

Some Rail fares from Edinburgh will be cheaper next month



No it is not an April Fool prank. It is really true. We all know that rail fares are decidedly complex, but the fact is that some fares from Edinburgh are to go down next month following a review by Scotrail.

Rail fares for more than a quarter of a million journeys a year are being cut after Transport Scotland and ScotRail worked together to tackle decades-old fare 'anomalies'. The new pricing structure will get rid of more than 1,500 of these inconsistencies, ensuring customers will find it much easier to access the cheapest fare for their journey.

This will reduce split-ticketing and means it will almost always be cheaper for a customer to buy one end-to-end ticket rather than two separate tickets for the same journey.

And, thanks to £2.28m input from the Scottish Government, fares will be reduced up to as much as 41 per cent on certain routes from 19 May 2013. As a general rule of thumb, end to end fares will be at least 50p less than the cheapest 'two ticket' option.

Here are some of the fares affected:-

Edinburgh-Aberdeen

Anytime return: Was £80.80. From 19 May £59.50.

Off-peak return: Was £56.50. From 19 May £51.60.

Edinburgh-Inverness

Anytime return: Was £63.60. From 19 May £57.00

Off-peak return: Was £58.10. From 19 May £52.10

Edinburgh-Dundee

Anytime single: Was £23.60. From 19 May £16.80

Edinburgh-Glasgow

Anytime single: Was £13.40. From 19 May £12.80

Transport Minister Keith Brown said:- “We have always been clear on our commitment to getting more people on Scotland’s trains and a major factor in that has been ensuring affordable and easily understood fare structures.

“It became apparent that, due to historic pricing regimes in the franchise specification agreed by the previous administration in 2004, passengers had to navigate their way through a fares database to find the best deal.

“That’s not what we want. We want a fares system which is quick and easy to use and which provides the cheapest fare possible. And that is what we and ScotRail are now delivering.”

Today’s announcement marks the latest in a series of moves by the Scottish Government to keep fares as low as possible now, as well as ensuring that in the next franchise peak fares can’t rise above inflation and off peak tickets rise by even less to bring an end to the incessant cycle of inflation-busting fares rises and encourage greater rail use in the off-peak.

Transport Minister Keith Brown also announced in December that he had negotiated a cap with FirstScotrail so peak fares in 2014 and 2015 will not go up by any more than inflation and off peak fares could be frozen if inflation stays below 3.5 per cent.

Steve Montgomery, managing director of ScotRail said:-“This is

another example of us putting the customer first , by tackling the fare inconsistencies that are most prevalent in Scotland. Transport Scotland's welcome support means we have accelerated our efforts in this area, providing easier access to best value rail fares."

Commenting, SNP MSP Gordon MacDonald, who sits on the Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee, said:

"Today's announcement will be hugely welcome news, particularly for those passengers who will see their fares fall by as much as 41% – it means cheaper fares across some 275,000 rail journeys.

"Eliminating the loopholes and inconsistencies that have been part of the hugely complicated rail fare system for decades – and was in the franchise specification agreed by the previous Labour/Lib Dem Executive – is a very positive step forward that will save money for rail users across Scotland.

"Today's announcement ends the unfair fares legacy of the previous Labour/Lib Dem Scottish Executive.

"This new system will ensure that passengers can easily get the best fare available, and help to encourage more people to travel by rail.

"It is excellent news, and underlines the SNP Government's commitment to ensuring rail passengers get the best deal possible."