

Senedd Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee

Rail delivery, infrastructure and performance in Wales

Transport Focus evidence outline based on our extensive research

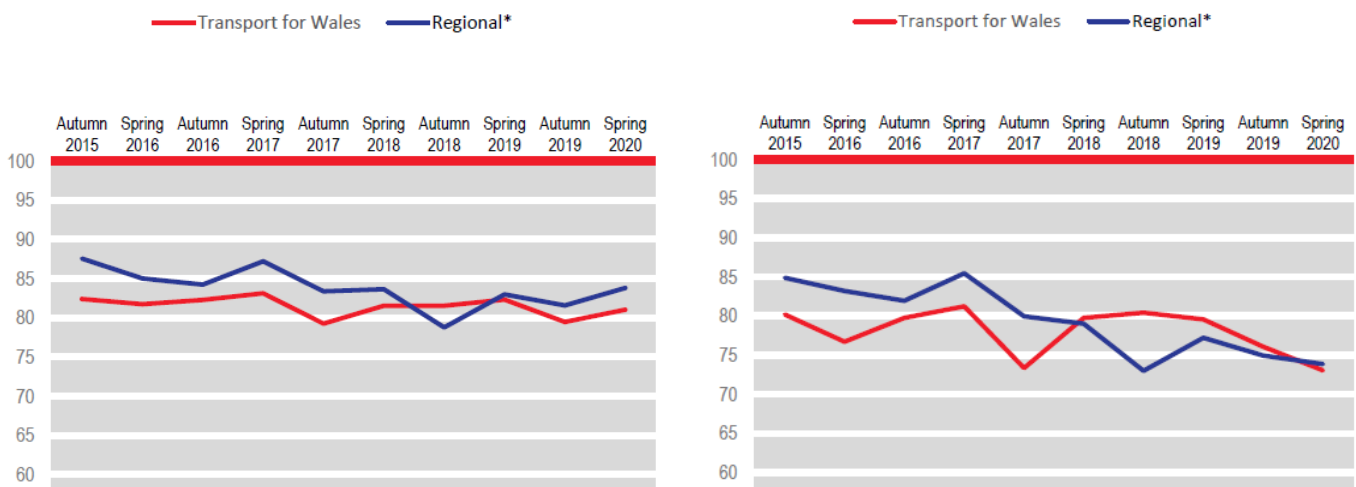
1. Delivery of the rail franchise and metro

Our research¹ shows what matters most to passengers is a punctual and reliable railway that delivers on the timetable's promise at an acceptable price.

Our National Rail Passenger Survey² benchmarked satisfaction up to 2020:

- Overall satisfaction with Transport for Wales (TfW) fairly static at around 80 per cent
- Satisfaction with punctuality/reliability less stable prior to 2018, with downturn more recently.

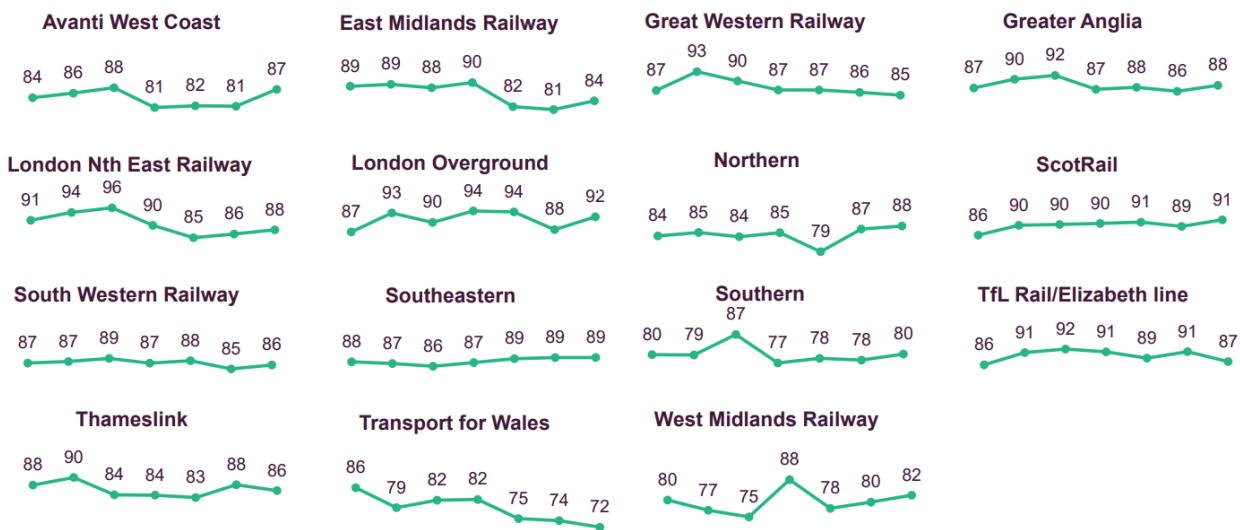
Overall journey satisfaction (left) and punctuality/reliability (right) (aut 2015 to spr 2020)



More recently our rail user survey³ has been tracking satisfaction over time and comparing train operators. This has shown a downturn in overall satisfaction with TfW.

Overall satisfaction across 12 three-month waves (Oct 2021 to Aug 2023)

6 Oct 2021-9 Jan 2022, 10 Jan-3 Apr 2022, 8 Apr-26 June 2022, 1 July-18 Sept 2022 and 23 Sept-11 Dec 2022, 16 Dec 2022-19 Mar 2023, 24 Mar to 20 Aug 2023



¹ [Britain's railway: what matters to passengers](#), Transport Focus. Dec 2022

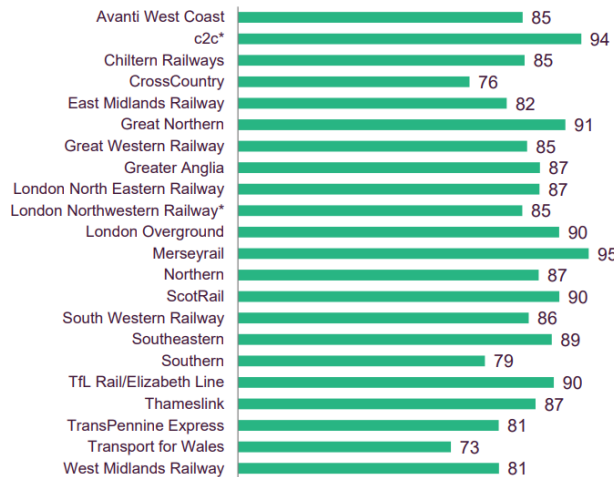
² [National Rail Passenger Survey: spring 2020](#), Transport Focus. Jul 2020

³ [Rail User Survey: train operator results](#), Transport Focus. Sep 2023

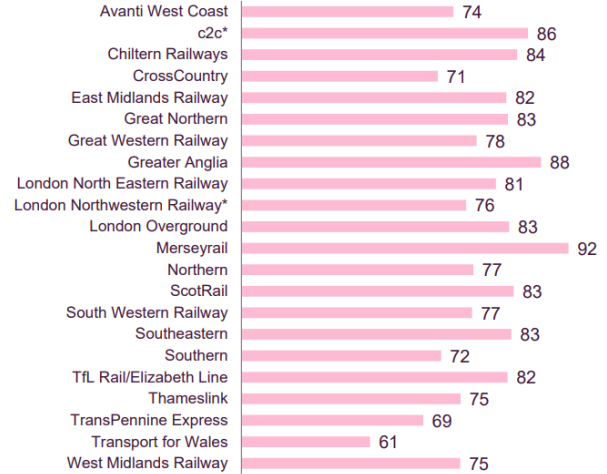
A number of issues have taken their toll on punctuality and reliability of trains during 2023. Passenger experience reflects this, with latest ratings for TfW at the bottom for overall satisfaction and punctuality/reliability.

Overall journey satisfaction and punctuality/reliability (Dec 2022 to Aug 2023)

Overall satisfaction %



Satisfaction with punctuality/reliability %



2. Rail infrastructure priorities – UK and Welsh Government

We have been working with Network Rail Wales to challenge and inform plans for Control Period 7 (2024-29) from both a passenger and stakeholder perspective.

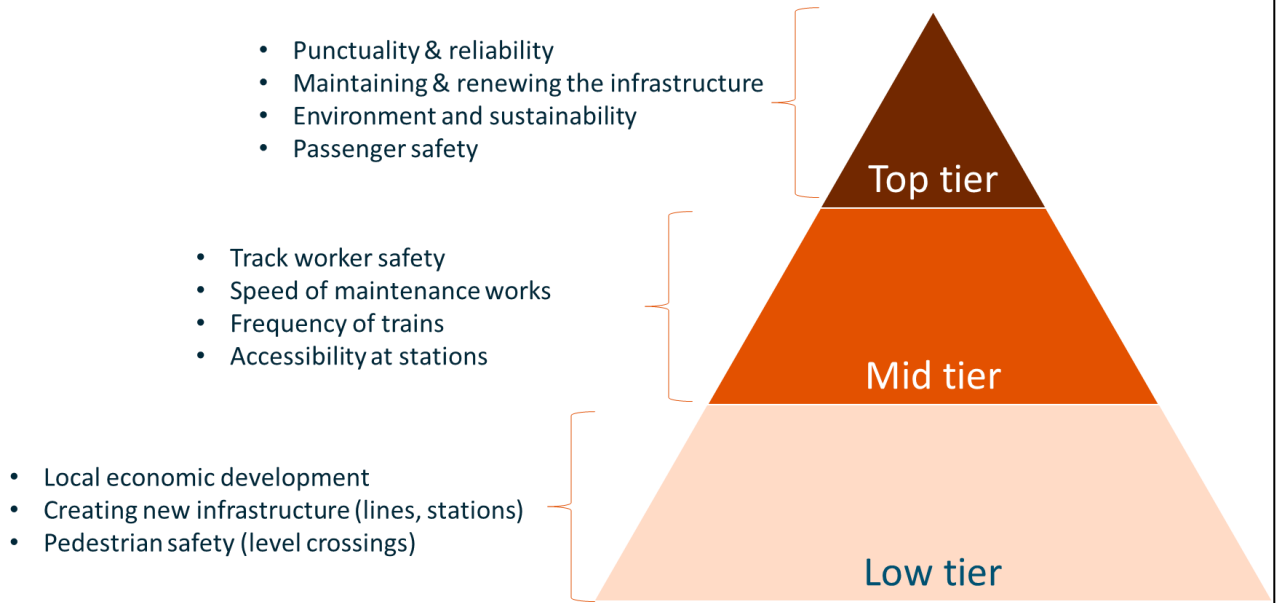
Key points emerging from UK Government’s railways high level output specification:

- Punctuality and reliability cited as being of the highest priority for rail passengers and freight customers, with steps to minimise the impact of disruption
- Support for rail recovery, need for continued modernisation and significant efficiency improvements, including greater cost efficiency
- Maintaining safety, with suicide and trespass prevention highlighted as priorities
- Inclusion and accessibility as a core element of CP7 planning
- Strong support for rail freight growth
- Infrastructure to be as resilient as reasonably possible to the effects of climate change and extreme weather
- Continued progress towards a low emissions railway and pursuing decarbonisation objectives, optimising social value and biodiversity
- Supporting growth, levelling up and deployment of technology.

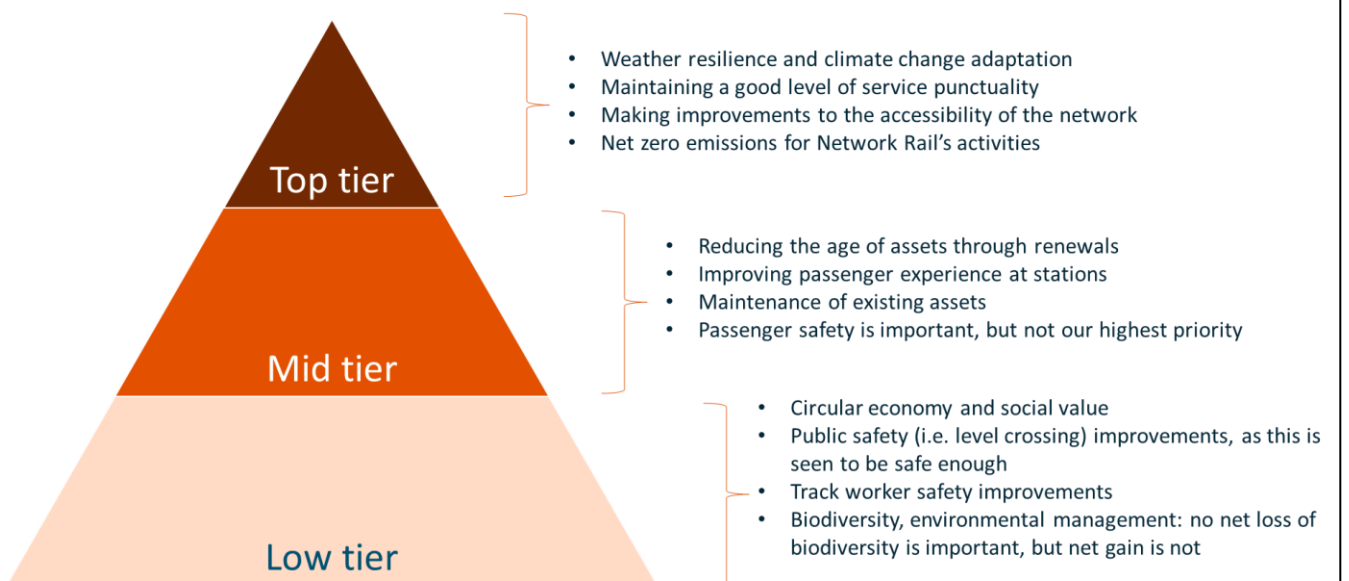
Putting passengers at the heart of planning is vital. Transport Focus worked with Network Rail’s Wales and Western region to research priorities⁴ with passengers and stakeholders to feed into the business plan for Control Period 7. The following illustrations show these priorities with relative importance.

⁴ [Network Rail Wales & Western: passenger research for 2024-29 business plan](#), Transport Focus. Mar 2023

Passenger priorities



Stakeholder priorities



3. Transport for Wales rail performance and passenger impact

Disruption to services has been causing some pain for passengers over the past twelve months. Issues with existing fleet and delays to new trains reduced capacity and also caused short-notice cancellations. Valleys transformation also caused extensive impact for residents.

Performance concerns were first raised at the Transport Focus board meeting in November 2022. We followed this with a formal letter in April 2023⁵, calling on TfW to:

- restore service performance and reliability as a priority
- improve information provision via a range of channels, not just digital, with honest and transparent communications when things do not go to plan
- monitor and improve the experience of replacement services
- have a greater focus on complaint handling quality.

We are working closely with TfW to help them focus on actions for improvement, monitoring and feeding back journey experience reports and challenging senior leaders to ensure the voice of transport users is being heard. We use our position at key meetings to keep performance on the agenda – TfW advisory panel (which Transport Focus chairs) also Network Rail route supervisory board and Welsh Government transport performance board and regular contact with rail user groups.

We recognise a number of actions showing green shoots of improvement:

- introduction of new fleet in the Valleys, North Wales and Marches lines
- punctuality improvements on the Valleys lines
- reductions in the turnaround time for delay repay payments, monitoring and publishing the information
- Significant efforts going into challenging ticketless travel & fraud, which is also serving to reduce antisocial behaviour on the network.

Transport Focus supports Transport for Wales colleagues with various initiatives, particularly in providing input from our extensive research, to give further depth to understanding passenger experience and priorities.

Ffocws ar drafnidiaeth Cymru | Transport Focus Wales

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⁵ [Transport for Wales performance letter](#), Transport Focus. Apr 2023