



Rail campaigners claim victory over inflation-busting fare rises

Rail campaigners are claiming victory in a battle to stop inflation-busting fare rises for rail travellers. The Conservatives are expected to announce this week that they are suspending rail fare increases of 3% above inflation. Bruce Williamson from the campaign group Railfuture said "we've been fighting inflation-busting fare increases ever since they were first announced, so we're delighted that the government has seen sense. It is unfair that rail passengers feel pain when motorists are not having to face such increases in fuel costs"

Last June, the Chancellor backed down on plans to increase fuel duty by more than inflation. Bruce Williamson thinks the timing of this announcement is critical: "it's not just the fact that the Conservatives want some good news during their conference, it's the fact that train tickets can be bought up to 12 weeks in advance, so any changes planned for January 1st have to be made this week."

"It claimed to be the greenest ever, so the government can't credibly put up rail fares and discourage passengers from using one of the greenest forms of transport. We already have the highest rail fares in Europe, and pricing people off the trains is in no one's interest. Investing in rail and encouraging people to go by train is the only credible way to get the country moving again"

He added a word of caution: "The proposed fare cap will probably be an overall figure. If rail companies are allowed some flexibility over pricing, as they have been in previous years, there is still the possibility that some fares could rise well above inflation"

Notes to editors:

Railfuture is the UK's leading independent organisation campaigning for better rail services for both passengers and freight.

Railfuture's website can be found at: <http://www.railfuture.org.uk>

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