

## South West Trains and 20% fares hikes

On Sunday 20 May [South West Trains increased some first class and some off-peak fares](#) by up to 20%.

The new South West Trains fares structure means that many people travelling into Waterloo until at least midday on a week day are seeing substantial increases to their fares. There was no consultation on the proposal and little attempt to explain it to passengers.

This move was [condemned by Passenger Focus as exploiting passengers for profit](#), and on 8 May [Passenger Focus launched a campaign calling for South West Trains to explain the hikes](#).

Passengers are invited to join the campaign by [telling Passenger Focus what they think of the increases and how they will be or have been affected](#). You can also write to Stewart Palmer Managing Director of South West Trains or write to your local MP.

If you want to beat the latest South West Trains fares hikes [visit our advice and information section](#).

South West Trains state that these changes are designed to tackle overcrowding. However [Passenger Focus research](#) shows the importance of incentivising passengers away from the most crowded trains rather than hiking up fares.

Not only does this move mean that passengers suffer up to a 20% fare increase they now have a more complex fare structure. There is also a danger of pushing passengers onto the morning peak as differentials are eroded.

Passenger Focus has taken a robust stand on this matter and wants to make sure that other train operators do not follow suit. We have raised passengers' concerns with the Government and the managing director of South West Trains.

[We have also expressed our concerns to the Office of Rail Regulation \(ORR\)](#). We argued that this move was against the wider passenger interest and did not adequately reflect the fact that some passengers have little choice but to use the train - especially for journeys into central London. We also pointed out that the increases were lowest where South West Trains faced direct competition from First

Greater Western services. For instance, the fare from Reading to London Waterloo has not increased and that from Basingstoke has only gone up by 1.23% - compared to an average increase of 20% elsewhere. [The ORR responded saying that in their opinion the increase would not meet the high evidential test required to prove excessive pricing and be considered an abuse under competition law.](#)

We will continue to raise this issue publicly to ensure that passengers' views are heard.