

## 2014 experiment for part-time season tickets

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Part-time season tickets could be introduced next year as part of plans to trial new, flexible ticketing products.

Rail minister Norman Baker announced this week that the government will invest in a trial of cut price season tickets which will be valid for a limited number of days of the week and will complement the £45m South East Flexible Ticketing programme (TB 9164).

It is not clear exactly how the pilot scheme will work but it is likely to use smart ticketing technology and offer discounted rates for those who travel in the less busy 'shoulder peaks' as well as benefiting those who work part-time.

The Department for Transport will run a competition next year to select a train operator to run the trial on a busy commuter route into London so that it can assess the benefits.

Norman Baker said: "Part-time workers and those who sometimes work from home have long complained they have to pay the full price for season tickets even though they do not get the full benefit. Under this pilot we will look at how we can give them a better deal and also reward those commuters who avoid the busiest rush hour services.

"Our vision is for a ticketing system that gives passengers what they need, when they need it, but which over time costs less not more. This will allow us to focus our resources on improving train services and ending the era of above inflation fare rises."

Stephen Joseph, Chief Executive of the Campaign for Better Transport, responded: "This announcement is good news for thousands of part-time workers who rely on the train to get to work and currently have no option but to pay full fare. Introducing part-time season tickets will help provide the flexibility and affordability workers want and the economy needs. We need to quickly learn the lessons from these trials and move to ensuring that part-time season tickets are available on all lines."

The DfT has been looking at a range of options to modernise fares as part of its fares and ticketing review which it says will be published shortly.

[News index](#) [Front page](#)