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## Southeastern apologies for daylight-blocking coverings on train station bridge

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Southeastern railway has been accused of "daylight robbery" after it papered over the windows of a busy passenger footbridge connecting two London stations.

Tens of thousands of travellers moving between Waterloo and Waterloo East stations cross the high level footbridge each day which, until Monday evening, had covered its windows with vinyl wrappers.

"How to make your customers depressed. Lesson one by Southeastern. Block out all the light in the overground footbridge from Waterloo to Waterloo East," wrote one frustrated commuter on X.

"Why rob the customers of free sunlight? Staff do not like it."

According to a report in The Times, station staff claimed the coverings had been introduced because it was "too expensive to have them cleaned".

"It's so depressing," said one. "[We] came into work one day and they had taken away all the daylight. The only explanation we've had from the bosses is that people were complaining that the windows were dirty but they felt it was too expensive to actually clean them, so they just papered over them. No one is happy about it."

Another said: "It's just awful. Passengers keep asking us why we've blocked out the sunshine."

Southeastern – one of the UK's busiest rail operators – connects London with Kent and East Sussex.



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It was taken over by the UK government in October 2021 following a serious breach of franchise.

An investigation into the firm found that the operator did not declare more than £25 million of historical taxpayer funding.

The company recently concluded a £2 million station improvement programme which involved “deep cleans” at 116 stations, alongside repair and improvement works at 20 stations.

It claimed the investments formed part of “the wider goal of building a better, more reliable and sustainable railway”.

A spokesperson for [Southeastern](#) told The Independent that the claims around cost-cutting or cleaning were “completely untrue”.

They added that the covering was “simply an incorrect installation by our suppliers in the middle of last week which was swiftly taken down on Monday night”.

[David Wornham](#), passenger services director at [Southeastern](#), told The Independent: “We want our stations to be accessible, safe and welcoming places for our customers. We have spent £2million in the last six months to deep clean over 100 stations, as well as repaint and repair a further 20.

“At Waterloo East, we have invested £150,000 to repaint all platform areas, replace all the wayfinding and signage and added new customer information screens so customers can quickly and easily identify the next trains to Charing Cross and [London Bridge](#).

“The final phase of this programme was intended to install new artwork vinyls to brighten the walkway – but it was never our intention to cover the windows. This error has now been fixed and the artwork has been removed. We are really sorry for the mix up.”