



---

## The Independent - 'Travellers return to the railways'

---

Sir,

Your leading article "Off the rails" (6 June) ignores the very substantial sums that have and will continue to be spent on the rail network.

Rail users are already seeing improvements. We have the youngest fleet of trains in Europe. More trains are running on time now than at any time in the last seven years. Over a billion passenger journeys were made last year – more than at any time in 60 years.

Last year, we announced that we will spend £15bn on the rail network and that £10bn would be invested in increasing capacity. This is the biggest single increase in capacity for a generation. In addition, we have committed to over £5bn of support for Crossrail, which will enable 200 million passenger journeys a year.

With costs now under control, efficiencies being delivered and Railtrack's backlog of maintenance now paid for, the money we have committed will support the demand for rail travel and improve punctuality and safety, the things that matter most to rail passengers.

**Tom Harris MP**  
Rail Minister