

Rt Hon Ruth Kelly MP
Secretary of State for Transport
Department for Transport
Great Minster House
76 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DR

1 July 2008

Dear Ms Kelly,

Campaign for Better Transport has heard from people around the country who say that high rail fares – particularly walk-on fares – stop them from using the train. We understand Government is planning to reduce its investment in the rail network from £6.3 billion in 2006/7 to £3 billion annually by 2014. This will lead to even higher walk-on fares, discouraging more people from travelling by train. We think this is misguided. Government should invest more in our railways, not less, and bring down the cost of walk-on fares.

1. High walk-on fares are making it harder for people to travel by train.

We have shown that walk-on fares can be seven times more expensive than advance fares, even at off peak times (see below). It is not always possible to buy advance tickets: circumstances (such as family or work demands) sometimes mean that people have to make a journey at short notice. When this happens, high walk-on rail fares discourage people from using the train, making it more likely that they will choose the car instead. Furthermore, there are only a limited number of cheap tickets available.

2. The Government is allowing rail fares to rise too much.

Overall, rail fares have risen by 6% in real terms since 1996 – this has mainly hit people buying walk-on tickets (unregulated ones in particular). We recognise the Government regulates saver tickets to some extent, but there are lots of unregulated walk-on tickets which are rising well above inflation. There are also various restrictions on when people can use off-peak tickets which can force them to buy more expensive, flexible tickets. High and increasing walk-on fares are the result of Government policy. In the rail White Paper released 1 year ago, the Government decided to increase capacity on the rail network, but to reduce its own investment in the network, and make passengers pay more. By 2014, passengers will be paying for 75% of the cost of running the railway, through higher fares.

3. Lower train fares will help the Government achieve its climate change objectives.

Rail is a low-carbon way to travel – we think you should make it easier for people to reduce their carbon emissions, not harder. Many people would like to be able to choose rail travel over the car or the plane, which would help Government efforts to reduce carbon emissions from transport. Given that the Government is considering how to meet its climate change objectives and planning transport policy beyond 2014, it makes sense to ensure that rail is affordable, both now and in the future.

I look forward to hearing from you. Yours sincerely,



Cat Hobbs, Public Transport Campaigner

cc: Dr Mike Mitchell, Director, National Networks; Bob Linnard, Director of Rail Policy; Stephen Clark, rail strategy; David Leam, Special Adviser

Walk-on rail fares are 4.7 times the price of advance fares

Walk-on fares

	TO	Cardiff	Glasgow	Bristol	Southampton	London	Norwich	Nottingham	Birmingham	Leeds	Newcastle Upon Tyne	Manchester
FROM												
Cardiff			£96.80	£8.80	£31.00	£56.00	£94.00	£52.70	£35.00	£76.00	£98.50	£48.30
Glasgow		£96.80		£106.00	£100.50	£101.90	£114.90	£83.50	£78.00	£74.80	£52.30	£48.50
Bristol		£8.80	£106.00		£23.00	£48.00	£85.00	£47.00	£34.00	£71.00	£98.50	£53.00
Southampton		£31.00	£100.50	£23.00		£28.00	£57.50	£57.50	£53.00	£77.00	£121.20	£71.00
London		£56.00	£101.90	£48.00	£28.00		£40.00	£49.70	£38.50	£78.20	£98.30	£61.40
Norwich		£94.00	£114.90	£85.00	£57.50	£40.00		£36.50	£48.50	£67.00	£97.00	£67.50
Nottingham		£52.70	£83.50	£47.00	£57.50	£49.70	£36.50		£17.30	£26.00	£57.50	£17.00
Birmingham		£35.00	£78.00	£34.00	£53.00	£38.50	£48.50	£17.30		£38.00	£69.00	£25.50
Leeds		£76.00	£74.80	£71.00	£77.00	£78.20	£67.00	£26.00	£38.00		£34.60	£14.10
Newcastle upon Tyne		£98.50	£52.30	£98.50	£121.20	£98.30	£97.00	£57.50	£69.00	£36.40		£45.80
Manchester		£48.30	£48.50	£53.00	£71.00	£61.40	£67.50	£17.00	£25.50	£14.10	£45.80	

Advance fares

	TO	Cardiff	Glasgow	Bristol	Southampton	London	Norwich	Nottingham	Birmingham	Leeds	Newcastle Upon Tyne	Manchester
FROM												
Cardiff			£22.50	£3.00	£7.00	£11.50	£21.00	£10.00	£6.50	£11.50*	£13.50*	£10.00*
Glasgow		£22.50		£27.00	£23.00	£18.50	£18.00	£23.50	£18.00	£11.50	£10.50	£12.50
Bristol		£3.00	£35.50		£5.00	£10.00	£21.00	£12.50	£6.50	£11.00	£13.50*	£10.50
Southampton		£7.00	£30.00	£5.00		(No advance ticket)	£19.00	£17.50	£9.00	£26.50	£26.50	£11.50
London		£11.50*	£15.70*	£10.00	(No advance ticket)		£6.00	£10.00	£14.00	£11.25*	£27.00	£13.00
Norwich		£21.00	£18.00	£21.00	£19.00	£6.00		£8.00*	£20.00	£11.00	£20.50	£21.00
Nottingham		£10.00	£15.50*	£12.50	£17.50	£10.00	£8.00		£4.00	£9.00	£14.00*	£8.00
Birmingham		£6.50	£31.50*	£6.50	£9.00	£14.00	£20.00	£4.00		£7.00	£11.00	£5.50
Leeds		£11.50*	£11.50	£11.00	£26.50	£11.25	£11.00	£9.00	£7.00		£10.50	£5.00
Newcastle upon Tyne		£13.50*	£7.50	£13.50	£18.50	£27.00	£26.00	£12.00*	£11.00	£10.50		£14.00
Manchester		£10.00	£15.50	£10.50	£11.50	£13.00	£21.00	£8.00	£5.50	£5.00	£14.00*	

Walk-on fares compared to advance fares

	TO	Cardiff	Glasgow	Bristol	Southampton	London	Norwich	Nottingham	Birmingham	Leeds	Newcastle Upon Tyne	Manchester	Average
FROM													
Cardiff			4.30	2.93	4.43	4.87	4.48	5.27	5.38	6.61	7.30	4.83	5.04
Glasgow		4.30		3.93	4.37	5.51	6.38	3.55	4.33	6.50	4.98	3.88	4.77
Bristol		2.93	2.99		4.60	4.80	4.05	3.76	5.23	6.45	7.30	5.05	4.72
Southampton		4.43	3.35	4.60		(No advance ticket)	3.03	3.29	5.89	2.91	4.57	6.17	4.25
London		4.87	6.49	4.80	(No advance ticket)		6.67	4.97	2.75	6.95	3.64	4.72	5.10
Norwich		4.48	6.38	4.05	3.03	6.67		4.56	2.43	6.09	4.73	3.21	4.78
Nottingham		5.27	5.39	3.76	3.29	4.97	4.56		4.33	2.89	4.11	2.13	4.07
Birmingham		5.38	2.48	5.23	5.89	2.75	2.50	4.33		5.43	6.27	4.64	4.49
Leeds		6.61	6.50	6.45	2.91	6.95	6.09	2.89	5.43		3.30	2.82	5.00
Newcastle upon Tyne		7.30	6.97	7.30	6.55	3.64	3.73	4.79	6.27	3.47		3.27	5.33
Manchester		4.83	3.13	5.05	6.17	4.72	3.21	2.13	4.64	2.82	3.27		4.00
TOTAL AVERAGE												4.69	

Notes: Research undertaken between Monday 9 June 2008 and Monday 16 June 2008. Rail fares were obtained using the National Rail website. The walk-on fares for an imagined same-day single journey were obtained by selecting the cheapest ticket of the two options provided: Saver/Cheap Day Ticket or Open Ticket. The advance fares were obtained by examining the price of advance tickets available for a single journey four weeks in the future. If there were no advance tickets available at four weeks, then a 12-week journey was imagined and a 12-week advance ticket price used; those fares are marked with an *. The list is of the biggest town or city in each of the nine regions of England, in Scotland and in Wales, according to the data collected by the Office of National Statistics for the 2001 Census.