

Peak rail fares scrapped for good

In the programme for government announced at Holyrood on Tuesday the scrapping of peak rail fares is one which stands out and which has been welcomed by most other political parties.

The Scottish Greens co-leader, Lorna Slater, said in response to the First Minister in the chamber: “I am delighted that the Government has finally committed to the Scottish Green policy of ending peak rail fares for good.

“Earlier this year, they said they wouldn’t do it. They even voted against Green calls to do it. We’ve finally got there.

“More brave decisions are needed to make all public transport cheaper.

“The Scottish Government agreed to Green proposals for a £2 bus cap, only as a local pilot from January 2026, but people all across Scotland need cheaper buses now.

“Will the First Minister avoid the hesitation he showed over peak rail fares, get on with delivering another great Green idea: capping the price of bus fares in Scotland for good?”

Green MSP, Mark Ruskell, is the party’s transport spokesperson. He said: “This is a very welcome announcement and is a tribute to the work of green campaigners, trade unions and the many people who have urged the SNP to finally

end peak fares for good.

“The 12 month pilot that the Scottish Greens secured showed a huge uplift in passenger numbers while saving some rail users hundreds of pounds.

“It is regrettable that the SNP dropped the policy, and it is to their credit that they have listened and brought it back.

“Peak rail fares have always been an unfair tax on workers, students and regular travelers. They penalise people who often have no say on when and where they need to travel.

“This is an important step forward and a huge win for commuters and our climate. If we are to build a people’s railway fit for the future then it must be affordable, accessible and available when people need it.”

TSSA’s Scottish Organiser, Gary Kelly, said: “The scrapping of peak time ScotRail fares is great news for passengers, something TSSA has campaigned for, and like many things on ScotRail long overdue.

“Commuters have been paying peak fare rates since last September and they’ll still be paying them for another four months.

“The Scottish government’s own figures from their pilot showed that cancelling peak rail fares led to more people ditching the cars to take the train. They should never have cancelled the pilot at all.

“Commuters aren’t stupid. If it’s cheaper to take the train than the car that’s what they’ll do. Getting people out of the cars will mean less air pollution, and fewer greenhouse gas emissions. It may be overdue, but this is good news.”

Other key announcements include:

- 100,000 enhanced service GP appointments by March 2026 for key risk factors including high blood pressure, high cholesterol, high blood sugar, obesity and smoking as well as more than 150,000 extra appointments and procedures, including surgeries and diagnostic tests, and target cancer pathways to tackle backlogs against the 62-day referral to treatment standard
- The cost-of-living guarantee which includes ongoing free prescriptions, eye exams, bus travel for 2.3 million people, free tuition for students and more than £6,000 in early learning and childcare support for each eligible child
- ScotRail peak rail fares abolished and the general alcohol ban on ScotRail trains removed and replaced with time and location restrictions
- Winter fuel payments for pensioners restored
- A new Six Point Export Plan, with a focus on actions to unlock target markets, and showcase Scotland to global buyers
- A national regeneration fund that will support at least 26 projects to renew and restore communities, with a focus on delivering more local jobs
- More rights and stronger protections for tenants, helping deliver more than 8,000 affordable homes, including for social and mid-market rent, and removing barriers on stalled building sites with the potential to deliver up to 20,000 new homes



ScotRail