



# Revenue protection priorities to improve passenger experience

January 2025

The issues set out below will be the focus of Transport Focus ongoing work with rail organisations and governing bodies on revenue protection as we seek to achieve an environment in which passengers can travel with confidence.

### **Introduction of a 'Yellow Card' system'**

- Introduce a system that can be used on the first occasion a passenger is identified to have an incorrect ticket for the journey they are making.
- Details of the discrepancy and explanation offered should be recorded and be available to check against on future occasions.
- This approach is already employed and deemed useful by some operators but would be most effective if the system was operated nationally with information accessible by all operators.

### **Removal of the route to prosecution from the Railway Byelaws**

- Criminal prosecutions without proof of intent to evade offends natural justice.
- Objections to use of 'strict liability' is a long-standing Transport Focus policy position and documented in Ticket to Ride<sup>1</sup> publications.
- Penalty Fares and Unpaid Fare Notices/and prosecutions under the Regulation of the Railways Act 1889 remain effective options to address evaders.

### **Introduction of a Railcard Database**

- A central digital record of all railcards issued that can be accessed on demand will ensure that passengers' eligibility for the relevant discount can speedily and easily be checked, even if they have forgotten or are unable to access proof when asked.
- Automatic reminders as railcards reach expiry would also be useful to help encourage renewal.

### **Agreement that there will be no penalties in no net loss to industry situations**

- Natural justice dictates that applying penalties is inappropriate when a simple technical error on purchase is made but without any loss of revenue to the industry.

### **Review of guidance underpinning Penalty Fares to assess if fit for purpose**

- The bodies assessing appeals should be audited on a regular basis to check compliance with the relevant criteria, and the results of this made public.

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<sup>1</sup> *Ticket to Ride* (2012) and *Ticket to Ride – an update* (2015)

- This is not to imply any wrongdoing on their part but simply to promote greater accountability and public confidence in the system.
- Review the appeal process (for example awareness of the right to appeal, signposting on how to appeal, and the quality of replies).<sup>2</sup>

### **Provision of transparent data about Penalty Fares/Unpaid Fare Notices/Byelaw and Regulation of the Railways Act Prosecutions**

- Data about numbers of cases, appeals, outcome of appeals can demonstrate the industry has 'nothing to hide' and how effective the application of penalties and discretion are in practice.
- It is also important to make sure that discretion is being applied consistently and not being used to the benefit or disadvantage of particular individuals or groups of passengers.

### **Reform of railway processes to achieve greater fairness for passengers**

- Industry to establish and follow clear hierarchy of actions for Revenue Protection – and back this up with improved training for front-line staff.

### **Increased measures to collect all fares due**

- Demonstrate to passengers that the industry cares about and collects its revenue and ensure that people know they will be asked to produce a valid ticket at the start, end, and during their journey.
- Install more gate-lines and ensure these are in operation throughout the service day.
- Increase ticket checks at stations and on trains.

### **Establishing a simpler fares and ticketing system and improvements to clarity of messaging about ticket eligibility and restrictions**

- Fares and ticketing reform should be expedited to make it easier for passengers to easily choose the correct ticket for their journey.
- Railcards should be issued with a physical or digital ready reference note highlighting times of eligibility, minimum ticket price and any other significant restrictions. Key facts should not be buried in small print Terms and Conditions.

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<sup>2</sup> [Penalty Fares - how passengers are treated when they appeal - Transport Focus, 2020](#)

## Contact Transport Focus

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