NI Airport Statistics 2020

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This report was produced in March 2021 by Tourism NI's Insights & Intelligence Service

NI Airport Monthly Passengers 2020

Month	2020 Passengers	2019 Passengers	% Change
January	536,791	582,484	-8%
February	559,213	633,686	-12%
March	296,860	699,179	-58%
April	2,669	769,103	-99%
May	6,078	844,468	-99%
June	27,206	859,818	-97%
July	113,580	915,258	-85%
August	254,532	912,093	-72%
September	216,014	800,320	-73%
October	150,559	473,208	-80%
November	68,563	590,950	-88%
December	118,062	586,912	-80%
Total	2,370,127	8,937,479	-73%

Predictably, the global coronavirus pandemic had a drastic impact on the number of passengers flying through Northern Ireland's main airports with each month in 2020 seeing a decrease in passengers when compared to the same month in 2019.

The number of total passengers decreased by 73% in 2020 compared to 2019, down from 8.9m to 2.4m.

The number of passengers was highest during January and February with over half a million passengers in each month before national lockdown reduced travel to just over 2,500 and 6,000 passengers in April and May, respectively.

A reduction in the declines were evident over the summer months following the reopening of many tourism businesses in July 2020 although the reductions remained significant.

NI Airport Total Passenger Numbers by Month (2020 vs 2019)

Source: Civil Aviation Authority Airport Data – Table 8
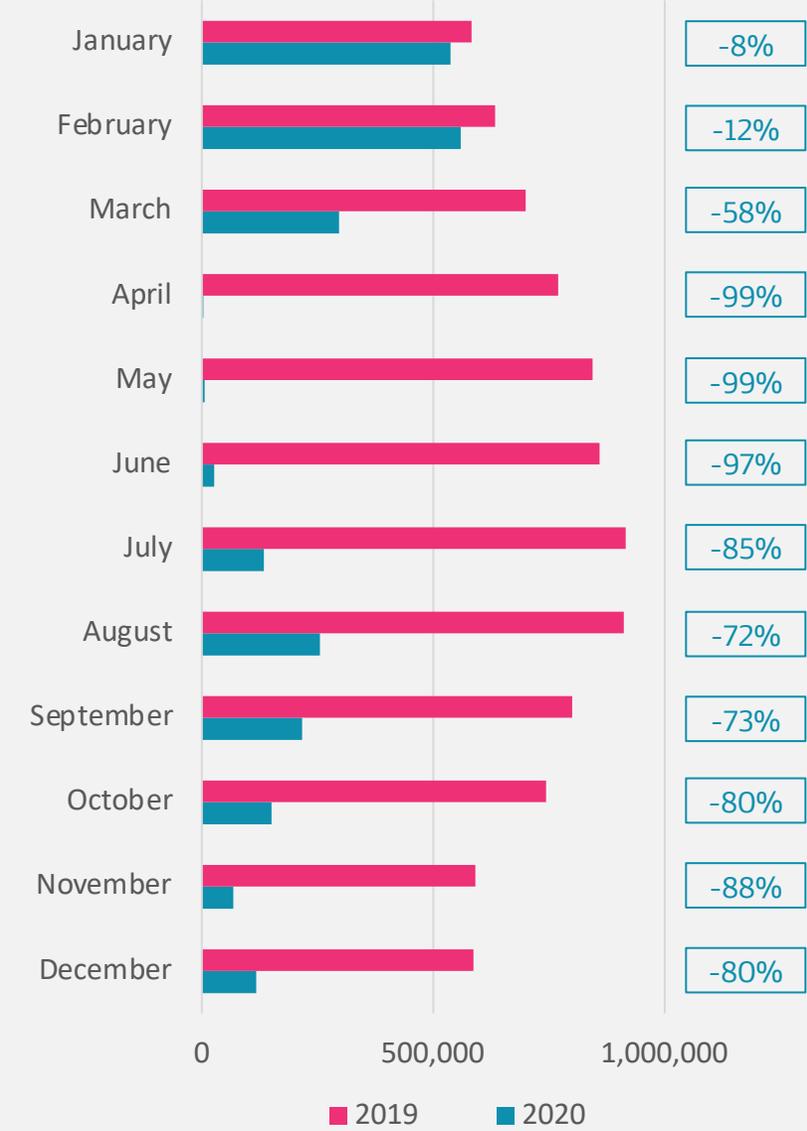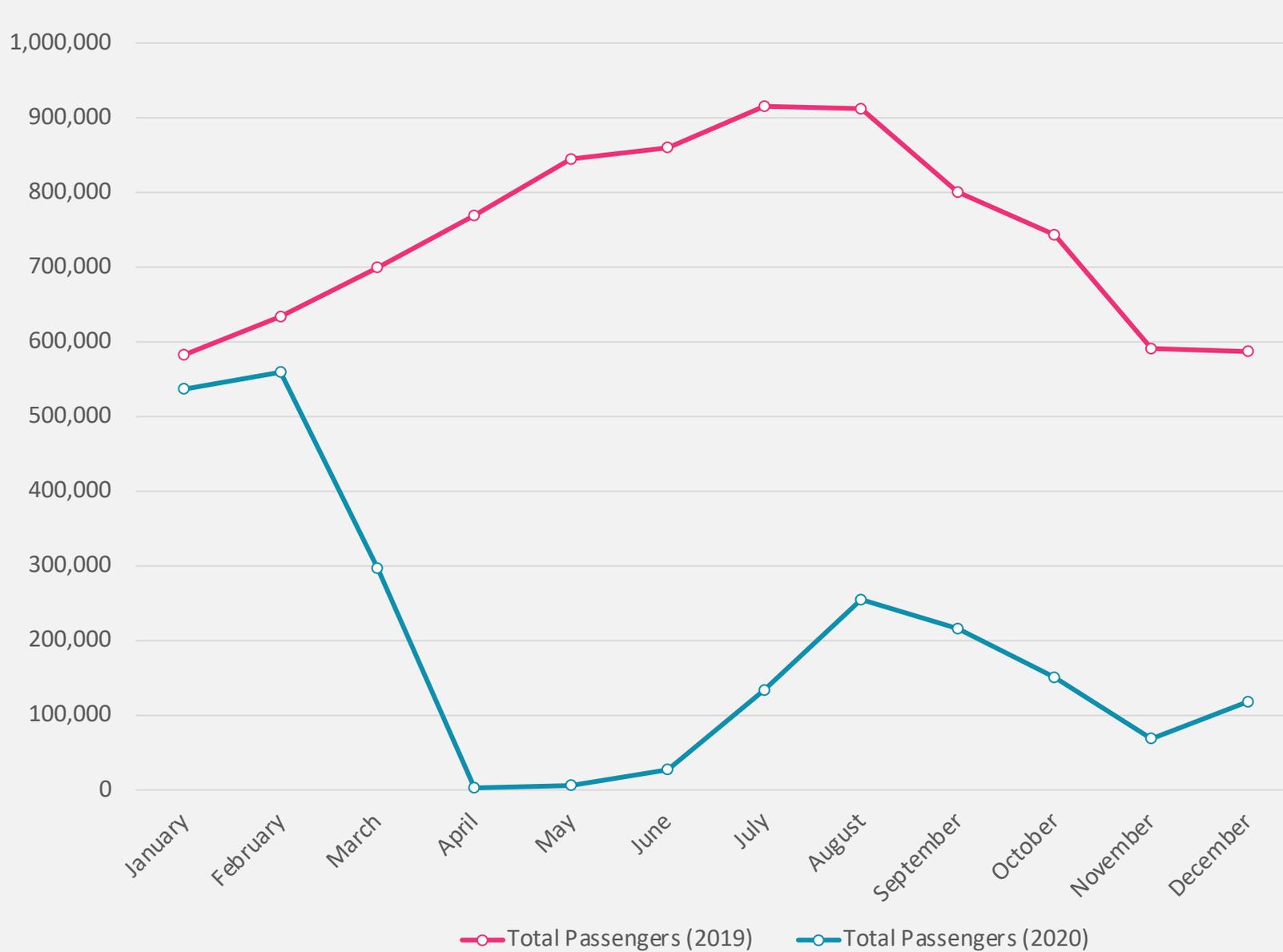
Total Monthly Passengers by NI Airport

The following page highlights the total monthly passengers for each NI airport; Belfast International Airport (BIA), George Best Belfast City Airport (BCA) and City of Derry Airport (DCA).

Belfast International Airport continues to have had the highest passenger carryings with 1,747,086 travelers flying in 2020. This is a 72% decrease compared to 2019.

George Best Belfast City Airport saw 542,567 passengers in 2020 – a decline of 78% compared to 2019.

City of Derry Airport saw the smallest decrease in annual passenger numbers with 80,494 passengers in 2020 – down 60% on 2019.

Each of the three airports saw the same general trend throughout 2020 whereby the number of passengers travelling drastically decreased after February as the coronavirus restrictions brought the travel industry to a halt.

Unlike Belfast International Airport and City of Derry Airport, George Best Belfast City Airport did not see the same spike in passenger carryings in July and August. Instead, this airport saw a more gradual increase when restrictions eased.

Before the major impact of the pandemic, City of Derry Airport had shown increases in passenger numbers for January and February 2020 when compared with the same months in 2019.

Total Monthly Passengers Numbers by NI Airport (2020 vs 2019)

Belfast International Airport

George Best Belfast City Airport

City of Derry Airport
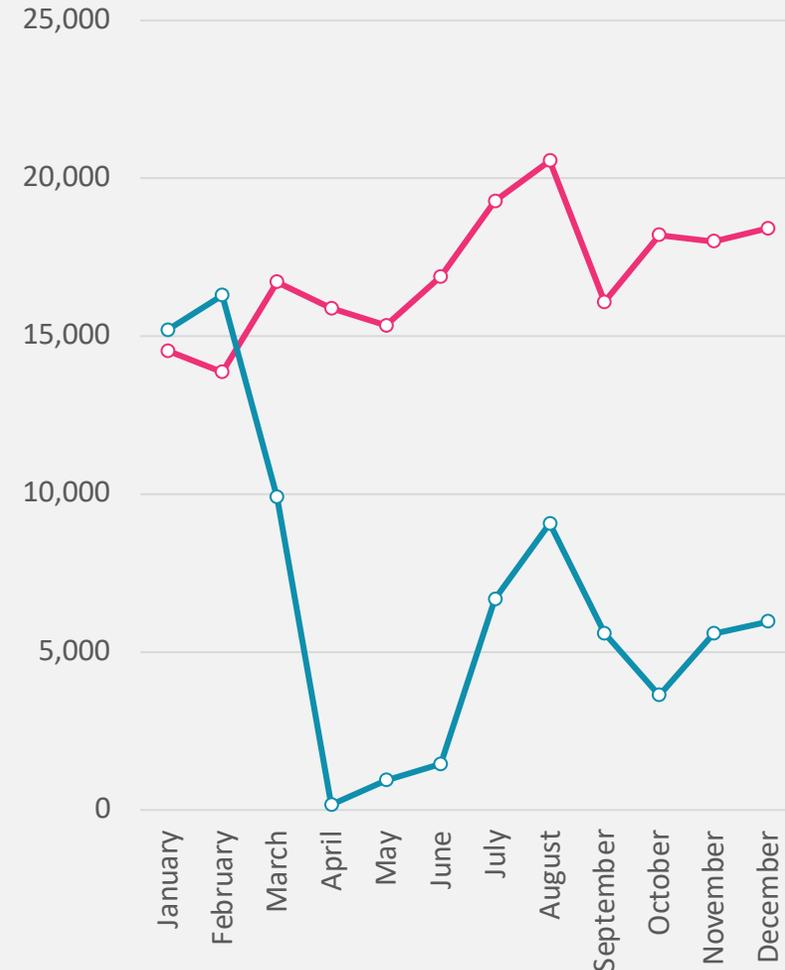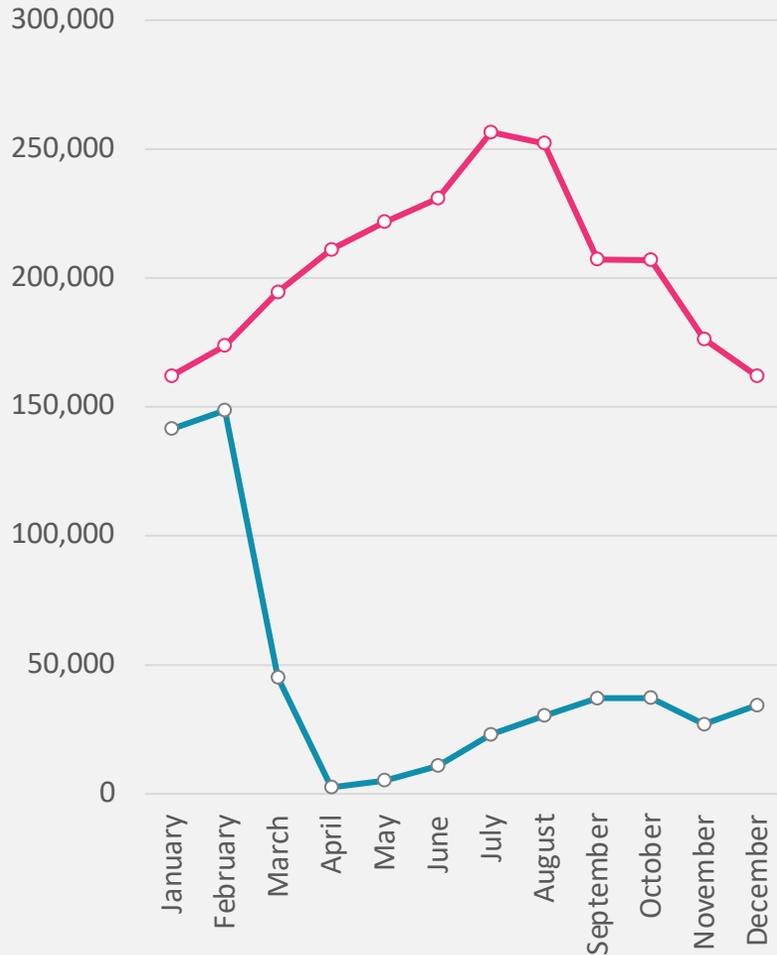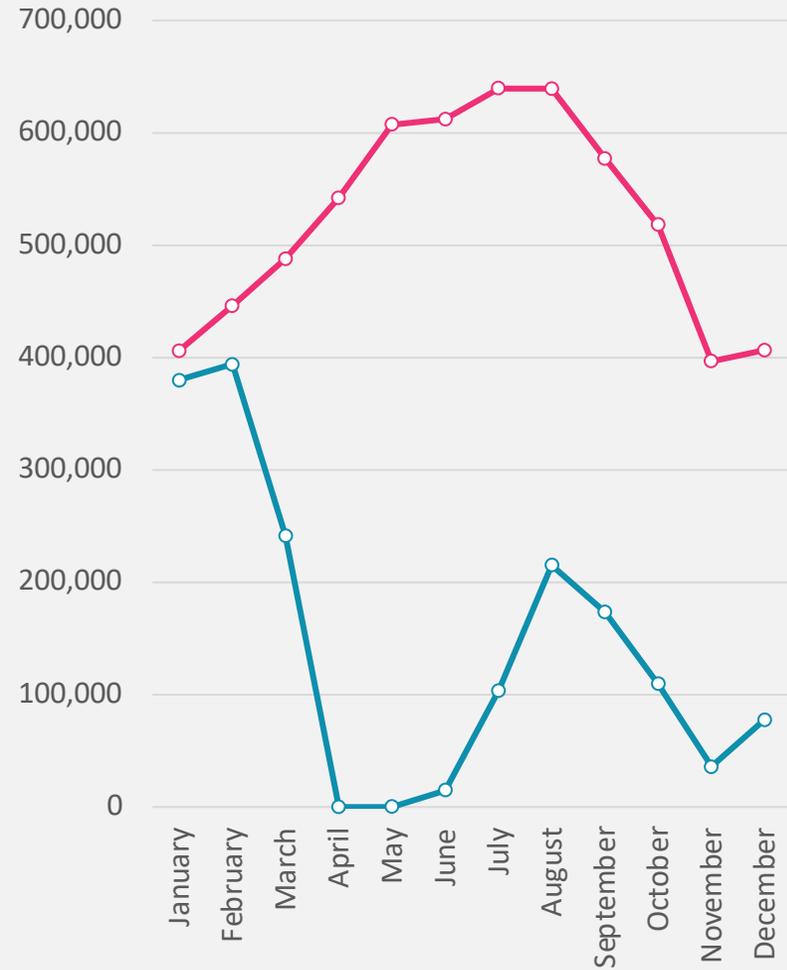
- BIA Passengers 2019
- BIA Passengers 2020
- BCA Passengers 2019
- BCA Passengers 2020
- DCA Passengers 2019
- DCA Passengers 2020

Monthly Passenger Routes by Airport

	Jan 2020	Feb 2020	Mar 2020	April 2020	May 2020	June 2020	July 2020	Aug 2020	Sept 2020	Oct 2020	Nov 2020	Dec 2020
BIA – UK	297,996	303,738	197,163	-	-	14,229	82,874	173,580	144,949	98,585	28,941	71,597
% Change vs 2019	1%	-9%	-45%	-100%	-100%	-96%	-74%	-48%	-53%	-70%	-91%	-78%
BIA – EU/Int	82,060	90,517	44,580	-	-	667	21,047	41,635	28,458	11,204	7,098	6,168
% Change vs 2019	-26%	-19%	-66%	-100%	-100%	-100%	-93%	-86%	-89%	-94%	-91%	-93%
BCA – UK	138,382	145,311	43,468	2,503	5,132	10,856	22,963	28,811	35,944	36,292	26,079	33,886
% Change vs 2019	-13%	-15%	-77%	-99%	-98%	-95%	-90%	-88%	-82%	-82%	-85%	-79%
BCA – EU/Int	3,154	3,351	1,744	-	-	-	13	1,432	1,067	847	865	447
% Change vs 2019	-16%	-8%	-53%	-100%	-100%	-100%	-100%	-93%	-91%	-82%	-82%	-88%
DCA – UK	15,199	16,296	9,905	166	946	1,454	6,683	9,004	5,596	3,631	5,580	5,964
% Change vs 2019	7%	18%	-41%	-99%	-94%	-91%	-65%	-56%	-65%	-80%	-69%	-68%
DCA – EU/Int	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	70	-	-	-	-
% Change vs 2019	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Source: Civil Aviation Authority Airport Data – Tables 10.1 & 10.2

EU and International Travel (2020 vs 2019)

Belfast International Airport

333,434
EU & Int. passengers in 2020 through Belfast International Airport

-86%
Reduction in EU & Int. passenger numbers compared with 2019

George Best Belfast City Airport

12,920
EU & Int. passengers in 2020 through George Best Belfast City Airport

-90%
Reduction in EU & Int. passenger numbers compared with 2019

City of Derry Airport

70
EU & Int. passengers in 2020 through Derry City Airport

-81%
Reduction in EU & Int. passenger numbers compared with 2019

Source: Civil Aviation Authority Airport Data – Tables 10.1 & 10.2

Annual NI Airport Passengers

Year	Total Passengers	% Change vs Previous Year	BIA Passengers	BCA Passengers	DCA Passengers
2010	7,095,943	-	4,016,170	2,740,341	339,432
2011	6,906,629	-3%	4,103,620	2,397,312	405,697
2012	6,958,096	+1%	4,313,685	2,246,202	398,209
2013	6,950,068	-0%	4,023,336	2,541,759	384,973
2014	6,939,356	-0%	4,033,954	2,555,145	350,257
2015	7,368,583	+6%	4,319,311	2,692,742	284,485
2016	8,101,171	+10%	5,147,546	2,662,954	290,671
2017	8,590,379	+6%	5,836,552	2,559,846	193,981
2018	8,966,064	+4%	6,278,960	2,511,261	185,843
2019	8,937,479	-0%	6,278,443	2,455,259	203,777
2020	2,370,127	-73%	1,747,086	542,547	80,494

Source: Civil Aviation Authority Airport Data – Table 8

Total Annual NI Airport Passengers (2010-2020)

Legend: Total Passengers

Data labels on chart: -3%, +1%, -0%, -0%, +6%, +10%, +6%, +4%, -0%, -73%
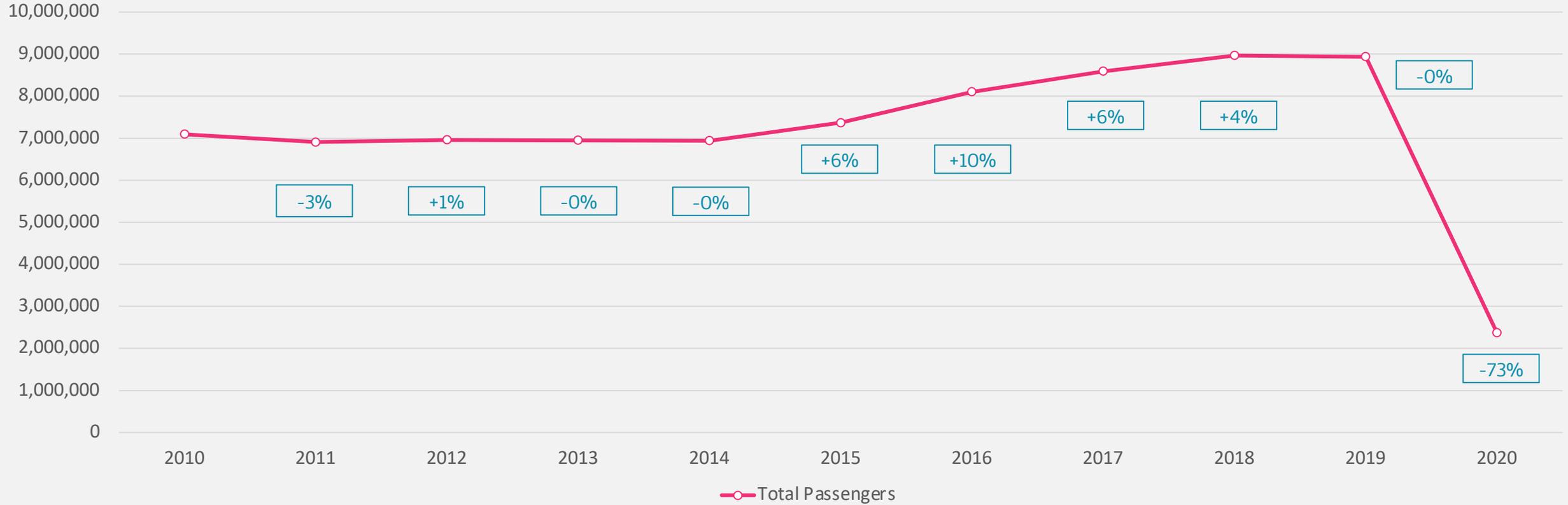
This graph shows the annual NI airport passenger numbers from 2010-2020.

The chart highlights that the number of passengers passing through NI three main airports remained relatively steady between 2010-2014 before seeing year on year increases between 2015-2018.

The severe 73% decline in 2020 emphasizes the impact of COVID-19 on the travel industry in NI as annual passenger numbers fell from just below 9 million in 2019 to around 2.3 million in 2020.

Source: Civil Aviation Authority Airport Data – Table 8

Annual NI Airport Passenger Routes

Year	Total UK Passengers	% Change vs Previous Year	Total EU & Int. Passengers	% Change vs Previous Year
2013	5,462,243	-	1,486,921	-
2014	5,438,591	-0%	1,498,486	+1%
2015	5,752,595	+6%	1,615,943	+7%
2016	6,246,282	+9%	1,857,074	+15%
2017	6,312,670	+1%	2,277,892	+23%
2018	6,477,513	+3%	2,488,551	+9%
2019	6,470,296	-0%	2,467,303	-1%
2020	2,023,703	-69%	346,424	-86%

Source: Civil Aviation Authority - Airport Data– Tables 10.1 & 10.2

Annual NI Airport Passenger Routes (2013-2020)

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UK Passengers
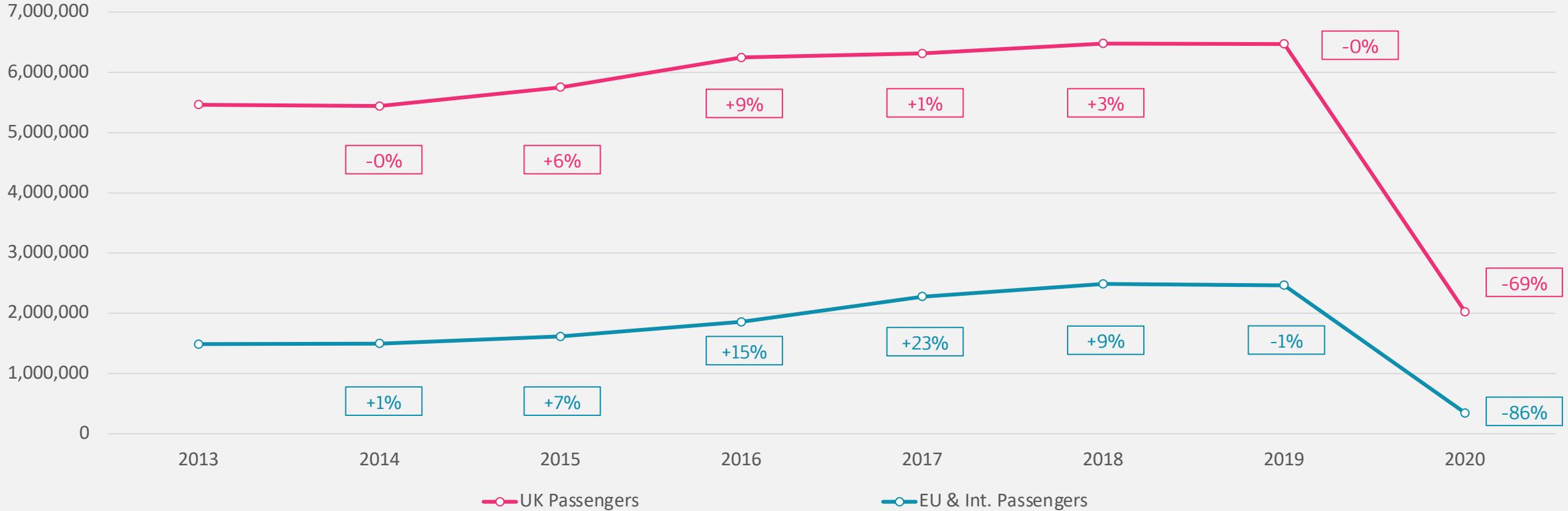
EU & Int. Passengers

This graph shows the total number of UK and EU/International passengers coming through NI airports between 2013-2020.

Prior to 2020, UK passenger numbers had been growing stedily between 2015-2019. EU and International travel had been seeing larger growth in the same time period.

The coronavirus pandemic has had a significant impact on all passenger routes in 2020. EU and International passenger numbers (-86%) were worse affected than UK passengers (-69%) likely due to stricter travel restrictions outside of the UK.

Source: Civil Aviation Authority Airport Data– Tables 10.1 & 10.2

Annual Passenger Routes by Airport

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
BIA - UK	2,735,918	2,705,817	2,953,628	3,563,658	3,771,164	3,919,175	3,936,906	1,413,652
% Change vs Previous Year	-	-1%	+9%	+21%	+6%	+4%	+0%	-64%
BIA - EU/Int	1,286,551	1,325,892	1,437,863	1,583,888	2,065,571	2,349,785	2,341,657	333,434
% Change vs Previous Year	-	+3%	+8%	+10%	+30%	+14%	-0	-86%
BCA - UK	2,383,694	2,417,867	2,521,625	2,403,763	2,349,996	2,375,144	2,329,979	529,627
% Change vs Previous Year	-	+1%	+4%	-5%	-2%	+1%	-2%	-77%
BCA – EU/Int	158,028	137,244	171,117	261,376	209,850	136,117	125,280	12,920
% Change vs Previous Year	-	-13%	+25%	+53%	-20%	-35%	-8%	-90
DCA - UK	342,613	314,907	277,342	278,861	191,510	183,194	203,441	80,424
% Change vs Previous Year	-	-8%	-12%	+1%	-31%	-4%	+11%	-60%
DCA – EU/Int	42,342	35,350	7,143	11,810	2,471	2,649	366	70
% Change vs Previous Year	-	-17%	-80%	+65%	-79%	+7%	-86%	-81%

Source: Civil Aviation Authority Airport Data – Tables 10.1 & 10.2

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Data Source: Civil Aviation Authority

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