

Press Release

20 January 2015

CrossCountry welcomes government decision on Advance fares

CrossCountry, the long distance train operator within leading transport group Arriva, has welcomed a decision by the Department for Transport to allow it to sell Advance Purchase tickets on the day of travel on a permanent basis, following a successful trial.

Since 2013 CrossCountry has been trialling a system that allows Advance Purchase tickets for its services to be sold on the day of departure, right up to almost the time a train leaves a station. These tickets are often much cheaper than other fares available to passengers travelling the same day, and are available exclusively through CrossCountry's website, its 'Train Tickets' App, telesales office, or The Trainline. Advance Purchase tickets are hugely popular with rail users with over one million sold each week on Britain's railways, and are used by train operators to encourage travel on trains where capacity is available.

CrossCountry introduced the sale of Advance Purchase tickets on the day of travel as part of its extensive investment to make it easier for people to obtain information and purchase train tickets following the widespread increase in people using websites and smartphone Apps. Launching one of the industry's most comprehensive Apps in 2009, CrossCountry followed this in 2011 by offering customers the opportunity to reserve a seat up to ten minutes before a train's departure. Since then over 175,000 'Reservations on the Day' have been made. Almost 150,000 journeys have been made on CrossCountry using Advance tickets, purchased on the day of travel. The service has been so successful it has already won multiple awards for innovation.

Transport Secretary Patrick McLoughlin said: "Passengers should be able to get the best possible deal every time they take the train, so this is great news for CrossCountry's customers.

"We are taking real steps to address passengers' concerns about the cost of rail travel. In addition to the deal with CrossCountry, we have frozen fares at inflation for the second year in a row. We are also working with the industry to improve the information people receive when buying tickets, to ensure they always get the best value fare."

Welcoming today's announcement, CrossCountry's managing director, Andy Cooper, said: "This decision will be welcomed by our customers as it allows us to continue offering the best value ticket possible, right up to the time they want to travel.

"We know that not everyone can plan their journey in advance when traditionally the cheapest tickets are available, and even those who can often have a change in circumstances that means their return journey can be uncertain. We now have the opportunity, if we expect to have seats available, to offer our customers a cheaper fare for their journey. And, like all other Advance tickets, customers can use their railcards to get a further discount, making their journeys even cheaper."

Following the Government's 'Rail Fares and Ticketing Review' which was published in 2013, CrossCountry was granted a temporary exemption to offer Advance Purchase tickets up to ten minutes before a train's departure. The trial was monitored by the rail industry watchdog Passenger Focus and included two rounds of research to understand customer opinions of the scheme, both of which provided very positive feedback on its use.

Guy Dangerfield, Passenger Issues Manager at Passenger Focus said: "It's great news for passengers that 'advance on the day' is here to stay and CrossCountry can carry on offering lower fares to last-minute travellers where seats are available".

CrossCountry will now share its experience with other train operators that may be considering offering a similar service.

- ENDS -

Notes to Editors:

- The CrossCountry network is the most extensive passenger rail franchise in Britain. Stretching from Aberdeen to Penzance, Bournemouth to Manchester and from Stansted to Cardiff, it calls at over 100 stations. Based in Birmingham, CrossCountry connects seven of the Britain's 10 largest cities and delivers 295 services every weekday, equating to some 33 million passenger journeys a year.
- Examples of possible savings* using 'Advance on the Day' include:

Journey	Single Anytime fare	Single Off Peak fare	Example 'Advance on the Day' fare **
Birmingham to Manchester	£39.80	£35.20	£16.60
Leeds to Derby	£41.90	£33.30	£11.90
Edinburgh to Newcastle	£53.00	£48.00	£20.60
Bristol to Plymouth	£64.00	£39.40	£20.20
Newcastle to York	£38.50	£33.50	£14.50

* All prices quoted are Standard fares

**Advance on the Day prices quoted subject to availability

'Advance' tickets are discounted quota-controlled fares designed to encourage customers to travel on services where spare capacity is available and are a key factor in the growth in passenger journeys on Britain's railways. The allocation of Advance Purchase tickets on each train is closely controlled to account for expected demand and these tickets can be purchased up to 12 weeks before a train's departure. Customers are still advised to book their journeys as far in advance as possible to secure the best price, as once the allocation has been exhausted then only full priced tickets can be purchased. 'Advance on the Day' tickets are available on all longer distance direct journeys using only CrossCountry services and where allocation remains, by booking through CrossCountry's mobile App or call centre, or at www.crosscountrytrains.co.uk