Bring Back Euro Trains
Data Insights Report

Analysis of Petition Support for Kent International Rail Services

Report compiled by: Diccon Spain
Spokesperson and Political Liaison Officer
Based on data analysis by: Phillip Gay
Data Officer

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Executive Summary

This report analyses over 65,000 signatures gathered since March 2023, revealing a powerful, geographically diverse, and both latent and largely untapped demand for reinstated international rail services to Kent's stations. The analysis of the 37,133 signatures from the primary catchment area shows an exceptional concentration of support, with 83.4% coming from the three key postcode areas (TN, CT, and ME) that historically benefited most.

This support translates into a powerful regional mandate, underscored by its remarkable density; engagement rates in core areas are as high as one in every 51 residents (TN postcode area) signing the petition. This intense regional backing is complemented by significant, widespread support from beyond the primary catchment area, notably from Greater London (14.7%) and across the UK, and from international signatories (4.1%), confirming the issue's national strategic importance.

Collectively, this data provides compelling evidence that lends significant weight to the business case for restoring international connectivity to Kent's purpose-built stations at Ashford and Ebbsfleet. The forecast-beating success of other UK rail projects, like the Elizabeth and Northumberland lines, highlights a national trend of underestimating passenger demand. This suggests the opportunity in Kent and adjacent areas is substantial and that historical passenger numbers represent only a fraction of the true current potential.

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1 Introduction

This report provides a detailed analysis of the signature data from the "Bring Back Eurostar Train Services to Kent" petition, which has gathered over 65,000 signatures since its launch in March 2023. The primary objective is to quantify the geographical distribution and density of support to provide data-driven evidence for the reinstatement of international rail services at Ashford and Ebbsfleet. The scope of this analysis covers the primary catchment area in the South East of England as well as the wider national and international distribution of signatories. The report begins with an analysis of the key postcode areas, explores the wider geographical spread of support, and concludes with an assessment of the opportunity this data represents.

2 Background and Context

Since its launch on 9th March 2023, the petition calling for the reinstatement of international rail services to Kent's stations has garnered over 65,000 signatures, demonstrating significant public support for the restoration of these vital transport links. The petition is hosted on Change.org - https://www.change.org/p/bring-back-eurostar-train-services-to-kent and as of 5th August 2025 has 65,204 signatures.

Bring Back Euro Trains (BBET) continues to work extensively with a broad coalition of stakeholders, including parliamentarians, local authorities, business organisations, and rail industry partners, to secure the return of international rail services to Kent's international stations. Our objective is to restore services at both of Kent's purpose-built international stations - Ashford International and Ebbsfleet International - whether those services are operated by Eurostar or new market entrants.

While maintaining the petition as evidence of public demand, BBET is actively pursuing multiple parallel workstreams to achieve the reinstatement of these strategically important services.

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3 Primary Catchment Area Analysis

The analysis presented in this section examines petition signatures across postcode areas encompassing Kent, parts of Essex, East Sussex and outer parts of south east London which account for 56.9% (37,133) of the total signatures (65,204). These postcode areas have been specifically selected to encompass the *primary catchment area* for Kent's two international stations: Ashford International and Ebbsfleet International. The total population of these postcode areas is around 5 million people. This provides a view of the support from communities that would most directly benefit from reinstated international rail services.

3.1 Distribution by Postcode Area

Postcode Area	Some urban areas and settlements in Postcode Area	Signatories	% of Catchment Total	% of Area Population Signed	Population per Signatory (1 in n)
TN (Tonbridge)	Tonbridge, Ashford, Tenterden, Paddock Wood, Sevenoaks, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Hastings, Bexhill-on-Sea	14,112	38.0%	2.0%	1 in 51
CT (Canterbury)	Canterbury, Dover, Folkestone, Herne Bay, Margate, Ramsgate, Deal	9,098	24.5%	1.8%	1 in 55
ME (Medway)	Chatham, Gillingham, Maidstone, Sittingbourne, Rochester	7,755	20.9%	1.2%	1 in 86
DA (Dartford)	Dartford, Ebbsfleet Valley, Longfield, Bexley, Gravesend, Swanscombe, Greenhithe, Erith, Belvedere, Crayford	3,466	9.3%	0.7%	1 in 135
BN (Brighton)	Brighton, Hove, Eastbourne, Worthing, Lewes	1,173	3.2%	0.1%	1 in 423
BR (Bromley)	Bromley, Beckenham, West Wickham, Orpington, Chislehurst, Swanley	754	2.0%	0.2%	1 in 715
RM (Romford)	Romford, Dagenham, Hornchurch, Rainham, Upminster, Grays, Tilbury, Purfleet	446	1.2%	0.1%	1 in 1,308
SS (Southend)	Southend-on-Sea, Westcliff-on-Sea, Leigh-on-Sea, Basildon, Rochford, Hockley, Rayleigh, Benfleet, Canvey Island, Wickford	329	0.9%	0.1%	1 in 1,657
Total		**37,133**	**100%**		

Table showing data for the petition totalled by Postcode area.

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Notes:

1. **Source Data:** Population figures used for the % of Area Population Signed, and Population per Signatory (1 in n) columns, are from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) 2021 Census. Signatory data is based on the provided total of 37,133 signatures.
2. **Rounding:** To ensure accuracy, all calculations were performed using the original, unrounded numbers. The figures presented in the table have been rounded to one decimal place (for percentages) or the nearest whole number (for ratios) for clarity.
3. **Calculation Method:** The rounding of percentages and '1 in n' ratios independently may result in minor apparent inconsistencies. For instance, the TN area's engagement rate of 1.98% is correctly rounded to 2.0%, while its more precise ratio of '1 in 50.58' is correctly rounded to '1 in 51'.

The data shows particularly strong support from the TN, CT and ME postcode areas, which together account for just over 83% of signatures within the primary catchment area. This concentration aligns with the areas that historically benefited most from international services at Ashford International and represent a combined population of around 2 million people.

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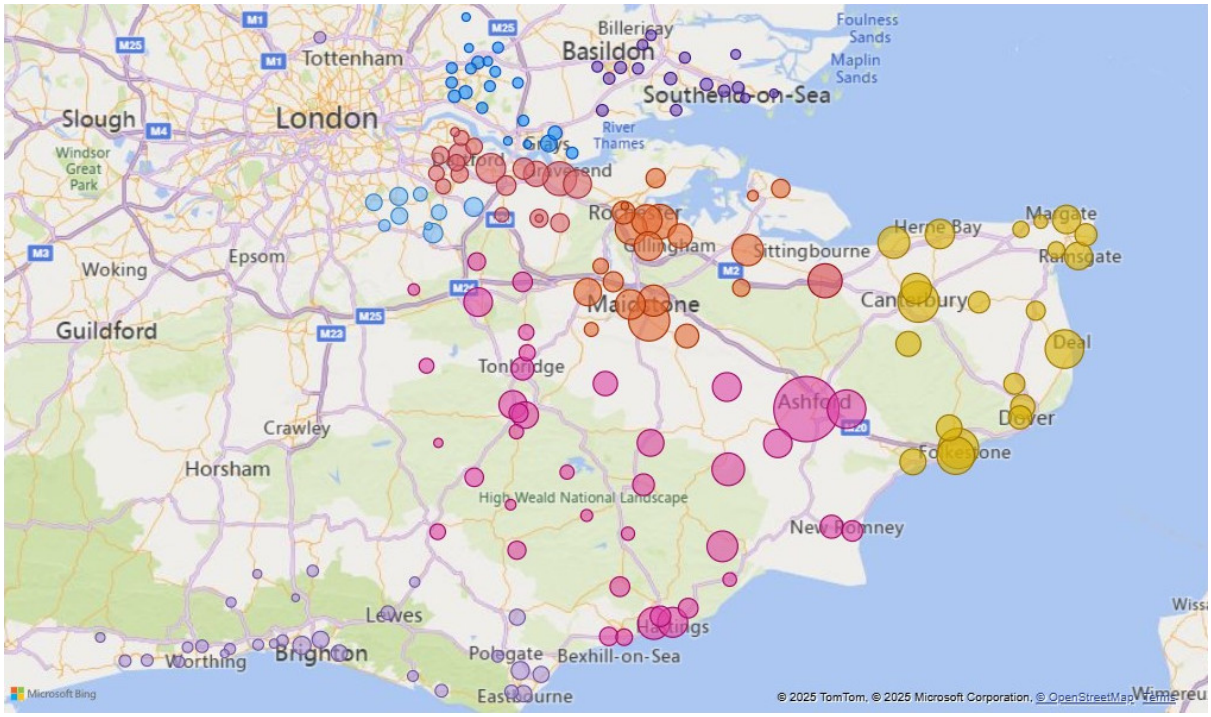
3.2 Geographical Distribution by Postcode District

The map below illustrates the geographical distribution of support at a more granular level within the primary catchment area, with each circle representing the total number of signatures per postcode district. The size of each circle is proportional to the number of signatures received.

Postcode Area - Key

- RM (Romford)
- SS (Southend)
- BR (Bromley)
- DA (Dartford) – includes Ebbsfleet
- TN (Tonbridge) – includes Ashford
- ME (Medway)
- CT (Canterbury)
- BN (Brighton)

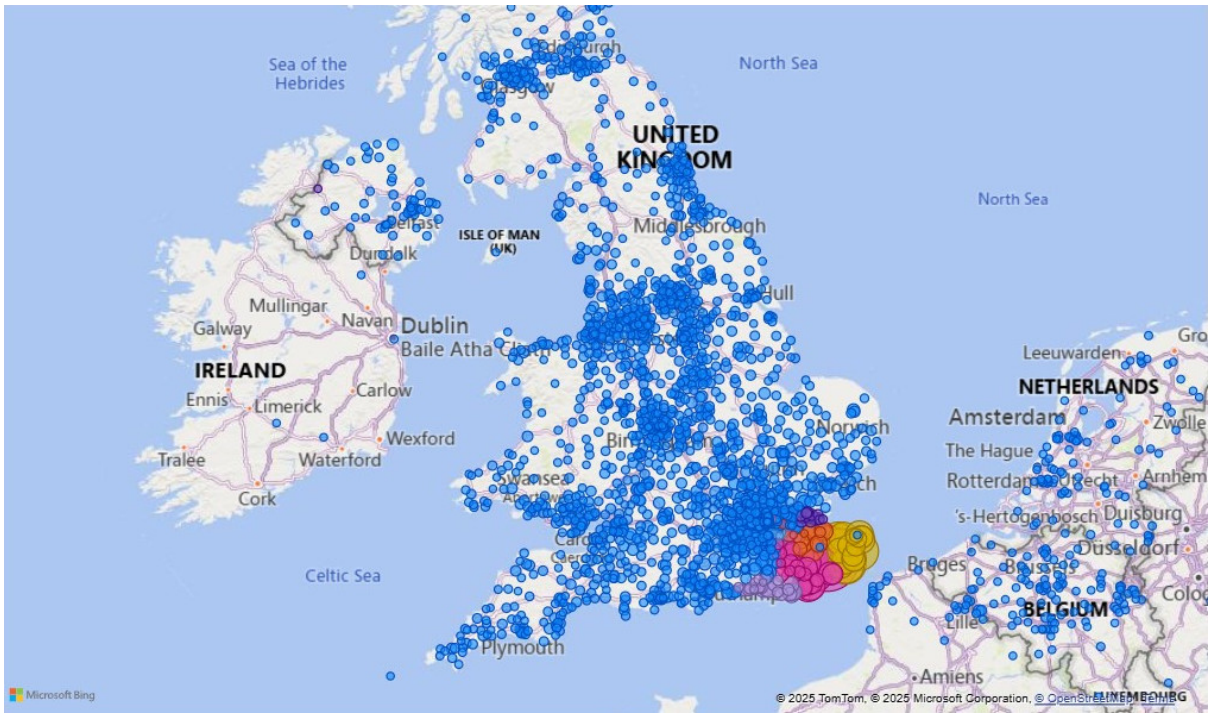


Map / Bubble Chart showing data for the petition totalled by Postcode Area and District.

4 Wider Geographical Distribution of Support

While the petition's core support comes from the stations' natural catchment areas, significant backing has emerged from across a broader geographical range. Greater London (excluding the outer London postcodes covered in the previous section) accounts for approximately 15% of total support. International signatories contribute a further 4% of the total.

The remaining signatures are distributed relatively evenly across UK regions, with the majority of regions contributing between 2% and 3% of total support. This widespread backing demonstrates that the reinstatement of Kent's international rail services is recognised as an issue of national, rather than purely regional, significance.



Map / Bubble Chart showing data for the petition totalled by Postcode Area and District – UK and parts of Europe.

The table below shows the total percentages (sorted high to low):

Region	Total percentage of signatures (rounded)
South East	60.7%
London	14.7%
Outside of the UK	4.1%
East of England	2.8%
Scotland	2.7%
South West	2.6%
North West	2.4%
West Midlands	2.2%
Region Not Disclosed	2.1%
East Midlands	2.0%
Yorkshire and Humber	1.6%

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Wales	1.1%
North East	0.7%
Northern Ireland	0.3%
Channel Isles	0.01%

Notes:

1. **Source Data:** Percentages are based on BBET signatory data as at 5th August 2025.
2. **Rounding:** The figures presented in the table have been rounded to one decimal place (except for the Channel Islands).

5 Conclusion

The analysis of over 65,000 petition signatures provides definitive evidence of the powerful, geographically diverse, and both latent and largely untapped demand for reinstated international rail services in Kent.

The exceptional concentration of support within the primary catchment area—particularly in the TN, CT, and ME postcodes—demonstrates an intense, grassroots demand from the nearly two million residents who historically benefited from these services. The density of this support, with engagement rates as high as one in every 51 residents signing in the TN postcode area, confirms this is a deeply felt regional mandate, not just passive approval. This is bolstered by significant backing from Greater London and international signatories, confirming the issue's national strategic importance.

Collectively, these findings, based on BBET's unique and large dataset, present an undeniable, data-driven foundation for action to tap this huge opportunity. They move the conversation beyond anecdotal evidence and lend significant weight to the business case for returning international services to Kent's purpose-built stations at Ashford and Ebbsfleet. The forecast-beating success of recent UK rail projects, including the Elizabeth line, and the reopened Northumberland line, which has seen five times its predicted usage, provides a clear precedent. This national trend of underestimating passenger demand for new and improved rail connectivity strongly suggests that historical usage, such as the 614,000 international passengers at Ashford in 2006, is likely only a fraction of the true current potential.

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