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However, The Telegraph can reveal the 11 bosses at the Government owned company prefer to travel by train than car after claiming a staggering £103,875 of taxpayers' money on rail fares in just one year.

A file of their expenses seen by this newspaper shows the executives claimed a total of £157,859 for the financial year to March 2020.

The disclosure of the well paid public sector bosses' expenses has led to MPs and campaigners condemning the expenditure as "indefensible".

The dossier shows how executives racked up £26,087 in hotel bills, a further £4,571 in flights and £14,045 in other travel and subsistence allowances. But, 65 per cent of the total claim was made up of rail fares, with some even claiming season tickets to attend meetings.

A further £2,708 was spent on car hire, £2,126 on parking and £1,122 on taxis.

Jim O'Sullivan, the outgoing chief executive on an annual salary of £456,727, made the smallest claims, including a £1 travel bill and £2 parking fee.

He also received £140 for a late night car service after attending the National Transport



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a total of £177.

Highways England executive expenses

Name	Title	Total Claim
Nick Harris	Executive director	£25,859
Mike Wilson	Chief highways engineer	£25,106
Malcolm Dare	Executive director commercial and procurement	£21,855
Peter Allen	Executive director corporate affairs and communications	£17,524
Elliot Shaw	Executive director strategy and planning	£14,645
Tim Reardon	General counsel	£11,790
Vanessa Howlison	Chief financial officer	£11,168
Peter Mumford	Executive director major projects and capital portfolio management	£9,512
Jim O'Sullivan	Chief executive	£9,091
Elaine Billington	Executive director for HR and organisational development	£7,932



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Claire Mercer, who has campaigned against smart motorways after her husband, Jason, was killed on the M1 where the hard shoulder had been turned into a live lane, said: "The executives' reliance on trains suggests they have worked out what most British motorists know - removing the hard shoulder make smart motorways death traps."

A Highways England spokesman said: "We have a large workforce located around the country. All our decisions are based on providing best value for money, including our travel. Our overriding policy is that our workforce should choose the most cost-effective and efficient method for each journey where possible. We publish details on company expenses within our Annual Report and Accounts."

He added all journeys are standard class unless there are exceptional circumstances.

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CHARLOTTE RUNCIE

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By Mike Wright

15 Sep 2020, 2:56pm

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