

Scottish Government to extend EMAs and lower than average increase in rail fares

December 22, 2020



The Scottish Government has announced plans to extend the current Emergency Measures Agreements (EMAs) for the ScotRail and Caledonian Sleeper franchises and also confirmed that the 2021 increase in rail fares will be deferred to March, with a lower average increase in Scotland than elsewhere.

The EMAs which were put in place in September are due to expire on 10 January 2021. The additional support for Scotland's railway is estimated to cost around £108 million and will be in place until the 31 March 2021.

Plans are also in place to defer the implementation of the annual inflation-related increase of Scottish fares. This will see off-peak fares increasing by 0.6% and peak fares increase by 1.6% on 1 March 2021. This is a lower average increase than being applied elsewhere.

Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure & Connectivity Michael Matheson said: "In order to support rail services through a period of economic recovery we have extended the financial assistance for the ScotRail and Caledonian Sleeper franchises.

“Given the extremely challenging budgetary position and the current uncertainty as to future consequential funding from the UK Government in 2021-22, the agreements will be in place until March 2021. This will provide staff and suppliers of Abellio ScotRail and Serco Caledonian Sleeper with reassurance during this period.

“We are also committed to ensuring that rail fares are affordable for passengers and taxpayers across Scotland. We have taken action to keep fares down and ScotRail fare are still on average, 20% cheaper than those across the rest of GB.

“We must balance the needs of passengers with the need to avoid further additional financial burdens to the taxpayer at an already challenging time. Therefore we plan to defer the implementation of the annual inflation-related fares increase of Scottish fares until 1 March 2021. This will see off-peak fares increasing by 0.6% and peak fares increase by 1.6%. This is a lower average increase than being applied elsewhere.

“We will continue to work with the rail industry and the UK Government during the coming months to understand the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 outbreak and the contractual arrangements required after March 2021.”

In response, ScotRail Tweeted: “The emergency government funding has allowed ScotRail to continue to pay staff wages and suppliers, as well as operate a safe and reliable service for those who need it.”

Photo credit: ScotRail

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