**Date issued:** 7th of October 2024

**Freedom of Information Request 256/24**

**You asked us…**

**Regarding the decision of Transport for Wales (TFW) to include the Marches Line in the Penalty Fare Zone from the the 9th of September 2024.**

**The announcement, and policy change by TFW, has been accompanied by claims of significant loss of revenue - as a consequence of fare evasion. Loss of revenue is based on 'estimates' by TFW.**

**No evidence has been provided, in media posts, of actual statistics relating to fair evasion on the Marches Lines. The TFW Annual Report does not note any significant concerns regarding fare evasion.**

**The decision, by TFW, to extend the Penalty Fare Zone to the Marches Line appears not to be based on evidence of actual fare evasion - rather estimates.**

**The decision seems to have been made to solely to raise further revenue, from passenger arriving late at stations, because of 'estimates' of fair evasion - when the previous system, of buying a ticket on the train worked perfectly well.**

**Could you therefore please provide evidence, of actual fair evasion statistics, on the Marches Line, which has been used by TFW to justify the extension of the Penalty Fare Zone?**

**If you are not willing or able to provide relevant statistics, please advise of the process to access this information.**

**RESPONSE**

The annual TfW Ticketless Travel Survey (undertaken for TfW by a 3rd Party) for 2023 was used to inform decisions on Penalty Fares for the Marches. It is important to note that Yield (average £’s per Journey) plays an important role in decision making, as 1% Ticketless Travel on a higher yielding route such as the Marches may have a larger impact on revenue losses than 1% Ticketless Travel on a lower yielding route.

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| Marches Station | Ticketless Travel 2023 |
| Abergavenny | 4.11% |
| Ludlow | 6.15% |
| Shrewsbury | 11.07% |
| Nantwich | 4.65% |

The impact of ticketless travel and retail and ticketing fraud is significant. It not only costs the rail industry and the taxpayer money, but also undermines public confidence and trust in the system. Customers who see others travelling without a ticket are also less likely to pay for their own fare, which can act to worsen the problem.

Penalty fares can help to change customer behaviour by acting as a more significant deterrent against fare evasion and other fraud. We are committed to ensuring that penalty fares are used fairly and proportionately on our network. This means that they will only be issued in cases where there is a reasonable suspicion that fare evasion or fraud has taken place. We also target a reduction in court related fines in parallel with introducing penalty fares, thereby making the link that any penalty fares regime simply replaces an existing regime which is more costly and less effective for the taxpayer.

However, we’re aware that not everyone can use our self-service machines. If this is the only means of purchasing a ticket at the station you are travelling from and you are unable to use the machine, you will be able to purchase a ticket on the train.  Under these circumstances our Revenue Protection team will be given discretion not to charge a penalty fare, and either charge the full single fare in line with National Rail Conditions of Travel (Condition 6 and Condition 9) or charge any relevant discounted fare as appropriate under the circumstances.

If ticket buying facilities are out of order or are not available at the station you are travelling from then you must pay your fare at the first available opportunity, i.e. onboard a TfW service. Conductors are available on all of our services and are able to check with our control centre to confirm the availability of ticket buying facilities.

Additionally, if you’re entitled to a discounted ticket but our self-service machine does not offer the ticket you wish to purchase, and there is no available booking office, you can buy them from the conductor on the train.

We hope this information is of use to you.

Yours sincerely,

**Transport for Wales**

**Appeal Rights**

If you are unhappy with the way your request has been handled and wish to make a complaint or request a review of our decision, please write to the Head of Freedom of Information at either Transport for Wales, 3 Llys Cadwyn, Pontypridd, CF37 4TH or [freedomofinformation@tfw.wales](mailto:freedomofinformation@tfw.wales). Your request must be submitted within 40 working days of receipt of this letter. If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision.

The Information Commissioner (ICO) can be contacted at Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF or you can contact the ICO through the 'Make a Complaint' section of their website on this link: <https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/>

The relevant section to select will be "Official or Public Information".