

Stability and safety key wins for pallet network sector in 2023



The Association of
Pallet Networks

22 Feb 2024 – For immediate release

The Association of Pallet Networks (APN) has published its sector statistics for 2023, showing slightly reduced but stable volumes compared to 2022, and yet more significant safety and sustainability progress by the sector. The full report is available from the [APN website](#).

Key points include:

- Hub safety improves for the sixth year running
- Total volumes 5.1% up on 2019
- Average pallet weight continues to decrease
- Trailer and HGV efficiency both reach new heights
- On time delivery levels at 96.7%

APN members delivered 28.4 million pallets in 2023, a 2.8% reduction against 2022, but 5.1% higher than 2019 pre-pandemic levels. Q4 2023 volumes rallied slightly with final figures almost 10,000 pallets higher than Q4 2022.

In 2023 all pallet sizes have declined from 2022 volumes, although still show strong growth against 2019. Full pallets achieved growth of +4.7% and half-pallets +2.6% against 2019. Quarter pallets saw a 9.7% increase in volume. Full pallets account for 49.0% of the volume, half-pallets 29.1%, and quarter-pallets make up the remaining 21.9%.

APN chairman Paul Sanders says: “The sector managed to achieve some significant wins in 2023, with Hubs becoming safer for the sixth year running, and trailer utilisation and service levels both at a five-year high. The sector managed to deliver 96.7% of all pallets on time, which is a remarkable track record.”

“Even accounting for slightly lower volumes than in 2022, the industry has made some excellent efficiency gains. Sustainability is one of the APN’s pillars and every gain in efficiency means less energy, less cost and a better use of resource,” says Sanders.

Hub injuries have dropped 23.9% to 0.36 per 100,000 pallets. Trailer utilisation is 76.6%, eight percentage points above the published national average for articulated vehicles, (DfT RFS0125) and the sector reduced trunking journeys by 7.6%.

The proportion of residential deliveries decreased slightly in 2023. However, despite inflationary pressure, next day and premium deliveries still dominate over the economy services, for both freight owners and commercial and residential customers. Over 60% of network freight is on a next day service, and 16% of that freight is booked as a premium timed delivery.

“It’s clear that suppliers and customers alike value next day and premium services and are prepared to pay for that level of service despite other cost pressures,” says Sanders. “Networks are continually investing in IT evolution to give ever more precise delivery times and better customer communication.”

Notes to Editors

The **Association of Pallet Networks** has a membership of eight pallet networks in the UK: Fortec, Pall-Ex, Pallet-Track, Palletforce, Palletline, Palletways, THE Pallet Network and United Pallet Network. These in turn represent 800 hauliers, more than 24,000 vehicles and over 13 million sq ft of warehouse space collectively.

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