

NEWS RELEASE
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Fare hike is a con - TSSA

TSSA, Britain's second largest rail union, questions what the above-inflation rise in train fares announced today will do to improve the performance of the railways.

The union has accused the Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC) of trying to hoodwink the public into thinking that the fare hike will improve reliability and services.

In the three years to 2002/03 the train operating companies retained between £150 million and £200 million of compensation paid to them by Network Rail for delays attributable to the infrastructure. This meant that some companies made more money from compensation payments than their total operating profit.

TSSA's general secretary Gerry Doherty said: "It is disingenuous of ATOC to suggest that they will use fare increases to improve services when the funds raised will not help Network Rail to make the trains run on time or reduce future compensation payments.

"Passengers should not be expected to pay more until they are sure the money is going directly to improve services rather than lining shareholders' pockets.

"The huge investments that are being made in the railway, such as £7bn on the West Coast Main Line are all funded by the taxpayer not by the train operating companies - none of this money comes from fare revenue.

"Perhaps Silverlink would like to explain to passengers how their 7.2 per cent increase in some tickets to Euston would be used to improve punctuality?

"If Britain's trains are to get moving, it is infrastructure which needs to be improved and this is the responsibility of Network Rail. Raising fare prices will only place a greater burden on an already disgruntled travelling public."