

Customer Report 2024





Mark Hopwood, Managing Director, GWR

Welcome to our 2024 Customer Report update. Over the last six months performance has been an issue on many of our routes. In part due to some very difficult weather conditions that have seen flooding and landslides across all areas of our network, but also in part to infrastructure failures between Reading and London Paddington, that have impacted local, regional and long distance services. In this report Marcus Jones, Route Managing Director for Network Rail Western outlines the action that Network Rail are now taking to resolve this. We have pledged to work with them and to support them as much as we can to help stabilise and improve reliability.

This year has seen the industrial dispute with the RMT trade union resolved. Industrial action continues however through ASLEF the train driver's trade union and this is continuing to impact services leading to delays and cancellations.

We are seeing a steady return to rail, particularly among leisure customers. This is leading to busier trains. It is therefore essential that both GWR and our partners Hitachi ensure that our trains are well maintained and ready for service each day. We know that short-formed services are a leading cause of customer complaints, and we are working on this. We have reached agreement with the Department for Transport (DfT) to retain some of our Castle Class fleet for use in Devon and Cornwall and this has helped. We do not however have any spare capacity in our fleet.

This year has also seen us open three new stations with the support of the DfT, and local partners Bristol City Council, Reading Borough Council and Devon County Council. The West of England Combined Authority has supported additional rail services around Bristol, Gloucester and Westbury and we have continued our work to better integrate our services with buses, cycling and walking.

We are committed to working in partnership to support the communities we serve, building a sustainable rail service, that is reliable, easy to use and meets the needs and aspirations of our customers.



Chipping Sodbury flooding

Mark Hopwood

Mark Hopwood,
Managing Director










Customer Service and Satisfaction

Passenger Assistance

GWR has had it's busiest year ever delivering Passenger Assistance, to over 200,000 assistance requests, approximately 25% more than last year. We have also seen an increase in passengers who do not prebook but use our Turn Up and Go service. Our frontline staff are now completing bespoke disability awareness refresher training, designed with input from the GWR Accessibility Panel, and we look forward to welcoming more disabled passengers onto our network in the next year.

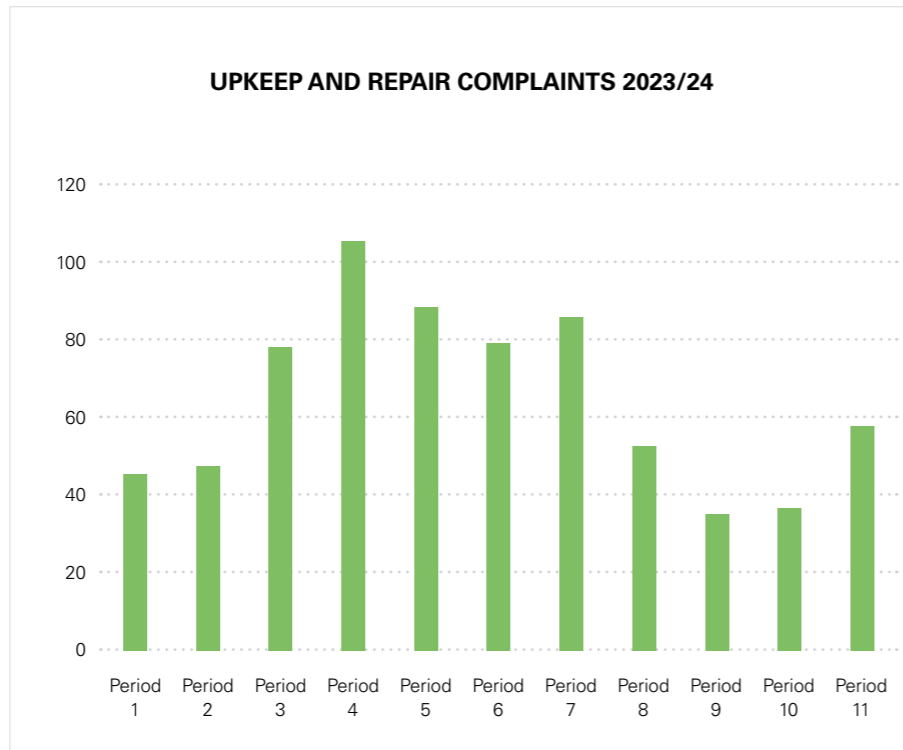


215,221
TOTAL CUSTOMERS HELPED
WITH ASSISTANCE THIS YEAR

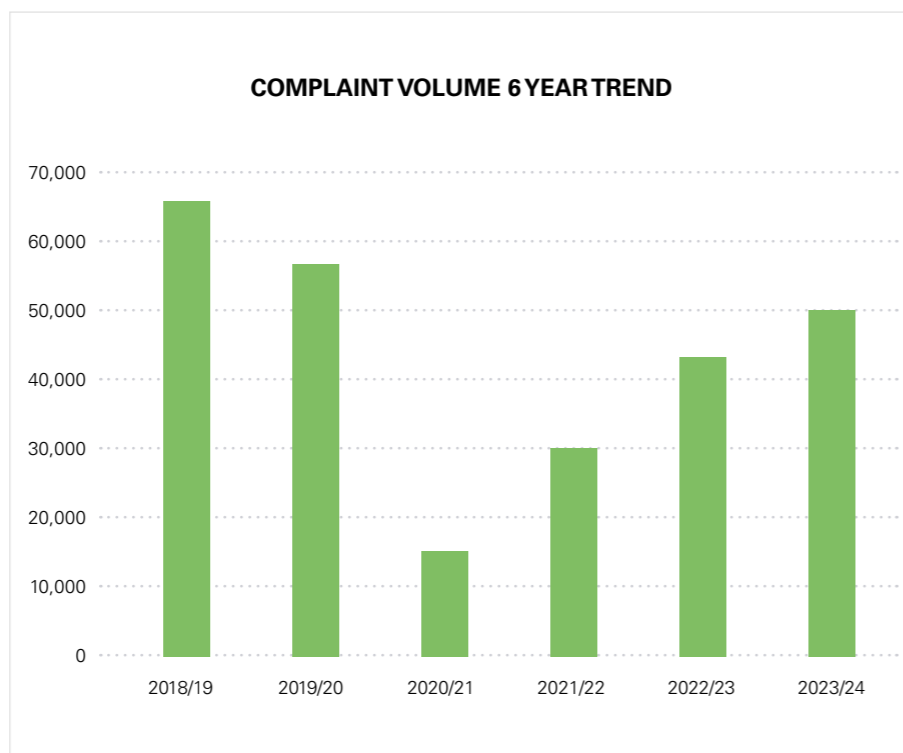
 16,870 DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING	 71,028 OTHER MOBILITY IMPAIRMENT	 8,012 MOBILITY SCOOTER USERS
 32,032 VISUAL IMPAIRMENT	 14,710 ELDERLY	 67,911 WHEELCHAIR USERS
 4,185 SPEECH IMPAIRMENT	 10,964 AUTISM	 4,454 3,781 GUIDE DOG ASSISTANT DOG

Complaints and Faults Handling Data

2023-24 has presented a challenging environment with ongoing industrial action, and more recently weather related disruption that affected many different parts of the GWR network. Complaints about capacity (crowded services and reservation problems), Delay Repay compensation scheme, and Train Service Performance (delayed and cancelled trains) represented over 50% of all complaints received.



2023/24 has seen an average of 65 complaints per four week period about some aspect of our trains or stations that are in need of attention. Those complaints are far more likely to be made about issues on-board our trains, and can be related to the toilets on-board, problems with the seats, or the internal doors. Both GWR and Hitachi maintenance teams use this data, as well as data supplied by our on board teams to prioritise and schedule remedial work to address faults found.



GWR ticket offices

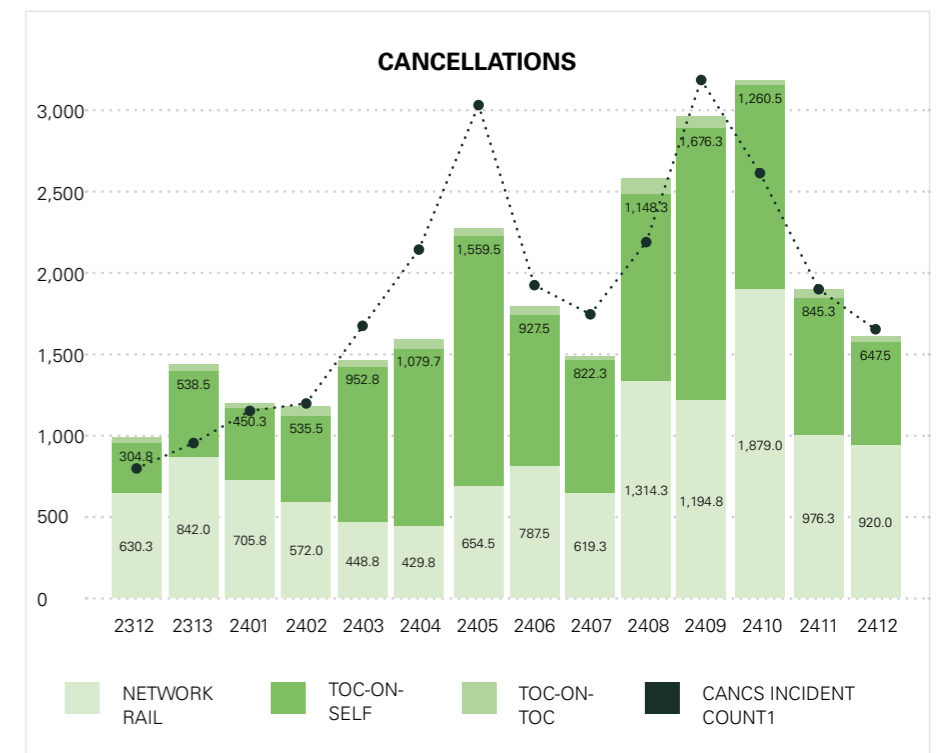
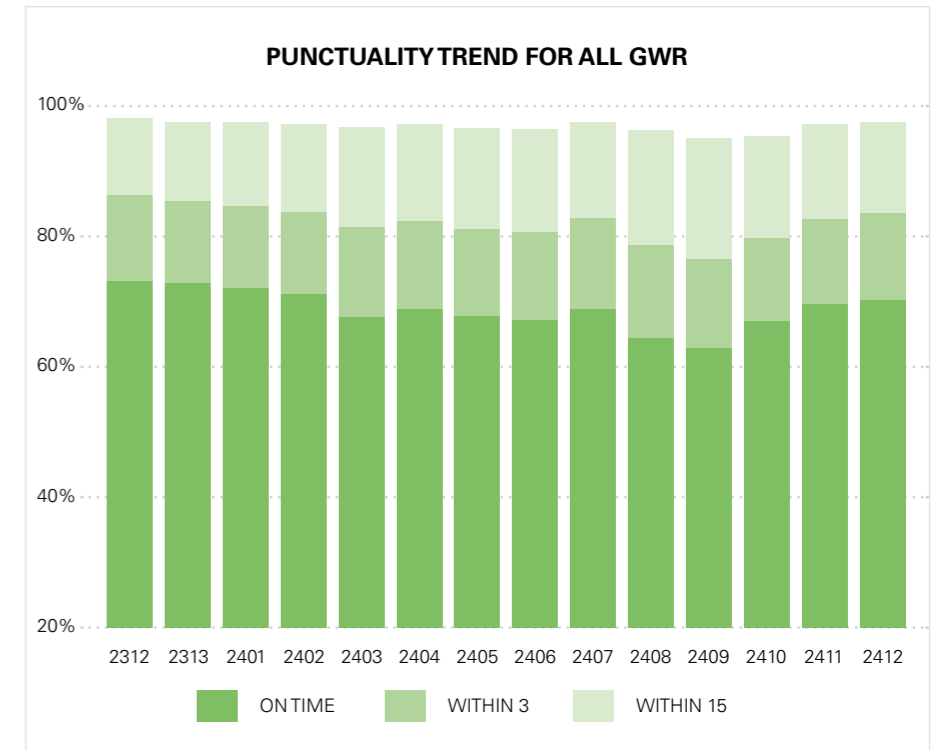
In our most recent reporting period, our Ticket Offices met their scheduled opening hours 88% of the time. We have some ticket offices where the reliability of opening has been affected by colleagues leaving the business or moving to other roles in the company and we are actively recruiting to fill their positions.

GWR Performance

This has been a challenging year for performance. The combined effects of global warming on severe weather events and a deterioration in reliability of track, signalling and overhead line infrastructure in London and the Thames Valley has had a significant impact on our customers.

We have been working closely with our alliance partners Network Rail to support improvements in the Thames Valley and wider network. It is pleasing to see that recent periods have seen some stabilisation in performance, however there is more to be done to provide the reliability and punctuality our customers rightly expect.

Our focus remains the reliability and resilience of our directly managed fleet and work closely with industry partners Hitachi on resilience of our High Speed IET fleet.





Improving Performance - Marcus Jones, Route Director, Western at Network Rail

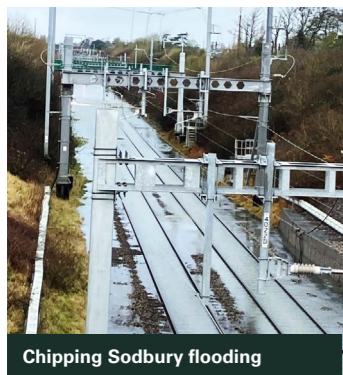
My name is Marcus and I'm the Director of our Western route in Network Rail. Our route stretches from London Paddington to Penzance, through Bristol and up to the boundaries with Wales, the Cotswolds and Hampshire.

Last year, I joined Network Rail from MTR Elizabeth Line and have worked in the railway industry for most of my career. I have dedicated my career to delivering a railway service that passengers and train operators truly deserve and will continue to do so in my new role.

Performance

Train performance has not been good enough recently and it's not the standard our passengers expect nor deserve. In response to this, we are putting in place an accelerated performance plan to address the decline in performance as a priority. We are working together with train operators for a whole system approach to train crew, fleet, service recovery, and impacts of industrial action.

Our biggest challenge is within the Thames Valley, which is one of the busiest railway corridors in the country serving London Paddington - the second busiest station in the UK. Indeed, infrastructure failures on this part of the line can have a significant impact throughout the network, across to Wales and down to the South West. With four major timetable changes since December 2019, train operators have introduced more trains and station stops with faster journey times between Paddington and Reading. Consequently, there has been additional strain on the infrastructure, which despite significant investment in enhancements, has largely remained unchanged since Victorian times.



Chipping Sodbury flooding

We have already brought in external experts to help us get to the bottom of the issues delaying trains. We have carried out extensive analysis on the factors contributing to the decline in performance and we have determined that six core factors are responsible for nearly two-thirds of all delays across the corridor.



Renewal works

Our Plan

Improvement of resilience and performance will be undertaken in three phases: stabilise, short term, and sustain and renew. The changes we will deliver in the first six months of a targeted stabilisation period will start to reduce disruption immediately.

Following this six-month period, we will build on this initial progress over the next year to address the key causes of disruption and move towards sustaining and renewing the network, aimed at consolidating long-term service improvements.

In order to address these issues our plan will deliver accelerated targeted interventions to quickly raise the base performance of the railway infrastructure. As part of the analysis, we have identified the top 19 track sites that need improvement works and already begun on some of the renewal works. We recently implemented this approach on the renewal of two of the main tracks coming out of London Paddington. This work would usually take several years to plan and deliver. In this case, using our focused approach, work was completed in just three weeks.

As well as this, a dedicated team of around 20 external and internal experts has been formed to drive performance improvements. These experts will not only deliver infrastructure improvements but also review the organisation, people capability and processes to ensure we can deliver better performance in future. So, if things do go wrong, less time is needed to get trains running again.

We are committed to delivering performance improvements for passengers as quickly as possible. While there are no instant fixes, we believe this plan will deliver improvements in the reliability of services and reductions in delays over time.

Environment Information

The rail industry will have a large part to play in contributing towards reducing the impact of the wider transport sector on climate change and achieving Net Zero by 2050. GWR is working with Network Rail, DfT and the RSSB to achieve environmental improvements, and also understand the impact of climate change on the rail network.

GWR operates under international standards for environmental and energy management, ISO 14001:2015 and ISO 50001:2018 certifications, which cover all activities across the business. The environmental and energy management system drives improvements in waste, water, and energy consumption. A successful external audit by Lloyds in early 2024 found our management system to be continuously improving and fully supporting the GWR sustainability agenda.

Measuring and managing our environmental impact is key to the success of our business. We continue to run trains on electricity wherever possible, which substantially reduces carbon emissions as well as decreases the air quality and environmental noise impacts from operating our trains.

We are in the process of finalising a decarbonisation road map which is aligned to the Government's commitment to net zero and to phase out all diesel-only traction by 2040. Our investment in innovative technology for battery operated trains is testament to this. In February this year the Fast Charge Battery Train Trial commenced.

The Class 230 battery train is thought to have broken a UK battery powered train distance record during a test journey on the 14th of February and it then completed a 70 mile move from Long Marston to Reading Train Care Depot on 45 per cent of its battery capacity. The Fast Charge Battery Train Trial will be undertaken on the Greenford branch to monitor the progress and performance of the battery train in real world conditions. A full performance report will be produced once the trial has concluded towards the end of 2024 after which the operational, climate and environmental implications of the use of battery trains can be better quantified.

GWR has an overall recycling target of 75% of all waste at stations and depots being recycled. In the year to date we are surpassing this target with 77% recycling being achieved so far. This is an increase from 73% in 2022-2023. We also continue to fulfil our zero waste to landfill target. Working closely with both suppliers and vendors, we will continue to examine how to optimise our current operations to enhance recycling efforts across the network.

Our major natural resource consumption is water and to minimise this we have installed a new carriage wash machine at our St Philips Marsh depot. This machine reclaims 70% of water usage and we've seen a significant reduction in water use at that site which was confirmed through automated water meters on site. We continue to closely monitor water consumption across our all our stations and depots.

With regards to our energy use, real-time data from our BMS system is allowing us to see peaks and troughs in consumption, enabling us to analyse the reasons for this and act accordingly. Consumption is monitored on a regular basis and we work with our BMS partners to identify issues and take action.



Battery Train

