

Pallet network 2022 report shows 8% growth against 2019



The Association of
Pallet Networks

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The Pallet Network Sector Report 2022 shows continued strong growth, despite the fluctuations of COVID and an equalising effect after the pent-up demand of 2021.

Key points include:

- 2022 total pallet volumes at 29.2m, 8.2% up on 2019
- 61.9% of all pallets delivered on a next-day service
- B2C volumes at 4.6m, three percentage points up on 2019 (15.9% vs 13%)
- 50-50 split between premium and economy services for B2C
- B2C full pallets favour economy services; B2C quarter pallets favour next-day delivery
- Hub safety improved for fifth year running at 0.46 accidents per 100,000 pallets

The Association of Pallet Networks has released its sectoral report for 2022. APN Chairman Paul Sanders says the 2022 figures show that network sector has finally left the pandemic era behind, and can see that despite the fluctuations of the past four years, network volumes have continued to grow in real terms.

“The pallet network sector has had so much thrown at it in the past four years – COVID, Brexit, labour shortages, a strained economy – and yet it has proved to be exceptionally resilient, commercially and operationally,” says APN chairman Paul Sanders.

Service levels have remained strong at 96%, and trailer utilisation remains well above the Department for Transport’s average for the industry.

“The major take-away from 2022 is that B2C growth has stayed high and was not a transient feature of the pandemic,” says Sanders. “At 16% of all pallet volume, this is now being driven by the increasing popularity of e-commerce for large household and manufactured supplies.”

Safety and recruitment

The APN and its network members spent much of 2022 highlighting the range of careers available in the sector. It also developed its sustainability programme, and continued the sterling work of its health and Safety Steering Group.

Safety for staff, customers, and the general public has been a continuing theme for several years. The networks have lowered their incident rate to 0.46 accidents per 100,000 pallets delivered in 2022. This is the fifth reduction in five years, and results from the ongoing sharing of health and safety best practice by APN members.

The most common cause of Hub related safety incidents, accounting for 26.8% of the total, is load security equipment such as straps, nets and curtains. These accidents all lead to injury and accounted for 32% of all lost time (20 out of 62 days).

Future focus

Sustainability is one of the three strategic pillars of the APN. Network hubs play a vital role in the pallet network model. Therefore, over 2022 we have been measuring sustainability of the network hubs in five key areas:

~ energy use ~ water consumption ~ paper use ~ waste management ~ carbon emissions

Our newly formed **Sustainability Forum Group** brings together experts from each network to benchmark operations, discuss best practice, identify opportunities and measure the impact of initiatives in this important area.

Sanders says: “Decarbonisation is the greatest challenge our industry faces, and we are facing it as sector, examining better Hub sustainability and investigating the operational viability of electric vehicles.”

ENDS

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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