



**Promoting Britain's
Railway
for Passengers
and Freight**

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Retail market review for selling tickets

Dear Siobhán Carty

Railfuture is a national voluntary organisation structured in England as twelve regional branches, and two national branches in Wales and Scotland. We are completely independent of all political parties, trades unions and commercial interests, funded entirely from our membership. We campaign for improved rail services for passengers and freight. Whilst pro-rail, we are not anti car or aviation.

We welcome the opportunity to take part in this review and would be keen to engage further. We see the retailing of tickets as a key item for:

- Increasing passenger numbers (especially off-peak) .
- Reducing the reliance on the car.
- Reducing accidental, or deliberate ticketless travel.
- The opportunity for more tailorable ticketing.
- Increase the value of rail travel.

What additional drivers (if any) of the review should be considered?

The review should also look at ticket sales to those without internet access. Although there has been a significant growth in use of the internet, there will always be people that do not, or cannot use it. The cost of broadband links may also be an issue when finances are under pressure. Currently this is excluding a significant number of passengers, and potential passengers, from accessing many special deals that are not available at the booking office, ticket machine or other face to face sales.

What is your view on the proposed scope of the review? What, if any, additional areas should be considered? What areas, if any, should not be considered?

We support the proposed scope but would also would want to ensure:

The correct supporting information is available for passengers at the point of sale to indicate the terms, conditions and restrictions of the ticket purchased.

The market for sale of tickets has grown significantly, but this has added complexity and made it difficult for a passenger to know they are getting the best value for their money. Even national advertising gives the impression that large savings are made by using online providers when the same tickets are available at the ticket office. There has also been a growth in special deals by Train Operating Companies which are

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welcomed, but are only available through their own web sites usually not at their own ticket office, ticket machines or other retailers.

There appears to be no scope for other retailers to offer any discounts on tickets (although some have introduced loyalty schemes).

Availability of Advance Fares can also be difficult to identify.

The growth in smart ticketing should also be considered. Will this close down the market for retailers? We welcome the flexibility that smart ticketing can bring, but this may lead to a reduction in retail opportunities.

What features of the GB retail market for tickets work well? What features of the retail market for tickets work less well for passengers and industry?

The growth in online sales has worked well for those with the knowledge and access to exploit it. However the number of alternatives has complicated issues and it is difficult to identify best value. It is interesting that no comparison application has been devised and indicates that there is little variance in the market with special deals limited to TOCs own web/applications.

Attempts to show the cheapest ticket and/or other alternative routes work well, but are not consistent across retailers.

Are there examples of particularly innovative retailing approaches from rail market elsewhere or other sectors that could be relevant to the GB rail market?

The growth of smart ticketing, apart from a few exceptions, is well behind that elsewhere (especially in Europe). There does need to be some consideration of the market there.

What are your views on the proposed timetable and approach to the review?

The timetable is supported. We see this as a significant contribution to the passenger experience and look forward to the results of the review. The approach is also supported.

Yours Faithfully

Chris Fribbins
Railfuture
Member, National Board
Head, Passenger Group