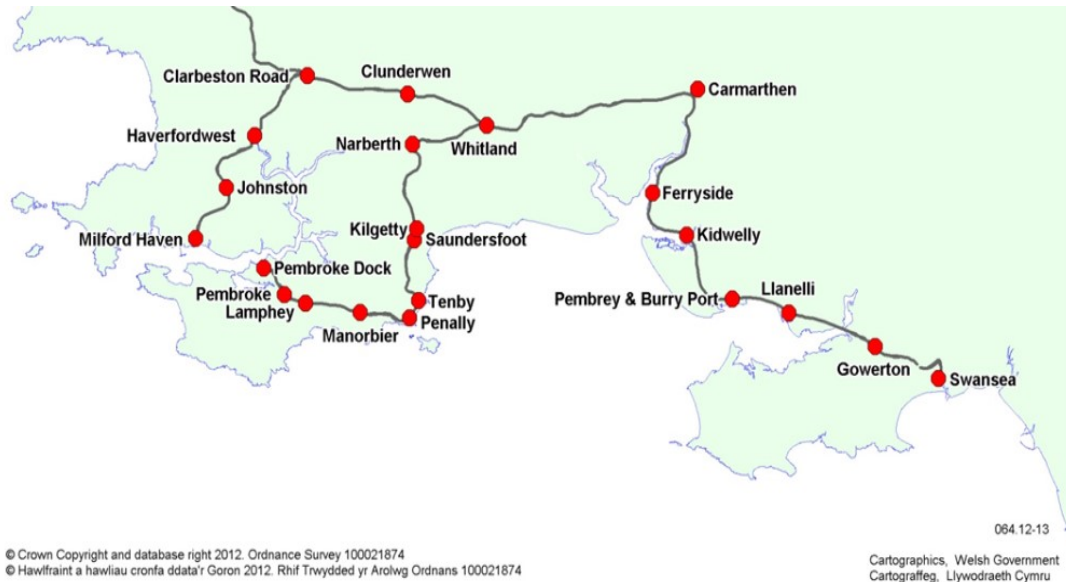
Table 14: Swanline station usage, 2017-18 to 2018-19

Station	<i>Number and percent</i>		
	2017-18 Entries & Exits	2018-19 Entries & Exits	Percentage change
Cardiff Central	12,951,746	14,204,684	▲ 9.7
Swansea	2,158,886	2,204,216	▲ 2.1
Bridgend	1,526,622	1,636,296	▲ 7.2
Neath	816,748	882,106	▲ 8.0
Port Talbot Parkway	516,610	547,228	▲ 5.9
Pontyclun	305,836	365,524	▲ 19.5
Pencoed	238,180	281,706	▲ 18.3
Pyle	125,410	146,622	▲ 16.9
Skewen	41,692	43,898	▲ 5.3
Briton Ferry	33,868	38,820	▲ 14.6
Llansamlet	31,758	34,138	▲ 7.5
Baglan	23,716	24,346	▲ 2.7
Total, excluding Cardiff Central	5,819,326	6,204,900	▲ 6.6
Total	18,771,072	20,409,584	▲ 8.7

RR Estimates of Station Usage

West Wales lines

The routes from Swansea to Pembroke Dock, Milford Haven and Fishguard connect to the West Wales ferry ports, and many of the rail services are timed to meet ferry services with additional services run in the summer months. In May 2012, Fishguard and Goodwick station was re-opened, and this change was combined with increased service frequencies on the Fishguard branch line.



Swansea to Pembroke Dock

This line runs from Swansea through to Pembroke Dock via Carmarthen, branching off West of Whitland calling at a number of stations before terminating at Pembroke Dock. In 2018-19:

- More than half of stations along this route had increases in the number of entries and exits.
- Gowerton had the largest percentage increase (19.8 per cent) along this line, while the largest percentage decrease was at Carmarthen (7.4 per cent)
- There was an increase of 1.3 per cent in station entries/exits on this line compared with 2017-18.

Table 15: Swansea to Pembroke Dock station usage, 2017-18 to 2018-19

<i>Number and percent</i>			
Station	2017-18 Entries & Exits	2018-19 Entries & Exits	Percentage change
Swansea	2,158,886	2,204,216	▲ 2.1
Llanelli	400,780	399,892	▼ -0.2
Carmarthen	416,694	385,894	▼ -7.4
Gowerton	174,096	208,580	▲ 19.8
Pembrey & Burry Port	138,008	136,086	▼ -1.4
Tenby	122,584	125,450	▲ 2.3
Pembroke Dock	46,226	47,918	▲ 3.7
Whitland	48,104	45,168	▼ -6.1
Pembroke	31,066	32,616	▲ 5.0
Kidwelly	28,188	28,652	▲ 1.6
Ferryside	20,086	19,572	▼ -2.6
Narberth	18,966	18,992	▲ 0.1
Kilgetty	16,402	15,694	▼ -4.3
Manorbier	9,346	9,122	▼ -2.4
Saundersfoot	8,002	8,346	▲ 4.3
Lamphey	4,868	5,108	▲ 4.9
Penally	5,168	5,102	▼ -1.3
Total	3,647,470	3,696,408	▲ 1.3

Source: WG analysis of ORR Estimates of Station Usage

Swansea to Milford Haven and Fishguard

This line runs from Swansea through to Fishguard and Milford Haven via a branch line west of Clarbeston Road. In 2018-19:

- The largest percentage increase along this line was at Gowerton (19.8 per cent), while the largest decrease was at Fishguard Harbour (down 17.7 per cent)
- There was an increase in station entries and exits of 0.6 per cent on this line compared with 2017-18, although most stations showed a decrease.

Table 16: Swansea to Milford Haven & Fishguard station usage, 2017-18 to 2018-19

<i>Number and percent</i>			
Station	2017-18 Entries & Exits	2018-19 Entries & Exits	Percentage change
Swansea	2,158,886	2,204,216	▲ 2.1
Llanelli	400,780	399,892	▼ -0.2
Carmarthen	416,694	385,894	▼ -7.4
Gowerton	174,096	208,580	▲ 19.8
Pembrey & Burry Port	138,008	136,086	▼ -1.4
Haverfordwest	133,164	124,190	▼ -6.7
Milford Haven	62,752	59,256	▼ -5.6
Whitland	48,104	45,168	▼ -6.1
Kidwelly	28,188	28,652	▲ 1.6
Clunderwen	24,474	22,106	▼ -9.7
Fishguard & Goodwick	20,136	19,838	▼ -1.5
Ferryside	20,086	19,572	▼ -2.6
Fishguard Harbour	16,994	13,982	▼ -17.7
Johnston (Dyfed)	9,008	8,270	▼ -8.2
Clarbeston Road	7,828	7,216	▼ -7.8
Total	3,659,198	3,682,918	▲ 0.6

Source: WG analysis of ORR Estimates of Station Usage

Mid Wales lines

The Mid Wales lines cover the Heart of Wales line and the Cambrian line. These lines serve communities across Mid-Wales and North Wales, linking into services to the Midlands, Northern England and London and the South East via Shrewsbury.



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Cartographics, Welsh Government
Cartograffeg, Llywodraeth Cymru

Heart of Wales line

The Heart of Wales Line runs from Swansea to Shrewsbury via a number of stations across Mid-Wales. In 2018-19:

- The number of station entries and exits on this line increased by 1.5 per cent when compared with 2017-18
- Garth (Powys) had the highest increase (29.8 per cent) whilst Sugar Loaf recorded the largest relative decrease (61.6) per cent compared to 2017-18.

Table 17: Heart of Wales Line station usage, 2017-18 to 2018-19

			Number and percent	
Station	2017-18 Entries & Exits	2018-19 Entries & Exits	Percentage change	
Swansea	2,158,886	2,204,216	▲	2.1
Llanelli	400,780	399,892	▼	-0.2
Llandrindod	40,128	40,672	▲	1.4
Ammanford	19,934	19,596	▼	-1.7
Llandeilo	19,520	19,280	▼	-1.2
Llandovery	16,732	15,750	▼	-5.9
Llandybie	10,756	9,580	▼	-10.9
Llanwrtyd	7,254	7,368	▲	1.6
Builth Road	7,458	7,132	▼	-4.4
Pontarddulais	4,820	5,412	▲	12.3
Llangadog	5,578	5,018	▼	-10.0
Pantyffynnon	3,274	3,632	▲	10.9
Llangennech	3,350	3,578	▲	6.8
Knucklas	3,454	3,548	▲	2.7
Bynea	2,228	2,686	▲	20.6
Ffairfach	2,694	2,372	▼	-12.0
Pen-Y-Bont	1,824	1,854	▲	1.6
Llangammarch	1,782	1,802	▲	1.1
Llanwrda	2,052	1,750	▼	-14.7
Garth (Powys)	1,032	1,340	▲	29.8
Dolau	1,372	1,278	▼	-6.9
Cilmeri	1,436	1,266	▼	-11.8
Cynghordy	1,170	1,046	▼	-10.6
Llanbister Road	992	930	▼	-6.3
Llangynllo	806	774	▼	-4.0
Sugar Loaf	1,846	708	▼	-61.6
Total	2,721,158	2,762,480	▲	1.5

Source: WG analysis of ORR Estimates of Station Usage

Cambrian main line

The Cambrian Main Line runs from Shrewsbury across Mid-Wales to Aberystwyth via Machynlleth. In 2018-19:

- 2 of the 7 stations along the line saw an increase when compared with 2017-18, the largest in Dovey Junction (up 4.2 per cent). Caersws had the largest decrease (13.0 per cent).
- There was a decrease of 4.6 per cent in station entries and exits on this line compared with 2017-18.

Table 18: Cambrian Main Line station usage, 2017-18 to 2018-19

Station	<i>Number and percent</i>		
	2017-18 Entries & Exits	2018-19 Entries & Exits	Percentage change
Aberystwyth	335,426	309,816	▼ -7.6
Newtown	185,064	184,576	▼ -0.3
Welshpool	180,486	182,956	▲ 1.4
Machynlleth	137,686	130,598	▼ -5.1
Borth	67,168	61,446	▼ -8.5
Caersws	69,668	60,626	▼ -13.0
Dovey Junction	4,434	4,622	▲ 4.2
Total	979,932	934,640	▼ -4.6

Source: WG analysis of ORR Estimates of Station Usage

Cambrian Coast line

The Cambrian Coast Line runs from Machynlleth to Pwllheli in North Wales via a number of stations along the coast. In 2018-19:

- There was a 2.4 per cent increase in station entries/exits on this line when compared to 2017-18.

Table 19: Cambrian Coast Line station usage, 2017-18 to 2018-19

<i>Number and percent</i>			
Station	2017-18 Entries & Exits	2018-19 Entries & Exits	Percentage change
Barmouth	186,824	197,922	▲ 5.9
Harlech	124,892	135,362	▲ 8.4
Machynlleth	137,686	130,598	▼ -5.1
Tywyn	102,220	105,178	▲ 2.9
Pwllheli	76,454	76,236	▼ -0.3
Porthmadog	70,860	73,056	▲ 3.1
Penrhyndeudraeth	56,156	57,100	▲ 1.7
Fairbourne	40,512	41,420	▲ 2.2
Aberdovey	37,706	40,390	▲ 7.1
Llwyngwril	28,560	31,626	▲ 10.7
Criccieth	27,486	27,532	▲ 0.2
Talybont	26,936	25,274	▼ -6.2
Minffordd	17,178	16,774	▼ -2.4
Dyffryn Ardudwy	16,636	15,134	▼ -9.0
Llanbedr	11,340	12,398	▲ 9.3
Morfa Mawddach	11,434	11,920	▲ 4.3
Penhelig	8,570	8,852	▲ 3.3
Talsarnau	5,400	5,890	▲ 9.1
Llandanwg	4,312	4,682	▲ 8.6
Dovey Junction	4,434	4,622	▲ 4.2
Penychain	4,126	3,554	▼ -13.9
Tonfanau	3,292	3,058	▼ -7.1
Llanaber	3,318	2,874	▼ -13.4
Pensarn	2,736	2,652	▼ -3.1
Abererch	2,506	2,228	▼ -11.1
Llandecwyn	1,886	1,700	▼ -9.9
Tygwyn	1,580	1,330	▼ -15.8
Total	1,015,040	1,039,362	▲ 2.4

Source: WG analysis of ORR Estimates of Station Usage

North Wales lines

The North Wales lines encompass the North Wales Coast Line, the Conwy Line, the Borderlands line and on routes from Wrexham.



North Wales Coast line

The North Wales Coast Line is the mainline in North Wales linking Holyhead in the West to Shotton in the East and services onto Northern England, the Midlands and London via Crewe. In 2018-19:

- There was an increase in station entries and exits of 2.2 per cent on this line when compared to 2017-18.
- Llanfairfechan and Conwy showed increases of 16.5 per cent and 13.0 per cent respectively.

Table 20: North Wales Coast Line station usage, 2017-18 to 2018-19

<i>Number and percent</i>			
Station	2017-18 Entries & Exits	2018-19 Entries & Exits	Percentage change
Bangor (Gwynedd)	662,060	667,382	▲ 0.8
Rhyl	520,198	520,124	▼ 0.0
Prestatyn	332,714	334,258	▲ 0.5
Llandudno Junction	317,382	324,874	▲ 2.4
Colwyn Bay	269,128	281,032	▲ 4.4
Flint	257,500	278,488	▲ 8.2
Shotton	215,066	223,578	▲ 4.0
Holyhead	219,748	217,046	▼ -1.2
Abergele & Pensarn	70,114	73,772	▲ 5.2
Conwy	57,006	64,442	▲ 13.0
Llanfairpwll	20,604	21,246	▲ 3.1
Llanfairfechan	14,040	16,358	▲ 16.5
Valley	14,742	14,512	▼ -1.6
Penmaenmawr	11,692	12,820	▲ 9.6
Rhosneigr	11,558	10,844	▼ -6.2
Bodorgan	5,552	5,394	▼ -2.8
Ty Croes	4,292	3,590	▼ -16.4
Total	3,003,396	3,069,760	▲ 2.2

Source: WG analysis of ORR Estimates of Station Usage

Conwy Valley line

The Conwy Valley Line runs from the North Wales Coast at Llandudno through the Conwy Valley via Llandudno Junction, terminating at Blaenau Ffestiniog. In 2018-19:

- There was an increase in station entries and exits of 2.6 per cent on this line when compared to 2017-18.
- Only one station, Blaenau Ffestiniog, saw a decrease in entries and exits,

Table 21: Conwy Valley Line station usage, 2017-18 to 2018-19

Station	<i>Number and percent</i>		
	2017-18 Entries & Exits	2018-19 Entries & Exits	Percentage change
Llandudno Junction	317,382	324,874	▲ 2.4
Llandudno	305,280	312,204	▲ 2.3
Blaenau Ffestiniog	39,932	39,102	▼ -2.1
Betws-y-Coed	35,322	35,364	▲ 0.1
Llanrwst	12,606	13,808	▲ 9.5
Deganwy	10,940	12,830	▲ 17.3
Glan Conwy	3,166	3,932	▲ 24.2
Dolwyddelan	3,442	3,838	▲ 11.5
North Llanrwst	1,942	2,572	▲ 32.4
Tal-y-Cafn	1,148	1,362	▲ 18.6
Roman Bridge	942	1,094	▲ 16.1
Pont-y-Pant	842	896	▲ 6.4
Dolgarrog	612	826	▲ 35.0
Total	733,556	752,702	▲ 2.6

Source: WG analysis of ORR Estimates of Station Usage

Borderlands line

The Borderlands Line runs north from Wrexham Central terminating at Bidston in the Wirral. In 2018-19:

- 6 stations along this line saw increases when compared with 2017-18, whilst 5 stations saw decreases.
- There was an increase of 3.8 per cent in station entries and exits on this line when compared with 2017-18.

Table 22: Borderlands Line station usage, 2017-18 to 2018-19

<i>Number and percent</i>			
Station	2017-18 Entries & Exits	2018-19 Entries & Exits	Percentage change
Wrexham General	492,390	529,622	▲ 7.6
Shotton	215,066	223,578	▲ 4.0
Wrexham Central	88,568	81,792	▼ -7.7
Buckley	41,008	40,636	▼ -0.9
Hawarden	32,642	33,424	▲ 2.4
Gwersyllt	26,802	24,464	▼ -8.7
Penyffordd	20,686	22,428	▲ 8.4
Hope (Clwyd)	24,630	21,820	▼ -11.4
Caergwrle	17,800	19,140	▲ 7.5
Cefn-y-Bedd	7,620	7,240	▼ -5.0
Hawarden bridge	3,296	3,664	▲ 11.2
Total	970,508	1,007,808	▲ 3.8

Source: WG analysis of ORR Estimates of Station Usage

Wrexham to Chirk

This route is part of the Shrewsbury to Chester line. For 2018-19:

- There was an increase of 7.3 per cent in all station entries and exits on this route when compared with 2017-18.

Table 23: Wrexham to Chirk station usage, 2017-18 to 2018-19

<i>Number and percent</i>			
Station	2017-18 Entries & Exits	2018-19 Entries & Exits	Percentage change
Wrexham General	492,390	529,622	▲ 7.6
Ruabon	95,670	102,628	▲ 7.3
Chirk	75,524	79,746	▲ 5.6
Total	663,584	711,996	▲ 7.3

Source: WG analysis of ORR Estimates of Station Usage

Interchange stations



An interchange station is a train station that serves more than one railway route. It allows passengers to change from one route to another. Interchange stations play an important role in ensuring continuity of passenger journeys from one line to another. This also ensures that the rail network is completely interlinked. Wales railway has 23 interchange stations, representing 10 percent of all stations in Wales.

The number of entries and exits at interchange stations in this section represents the number of passengers *changing* at the station i.e. they did not leave the station but connected to a different train.

- There was an increase of 12.3 per cent in all interchange station entries and exits in Wales in 2018-19 compared with 2017-18
- Cardiff Central is the busiest interchange station, supporting a total of 10 different lines. This is followed by Cardiff Queen Street, which supports 6 lines.

Table 24: Interchange entries and exits by station, 2017-18 to 2018-19

<i>Number and percent</i>				
Station	2017-18 Entries & Exits	2018-19 Entries & Exits	Percentage change	
Cardiff Central	1,948,266	2,187,063	▲	12.3
Cardiff Queen Street	1,154,062	1,518,923	▲	31.6
Newport (Gwent)	580,321	560,493	▼	-3.4
Swansea	95,024	97,752	▲	2.9
Radyr	82,083	91,118	▲	11.0
Llandudno Junction	95,023	83,402	▼	-12.2
Bridgend	48,739	55,113	▲	13.1
Pontypridd	57,963	53,586	▼	-7.6
Severn Tunnel Junction	41,349	36,796	▼	-11.0
Abercynon	36,440	33,631	▼	-7.7
Shotton	17,471	19,518	▲	11.7
Total	4,283,925	4,811,542	▲	12.3

Source: WG analysis of ORR Estimates of Station Usage

Key Quality Information

1 Data source

The Office of Rail and Road (ORR) commissions Steer Davies Gleave to collate and report on station usage figures on an annual basis. The data consists of estimates of the number of passengers travelling to and from each station (entries and exits). They are based on ticket sales data from the national ticketing database and estimates of travel using zonal/multi-modal tickets sold by Strathclyde Partnership for Transport and English Integrated Transport Authorities (formerly PTEs). More information on the methodology and ORR station information can be found in the [ORR's Estimates of Station Usage 2018-19 report](#).

2 Definitions

2.1 Coverage

In Wales, as in England and Scotland, passenger train services are operated by a number of companies, referred to as Train Operating Companies (TOCs), normally on the basis of regional franchises awarded by the Department for Transport. There are 4 TOCs operating services to/from/within Wales during 2018-19 – Transport for Wales (TfW) (Arriva Trains Wales operated the Wales and Borders franchise until October 2018); Great Western Railway (which operates services between Swansea and London with a summer weekend service to Pembroke Dock); Cross-country Trains (which operates a service from Cardiff to Nottingham via Newport and Chepstow); and Avanti West Coast (previously Virgin Trains, which operates services from Holyhead to London Euston), with one train a day from Wrexham General to London Euston. Station usage estimates are based on ticket sales regardless of which TOC is providing the journey.

2.2 Relevance

These statistics are used both within and outside the Welsh Government to monitor trends in rail transport and as a baseline for further analysis. They are also used in monitoring Welsh Government transport policy.

These statistics do not provide an indication of a TOC's revenue as train fares are allocated to TOCs dependent on the route of the journey. For example, if a TOC only carried out a small portion of a longer passenger journey, they would only receive a small allocation of the fare.

2.3 Accuracy

The estimate of station usage data set consists of estimates of the total numbers of people:

- Travelling from or to the station (entries and exits); and
- Interchanging at the station (interchanges).

The estimates are subject to some error. Volatility in the estimates is more common when numbers are low.

Information is given for all the national rail stations in England, Scotland, and Wales based on tickets sales data and for some stations may not be an accurate reflection of usage. For example,

some tickets are sold to the end of the line or as far as a fare price will allow, and not to the actual journey destination. Consequently, some stations marking the end of lines or fare prices appear busier than they are and other stations along those lines appear less busy than they are.

All estimates of station usage, exits, entries and interchanges included in the station count dataset, are derived from the Origin Destination Matrix (ODM), also produced by Steer Davies Gleave for the ORR. The ODM itself is, in turn derived primarily from the MOIRA2.2 Demand Matrix.

The MOIRA2.2 demand matrix is sourced from MOIRA2.2 which is the rail industry's principal planning tool and includes a comprehensive representation of travel on the national rail network. The base data for the MOIRA2.2 demand matrix is LENNON, the rail industry's ticketing and revenue system, with the addition of "infills" for tickets outside the LENNON system such as London Travelcards, airport links and multi-modal and zonal products sponsored by Passenger Transport Executives (PTEs).

2.4 Types of infills and other definitions

Infills are included within the MOIRA2.2 demand matrix to add in the missing journeys and revenue in three key areas:

- Within London travel card area. Whilst the underlying matrix includes an estimate of journeys made on Day travel cards/travel card seasons purchased at National Rail stations, it does not include a significant number of national rail trips made using Travel cards purchased at Tube stations, travel shops and newsagents.
- Within Passenger Transport Executive (PTE) areas. The underlying matrix excludes virtually all rail trips made on PTE-sponsored tickets, which are usually zonal and often multimodal.
- Trips to/from Airports. The underlying matrix includes many trips to/from airports, but excludes all Heathrow Express journeys, and some tickets sold for Gatwick Express, Stansted Express and other airport operators.

Passenger Transport Executives (PTEs) – PTEs are local government bodies which are responsible for public transport within large urban areas and are accountable to Integrated Transport Authorities (ITAs). There are five PTEs in England, for each of the metropolitan counties (Merseyside, South Yorkshire, Tyne and Wear, West Midlands and West Yorkshire). In Scotland the Strathclyde Partnership for Transport is the equivalent body covering the region of Strathclyde.

Stations - Network Rail own and maintain all the stations in Wales (with the exception of Fishguard Harbour which is owned and operated by Stena Line) and all are leased to Transport of Wales.

3. Timeliness and punctuality

This bulletin reports on rail stations usage in Wales. Information covers each station in Wales during the 2018-19 financial year and the UK as a whole back to 2012-13. The bulletin is based on the annual station usage report that is published by the Office of Rail Regulation (ORR). As part of this report the ORR publish a spreadsheet which lists the estimation station entries and station exits for each station on the UK rail network.

4. Accessibility and clarity

This statistical bulletin is pre-announced and then published on the Statistics & Research website and all the data in this bulletin as well as other years will be available on the [StatsWales website](#) in due course.

5. Comparability and coherence

Caution must be taken when making comparisons over time due to changes in the coverage of the LENNON database and annual methodological improvements.

Users should also take care when interpreting percentage changes, especially when dealing with small numbers.

6. Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFG)

The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The Act puts in place seven well-being goals for Wales. These are for a more equal, prosperous, resilient, healthier and globally responsible Wales, with cohesive communities and a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. Under section (10)(1) of the Act, the Welsh Ministers must (a) publish indicators (“national indicators”) that must be applied for the purpose of measuring progress towards the achievement of the Well-being goals, and (b) lay a copy of the national indicators before the National Assembly. The 46 national indicators were laid in March 2016.

Information on the indicators, along with narratives for each of the well-being goals and associated technical information is available in the [Well-being of Wales report](#).

Further information on the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#).

The statistics included in this release could also provide supporting narrative to the national indicators and be used by public services boards in relation to their local well-being assessments and local well-being plans.

7. Further details

The document is available at: <https://gov.wales/rail-station-usage>

8. Next update

February 2021 (provisional)

9. We want your feedback

We welcome any feedback on any aspect of these statistics which can be provided to: stats.transport@gov.wales.

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