



Rail fares - more financial pain for commuters

23rd January 2013

On the 2nd January, rail fares will rise again by an average of 3.1%. "This comes after ten years of inflation-busting fare increases, meaning that our trains are easily the most expensive in Europe." said Bruce Williamson of the campaign group Railfuture . "there's no doubt that this will mean increasing financial pain for many ordinary commuters who are facing a cost of living crisis and are in some cases spending 25 percent of their income on rail fares."

In his autumn statement, the Chancellor George Osborne backed down from plans to increase rail fares by 1% above inflation, limiting them to just the RPI measure of inflation. "But this is just an average. Rail companies still have some flexibility, and we may see some fares going up by more than 5%, nearly double the inflation rate. Most people haven't seen their wages go up by this amount. The RPI measure of inflation is higher than CPI, but most pensions benefits and salaries are linked to CPI not RPI, so what does this mean in reality? It means that a larger chunk of peoples income will be spent on rail fares."

The Chancellor also froze petrol duty, for the second year running. "So the cost of driving remains static whilst the government seeks to price people off the trains, worsening congestion"

"There are still some bargain fares to be had, if you can fight your way through Britain's spectacularly complex fares system, which is unfair on people who don't know how to exploit the anomalies. So we're doing our bit by publishing an online guide to help travellers find the best fares". The guide can be found at www.railfuture.org.uk/rail+user+help

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: www.railfuture.org.uk

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