

Campaign for Better Transport calls for rail fare freeze as RPI forecast hits at 17.7%

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Campaign for Better Transport is calling for a fare freeze for rail passengers. The call from Paul Tuohy comes as the National Institute of Economic and Social Research forecast that the Retail Prices Index (RPI), which is used to set rail fares, will hit 17.7 per cent.

RPI for June 2022 was 11.8 per cent.

Regulated rail fares, including season tickets on most commuter journeys, some Off-Peak return tickets on long distance journeys and Anytime tickets around major cities, make up almost half (45 per cent) of all fares and increases are set by the Government. In recent years, fares have risen each year by either RPI or RPI+1%, based on the previous July's RPI figure. In 2022, fares rose by RPI.

Campaign for Better Transport says there is mounting evidence to suggest that a rise in rail fares leads to a reduction in passenger numbers. A 2003 [report by ITS Leeds](#) found that for suburban rail, a fare increase of five per cent leads to a three per cent reduction in patronage, and for inter-urban rail a fare increase of five per cent leads to a 4.5 per cent reduction in patronage.

Paul 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 with a double-digit fare rise on the cards for 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 rail passengers with a fare freeze for 2023.”

Photo credit: Cycling UK