

Privatisation has failed. The only problem that we have...

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The very slightest editing of [an FT headline](#) this morning makes it read as follows:

Rail chaos on England's West Coast line as Link to London suffers sustained delays, cancellations, slashed timetables, overcrowding and poor customer service

Let's be clear; this is not the result of strikes. This is the consequence of profound mismanagement by Avanti, who are the private sector operator of this line which has now been in chaos for so long that the despair of those who need to use it is utterly justified.

We are used to hearing about the total failure of water companies by now.

Avanti's management of the West Coast line, which has not enjoyed the benefit of being subject to occasional state ownership, which advantage the East Coast route has enjoyed, has been absolutely disastrous. A policy of underinvestment, most especially in staff training, seems to be at the heart of what is wrong. But, deeper than that there is a more significant malaise. They run this railway with the intention of making a profit, which the state essentially guarantees to them. Their incentive to actually serve the public is almost non-existent.

It is time that the whole concept of privatisation was abandoned. There are services, including water, rail, gas, electricity, post, healthcare, education, buses and more that need to be under state control to ensure that they are delivered to meet need. The only problem that we have is a shortage of politicians that will admit this.