



Crime soars after Labour nationalises train company

Crimes reported to police have soared at a train company nationalised by Labour.

South Western Railway (SWR) saw the highest number of crimes recorded on its trains and stations since 2023 after it fell under Government control in May this year.

Nearly three serious public order offences happened every day aboard SWR trains during June and July, according to police data obtained under Freedom of Information (Fol) laws by the SWR Watch campaign group.

Police-recorded incidents aboard the London-to-Weymouth operator's trains rose 15.8 per cent during the two months compared with the same period in 2024.

Crimes sharply increased in the weeks immediately following nationalisation, which took place on May 25.

Heidi Alexander, the Transport Secretary, said in a May statement that public ownership of SWR "will ensure services are run in the interests of passengers, not shareholders, and is a vital step in enabling the Government to bring track and train together".

She added: "But public ownership alone is not a silver bullet and will not fix the structural problems hindering the railways currently. That will take time."

It was not clear from the data why reported crimes surged straight after the Government took control of the train company.

Reports of serious public order offences aboard SWR trains – such as affray and violent disorder – increased by almost 40 per cent immediately after nationalisation when compared with last year, up from 102 reported crimes to 142.

Other violent crimes on the operator's trains increased by a third compared with June and July 2024, up from 68 incidents to 91 in the eight-week period after the Government took over SWR.

Similarly, sex crime reports increased from 17 in June and July 2024 to 23 in the same months this year.

On-board thefts from passengers declined, however, down 9 per cent from 145 reports to 132 in the immediate post-nationalisation period.



Offences detected at stations largely correlates to how busy those rail hubs are, with London Waterloo – SWR's terminus in the capital – experiencing almost 1,700 reported crimes between June 2023 and June 2025.

Next worst were Reading and Clapham Junction stations, each with just over 500 reported crimes for the same period.

Earlier this month it was revealed that train cancellations had surged at SWR immediately after nationalisation, a fact likely to fuel calls for the Government to rethink its manifesto pledge to nationalise all passenger trains.

Recommended

Train cancellations surge 50 per cent after being nationalised

Train companies are being nationalised about every three months . Having started with SWR, the Government took c2c into state ownership in July when the previous private operator's contract could be terminated.

Greater Anglia fell into public sector ownership earlier this month, with West Midlands Trains set to follow next February, and the mammoth Thameslink, Southern and Greater Northern franchise coming under state control after that.

Labour plans to set up a new body – **Great British Railways** (GBR) – by 2028, replacing all current private branding with a new British Rail-style unified body.

An SWR spokesman said: "The upward trend in police-recorded crime incidents, in part driven by our proactive campaigns to encourage more reporting, is in line with similar increases in other public services and industries, and bears no relation to SWR's transfer into public ownership."

Heidi Alexander, the Transport Secretary, admitted that public ownership was not a silver bullet when the Government took control of South Western Railway

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Offences reported to police on South Western Railway climbs 15.8pc after the Government takes control