

Teesside Airport: the railway station with 14 passengers a year

New figures reveal that the three least used rail stations across Britain are in Darlington, Manchester and Surrey

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Dorking West station, which was used by 16 passengers in 2011/12.

It has emerged that some mainline train stations are now operating with fewer than 30 passengers – not just in an hour, or a day, but in a whole year. Teesside Airport station in Darlington had just 14 passengers in the 12 months ending March 2012, and only 18 the year before that.

The statistics appeared in the latest set of annual figures on train station usage, compiled by transport consultants Steer Davies and Gleave and published by the Office of Rail Regulation.

Dorking West in Surrey could boast only 16 passengers in 2011/12 and just 22 in 2010/11.

The third least busy station in 2011/12, with 30 passengers, was Denton in Greater Manchester, which has just one train a week – a one-way Friday morning service that runs from Stockport to Stalybridge. In 2010/11 Denton, part of the Northern Rail network, had a total of 52 passengers.

A spokeswoman for Northern Rail said on Wednesday: "It was part of our rail franchise agreement that we would keep this Denton service going in order to keep the line open. These particular services are known by some as 'ghost trains'.

"Although passenger numbers are low, we continue to work closely with the Friends of Denton Station group and the South East Manchester Community Rail Partnership on a local level.

"We would look to industry partners such as the Department for Transport to specify a higher level of service to the station and help us to contribute funding for it."

Alan Jones, the chairman of the Friends of Denton Station group, said: "We are campaigning to increase the frequency of trains through Denton.

"I'm sure that if there were more trains, people would use them."

Teesside Airport station is also part of the Northern network and, like Denton, is operated as part of the company's franchise agreement. A 15-minute walk from the airport – now known as Durham Tees Valley airport – the station receives just two trains a week, which both call on Sundays.

Dorking West has regular services to and from London, but its user statistics suggest that nearly everyone prefers to travel from the Surrey town's two other stations, Dorking and Dorking Deepdene.