



Harry Burr
Joint Chief Executive

Steve Rotheram
Mayor of the Liverpool City Region
Liverpool City Region Combined Authority

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Dear Steve,

Enroute, a transport research group and advocacy organisation, are writing this open letter to express our deep concern surrounding Merseyrail's policies on e-ticketing, which are resulting in innocent passengers being unduly penalised and out of pocket, from £50 to nearly thousands, at a time of a severe cost of living crisis.

We are concerned about this issue affecting patronage on your region's services, migrating passengers back to their private cars, affecting the pressing need to get people onto sustainable transport modes to make our planet a better place to live, and meet the nation's net zero target for 2050.

We have reviewed the situation regarding Merseyrail's refusal to accept QR-code based tickets on its services without being printed prior, a stance that contradicts general practice across the Great British rail network.

This policy, stemming from Merseyrail's unique byelaws, has led to several reported instances of passengers being issued penalty fares and fines, despite having a valid ticket purchased through reputable platforms like Trainline.

The testimonials and case studies that we have gathered paint a distressing picture. Passengers, including teenagers and young adults, the very people we should be attracting to use the railway, have been subjected to intimidating encounters with Merseyrail staff, leading to fines and, in some cases, even bailiff intervention for non-payment.

"They will persue you, you will end up with a county court judgement and you will end up with bailiffs at the door for an amount way in excess of the fine you received."

Diastolic
via Reddit

These individuals were simply unaware of Merseyrail's outdated ticketing policies, which are not prominently communicated to the public. In the current cost of living crisis, such unexpected financial penalties can be catastrophic for those already struggling to make ends meet, impacting not only the individual but households in their entirety.

Experiences like these have understandably left many passengers feeling unfairly treated, confused, and discouraged from using Merseyrail services in the future. In an era where digital ticketing is the norm, Merseyrail's stance appears archaic and out-of-touch with not only the expectations of modern travellers, but other operators too.

We understand that Merseyrail operates under its own byelaws, but this technicality should not be used to penalise well-intentioned passengers who have complied with industry-standard ticketing practices.

At a time where every penny counts for households across the region and nation, Enroute strongly urges you to encourage Merseyrail management to change its position and bring its ticketing policies in line with the rest of the UK rail network.

"The experience has made me a bit scared to travel by train in future in case this happens again. I felt bad telling my mum about it because she will have to help me pay the fine."

'Izzy'
via Liverpool Echo

This change failing to take place not only inconveniences and alienates customers, but also tarnishes Merseyrail's reputation as a customer-friendly and progressive transport operator. It will place an unnecessary financial burden on innocent passengers during an already difficult economic period.

We implore you to take immediate action to rectify this situation and prevent further instances of customers being unfairly penalised.

Enroute remains committed to advocating for fair and transport practices across the rail and transport sectors, and we hope that you will ensure your region's operator will take the necessary steps to address this issue promptly, demonstrating understanding for the financial challenges faced by your customers.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

For and on behalf of Enroute,

Harry Burr

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