

Letter to Transport Secretary about season tickets

Dear Grant,

I am glad the railway has considered the issue of season tickets and discounts in a new era of flexible working where many full time employees will become part time in the office . I raised this early in the pandemic with Ministers and the industry.

The response of a 15% discount for eight tickets a month is disappointing and inflexible. It is in the railway's interest to encourage more use of the excessive capacity it currently provides. No one can be sure they want just eight returns a month.

The model to adopt should be a rising discount model. The more you travel your chosen route the cheaper the extra journey should become. The accumulating discount could be a quarterly system, or a longer or shorter period. The first time you went to the office it would be full fare. The second time there would be a small discount, with a progressively higher discount. Frequent users would end up paying perhaps just a 20% fare for an additional journey.

This would give most of the advantages of the season ticket which allows additional journeys over the basic five returns a week free, whilst always giving the railway marginal revenue from more travel. It also incentivises travellers to go more often. If a traveller choose off peak the fare would be an off peak one. The railway will need to see if the peak changes and be ready to change peak period pricing to reflect travel reality.