



PRESS RELEASE

09/02

DATE: 23 February 2009

Rail Fares not Fair to East Midlands

TravelWatch East Midlands is disappointed that passengers in the East Midlands are less satisfied that their fares offer value for money than any outside the London commuter belt and East Anglia, while East Midlands Trains has the lowest rating of any long distance operator.

Survey results in a major report into rail fares and ticketing by national watchdog Passenger focus found that *"In recent years passenger satisfaction with value for money when travelling by train has lagged well behind overall satisfaction"*.

The report includes a comparison of value for money for passengers in each of the English regions. The average unrestricted day return fare into Nottingham is higher than into any other city surveyed except London, while services in the East Midlands begin later in the morning and finish earlier in the evening (as early as 20.30) in comparison with most other regions - although the December 2008 timetable has now provided later trains on some routes.

Jim Froggatt, TravelWatch East Midlands Vice-chair, said "our own research shows that, on a pence per mile basis, peak hour fares into Derby and Leicester are even higher than those into Nottingham. Many are over 20p/mile, which is more than the marginal cost of a journey in a family car. Costs can be brought down if you travel off-peak, or regularly enough to buy a season ticket, but the average fare remains discouragingly high. There are some notable anomalies. We cannot understand why the fares between Derby and Leicester are so different to those between Nottingham and Leicester. The off-peak fare is the same, a weekly ticket is 18% more but a peak hour return is more than double!

Jim Froggatt continued "Since September 2005 most local fares have increased by 20-40%, which is well above the rate of inflation, but some by much more, including Derby-Leicester which has increased by 84%."

Stephen Abbott, TravelWatch East Midlands Secretary, commented "The Passenger focus report highlights the fact that the government expects passengers to pay an increasing proportion of the cost of the railways. The East Midlands Trains' franchise conditions reflect this, but impose a disproportionate burden on passengers in our region. Local and regional policy is to encourage commuters to use public transport and so reduce congestion on our roads. At this time of economic uncertainty, when people who are made redundant are likely to be looking for jobs 20-40 miles away, it is important that new commuters and other users aren't driven away from using the train by high fares".

ENDS

Notes for Editors:

1. **TravelWatch East Midlands** is an alliance of groups representing the consumer interest across all modes of public transport. The organisation's aim is to represent the interests and concerns of public transport passengers across all forms of transport and to assist local and regional authorities' work towards an integrated and seamless quality public transport network for the East Midlands region.

Website www.travelwatcheastmidlands.org.uk/

3. **Passenger Focus** is the independent national rail consumer watchdog. Details of the Fares and Ticketing Study can be found at <http://www.passengerfocus.org.uk>

4. **For further information contact:**

- Jim Froggatt of TravelWatch East Midlands on 01332 722957
- Stephen Abbott of TravelWatch East Midlands on 01858 466629