

Off-peak rail fares stand still



Fares changes are now in effect for passengers making advance bookings for UK rail journeys in 2015. What do you think? Is rail travel your preferred option? It always seems to us that the rail fare to London is far in excess of the air fare (even when you take the cost of transfers at either end).

Transport Scotland explain that ScotRail's off-peak tickets – used for 40% of journeys on its services – remain frozen at the 2013 level while peak fares increases are capped to increase in line with inflation.

Newly appointed Transport Minister Derek Mackay said:

“Scotland's railways are offering an ever more attractive travel option and, alongside the Scottish Government's £5billion package of investment over the next four years. This will help us see a continuation of the shift from road to rail which has resulted in 86 million passengers travelling on ScotRail services in the past year alone.

“The work being done between the Scottish Government and First ScotRail to bear down on fares will draw even more people out their cars and onto trains. We have already negotiated a cap on peak fares in 2014 and 2015 to ensure they do not rise beyond inflation levels; this is lower than fares increases across the border. In addition, off-peak fares are being frozen at 2013 levels for as long as inflation stays below 3.5%.

“The next ScotRail franchise will bear down even further on

rail costs for passengers, ensuring fares remain below inflation. It will also see regulated off-peak fares restricted to 1% below inflation from 2016. This will offer real benefits to passengers across the Scottish rail network by spreading demand throughout the day which, in turn, will increase efficiency.”

The 2.5% inflationary rise will apply only to peak time fares.

For example:

- a Glasgow-Edinburgh anytime return ticket will rise by 60p, from £22.50 to £23.10
- a Glasgow-Stirling anytime return ticket will rise by 30p, from £12.60 to £12.90.

Details of the new franchise which begins on 1 April 2015.

What do you think? Are these fares just too high? Are you looking forward to the new franchisee taking over?