

# News story: New independent appeals process to protect passengers issued with penalty fares

New rules coming into force today (6 April 2018) will offer a greater level of protection for rail passengers issued with a penalty fare, where they make an honest mistake, Rail Minister Jo Johnson has announced.

Fare dodgers will continue to receive tough penalties, but those with a genuine reason for not having a valid ticket will now be able to challenge a penalty with an independent committee, not connected to the rail companies. Once an appeal is received, the clock will stop on the 21 day deadline for the payment of a penalty fare, until the outcome is resolved.

The process will also give greater consideration to circumstances of how and why the penalty was issued, to ensure people are not unfairly penalised.

Rail Minister Jo Johnson said:

Rail users should make every effort to get the right ticket for their journey, but if you make an honest mistake, you should feel confident that the appeals system will recognise this and treat you fairly.

We are simplifying the rules around penalty fares and introducing an independent appeals process to help those who make a genuine error when using the railway.

The penalty fares guidance was last updated in 2002 and the new regulations will make the appeals system more consistent and clearer across rail companies. This includes reducing the existing 3 documents of guidance on penalty fares down to one simple document.

## [Penalty fares promotional video](#)

Jac Starr, Managing Director of Customer Experience at the Rail Delivery Group, said:

Customers sometimes make genuine mistakes and the changes to the penalty fares system, which is meant to deter fare dodgers, will help those who feel they have been mistreated and ensure there is enough time to deal with their appeal.

Fare dodgers deprive the railway of about £200 million every year, money which would otherwise be invested to improving Britain's railway for customers, communities and the economy.

A penalty fare can be issued where an individual travels without a valid ticket, or is unable to produce a railcard on a discounted ticket, stays on the train beyond the destination they have paid for or travels in the wrong class.

Passengers receive a charge of either £20 or twice the full single fare from the station where they got on the train to the next station at which the train stops.

The Rail Delivery Group is today publishing new [best practice guidance on the new penalty fare regime](#)

For information about the penalty appeal services, visit the [penalty services](#) and [appeal services](#) websites.