Government Hits Part-Time Workers With 100% Fare Increases on Northern Rail

Monday 8 September, 2014

Campaign for Better Transport (1) has criticised plans to increase fares on Northern Rail's city commuter routes by up to 117 percent from this evening (2). The charity has highlighted how part time and shift workers will be hardest hit by the introduction of new evening peak fares on routes including Wigan to Manchester and Hexham to Newcastle.

There are over a million part time workers in Manchester, Sheffield, Leeds, Hull and Newcastle (3), and almost two million across the north as a whole (4). They make up more than a quarter of those in employment, and 43 per cent of women in paid work (5). Despite this essential role they are paid much less per hour than those who work full-time (6).

Martin Abrams, Public Transport Campaigner, Campaign for Better Transport, said:

“This fares increase threatens to make rail travel unaffordable to tens of thousands of part-time workers. Despite Government promises, there are no flexible tickets for the increasing numbers who work part time or anything other than traditional 9 to 5 hours. Their only option is to pay for individual tickets, which will now be double the price on Northern Rail's most popular routes.”

Franchise operator Northern Rail has attributed the fares increase to Department for Transport requirements. Over 2,000 people have signed a Campaign for Better Transport petition calling on the Department for Transport to scrap the rise in evening peak fares, and many more are expected to add their names when the new prices are introduced (7).

Martin Abrams went on:

“What passengers really want is up-to-date trains, reliable services and decent stations – but they're paying ever-escalating rail fares and seeing little improvement in services. Rather than introducing evening peak tickets, the Department for Transport and Northern Rail should focus on investing in services and making Northern Rail more attractive to potential passengers.”

Campaign for Better Transport is among the groups protesting against the new evening peak fares at Manchester Victoria station from 7.30am on Monday 8 September (8). Professionally taken photographs of the protest will be available from Campaign for Better Transport on request.

Examples of the fares increases being introduced on Monday 8 September are

- Wigan to Manchester Piccadilly return rises from £4.20 to £9.10 (up 117%)
- Hexham to Newcastle return rises from £3.55 to £7.10 (up 100%)
- Bradford to Leeds return rises from £4.70 to £6.50 (up 38.3%)

ENDS

For further information please contact Chloë Darlington at Campaign for Better Transport, on 020 7566 6495 / 07984 773 468 orchloe.darlington@bettertransport.org.uk

Notes to Editors

1. Campaign for Better Transport is the UK's leading authority on sustainable transport. We champion transport solutions that improve people's lives and reduce environmental damage. Our campaigns push innovative, practical policies at local and national levels. Campaign for Better Transport Charitable Trust is a registered charity (1101929)

2. Northern Rail announces new evening peak fareshttp://www.northernrail.org/news/7507.

3. According to the 2011 Census, part time workers in the North's main metropolitan areas include 350,000 in Greater Manchester, 307,000 in West Yorkshire, 186,000 in South Yorkshire, 185,000 in Merseyside, 157,000 in Tyne and Wear.

4. In August, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) reported 1.86m people in part-time roles across the

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north of England, an increase of 68,000 since 2010.

5. Part time workers make up 27 percent of all those in employment in northern England, and 43 per cent of women in employment. In northern England, the percentage of employees working part time is around five percent higher than the UK average.

6. Part-time workers are paid much less than full-time workers. The ONS reports that in 2013 the national median average hourly wage for part time workers was £8.29 compared with £13.13 per hour for full-time employees. Nationally, the ONS estimates there are 622,000 people working zero hours contracts, 64 percent of whom work part time.

7. Campaign for Better Transport's No Northern Fares Hike petition is at www.bettertransport.org.uk/no-northern-fares-hike.

8. Organisations protesting on Monday 8 September from 7.30am at Manchester Victoria station include Campaign for Better Transport, RMT, Friends of the Earth and TSSA.

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