

Campaign for Better Transport asks Chancellor to help rail passengers with cost-of-living-crisis

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Campaign for Better Transport has said it has written to the Chancellor, Nadhim Zahawi, to urge him to help rail passengers with the cost-of-living crisis as inflation hits 11.8 per cent.

The transport charity is calling on the Chancellor to freeze rail fares next year and then fulfil its 2018 promise to move to the Consumer Price Index (CPI), rather than the Retail Price Index (RPI), for future increases.

The call comes as June's RPI figure reached 11.8 per cent, fuelling fears that next year's rail fare rise, which is normally calculated using July's RPI figure, could hit double digits.

Norman Baker from Campaign for Better Transport said: "We need people to use the trains to help cut congestion and air pollution and stimulate economic activity in our towns and cities. But if fares rise by 11 per cent next year, we are in very real danger of pricing people off the rails. The Government has helped out drivers with the cost-of-living crisis, now it's time to help public transport passengers too."

The government sets the annual rail fare rise each year using the previous July's RPI figure. This year's rise

was postponed until March when fares rose at 3.8 per cent, the highest rise since 2013.

With commuters no longer the captive market they once were and passenger numbers still below pre-pandemic levels, Campaign for Better Transport is urging the Chancellor to introduce a fare freeze to keep the county moving in a green and sustainable and to ensure future rises do not price people off the train and into their cars, which would be bad for the economy and for the planet.