



Enough is enough say rail campaigners

On the 2nd of January, rail fares will rise above inflation for the tenth year in a row.

"Yet again rail fares go up with no perceptible improvement in service", said Bruce Williamson of campaigning group Railfuture. "Over the last ten years fares have increased by more than 50 percent, much more than people's incomes. Annual increases should be limited to no more than the rate of inflation, and that should be CPI not RPI, because that's the lower figure and pensions benefits and salaries are all linked to CPI."

"There is an average rise of RPI plus 1, but it's very average, it will vary from area to area and route to route. Some fares are going down a little bit, although you'll need a magnifying glass to find them. Most people's fares are going up anywhere between 4% and 11 or 12 percent. Meanwhile, petrol tax is frozen and overall the cost of driving remains static. How does this help persuade people out of their cars and ease congestion? Where is the green policy?"

"The train operating companies may say that they need the money for improvements, but how much fare income is actually spent on improvements? Fares income is not ring fenced for anything. If you look at how much money is being paid back to the government in the form of corporation tax, fuel tax (which airlines don't have to pay), industrial buildings tax and so forth, you have to ask whether raising fares above inflation is really necessary."

"Most passengers would consider it reasonable that there's a correlation between the level of fares and the service they get. Our fares are the highest in Europe - do we have the best rail service in Europe? Of course there are some heavily discounted advance tickets to be had, but people want to just turn up and go at a reasonable price when it suits them. Discounting advance tickets is a way of managing passengers to suit the needs of the railway. I think we should be managing the railway to suit the needs of the passengers".

Notes to editors

Railfuture is the UK's leading independent organisation campaigning for better rail services for both passengers and freight.

Railfuture's website can be found at: <http://www.railfuture.org.uk>

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