

Ticketing Overhaul Launched to Save Small Business Rail Travellers Millions

News Article



A government-backed ticketing overhaul of the UK's rail fair system could save small business owners as much as £40m a year.

New trials, expected to start in May 2017, will introduce new single ticket-led pricing designed to make it easier to buy the cheapest rail tickets and get rid of overpriced routes.

It will be made clear to rail passengers whether it is cheaper to buy two single tickets or a return, and the ticketing overhaul will see new investment in automatic ticket-vending machines at stations, making them more user-friendly.

Fairs for some longer connecting UK journeys will be removed from rail ticketing systems entirely, in efforts to negate the need for split ticketing, saving passengers money.

The changes are expected to help rail passengers travelling longer distances. According to new research from rail travel booking platform ticketclever.com, passengers could potentially save

as much as £40m a year on 95m UK rail journeys over an hour long.

This follows a report from a transport select committee of MPs in October 2016 which revealed the “unfairness, complexity and lack of transparency” in the country’s rail ticketing system – the result of a complicated web of Government regulation, built up over decades.

Commenting on the planned trials, director of customer experience at the Rail Delivery Group, Jacqueline Starr, said in a statement: “Working with government, we are determined to overhaul the system to cut out red tape, jargon and complication to make it easier for customers to buy fares they can trust.”



Rail operators have claimed they have been held back from offering passengers more flexible ticketing due to the rules governing rail fares.

“There are more than 16m different train fares, many of which nobody has ever bought,” added Starr. “This makes it difficult to give passengers the right, simple options on ticket machines.”

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Trials due to start in May will begin initially on selected cross-country routes, with both Virgin Trains' east and west coast lines, and the East Midlands, likely to be effected.

Welcoming the initiative, rail minister Paul Maynard said: "We want a more modern and passenger-focused fares and ticketing system which takes advantage of all the benefits of new technology."

"The ticket-buying experience is all too often complicated and hard to navigate. Rail passengers must be able to trust that they are getting the best possible deal every time they travel."

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