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Union slams ‘cattle truck’ train services

By Kara Shadbolt



Train operators came under fire on Tuesday, when a leading rail union accused them of not having a clue about the severity of overcrowding on “cattle truck” commuter services.

Based upon unpublished evidence to parliament’s transport committee, the Transport Salaried Staffs Association said train operators had no clear data on

passenger numbers at peak travel times, because they relied on estimates.

The Association of Train Operating Companies said the accusation was “nonsense”, insisting it was in the process of collecting detailed information on passenger numbers.

Manuel Cortes, general secretary of the TSSA, is writing to Justine Greening, transport secretary, urging her to ensure operators produce the data.

“We have a ridiculous situation for passengers in the 21st century,” he said.

“Every transport secretary says they want to end overcrowding, particularly in the south-east. How can they even begin to do this until they know the exact size of the problem?”

The TSSA also said it would object to plans to increase fares during peak times.

Mr Cortes added: “British passengers already pay the highest fares in the western world.”

A spokesman for Atoc said: “It’s nonsense for the TSSA to suggest that train companies have no idea how many people are travelling on peak hour services.

“We are collecting more and more information on passenger numbers to identify the busiest commuter lines, using data from ticket sales, carrying out regular

passenger counts and using load-weighing equipment on trains to calculate how many people are on board.”

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