



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

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I write to raise my concern regarding the temperature on a number Southeastern trains during hot weather, which is, as you are aware, a frequent frustration for passengers travelling on your services during the summer months.

I have made enquiries about this problem on numerous occasions before, and made reference to it in my response to the ongoing South Eastern franchise consultation as something the future train operating company will have to address. From what I have been told in the past, the class 465/466 units, which are used on metro routes, are an older train commissioned by British Rail before air conditioning was specified as a prerequisite, the rationale being that the frequent opening and closing of carriage doors would render any air conditioning ineffective. While I understand that fresh air is pumped into carriages to keep them ventilated, with no cooling mechanism, this measure does little to alleviate the problem.

This can make journeys incredibly uncomfortable during the summer, and at times, results in what can only be described as unsafe conditions. This issue is exacerbated by chronic overcrowding on many of your services, and I have witnessed fellow passengers faint on more than one occasion. It is utterly insufficient to simply recommend that passengers carry a bottle of water with them during warmer weather.

From a layman's perspective, this appears to be a basic problem that should easily be rectifiable. This stock is over twenty years old, and while I recognise that it has undergone a number of refurbishments, it is clearly not keeping pace with the expectations of passengers, who simply want a comfortable, reliable service. Even on newer carriages, I understand that on-board temperatures cannot be manually controlled by drivers, and are routinely set at 21 °C.

I would therefore urge you to reconsider what more can be done to prevent the problems we have seen over the last couple of days reoccurring throughout the summer. I would also ask you to assess the feasibility of overseeing a retrofit of some form of air conditioning system.

I would be very grateful for your thoughts.

Bob Neill MP