

We can't go on like this: commuters balk at huge rise in fares



Some fares will go up by 9.2 per cent Rex Features

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Campaigners are calling for an end to the era of above-inflation fare rises as rail passengers face increases of as much as 9 per cent in the cost of some tickets from Wednesday.

Some station car park charges will also rise by as much as 25 per cent, while passengers on the London Underground face rises of 7 per cent.

The main passenger watchdog and transport campaigners say that the increases are “unacceptable” and claim that many commuters cannot afford to pay more to travel to work.

Passengers travelling from Norwich to London are among those whose tickets are set to rise by almost 10 per cent this week. An anytime return fare between London and Norwich on Greater Anglia will rise by 9.2 per cent to £107.70 from Wednesday.

For regular commuters to the capital, some of the biggest increases in season ticket prices will be shouldered by passengers travelling on the Southeastern railway from

Kent. An annual season ticket from Deal to London will rise by 4.8 per cent to £4,864.

Travellers in other parts of the country also face substantial fare rises. A Llanelli to Swansea pass will rise 5.4 per cent to £624.

Train companies are raising regulated fares by an average 4.2 per cent under a formula set by the Government, which wants to shift a greater share of the burden of paying for the railway on to passengers.

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Some tickets can rise by up to 0.2 per cent, so long as other fares are cut. Greater Anglia, for instance, has cut the cost of commuting between Shenfield and Central London by 0.6 per cent to £2,704. Tickets are also set for above-inflation rises in 2014, but campaigners hope that a government fares review, due in the summer, will finally signal an end to sharp price rises.

“We can’t go on like this, with arbitrary and inexplicable fares rises,” Anthony Smith, the chief executive of Passenger Focus, said.

“A Canterbury passenger might think: ‘Why have we gone up so much more than others?’ Really we are left to think they are putting fares up because they can. In a monopoly industry I do not think that is how we should continue to see pricing done.”

Stephen Joseph, the chief executive of the Campaign for Better Transport, said: “Government needs to set much clearer rules for fares rises so that back-door rises do not happen.

“Large scale, above-inflation fares rises are not acceptable. We look forward to the Government’s fares review taking much stronger action to prevent this happening in the future. We want ministers to set a date for ending above-inflation fares rises.”

Mr Joseph added that if such a deadline was not set by the next general election, the Government would suffer because many of the rises affected marginal seats needed to form a government.

The Association of Train Operating Companies said that while some tickets would rise sharply this week, the average increase for all fares would be 3.9 per cent. This is still far higher than the latest retail prices inflation figure of 3 per cent.

Michael Roberts, the ATOC chief executive, said: “We know nobody likes paying more for their journey, especially to go to work. Train companies will continue working with the rest of the industry to become more cost efficient, helping to take the pressure off future fare rises.”

Commuters in the capital also face sharply higher transport costs. Average Tube, Overground, DLR and bus fares in London will rise by 4.2 per cent.

However, passengers travelling in Zones 2-6 will have to pay 7.1 per cent more outside peak hours at £1.50.

A single Zone 1 pay-as-you-go fare will rise by 10p, or 5 per cent, to £2.10.

Bus fares will rise by 5p to £1.40 for passengers using an Oyster card and by 10p to £2.40 in cash.

However, some cyclists face the biggest increases as the Mayor of London is doubling the cost of using the Barclays cycle hire scheme to £2 a day. Weekly and annual charges will also double to £10 and £90, respectively.

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Tom Bloomfield

4 days ago

Or, in English "baulk".

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PJS

4 days ago

The ones who will be hardest hit are the low-paid who cannot afford accommodation in the cities thanks to rent-capping - joined up, growth plan 93 (failed).....

[Recommend](#) [Reply](#)

Alan Thorpe

4 days ago

Look at this another way. The highest price quoted here is just over £4800 for Canterbury to London. This allows the ticket holder to travel every day and if needed to make more than one return journey a day. But assuming it is used only for work and assuming a low figure of only working 200 days a year then the cost of the return trip is £24 or less. Just how much do they think they should pay for this journey? It seems very reasonable to me compared to the price of everything else.

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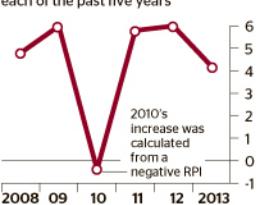
Lee Hawthorn

4 days ago

Why do people quote averages when trying to defend an increase? The average is meaningless for most people who pay more or less than the average. A weighted average (using expected passenger numbers) would be more interesting

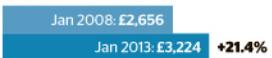
HEAD OF INFLATION

Average regulated fares have risen by a point more than retail price inflation in each of the past five years



STANDARD CLASS ANNUAL SEASON TICKETS

Guildford to London
on South West Trains



Hove to London
on Southern



Canterbury to London
on Southeastern



Colchester to London
on Greater Anglia



Gloucester to Birmingham
on Cross Country



Morpeth to Newcastle
on Northern



BREAKDOWN OF PUMP PRICE

Petrol - 133.19p a litre (60.2% tax)



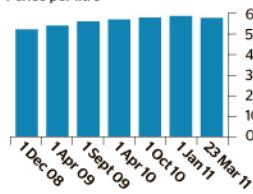
TRAIN PASSENGER JOURNEYS

number of journeys in billions



FUEL DUTY CHANGES

Pence per litre



COMPREHENSIVE CAR INSURANCE

93% increase since 2008



BUS TRAVEL

Bus trips in billions



33%

increase in average bus fares in England between March 2007 and June 2012

40%

Increase in metropolitan areas

31% Increase in London

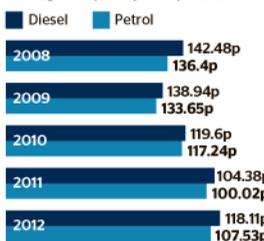
28% Increase in non-metropolitan areas

18%

Increase in RPI over that period

CAR TRAVEL

Average fuel price, pence per litre



TREASURY FUEL DUTY RECEIPTS



CAR JOURNEYS PER DRIVER

1,000s

