

Young Person's Train Guide



Overview

Since the establishment of the first UK Rail Ombudsman in 2018, young people's lack of knowledge of rail travel, how to optimise it and their responsibilities and obligations to achieve safe passage, has been evident.

Whilst the Rail Ombudsman acknowledges that this issue is not confined solely to young people of school age, this project is based on some specific case-study examples in which the lack of experience or knowledge of the sector is apparent. Their experience of the industry is negatively impacted, confidence is knocked, and parents, guardians and families reactions have long term industry repercussions.

This resource seeks to target these specific scenarios and furthermore, to consider the vulnerabilities of an uninformed young rail passenger population, taking action to remedy this.

Through collaboration with the industry and key stakeholders, a key remit of the Rail Ombudsman is to recommend solutions to prevent future complaints. This also serves to increase confidence of young people and their parents and families.

Railway Byelaws: A practical guide

What are Byelaws and what do they mean for you?



What is a byelaw?

A byelaw is a legal rule made by a community to regulate activity amongst its users. The Railway Byelaws regulate use and conduct of people using the railways.

Railway byelaws

Britain's railway byelaws cover trains, track and stations across the country. Thousands of trains use as many stations throughout the day and night. To ensure ease of travel and safety on the railway system, including passengers, staff, property and equipment, the byelaws need to be observed by everyone

Why is this important?

The byelaws contain rules that you agree to when you enter a station or board a train and this means that the rail companies are able to enforce them.

For the safety and comfort of all rail users, the byelaws have to be observed by everyone.

This means that there are rules to ensure your safety, such as where you are allowed to be and when (such as the platform) and where you are not (the track!).

There are also rules about comfort so you may be asked to turn your music down or turn your phone off or to silent in certain "quiet carriages".

Rules relating to your ticket

There are many different ticket types and it is your responsibility to make sure you have the right ticket for your journey. If you are under 16, you can buy a "child's fare" and this will have to cover all of your journey. The rail companies have the right to check this and if you are asked to produce a ticket, or a rail card, you will have to do so.

But there are also rules about how this works and what happens if you can't...

Tickets explained

The byelaws contain information about travel and fares explaining what a ticket is and, in certain circumstances, what other documentation you may be required to show alongside it, such as a railcard, photo, identity card or other travel documents. You must always travel with a valid ticket and if you are not sure, check at the ticket office before getting on the train.

When might you be asked to purchase a new ticket?

If you have an incorrect ticket for your journey, you might be asked to buy a new one or pay the difference if it is a more expensive ticket.

This could be a ticket that is not valid on that train or with that train operating company, or you could be traveling at the wrong time of day, for example during 'peak' time for an 'off peak' ticket.

The rules relating to 'peak' and 'off-peak' can change and you should check with the train operator to make sure you understand when you can travel with an 'off-peak' ticket or when you might have to have an 'on-peak' ticket.

The National Rail 'My Ticket' tool tool has been designed to give customers the clearest information possible. You can find out more here - <https://bit.ly/3tgEqeh>



What is a penalty fare?

Penalty fares are used to protect the rail network from people who travel without a valid ticket.

Penalty Fare Notices may be issued if you:

- travel without a valid ticket;
- are unable to produce an appropriate Railcard on a discounted ticket;
- travel in First Class accommodation with a Standard class ticket;
- are aged 16 or over, traveling on a child rate ticket;
- travel beyond the destination on your ticket.

The penalty is £100 plus the price of the full single fare applicable for your intended journey. However, if it is paid within 21 days, the Penalty Fare is reduced to £50 plus the price of the single fare applicable. It is less on Transport for Wales services operated wholly within Wales, and Transport for London can issue Penalty Fares subject to different regulations.

What is an unpaid fare notice?

An unpaid fare notice might be issued if you are traveling with the wrong ticket and you can't afford to pay for the right ticket there and then. If you don't pay it, this can still lead to a criminal prosecution, just as with a penalty fare.

There are published processes for you to follow and you should make sure you understand these and tell a responsible adult such as parent or teacher who can help you sort things out with the train company.

What you need to do

Buy a ticket for the whole of your journey

If you have a season ticket, make sure you have this with you – keep a photograph of it on your phone, just in case you lose it. Remember, this won't replace the ticket but a ticket inspector will at least know you have a valid ticket and will tell you what to do next.

If you have a railcard or ticket on your phone, make sure your phone is charged so that you can produce it – many trains have charging points on them.

Don't panic – if a member of staff from the train company asks to check your ticket and you can't find it, be honest with them and remember they are there to help.

Give your name and address if asked – the train company have a right to ask you for this - and giving an incorrect address will not help them to help you (and may make matters worse).

If you are issued a penalty fare or an unpaid fare notice, don't ignore it – there are time limits to paying and appealing it and the quicker you act, the better.

What the train company must do

Provide information about how to buy a ticket and which is the right ticket – if in doubt; just ask them.

Provide you with the facilities to purchase a ticket.

Train their staff as to the best way to enforce what the rail companies call “revenue protection” and when they can exercise discretion – for example they may charge you an ordinary fare instead of a penalty fare, but this is up to them.

All of the train company's staff must carry valid ID.

They must clearly explain what action they are taking and why – don't be afraid to ask.

Working Together

Make sure you give the right information to the train company – many issues can be sorted out very quickly, especially if you have made a genuine mistake.

Other Relevant Advice - Check Before You Travel

Timetables can change, even up to the date of travel, Train companies must publish amended timetables in advance, when possible, or provide details of changes so that you can plan your journey. However, you need to be aware that timetable changes and cancellations can happen and check that your ticket is valid on any alternative service. If in doubt, ask a member of staff from the train companies.

Travel & Fares

There are many different tickets available for travel and each train company has its own rules that are explained in its Passenger Charter (for example Great Western Railway <https://www.gwr.com/about-gwr/our-business/passengers-charter>). You should also be aware of the National Rail Conditions of Travel <https://bit.ly/3srHqVU> that contain general rules that apply to your journey with every train company.

Remember - Check Before You Travel



Dos & Don'ts

Do hand over your ticket when asked – the train companies' staff have every right to ask to see it.

Do sit where your ticket is valid – if you have a standard class ticket, you are not allowed to sit in first class (even if that is the only place seats are available).

Don't travel on a train or enter onto a platform without a valid ticket*. Sometimes you can buy a ticket on the train, but you should check first, just to make sure.

Don't buy a ticket from a stranger - there are very strict rules about altering tickets or buying them from people who are not allowed to sell them to you – you should purchase your ticket from a Ticket Vending Machine, from a Travel Centre at a station or online. You should not hand your unused ticket to someone else to let them travel on it.

If you are asked to show your ticket, the train companies' staff should have valid identification, so check this if you are unsure.

You might be asked to provide your name and address – the train company has a right to see this if they think you do not have the correct ticket, but they have to tell you why they believe you have breached the byelaws.

*There are specific areas where penalty fares can be given out and you cannot travel in those areas without a valid ticket. If there is nowhere to buy a ticket because, for example, the ticket machine is out of order and the station is not staffed, you may have a permit to travel. If there are no notices about penalty fares, generally you should still not get on a train without a valid ticket.

Safety on the Railways

Equipment and safety

Safety is paramount to the running of all railway services. The byelaws are very clear on matters of safety – and this protects equipment and property, as well as users and staff.

At a railway station you are only allowed in certain areas and there are very strict rules that are there for your own safety. This includes the obvious one such as the yellow line at the platform edge, but there are other rules that you may not be aware of:

DOS & DON'TS AT THE STATION

Don't bring dangerous items into the station or onto the train.

Don't go the wrong way up or down an escalator.

Do pass through the ticket barriers.

Don't open any barriers, doors or gates unless there is a notice to say you can (for example a waiting room).

Don't use an emergency exit, unless you are told to by the train company's staff or the British Transport Police.

Don't misuse escalators or lifts.

DOS & DON'TS ON THE TRAIN

Do allow people off first – it's polite and it's in the byelaws.

Don't attempt to open a door or leave a train while it is moving or between stations.

Don't try to enter or leave the train while the door is opening or closing – go to the next station and explain what happened.

Don't use emergency equipment unless it really is needed.

Don't drop or throw anything onto the tracks.

Do follow safety instructions given by train company staff or the British Transport Police.

Conduct and behaviour

Conduct and behaviour make a difference to everyone's experience of rail travel. Some practices can be generally unpleasant, or can be dangerous to yourselves and others. To make travelling more comfortable and safer, unacceptable behaviour is banned on the railways.

It is important that you understand what the byelaws expect of you as enforcement action can result in your removal from the railways and can even result in criminal investigation.

Here are some things that you might be asked to do whilst in and around the station or on the train:

- **Join a queue** – either to buy a ticket or access a busy platform
- **Leave a train or waiting room** - if your clothing is dirty and could damage property such as seats or another person's clothes.
- **Turn down your music** – you are also not allowed to sing or play an instrument without permission.
- **Fold or remove a bicycle** – there are specific rules about when you can travel with your bike in each Passenger Charter and in some cases, you might need to book!
- **Keep your feet off the seats.**

There is also a list of “Don’ts” that count as unacceptable behaviour, such as:

- Using threatening and abusive behaviour
- Writing or drawing on railway property
- Damaging or removing anything
- Spitting
- Dropping or leaving litter
- Affecting anyone else's comfort or convenience



Your responsibility to others

The byelaws contain provisions about the way in which your behaviour could impact the safety and comfort of others.

For example, in addition to the requirement not to use any threatening, abusive, obscene or offensive language on the railway, the byelaws also state that no person shall molest or willfully interfere with the comfort or convenience of any person on the railway.

You should also respect seating which is designated as Priority Seating for older, disabled or pregnant passengers and ensure your bags are not blocking areas that are reserved for wheelchair users.

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