

TRANSPORT FOCUS / RAIL DELIVERY GROUP “EASIER FARES” CONSULTATION

RESPONSE FROM SENRUG - THE SOUTH EAST NORTHUMBERLAND RAIL USER GROUP.

Note: Questions 1-16 are multiple-choice format only. The text in grey highlight was *not* submitted as part of this response but is included in this document to explain SENRUG's rationale to the responses it selected.

This response was submitted online at website:

<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/EasierFaresConsultation on 6th September 2018>



Easier Fares Consultation

britainrunsonrail.co.uk/fares

Mate Sarongs,
Tab Clear,
Inflatable Chairs,
Pagers, Y2K,
Fare Regulations,
Dolly the Sheep,
Vanilla Ice,
& Eldorado



Some things belong
in the 90s, but rail
fare regulations need
a refresh.

britainrunsonrail.co.uk/fares

Britain's fares system has failed to keep pace with the rise of modern technology or how people work and travel today, and with part time working and self-employment having increased by over a third in 22 years, the products we can offer don't always match that flexibility. Many passengers also find fares complicated and confusing with the latest study showing that only around a third of rail customers are very confident that they bought the best value ticket for their last journey.

Working together, the rail industry wants fares and ticketing regulation, which was originally set out in 1995, updated so we can offer our customers an easier to use range of fares and deliver improvements in ticket buying technology.

This survey, which is part of a joint consultation between the rail industry and passenger watchdog Transport Focus, is not about the industry advocating any specific changes at this stage, it is about getting your views on the type of system and structure you want to see. These will be used to develop proposals to government which, if accepted, we would need to work with them to deliver. The proposals will aim to be revenue neutral, which means that any changes to some fares would need to be balanced elsewhere – this consultation looks at some of the possible trade-offs involved in this.

As part of this consultation we will ask you for personal data including name, email address, partial postcode and optionally ethnicity and any disability that you have. Full details of what personal data we collect, how we process it and how we respect your privacy can be found in our Privacy Policy, available here: www.britainrunsonrail.co.uk/faresprivacypolicy.

Part 1: Fare Structures

We know that rail fares can sometimes be confusing to customers and we are interested in your views about how rail fares should be structured in the future. To what extent do you think each of the following options should be considered in re-structuring rail fares?

In answering these questions please assume that:

- *The overall average rail fare remains the same as now.*
- *Fares may be structured in a different way (so that some people pay more, some will pay less and others will pay the same as they do now).*
- *The consultation does not advocate any of the options you will be presented, but seeks your views on a range of scenarios. All the options presented are broad concepts which would require further consideration and refinement.*

1) Fares based on distance travelled (e.g. there is a cost per mile travelled). This may mean that some fares become higher than now and some become lower than now.

- Definitely consider
- Maybe consider ✓
- Do not consider
- Don't know/No opinion

The price per mile should decrease with the distance travelled, but it should never be cheaper to make a longer journey on the same route

2) Fares based on the level of service received (e.g. fares for routes with a lower quality service - such as slower, less regular and more basic trains - are lower than fares for routes with a higher quality service). This may mean that some fares become higher than now and some fares become lower than now.

- Definitely consider
- Maybe consider ✓
- Do not consider
- Don't know/No opinion



Loud noisy Pacers with no catering should be cheaper than nicer intercity trains

3) Fares where the cost is the same at all times of day and for all days of the week (e.g. fares are the same at busy (peak) and less busy (off-peak) times). This may mean that fares at off-peak times become higher than now and fares at peak times become lower than now. As a result trains during peak times may be busier than now.

- Definitely consider
- Maybe consider
- Do not consider ✓
- Don't know/No opinion

It wouldn't make sense for either operators or passengers to stop operators diverting passengers with flexibility on to less busy trains through cheaper ticket prices. This already happens with "Advance" fares, but it doesn't follow that traditional "off peak" trains (eg Sunday services) are not congested.

4) Fares based on time of booking (e.g. fares booked in advance of the day of travel are lower than fares available on the day of travel). This may mean that fares for customers booking on the day of travel become slightly higher than now.

- Definitely consider
- Maybe consider
- Do not consider ✓
- Don't know/No opinion

If a train still has spare capacity, it doesn't make sense not to offer a cheaper seat right up to the moment of travel, and thus discourage passengers from using congested services.

5) Fares based on the amount of flexibility required (e.g. fares for booking travel on a specific train service are lower). This may mean that customers wanting complete flexibility over when they travel pay slightly more than now.

- Definitely consider ✓
- Maybe consider
- Do not consider
- Don't know/No opinion

It is inevitable that a customer who cannot guarantee to use a non-congested train should be charged more than a customer who keeps the option of using congested services. However, there appears to be no valid reason for some Advance tickets to be non-exchangeable; the fee for exchanging should be much smaller, say £2 only, plus the difference for fare being booked.

6) Fares designed so that it is unnecessary to buy a 'split-ticket' in order to get the cheapest deal. At present, there are occasions when it is cheaper, when making a journey from A to C, to buy two or more separate tickets e.g. two tickets (A-B and B-C) may be cheaper



than one ticket (A-C). If this were changed those who currently buy split tickets may pay a little more whereas those who currently buy through tickets may pay a little less.

- Definitely consider ✓
- Maybe consider
- Do not consider
- Don't know/No opinion

Split ticketing makes the rail industry look stupid, and discriminates against the less knowledgeable customer in favour of the savvy one.

7) Fares based on encouraging travel to fill up empty seats (e.g. more last-minute deals to fill available seats). Even if this means different passengers paying different fares for the same journey.

- Definitely consider ✓
- Maybe consider
- Do not consider
- Don't know/No opinion

Seems very reasonable for operators to sell surplus capacity in this way

8) Fares based on loyalty to regular travellers (e.g. regular travellers can earn discounts for future purchases). Even if that means higher fares for individual journeys using single and return tickets.

- Definitely consider ✓
- Maybe consider
- Do not consider
- Don't know/No opinion

With flexible working patterns, the concept of the season ticket is outdated but should be upgraded to give similar discounts to passengers making repeat journeys even if not every day

9) Fares which provide savings for certain groups in society (e.g. lower fares for certain groups in society such as young people, older people, people with disabilities). Even if this means slightly higher fares for other passengers.

- Definitely consider
- Maybe consider ✓
- Do not consider
- Don't know/No opinion

We agree with modest discounts for certain groups, but not free travel, as this distorts the market and leads to unnecessary congestion.



10) Fares where both the outward and return journey fares are based on time of day travelled (e.g. return tickets replaced with easily combined one-way tickets, purchased together, enabling both outward and return journey fares to reflect time of travel, e.g. peak ticket for outward journey, off-peak ticket for return part of the journey).

- Definitely consider ✓
- Maybe consider
- Do not consider
- Don't know/No opinion

The “off-peak return” is outdated and should be replaced with off-peak singles half the price of the current off-peak return. There is no justification for the differential between off-peak day and period returns, and the fact that off-peak day returns are available for some journeys but not others gives rise to many of the anomalies currently solved by split ticketing

11) Reforming rail fares will involve balancing the needs of different customers and it is unlikely that a single approach will suit everyone. Which of the three options described below best reflects your preference for the range of rail fares available?

Option A: No discounted tickets, standard ticket price lower than now

- The cost of a single fare between any two stations will always cost the same amount.
- There will be no difference in price between travelling at busy times (peak) and less busy times (off-peak).
- **This may mean:**
 - There will be lower fares than now on busy services.
 - There will be higher fares than now on less busy services.
 - Trains are likely to be busier than now in the peak period.

Option B: Discounted fares same as now, standard ticket price same as now

- On some routes, the cost of a single fare between any two stations will vary, in the same way as now
- There will be cheaper tickets available at less busy times (off-peak) on routes where this is currently offered.
- There will be discounts for booking a ticket for specific trains in advance on routes where this is currently offered.
- **This may mean:**
 - Fares will be similar to now on busy services.
 - Fares will be similar to now on less busy services.
 - Trains are likely to carry the same number of passengers as now.

Option C: Greater discounts than now, standard ticket price higher than now

- On some routes, the cost of a single fare between any two stations will vary, in the same way as now.
- The difference in the cost of a single fare between any two stations at busy times (peak) and less busy times (off-peak) will be greater than it is now
- Discounts for booking specific trains in advance will be greater than now but fully flexible fares will cost more.



- **This may mean:**

- There will be higher fares than now on busy services.
- There will be lower fares than now on less busy services.
- Trains are likely to be less busy than now in the peak period.

Please select the option that best reflects your preference for the range of rail fares available.

- Option A
- Option B ✓
- Option C
- Don't know/No opinion

With the exemption that the current differential between an open and advance ticket, normally a factor of 10, is too great. Open tickets should be cheaper and advance tickets dearer. Prices for advance tickets should also be regulated.

12) On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is very necessary and 5 is not necessary at all, to what extent do you consider it necessary to reform the way rail fares are currently structured?

1. - Very necessary
2. - Quite necessary ✓
3. - Neither necessary nor unnecessary
4. - Not very necessary
5. - Not at all necessary
6. – Don't know / No opinion

The current system is full of anomalies and brings the rail industry into disrepute. But it must be replaced by something better, not worse.

Part 2: Buying a ticket

We are interested in your views about how passengers should be able to look for, buy and receive rail tickets. To what extent do you think each of the following options should be considered?

In answering these questions please assume that:

- *The range of rail fares is easier to use than it is at the moment and that the average rail fare remains the same.*
- *Some people pay more whilst some pay less.*
- *The options presented are broad concepts which would require further consideration and refinement.*

13) Should a ticket cost the same however you buy it? Passengers using e-tickets (for example tickets on mobile phones, smart travel cards, and on contactless bank cards) could pay slightly less for their travel to reflect the cost savings for the train company,

whilst those purchasing tickets at stations would pay slightly more.

Note: SENRUG has advised Transport Focus that it considers the wording of this question to be ambiguous. Some respondents might respond to the phrase "Should a ticket cost the same however you buy it?" whereas others have responded to the phrase "for example tickets ... could pay slightly less their travel" and give the opposite response. SENRUG's response of "Do not consider" is intended to convey that SENRUG believes tickets should cost the same regardless of how bought.

- Definitely consider
- Maybe consider
- Do not consider ✓
- Don't know/No opinion

This discriminates against the vulnerable and those that wish to pay in cash (or rail vouchers)

14) Passengers who make the same journey on a regular basis could have a smart or electronic ticket and pay for each journey that they make. Once the total cost of all journeys reaches a maximum amount they won't have to pay any more for the rest of the week, month or year. This is called a 'price cap'. The benefit of a 'price cap' is that passengers automatically get the best value fare for each individual journey, and only pay for the travel that they use.

- Definitely consider ✓
- Maybe consider
- Do not consider
- Don't know/No opinion

This is the technology solution needed to replace season tickets

15) Online accounts could be available which can be used for rail and other types of public transport e.g. bus, tram, underground and cycle hire. Account holders would be able to purchase, monitor, review and change travel arrangements online.

- Definitely consider ✓
- Maybe consider
- Do not consider
- Don't know/No opinion

Similar to London Oyster card. Allows flexibility between train and bus, ie can take the bus if train is cancelled or have missed the train.

16) On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is very necessary and 5 is not necessary at all, to what extent do you consider it necessary to reform the ways in which tickets can be purchased?



1. Very necessary
2. Quite necessary ✓
3. Neither necessary nor unnecessary
4. Not very necessary
5. Not at all necessary
6. Don't know / No opinion

The existing options seem sufficient. However, those wishing to purchase in person from a ticket office should not be discriminated against. Additionally, fast ticket machines on trains would overcome issues with passengers unable to collect tickets due to faulty machines, too long a queue at the machine, or passengers starting their journeys from stations without a machine.

Part 3: Any other thoughts

We would like you to have the opportunity to make any other comments about the issues you have considered in the previous questions or anything else you would like to say about fare structure reform. Please use the appropriate boxes provided below.

17) Comments on the factors which you think should influence rail fare structures e.g. peak/off-peak fares; advance fares, or anything else.

The following information is a summary of SENRUG's "Simpler Fares" campaign, see <http://www.senrug.co.uk/Simpler-Fares.php>.

SENRUG believes inter-city fares should be simplified, with restriction conditions easier to understand, and the price of tickets purchased "on the day" for lightly used trains significantly reduced.

Why?

SENRUG believes the current fares system is much too complicated. Many passengers are put off from travelling by train because fares are perceived to be significantly higher than the actual cost of Advance Tickets booked well in advance.

Whilst SENRUG understands Train Companies will want to offer cheaper fares for less busy trains, which is a valuable means of managing congestion, SENRUG does not accept such tickets must be purchased in advance. SENRUG believes this is unfair to those obliged to travel at late notice eg to visit a sick relative, and is like a tax on misery.

SENRUG also believes a simpler, more transparent fares system will make train travel more attractive and enable Train Companies to avoid the negative perceptions many passengers now have of low cost airlines.

How?

SENRUG recommends that for any rail journey, there should be 3, and only 3 fares for each class of travel. SENRUG proposes these should be called Red, Amber and Green, with Red



being the cheapest but severely restricted tickets, Amber being mid-price range but with some restrictions, and Green being fully flexible but more expensive tickets.

Type of Ticket	Restriction
RED	BOOKED TRAIN ONLY
AMBER	LIMITED RANGE OF TRAINS, LIMITED OPERATORS, LIMITED RANGE OF DATES
GREEN	ANY TRAIN, ANY OPERATOR, ANY DATE*

To support the simplification of the fares system outlined above, we believe a number of fare guarantees should also be introduced. If a rail company breaks one of these guarantees then they should be obliged to issue an instant cash refund of the fare paid to the customer.

Guarantee 1	All tickets to be sold as singles, which should be 50% of the return fare
Guarantee 2	It should never be cheaper to buy 2 tickets for a journey on a single train (eg Morpeth to York)
Guarantee 3	It should never be cheaper to buy a ticket for beyond the station you are travelling to and get off at an earlier stop
Guarantee 4	Maximum of 3 fares only per class for any journey (RED, AMBER, GREEN)
Guarantee 5	Railcard discounts must be available on all fares subject only to minimum ticket price

The Train Operators could either introduce such a system voluntarily working through an umbrella organisation such as RDG (Rail Delivery Group), or the Department for Transport could specify the system and require Train Companies to comply with it as part of their franchise commitment.

End of extract from www.senrug.co.uk

Guarantee 1 would benefit both customers and the industry in cases where a passenger needs the flexibility to travel in a peak train in one direction but is willing to restrict themselves to off-peak in the other direction. As many off-peak tickets are sold as returns only, when a single is available, it is typically 90 - 95% of the return price, meaning such customers must currently buy an anytime return ticket, and may then take a congested peak hour train in one direction because they have paid for it, whereas they would have been happy in an off-peak train had a ticket been offered at a competitive price.



Additionally, single open tickets should have the same validity as the return portion of a return ticket, eg any day within 1 month of the start day of the ticket

Furthermore, SENRUG has become aware of instances where some Train Companies' websites offer a restricted "Advance" fare for a journey at a higher price than an off-peak open ticket (with less restrictions and a choice of trains) available on the same train. SENRUG believes this is completely unacceptable and an IT solution should be found to restrict the offer of an Advance fare when an open ticket is cheaper.

18) Comments on the factors which you think should influence how tickets are purchased
e.g. online purchase, electronic ticketing, or anything else.

A range of face-to-face, online and electronic ticketing should be retained. Removal of face-to-face sales discriminates against non-online customers and customers with social skills and learning difficulties.

Web based sales channels should be enhanced to

- a) give additional options, such as the ability to wait longer at intermediate connecting stations and then take a cheaper train (currently they default to taking the next available train from the connecting station).
- b) advise the day on which the cheapest tickets are available
- c) make it easier to find cross country rather than "via London" journeys (very few customers know how to use the filters)
- d) sell tickets to "London CIV" or "London International" for onward Eurostar connections (since Eurostar themselves do not offer through tickets to the full range of UK stations). Currently, only non-TOC retailers sell these.

19) Any other comments.

Delay Repay should be automatic and within 48 hours where a ticket was bought for a specific train only which is then delayed beyond the compensation threshold

There should be clearer, industry wide standards on "advice not to travel" situations which cover both open and advance tickets, tickets for journeys with more than one operator, and onward or return tickets for what is demonstrably the same journey, even if the tickets were bought as singles or bought separately. All operators should be obliged to adhere to these guidelines if declaring an "advice not to travel" situation.

About you

We would like to know a little more about you to help us understand how people's views differ. Please help us by answering the following questions.

20) Are you responding to this consultation as an individual or on behalf of an organisation?

(Please select one)

- As an individual (Please continue)
- On behalf of an organisation (Please skip to page 12)

In the original consultation document, page 12 starts with question 31. Therefore, SENRUG did not submit a response to questions 21 to 30, which are designed for responses from individuals

We would like to know about your rail journeys and the kinds of tickets you have used. This information will be used to help us understand the difference in opinions between different types of rail users.

21) In the last 12 months, on average, how often have you travelled by train in England, Scotland or Wales? (Please select one)

- At least 5 times a week
- 3-4 times a week
- 1-2 times a week
- Less than once a week but at least once a month
- Less than once a month, but at least twice a year
- Less than twice a year, but at least once a year
- I haven't made a train journey in the last 12 months

22) In the last 12 months, what was the main reason for your train travel in England, Scotland or Wales? (Please select main reason only)

- Commuting journeys (journeys to/from work or education)
- Business journeys (journeys made for business on behalf of your employer)
- Leisure journeys
- I haven't made a train journey in the last 12 months

23) Which of the following rail services have you used in the last 12 months? (Please select all that apply)

- Intercity services – faster services covering longer distances
- Regional services – local or stopping trains between towns and cities
- Suburban and city services
- Don't know
- I haven't made a train journey in the last 12 months

24) Which of the following ticket types have you purchased in the last 12 months for train journeys in England, Scotland or Wales? (Please select all that apply)

- Annual season ticket
- Monthly / Weekly season tickets



- Anytime ticket / Anytime Day Travelcard (valid for travel at any time on any day)
- Off -Peak ticket / Super Off-Peak ticket / Off-Peak Travelcard / Weekender
- Advance ticket (valid for travel on one specific timed train only)
- Don't know
- I haven't made a train journey in the last 12 months
- Other (please specify)

25) Which of the following have you used for rail travel? (Please select all that apply)

- Smartcard (e.g. Oyster in London)
- Contactless bank card (to travel – rather than to purchase paper ticket)
- Mobile phone (with ticket loaded onto the phone)
- None of the above

26) Please provide the following information. Your name and email address are important to help ensure that all responses to the consultation are unique. They will not be used for any other purpose. The first part of your postcode will help us understand the differences in opinions between people living in different regions.

Your full name

Email address

(UK residents only) **The first part of your postcode e.g. D12, SW19**

We would like to know a bit about you so that we can analyse the findings by passenger types and ensure that any changes to rail fare structures or ticketing do not disadvantage any groups in society.

27) Which of the following age groups are you in? (Please select one)

- 16 -18
- 19 -25
- 26 -34
- 35 -44
- 45 -54
- 55 -59
- 60 -64
- 65 -69
- 70 -80
- 81+
- Prefer not to say



28) Are you: (please select one)

- Male
- Female
- Other
- Prefer not to say

29) To which of the following groups do you belong? (Please select one)

- Mixed/multiple ethnic groups
- White
- Asian or Asian British
- Black, African/Caribbean or Black British
- Chinese
- Arab
- Don't know
- Prefer not to say
- Other (please specify):

30) Are you affected by any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more? (Please select all that apply)

- No: None
- Yes: Sensory (e.g. vision, hearing)
- Yes: Cognitive (e.g. learning, social, behaviour, memory)
- Yes: Mental Health
- Yes: Physical (e.g. mobility, stamina, breathing, fatigue, dexterity)
- Don't know
- Prefer not to say
- Other (please specify):

Please skip to page 14 for details of how to return your completed response form.

About your organisation

We would like to know a bit about the organisation which you are representing. This information will be used to help us understand any differences in opinions between different types of organisations.

31) Which of the following options best describes the category of your organisation? (Please select the most applicable option)



- Small business (up to 49 staff)
- Medium sized business (50 -249 staff)
- Large business (150+ staff)
- Local government
- Central government
- Other public sector
- Third sector / voluntary / charity organisation
- Action / Interest group
- Elected representative (MP, councillor, MEP)
- Academia
- Other (please specify):

32) Does your organisation work within or for the rail industry?

- Yes
- No

33) Please provide the following information. Your name and email address are important to help ensure that all responses to the consultation are unique. They will not be used for any other purpose. The first part of your organisation's postcode will help us understand the differences in opinions between organisations based in different regions.

Your full name

Dennis Fancett

Email address

chair@senrug.co.uk

The name of your organisation

SENRUG – The South East Northumberland Rail User Group

(UK based organisations only) **The first part of your organisation's postcode e.g. D12, SW19**

NE61

Postcode for Morpeth station

34) If you are willing to be contacted to be invited to a workshop to discuss these issues further, please enter your preferred email address below.

chair@senrug.co.uk

Thank you

Thank you for responding to the consultation.

An easier-to-use range of fares is key to delivering the industry's long-term plan, specifically our commitment to increase customer satisfaction.

Please post your completed response form back to the Freepost Address:

'Freepost EASIER FARES'

v2