Introduction

The Department for Transport (DfT) collects rail passenger counts from train operating companies to monitor train crowding levels.

All franchises let by DfT require the train operator to address crowding and to plan their timetables in such a way as to ensure, as far as possible, that crowding is not unduly concentrated on any particular route or individual service.

The ‘top 10’ lists of overcrowded train services are based on services arriving at or departing from major cities in England and Wales during the morning and afternoon peaks.

The tables included in this paper show the 10 most overcrowded peak services in the spring and autumn 2015 counts.

The ‘top 10’ services in spring 2015 were between 60% and 122% over their passenger capacity.

The ‘top 10’ services in autumn 2015 were between 61% and 129% over their passenger capacity.

These figures are taken from internal management information used for monitoring purposes. Recognising that there is a demand for this type of data, DfT periodically makes these ‘top 10’ lists public. This release includes lists for both the spring and autumn 2015.

It should be noted that there are a number of data issues associated with passenger counts that affect the quality of this information. These must be considered when referring to the ‘top 10’ tables. In addition to the notes that follow the tables, more detailed information is available in the notes and definitions document that accompanies DfT’s annual statistical publication covering passenger demand and rail crowding. It can be found at: https://www.gov.uk/transport-statistics-notes-and-guidance-rail-statistics.

The data collected are intended to represent a ‘typical’ weekday (usually Tuesday to Thursday). Historically, the Department monitored crowding levels for London and South East operators only, however, since 2012 more data has been collected for a number of key regional cities in England and Wales. The Department’s statistical publication, showing weekday passenger numbers and crowding at these cities can be found at the following link: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/rail-passenger-numbers-and-crowding-on-weekdays-in-major-cities-in-england-and-wales-2015.
Methodology

The ‘top 10’ lists cover arrivals into eleven major cities during the morning peak (07:00-09:59) and departures from these cities during the evening peak (16:00-18:59) on a ‘typical’ weekday, for franchised train operators only. The figures include ‘typical’ weekday passenger counts avoiding school and bank holidays, as well as excluding periods of disruption. While recognising there are variations in travel behaviour, this gives a representation of crowding levels at the time when passenger demand is generally at its highest.

Passenger loads are based on data collected at the busiest point on a train’s journey, known as the critical load point, on arrival at (AM peak) or on departure from (PM peak) a city centre. This could be an interchange point outside the city (e.g. Stratford or Ealing Broadway on approach to London) and may not be the terminal or city centre station. The spring data were collected prior to the May 2015 timetable change, and the autumn data were collected prior to the December 2015 timetable change.

There are two methods by which the information is collected, either by automatic counting equipment fitted to the trains, or by manual guard or platform counts. Some services may have been counted only once and may not be an average representation of overcrowding on the service over a period of time.

Definitions

► **Critical load point**: The station where the standard class passenger load on a service is highest on arrival at (AM peak) or on departure from (PM peak) a city centre. Critical load points can vary from service to service, but will usually be at the same location for services on the same route.

► **Standard class passenger capacity**: This includes the number of standard class seats on the service and may include a standing allowance. A standing allowance is included when the time between stations before (AM) or after (PM) the critical load point is 20 minutes or less.

► **Critical load**: The number of standard class passengers on a service at the critical load point.

► **Passengers in excess of capacity (PiXC)**: The number of standard class passengers on a service that are in excess of the standard class capacity at the critical load point.

► **Standard class load factor**: The ‘top 10’ lists are based on the service’s load factors, which is the number of standard class passengers on a service expressed as a percentage of the maximum stated standard class passenger capacity for that service. For example, a train which has the same passenger load as the passenger capacity has a load factor of 100%. Numbers of first class passengers are not considered in the calculation of load factors.
The 10 most overcrowded peak train services in major cities in England and Wales: spring 2015

Warning: These figures should be treated with caution - please see notes on data issues (page 11).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Location of most crowded point (1)</th>
<th>Time at most crowded point (1)</th>
<th>Train operating company</th>
<th>Departure time</th>
<th>Service details</th>
<th>Number of cars</th>
<th>Standard class passenger capacity (2)</th>
<th>Standard class passenger load (3)</th>
<th>Passengers in excess of capacity (4)</th>
<th>Standard class load factor (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>Blackfriars</td>
<td>08:20</td>
<td>Govia Thameslink Great Western Railway</td>
<td>07:00</td>
<td>Brighton Bedford 09:25</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>933</td>
<td>513</td>
<td>222%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>Paddington</td>
<td>08:16</td>
<td>Great Western Railway</td>
<td>07:34</td>
<td>Didcot London      08:16</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>484</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>200%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Manchester</td>
<td>Oxford Road</td>
<td>08:24</td>
<td>TransPennine Express</td>
<td>04:22</td>
<td>Glasgow Manchester 08:47</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>369</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>193%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Manchester</td>
<td>Oxford Road</td>
<td>16:19</td>
<td>TransPennine Express</td>
<td>16:00</td>
<td>Manchester Edinburgh Waverley 19:40</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>332</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>174%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>Ealing</td>
<td>08:14</td>
<td>Heathrow Connect</td>
<td>07:51</td>
<td>Heathrow London     08:24</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>476</td>
<td>807</td>
<td>331</td>
<td>170%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>Waterloo</td>
<td>08:19</td>
<td>South West Trains</td>
<td>07:32</td>
<td>Woking London Waterloo 08:19</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>738</td>
<td>1239</td>
<td>501</td>
<td>168%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>Paddington</td>
<td>07:54</td>
<td>Great Western Railway</td>
<td>07:07</td>
<td>Henley-On-Thames St. Albans City 09:29</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>411</td>
<td>683</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>166%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>Elephant and Castle</td>
<td>08:39</td>
<td>Govia Thameslink</td>
<td>08:08</td>
<td>Sutton City        09:29</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>740</td>
<td>1229</td>
<td>489</td>
<td>166%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>Euston</td>
<td>17:46</td>
<td>London Midland</td>
<td>17:46</td>
<td>London Crewe       20:25</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>670</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>163%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>Waterloo</td>
<td>08:22</td>
<td>South West Trains</td>
<td>07:14</td>
<td>Alton London Waterloo 08:22</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>738</td>
<td>1178</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>160%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes

(1) The location and time of where the highest passenger load was recorded. For morning peak arrivals this is the station that the load was recorded on arrival, and for afternoon peak departures this is the station that the load was recorded on departure.

(2) Includes the number of standard class seats on the train and may also include a standing allowance. A standing allowance is made on a service when the time between stations before (AM peak) or after (PM peak) the critical load point is 20 minutes or less. The allowance for standing varies with the type of rolling stock.

(3) The number of standard class passengers on the service at its most crowded point on the journey into or out of the city.

(4) The difference between the standard class passenger load and the standard class passenger capacity.

(5) The number of standard class passengers expressed as a percentage of the maximum allowable standard class passenger capacity for that service. For example, a train which has the same passenger load as the passenger capacity has a load factor of 100%.
The ‘top 10’ services in spring 2015

1. **The 07:00 Brighton to Bedford service**
   - **Busiest point at London Blackfriars (via Elephant & Castle) at 08:20.**
   - **Load factor 222% with 513 passengers in excess of its capacity of 420.**
   - **Capacity includes seats only, and the service has first class seats.**

   This service ran as an 8-car train during 2015. In 2016 the train will contain 50% more coaches and run as a 12-car train.

   Many of the services on this list are on the Thameslink route. The Government has sponsored a £6.5billion programme of investment to upgrade the Thameslink track infrastructure and to provide over 1,300 new coaches. This will enable 24 trains per hour to operate the Thameslink core in central London between Blackfriars and St Pancras at the busiest time.

   The programme is due for completion in 2018 and will significantly reduce crowding on Thameslink routes from the end of 2018.

2. **The 07:34 Didcot Parkway to London Paddington service**
   - **Busiest point at London Paddington at 08:16.**
   - **Load factor 200% with 242 passengers in excess of its capacity of 242.**
   - **Capacity includes seats only, and the service has first class seats.**

   At the time of writing, this train runs with more carriages, which has doubled its capacity and reduced the crowding levels seen in spring 2015.

3. **The 04:22 Glasgow Central to Manchester Airport service**
   - **Busiest point at Manchester Oxford Road at 08:24.**
   - **Load factor 193% with 178 passengers in excess of its capacity of 191.**
   - **Capacity includes seats only, and the service has first class seats.**

   This service is busiest between Wigan North Western and Manchester Oxford Road. It runs non-stop and is between 10 and 15 minutes faster than alternatives services provided by other train operators, which makes it very attractive at peak times. The speed and convenience of this service compared to alternative options means that it continues to be in high demand. TransPennine Express are monitoring and reviewing options to improve this.

   As a non-stop service with a journey time of around 25 minutes between Wigan North Western and Manchester Oxford Road, it includes no standing allowance.
4. The 16:00 Manchester Airport to Edinburgh Waverley service

- **Busiest point at Manchester Oxford Road at 16:19.**
- **Load factor 174% with 141 passengers in excess of its capacity of 191.**
- **Capacity includes seats and a standing allowance, and the service has first class seats.**

Similar to the service at number 3 this service runs non-stop between Wigan North Western and Manchester Oxford Road, making it attractive to passengers travelling at peak times. This service also does not include a standing allowance.

5. The 07:51 Heathrow Terminal 5 to London Paddington service

- **Busiest point at Ealing Broadway on its journey to London Paddington at 08:14.**
- **Load factor 170% with 331 passengers in excess of its capacity of 476.**
- **Capacity includes seats only, and the service has no first class seats.**

This service is currently running with the maximum number of carriages. In September 2016, there will be a new train fleet introduced to relieve some of the pressure this service is currently experiencing. A further new set of trains will be introduced in 2017 as part of the Government’s Intercity Express Programme, spreading passenger demand across a wider range of services.

6. The 07:32 Woking to London Waterloo service

- **Busiest point at London Waterloo at 08:19.**
- **Load factor 168% with 501 passengers in excess of its capacity of 738.**
- **Capacity includes seats only, and the service has first class seats.**

This service has traditionally suffered from excess passenger loading and is at the maximum operable length (12-cars) for its route on current infrastructure. The trains immediately before and after (the 07:07 service from Woking and the 07:46 service from West Byfleet) are also at maximum length.

This service takes 22 minutes from the last calling point, Surbiton, and therefore does not have a standing allowance.

In 2015, South West Trains completed the introduction of 108 additional carriages, providing extra capacity for 77 morning and evening services across the network. In addition, more than £800million is currently being invested to provide even more space for passengers. This includes the renovation of London Waterloo and the introduction of a fleet of 150 brand new carriages. By the end of 2018, there will be 30% more capacity for passengers during the busiest times of the day.

The Invitation to Tender for the new South Western franchise set out what the government expects from bidders for the next franchise, including at least 95 additional services on weekdays from December 2018 and an increase of at least 20% in peak time capacity from December 2020.

7. The 07:07 Henley-On-Thames to London Paddington service

- **Busiest point at London Paddington at 07:54.**
- **Load factor 166% with 272 passengers in excess of its capacity of 411.**
- **Capacity includes seats only, and the service has no first class seats.**

GWR recognises that this service suffers from overcrowding and will be turning this service into a longer train, once the electrification and rolling stock programmes are complete. This service is currently running with the maximum number of carriages.
8. The 08:08 Sutton to St. Albans City service

- **Busiest point at Elephant & Castle at 08:39.**
- **Load factor 166% with 489 passengers in excess of its capacity of 740.**
- **Capacity includes seats and a standing allowance, and the service has first class seats.**

This service is on the Thameslink route, where capacity will be improved significantly when the Thameslink Programme is complete.

9. The 17:46 London Euston to Crewe service

- **Busiest point at London Euston at 17:46.**
- **Load factor 163% with 258 passengers in excess of its capacity of 412.**
- **Capacity includes seats only, and the service has first class seats.**

This service was introduced in December 2014 as part of London Midland’s ‘peak 110mph’ service launch and the introduction of 10 new class 350/3 units. The service can only run with a maximum of 8 cars as the platforms at Atherstone and Rugeley Trent Valley are short.

After Milton Keynes the 8-car unit is sufficient, however, all units are deployed during the peak and the removal of a 4-car unit from another service would simply move the crowding elsewhere.

There are no planned changes at present, but this is something London Midland continue to monitor and review.

10. The 07:14 Alton to London Waterloo service

- **Busiest point at London Waterloo at 08:22.**
- **Load factor 160% with 440 passengers in excess of its capacity of 738.**
- **Capacity includes seats only, and the service has first class seats.**

This service is already formed of 12 cars - the longest possible train on this route - as are the services immediately before and after.

As described in the note for the service at number 6, South West Trains is introducing a number of initiatives across the network to address crowding on its services.
### The 10 most overcrowded peak train services in major cities in England and Wales: autumn 2015

#### Warning: These figures should be treated with caution - please see notes on data issues (page 11).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Location of most crowded point (1)</th>
<th>Time at most crowded point (1)</th>
<th>Train operating company</th>
<th>Departure time</th>
<th>Service details</th>
<th>Arrival time</th>
<th>Number of cars</th>
<th>Standard class passenger capacity (2)</th>
<th>Standard class passenger load (3)</th>
<th>Passengers in excess of capacity (4)</th>
<th>Standard class load factor (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>London Blackfriars</td>
<td>08:20</td>
<td>Govia Thameslink</td>
<td>06:57</td>
<td>Brighton Bedford 09:25</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>960</td>
<td>540</td>
<td>229%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Manchester</td>
<td>Oxford Road</td>
<td>08:22</td>
<td>TransPennine Express</td>
<td>04:22</td>
<td>Central Manchester Airport 08:47</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>215%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Manchester</td>
<td>Oxford Road</td>
<td>16:19</td>
<td>TransPennine Express</td>
<td>16:00</td>
<td>Manchester Edinburgh Waverley 19:40</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>374</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>196%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Manchester</td>
<td>Oxford Road</td>
<td>18:19</td>
<td>TransPennine Express</td>
<td>18:00</td>
<td>Manchester Edinburgh Waverley 21:38</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>337</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>176%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>Elephant &amp; Castle</td>
<td>08:20</td>
<td>Govia Thameslink</td>
<td>08:02</td>
<td>Junction Bedford 09:38</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>732</td>
<td>1250</td>
<td>518</td>
<td>171%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>London Euston</td>
<td>17:46</td>
<td>London Midland South West Trains</td>
<td>17:46</td>
<td>Euston Crewe 20:25</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>684</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>166%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>Waterloo</td>
<td>08:19</td>
<td>London South West Trains</td>
<td>07:32</td>
<td>Woking London Waterloo 08:19</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>738</td>
<td>1223</td>
<td>485</td>
<td>166%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>Blackfriars</td>
<td>17:40</td>
<td>Govia Thameslink</td>
<td>16:26</td>
<td>Bedford Brighton 19:02</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>696</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>166%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>Waterloo</td>
<td>08:08</td>
<td>London South West Trains</td>
<td>06:51</td>
<td>Southampton London Waterloo 08:08</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>598</td>
<td>973</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>163%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Manchester</td>
<td>Oxford Road</td>
<td>09:23</td>
<td>TransPennine Express</td>
<td>06:15</td>
<td>Edinburgh Manchester Airport 09:47</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>161%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Notes

1. The location and time of where the highest passenger load was recorded. For morning peak arrivals this is the station that the load was recorded on arrival, and for afternoon peak departures this is the station that the load was recorded on departure.

2. Includes the number of standard class seats on the train and may also include a standing allowance. A standing allowance is made on a service when the time between stations before (AM peak) or after (PM peak) the critical load point is 20 minutes or less. The allowance for standing varies with the type of rolling stock.

3. The number of standard class passengers on the service at its most crowded point on the journey into or out of the city.

4. The difference between the standard class passenger load and the standard class passenger capacity.

5. The number of standard class passengers expressed as a percentage of the maximum allowable standard class passenger capacity for that service. For example, a train which has the same passenger load as the passenger capacity has a load factor of 100%.
The ‘top 10’ services in autumn 2015

1. **The 06:57 Brighton to Bedford service**
   - **Busiest point at London Blackfriars (via Elephant & Castle) at 08:20.**
   - **Load factor 229% with 540 passengers in excess of its capacity of 420.**
   - **Capacity is based on seats only, and the service has first class seats.**

   This service ran as an 8-car train during 2015. From 2016 the train contains 4 more coaches and runs as a 12-car train.

   Many of the services on this list are on the Thameslink route. The Government has sponsored a £6.5billion programme of investment to upgrade the Thameslink track infrastructure and to provide over 1,300 new coaches. This will enable 24 trains per hour to operate the Thameslink core in central London between Blackfriars and St Pancras at the busiest time.

   The programme is due for completion in 2018 and will significantly reduce crowding on Thameslink routes from the end of 2018.

2. **The 04:22 Glasgow Central to Manchester Airport service**
   - **Busiest point at Manchester Oxford Road at 08:22.**
   - **Load factor 215% with 219 passengers in excess of its capacity of 191.**
   - **Capacity is based on seats only, and the service has first class seats.**

   This service is busiest between Wigan North Western and Manchester Oxford Road. It runs non-stop and is between 10 and 15 minutes faster than alternatives services provided by other train operators, which makes it very attractive at peak times. The speed and convenience of this service compared to alternative options means that it continues to be in high demand. TransPennine Express are monitoring and reviewing options to improve this.

   As a non-stop service with a journey time of around 25 minutes between Wigan North Western and Manchester Oxford Road, it includes no standing allowance.

3. **The 16:00 Manchester Airport to Edinburgh Waverley service**
   - **Busiest point at Manchester Oxford Road at 16:19.**
   - **Load factor 196% with 183 passengers in excess of its capacity of 191.**
   - **Capacity is based on seats only, and the service has first class seats.**

   Similar to the service at number 2 this service runs non-stop between Wigan North Western and Manchester Oxford Road, making it attractive to passengers travelling at peak times. This service also falls outside the standing allowance limit.
4. The 18:00 Manchester Airport to Edinburgh Waverley service

- **Busiest point at Manchester Oxford Road at 18:19.**
- **Load factor 176% with 146 passengers in excess of its capacity of 191.**
- **Capacity is based on seats only, and the service has first class seats.**

This service runs on the same route as numbers 2 and 3 on this list, and the same issues apply.

5. The 08:02 Beckenham Junction to Bedford service

- **Busiest point at Elephant & Castle at 08:20.**
- **Load factor 171% with 518 passengers in excess of its capacity of 732.**
- **Capacity includes seats and a standing allowance, and the service has no first class seats.**

This service is also on the Thameslink route, where capacity will be improved significantly when the Thameslink Programme is complete.

This service is currently running with the maximum number of carriages on the route.

6. The 17:46 London Euston to Crewe service

- **Busiest point at London Euston at 17:46.**
- **Load factor 166%, 272 passengers in excess of its capacity of 412.**
- **Capacity is based on seats only, and the service has first class seats.**

This service was introduced in December 2014 as part of London Midland's 'peak 110mph' service launch and the introduction of 10 new class 350/3 units. The service can only run with a maximum of 8 cars as the platforms at Atherstone and Rugeley Trent Valley are short.

After Milton Keynes the 8-car unit is sufficient, however, all units are deployed during the peak and the removal of a 4-car unit from another service would simply move the crowding elsewhere.

There are no planned changes at present, but this is something London Midland continue to monitor and review.

7. The 07:32 Woking to London Waterloo service

- **Busiest point at London Waterloo at 08:19.**
- **Load factor 166% with 485 passengers in excess of its capacity of 738.**
- **Capacity is based on seats only, and the service has first class seats.**

This service has traditionally suffered from excess passenger loading and is at the maximum operable length (12-cars) for its route on current infrastructure. The trains immediately before and after (the 07:07 service from Woking and the 07:46 service from West Byfleet) are also at maximum length.

This service takes 22 minutes from the last calling point, Surbiton, and therefore does not have a standing allowance.

In 2015, South West Trains completed the introduction of 108 additional carriages, providing extra capacity for 77 morning and evening services across the network. In addition, more than £800million is currently being invested to provide even more space for passengers. This includes the renovation of London Waterloo and introduction of a fleet of 150 brand new carriages. By the end of 2018, there will be 30% more capacity for passengers during the busiest times of the day.

The Invitation to Tender for the new South Western franchise set out what the government expects from bidders for the next franchise, including at least 95 additional services on weekdays from December 2018 and an increase of at least 20% in peak time capacity from December 2020.
8. **The 16:26 Bedford to Brighton service**

   - **Busiest point at London Blackfriars (via Elephant & Castle) at 17:40.**
   - **Load factor 166% with 276 passengers in excess of its capacity of 420.**
   - **Capacity is based on seats only, and the service has first class seats.**

   This service is also on the Thameslink route, where capacity will be improved significantly when the Thameslink Programme is complete.

9. **The 06:51 Southampton Airport Parkway to London Waterloo service**

   - **Busiest point at London Waterloo at 08:08.**
   - **Load factor 163% with 375 passengers in excess of its capacity of 598.**
   - **Capacity is based on seats only, and the service has first class seats.**

   From December 2015, this service now runs as a 12-car train rather than a 10-car train.

   As described in the note for the service at number 7, South West Trains is introducing a number of initiatives across the network to address crowding on its services.

10. **The 06:15 Edinburgh Waverley to Manchester Airport service**

    - **Busiest point at Manchester Oxford Road at 09:23.**
    - **Load factor 161% with 116 passengers in excess of its capacity of 191.**
    - **Capacity is based on seats only, and the service has first class seats.**

    This service runs on the same route as numbers 2, 3 and 4 on this list, and the same issues apply.
DfT are undertaking work to improve the quality and quantity of passenger count data collected and the outputs derived from these data, and this work is ongoing. While we believe that aggregate statistics are of reasonable quality, due to the nature of the data, statistics on individual services are not always robust.

The overcrowding figures for the ‘top 10’ services are often derived from one-off measurements of the passengers on each train on a particular weekday. They may not be an average representation of overcrowding on the service over a period of time. Furthermore, some of the passenger load numbers are obtained by manual counting and so there is a significant risk of human error. Hence the figures should be treated with caution.

As the figures included in this release are one-off snapshots from spring and autumn 2015 they do not provide a reliable, accurate guide to current overcrowding. For example, extra capacity or timetable changes have already been introduced on some routes.

It should be noted that some of the services in the ‘top 10’ list are atypical, inasmuch as they are services/routes on which additional capacity cannot be provided without unrealistic changes to infrastructure.

Further information about passenger counts can be found in the notes and definitions document which accompanies the ‘Rail passenger numbers and crowding statistics on weekdays in major cities in England and Wales: 2015’ release, which can be found at the following link: https://www.gov.uk/transport-statistics-notes-and-guidance-rail-statistics.