

# Merseyrail to manage fines using the Single Justice Procedure

November 1, 2022



Anyone responding to a Single Justice Procedure (SJP) notice from **Merseyrail**, for an offence such as travelling without a valid ticket, can now enter their plea online. They are the first regional operator outside of London to move to this method of processing fines.

If the defendant pleads guilty, their case can be managed without a court hearing. These cases are managed using Common Platform, a criminal case management system which supports SJP. This means defendants' cases can be resolved quickly, fairly and more efficiently.

Suzanne Grant, commercial Director at Merseyrail, said: "I'm really pleased that we're the first regional train provider to use Common Platform to progress these types of cases.

"Whilst the majority of passengers travelling on our network purchase a ticket, this new platform will allow us to deal with the small number that fail to do so promptly and efficiently.

"It will benefit both Merseyrail and our customers. For our staff, it means less paperwork. For our customers, they'll be able to make a plea online and have their case resolved far more speedily, rather

than it hanging over them for a month or more.

“Working with HMCTS (HM Courts and Tribunals Service), we’ve rigorously trialled the new system, which delivered greater efficiencies and faster processes all round, so we’re confident it’ll be a huge asset to how we operate.”

As with all SJP cases, defendants can still choose to have their case heard in a court. They can also submit a plea on paper, rather than electronically. Each Merseyrail case will be considered in the same way and the same penalties apply.

## What is an SJP?

The SJP is part of the Single Justice Service. This service supports magistrates’ courts to deal with minor offences more efficiently, while still ensuring rigorous, open and fair justice.

A single magistrate, supported by a legal adviser, can decide adult, minor, non-imprisonable and victimless offences, such as fare evasion. People who plead guilty can resolve their case without going to court. This minimises delays and allows more court time for other cases.

It’s already used to process SJP cases for other non-police prosecutors, including:

- Transport for London
- TV Licensing
- Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency