

Passengers to 'perch'?

East Midlands Trains has confirmed that it hopes to re-fit training running on the troubled Liverpool to Norwich line so it can increase overcrowding by an additional 10% on its trains.

Writing to passengers, the troubled rail company confirmed that in order to address overcrowding caused by too few carriages, "a program of refurbishment and upgrade work has started" on its carriages.

Speaking to the Liverpool Echo they said; "Refurbishment of some trains will give more seats in each carriage to increase seating capacity." Exactly how this is to be done is a mystery.

South West Trains did something similar in 2007 by creating passenger "perches" after removing a fifth of their seats. The increase in empty floor space allowed the Government to claim that it was meeting targets on reducing overcrowding.



Passengers with 0.54 square metres of floor space are not deemed to be on an overcrowded train.

A spokesperson for *TrainSardine.org* said, "Rather than deal with the issue of not enough rolling stock it looks like they are going to try and get more of us on their failing trains."

No 10 petition live-sign now

Downing Street has agreed to host an online petition that could see East Midlands Trains investigated by the Government. All we need is 200 signatures and those who have signed will get a formal reply. So read the statement below, visit our website www.TrainSardine.org to link to the petition, and sign. Forward our address to friends and other passengers.

The Petition...

"We the undersigned petition the Prime Minister to investigate East Midlands Trains, the Liverpool to Norwich line rail franchise operator, for failing services."

Sign at www.TrainSardine.org



Sardines to the responsible

Last week *TrainSardine.org* sent tins of sardines to those responsible for the problems on the troubled Liverpool to Norwich line. The addresses are online so you can send your own if you like-there is also a sardine recipe section. More tins will be sent after Christmas. Sent in a spirit of goodwill, the following have received the little tinned fishes-

- **The Transport Secretary, Geoff Hoon**, received his for sanctioning standing, despite it being classed as a form of illegal torture by the Ministry of Defence.
- **Tim Shoveller, MD of East Midlands Trains** for not solving the problems after managing the franchise for the past twelve months.

Local MP 'told porkies' by minister

ON 21 Apr 2008, Helen Southworth, MP for Warrington South, asked the Secretary of State for Transport if discussions could be held with East Midlands Trains on overcrowding at peak times on train services from Warrington station.

The reply came from Mr Tom Harris who said; "I am aware that East Midlands Trains had problems at the start of the franchise with rolling stock availability for the Liverpool-Norwich route. It has put in place measures to ensure that as much rolling stock as possible is now available for use on the route. East Midlands Trains is carrying out passenger counts to evaluate the overcrowding and to formulate plans to improve capacity. The refurbishment programme for Class 158 vehicles commences this summer and will



provide a 13 per cent. increase in seating capacity." Nothing has happened and the Sheffield Star is reporting that the line has been missed of the additional carriage list. Your local MPs email can be found at www.TrainSardine.org



National coverage of our campaign and to the left a familiar sight on the 17.41 from Manchester Oxford Rd.

East Midlands 'secret' no result-rail group

East Midlands Trains has set up a "Stakeholder Group" to improve things.

The group has met four times in twelve months, excludes passengers, and seems to have achieved very little.

East Midlands Press Office confirmed that; "discussions stay within the group and have not been made public". They also confirmed that the group does not include regular Liverpool to Norwich passengers. Minutes and attendance lists have not been published. What else can we say-it is all very secret and going nowhere.

In a compromise to independence, the group is chaired by East Midlands Trains and it is alleged to include representatives from Regional Development Agencies, Passenger Transport Executives such as (GMPTE) and local authorities such as Liverpool and Stockport Councils, Passenger Focus.

Campaign's national profile

In the past week, since the campaign, launched over 6,000 people have visited the website viewing some 20,000 pages. There have been interviews given to media along the 300 mile length of the troubled Liverpool to Norwich line as well as BBC Five Live, newspapers, magazines and websites. We even made South Africa news! Now we have a Downing Street petition and feathers are beginning to ruffle!

Questions (and sardines) in the House

The day after launch, Transport Secretary, Geoff Hoon, was taking questions in the House of Commons when Peter Bone MP (Conservatives), whipped out a tin of sardines. "Do you support the 'In the Can' campaign whereby rail users are encouraged to send a tin of sardines to the chief executive of East Midlands Trains because of the gross overcrowding?", Bone asked.

Holding up the tin, he continued: "Or would you agree with me that this tin of sardines would be better presented to you for your inaction and complacency?" Amid laughter in the chamber, Hoon replied: "I'm grateful to you for thinking about my health and welfare by ensuring that I eat oily fish."

We did send Geoff a tin as reports have reached us that the Department for Transport have grudgingly admitted that they had something to do with moving carriages away from the Liverpool to Norwich line. Check site for new 'porkies' poster.

Vote, blog, debate, contacts and help

www.TRAINSARDINE.org

Why there are not enough carriages

BASICALLY, East Midlands won the right to run the Liverpool to Norwich line from Central Trains. Central Trains submitted low passenger figures to the Government so, when they lost the bid to East Midlands, they were able to hand only half the carriages needed over.

New carriages were then ordered from the carriage leasing company. However, the leasing company had a 90% share of the leasing market and made £175 Million with this monopoly position. Thinking this seemed a bit excessive the Government called for an investigation of the carriage leasing industry. Confidence in carriage production then stalled, delays occurred, leaving passengers standing high and dry.

East Midlands hiding the facts

East Midlands has a legal contract to provide a service. However, they only have to communicate late/cancelled trains. Their website 'faults with service' page never mentions the incomplete trains they send us. So no penalty and no action.

The millions of Government money East Midlands should have spent leasing carriages is presumably going straight to shareholders. By right you should be able to claim compensation.



No seat and overcrowding top passenger complaints survey

TrainSardine.org has obtained the findings of an East Midlands Trains passenger survey. The findings confirm that the biggest problems passengers face are:

Only 17% of passengers said they could always get a seat on the route. Nearly half of passengers (47%) highlighted overcrowding as a major concern (47% is nearly twice that of other train companies). Passenger Focus also identified that there was overcrowding on all parts of the Liverpool to Norwich route at any time of the day-a unique position in the rail industry. 20% of passengers are unhappy with the carriages (dirt/toilets/facilities).

Emma Knight, Head of External Communications at East Midlands Trains, said; "Some of the issues above are being addressed by our £10 million refurbishment of the Class 158 trains." She confirmed that this would see "new seating" which would result in "increasing capacity" allow East Midlands Trains to stuff more people into current carriages. Passengers are worried that this will see the introduction of passenger 'perches'.

Tell us your story, blog or lend a hand

The Sardine Campaign will report back on the reaction from East Midlands and the fight back by passengers. If you have a story about East Midlands, or want to help (editorial, photo, video, legal, journalist, PR, marketing) please email editor@TrainSardine.org or call the hotline on 0709 237 2160, visit the blog at www.TrainSardine.org or see us on facebook. East Midlands staff (including Tim) can also leave a message on 0709 237 2160.

we are not sardines - we are people - we are not standing for this