

TravelWatch NORTHWEST

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Winner of CILT award for best practice in passenger transport (2013)

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Passenger Services
 Department for Transport
 Great Minster House
 33 Horseferry Road
 London
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18th April 2019

Dear Passenger Services Team,

Pay-as-you-go on rail Consultation

1. Introduction

1.1 TravelWatch NorthWest (TWNW) is an independent Community Interest Company representing the interests of public transport users throughout North West England. We welcome the opportunity to respond to this request.

Question 1 Do you think that the price you pay to travel by rail should relate more closely to the amount that you travel?

Yes - there should be some form of discounting for regular travellers as there is for season ticket holders currently.

Questions 2/3 Do you think that there should be more options for people who work part-time?

In principle yes as more people are doing this. However, the definition of part time needs consideration. For instance, travelling on say three days a week may be a common example but when it comes to less frequent journeys further thought is needed. One possibility could be to give a discount on either a minimum number of journeys a month and/or a minimum mileage travelled per month.

Questions 4/5 Do you agree with the proposals as to how a PAYG travel area would work?

This consultation is primarily focussed on extending the PAYG travel area in London and the South East and any extension of the principle to other regions of the country such as the North West would require detailed work on how it

could be structured in a complex multi urban hub region. It should embrace all transport modes in the selected regions and offer good discounts on travel as in the London scheme. A big obstacle is the many different fare scales and the divergent commercial strategies of PTEs, commercial bus companies, metro and tram services and train operating companies. Oyster works in London because TfL controls the scheme and also controls the Underground, DLR, overground and buses. This is not currently the case in the North West. Certainly, in the major PTE areas such as Liverpool and Manchester (which would be the logical starting point for PAYG in our region) PAYG must include buses and other modes of transport to be effective, e.g. Manchester Metrolink.

Questions 6/7 Which smart ticketing technology, or technologies, would you prefer to use? (the current options are contactless bank card, dedicated smartcards for transport and the Oyster card)

Technology is changing all the time and certainly the contactless bank card is a key player.

Questions 8/9 Do you agree with these principles for deciding which stations a PAYG scheme could cover?

Again, this is London and the South East, but we agree about the need for consistency and passenger benefits.

Questions 10/11/12/13/14/15/16/17.

Whilst not commenting on the detail applicable to the South East, we support the principle of extending the PAYG area as widely as possible. Reference is made to Transport for the North's £150m multimodal PAYG scheme and we hope to have the opportunity to comment on that in due course.

Questions 18/19/20 Do you think passengers should be able to mix-and-match peak and off-peak fares? Do you think that single and return fares should be re-priced so that it is always cheaper to travel at quieter times?

We do think passengers should be able to mix-and-match peak and off-peak fares. Fares should be fixed to trains so at the height of the peak PAYG should be more expensive with a progressive increase in the build up to the peak and a progressive decrease after the peak to attempt to avoid fares suddenly becoming much cheaper on one particular train with attendant overcrowding. PAYG customers travelling in at the peak but travelling back at a quieter time, should therefore pay more for their inward journey and less for their homeward journey.

Questions 21 & 22 Do you think the amount that passengers pay using PAYG should be capped so that they know how much in total they will be charged?

We recognise and appreciate the principle of the cap in the London area. Rolling out PAYG to other areas could lead to more complex journey leg combinations and a fixed cap may be difficult to apply especially where longer journeys were made.

Question 23 For routes where it is cheaper to buy a weekly season ticket than five peak return tickets, do you think that daily prices should decrease and weekly prices, increase?

A difficult question to answer. The pricing of weekly season tickets offers an incentive to use public transport and this must be maintained to encourage more people to switch from car and free up road capacity.

Question 24 Do you have any other suggestions for making fares fairer for part-time commuters?

A suggestion could be to set the daily PAYG cap at the equivalent daily cost of a weekly season ticket.

Tentative example - Rochdale to Manchester by rail at £29.80 for a weekly season ticket is the equivalent of £5.96 a day for 5 days commuting. So the PAYG daily cap could be set to that amount. Other algorithms could be developed for monthly and annual season ticket scenarios.

Questions 25/26 Should there be both PAYG as well as weekly tickets available for the same routes?

Yes, for ease and flexibility.

Question 27 Where two or more operators cover the same routes, should PAYG fares be the same for all such operators?

Ideally yes though we are aware that operators can offer different fares now.

Questions 28/29 Should Super Off Peak and Peak tickets have the same price?

We see no reason for any changes to these fares.

Question 30 Do you have any other suggestions for making fares simpler?

Not at this time.

Question 31 Should fares for PAYG travel be cheaper?

Generally speaking, tickets on PAYG should always be cheaper than those bought at booking offices, travel agents, etc. Advance fares would be the exception to this principle.

Questions 34/35 Would you support a move to zonal fares?

There are merits with this concept which could help the introduction of PAYG in our region.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond

Yours faithfully

John A Moorhouse

John Moorhouse
Company Secretary