



# URBAN TRANSPORT GROUP

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Briefing

## Comparing bus operator fares across English city regions

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This paper is an update of work originally undertaken in 2013 to compare commercial bus fare offers from individual operators across our members' areas. Ticket price data was collected in May/June 2019 and provides a snapshot of ticket prices across our member areas. The prices quoted might not be the most recent prices, so caution should be applied when using this data. Ticket prices can sometimes be subject to large changes which can change the structure of the ticket market and the outcomes of this work.
- 1.2. The analysis focuses on adult, child and student bus fares. Fares are presented by company rather than by area.
- 1.3. It should be noted that there can sometimes be justification for differences in price, such as the size of a network, the quality and frequency of services and the nature of the service. It should not automatically be assumed that a higher price represents worse value for a customer.
- 1.4. Whilst bus fares in London are uniform across operators, prices have been included for comparison purposes.

## 2. First

Table 1. First Adult Tickets

	Adult day	Adult weekly	Adult monthly	Adult annual
Greater Manchester	£5.00	£16.00	£54.00	£540.00
South Yorkshire	£5.00	£20.00	£74.00	£814.00
West Yorkshire	£4.90	£21.00	£74.50	£852.00

- 2.1. First bus tickets continue to be significantly cheaper in Greater Manchester than in South and West Yorkshire, particularly for the longer period products.

Table 2. First Child Tickets

	Child day	Child weekly
Greater Manchester	£2.50	£8.50
South Yorkshire	£2.20	£7.50
West Yorkshire	£2.50	£8.30

- 2.2. First bus tickets for children are cheapest in South Yorkshire, with Greater Manchester having the most expensive tickets.



**Table 4. First Student Tickets**

	Student single	Student day	Student weekly	Student month	Student term	Student all term
Greater Manchester	-	-	-	£48.00	£105.00	-
South Yorkshire	£1.20	-	£15.00	-	£109.00	-
West Yorkshire	-	-	-	£45.00	£120.00	-

- 2.3. First South Yorkshire also offers a Sheffield ticket, where there is a £1.20 single ticket available, a £10 week and a £32 Month ticket. These are significant reductions on the South Yorkshire tickets.

**Table 5. First Other Zones**

		Adult day	Adult weekly	Adult monthly	Adult annual
Greater Manchester	South Manchester	£3.50	£12.00	-	-
	Manchester, Walkden and Little Hulton	-	£12.00	-	-
	Manchester, Middleton and Rochdale	-	£12.00	-	-
	Manchester and Didsbury	-	£8.50	-	-
South Yorkshire	Sheffield	£4.00	£14.50	£52.00	£572.00
	Doncaster	£4.50	£16.00	£54.00	£594.00
	Rotherham	£4.50	£16.00	£54.00	£594.00
West Yorkshire	Leeds	£4.50	£17.00	£60.00	£660.00

- 2.4. In Greater Manchester there is a wide range of tickets available for different geographical areas, but there are often only single tickets available for the other geographies.
- 2.5. It is also interesting to note that the Sheffield tickets are cheaper than the Doncaster and Rotherham tickets.



### 3. Arriva

**Table 6. Arriva Adult Tickets**

	Adult day	Adult weekly	Adult monthly	Adult annual
North East	£4.70	£18.60	£68.00	£652.00
Greater Manchester	£4.60	£16.00	£54.00	£540.00
Merseyside	£4.50	£16.00	£54.50	£545.00
West Yorkshire	£5.00	£19.00	£72.00	£675.00

- 3.1. The price of Arriva tickets varies widely between our member areas, which is likely to reflect the size of their networks and their market share.

**Table 7. Arriva Child Tickets**

	Child day	Child Week	Child Month	Child Year
Greater Manchester	£2.20	£7.80	£27.00	£270.00
Merseyside	£2.20	£10.00	£35.00	-
West Yorkshire	£2.50	-	-	-
North East	£1.10			

- 3.2. In the North East, Arriva offers a “Teen Card” which entitles holders to make any single journey for half fare or £1.10 depending on which is cheaper. There are no period products offered.
- 3.3. In Merseyside, child tickets are offered by the Local Transport Authority at £2.20 per day. This has become a commercial product meaning that there is no commercial offer by the operators.

**Table 8. Arriva Student Tickets**

	Student Term	Student year
Greater Manchester	£140.00	-
Merseyside	£140.00	£325.00
West Yorkshire	-	£555.00
North East	-	£799.00

- 3.4. Student tickets are available on the Arriva website as either term or year tickets. The prices are the same across Greater Manchester and Merseyside, but higher in West Yorkshire. In West Yorkshire there is also a Leeds Urban Saver which is priced at £280 per annum. However, there are no term tickets and no other districts have an urban specific ticket.



- 3.5. In the North East the ticket covers the whole academic year rather than just the terms. An annual ticket is also available at £825.00

**Table 10. Arriva Other Zones**

		Adult day	Adult weekly	Adult monthly	Adult annual
North East	County Durham Saver	£7.50	£26.20	£90.00	£952.00
	East Durham Saver	£5.00	£23.00	£82.00	£828.00
	Bishop Auckland Saver	£4.70	£15.00	£54.00	£544.00
	Darlington Town Saver	£3.70	£14.00	£45.00	£470.00
	Darlington District Saver	£6.10	£17.90	£58.00	£530.00
	Redcar Saver	£4.10	£12.00	£44.00	£437.00
	Teesside and East Cleveland Saver	£4.60	£17.00	£65.00	£586.00
	Tees Valley Saver	£7.30	£25.70	£87.00	£977.00
North West	Merseyside Plus	£4.50	£16.00	£54.50	£545.00
	Halton	£4.20	-	-	-
West Yorkshire	Leeds	£4.20	£15.00	-	-
	Wakefield	£4.30	£15.00	-	-
	Yorkshire	£5.60	£20.50	£74.00	£740.00
West Midlands	Black Country	£4.00	£11.50	£40.00	-
	Midlands Area	£6.30	£25.00	£80.00	£800.00

- 3.6. Arriva offer a wider range of other regional products, especially in the North East where eight different zonal tickets were available with a full range of products.



## 4. Stagecoach

Table 11. Stagecoach Adult Tickets

	Adult day	Adult weekly	Adult monthly	Adult annual
Greater Manchester	£4.80	£16.00	£60.00	£595.00
Merseyside	£4.20	£14.00	£53.99	-
North East	£4.20	£17.00	£65.50	£770.50
South Yorkshire	£6.00	£19.00	£74.00	-

- 4.1. The price of adult day tickets across the various operations is relatively similar, however, there are wide variations as the time period increases.
- 4.2. The South Yorkshire Ticket is more expensive than tickets from other regions. However, smaller geography tickets, such as a Sheffield ticket, are available.

Table 12. Stagecoach Child Tickets

	Child day	Child weekly	Child monthly
Merseyside	£2.10	£7.00	-
South Yorkshire	£2.30	£7.50	£32.00

- 4.3. The South Yorkshire tickets cover bus and tram.



**Table 14. Stagecoach Student Tickets**

		Single ticket	Student week	Student month	Student term	Student year
Greater Manchester		-	-	-	£105.00	-
Merseyside		-	-	-	£83.00	321.00
North East		-	-	-	£117.00	-
South Yorkshire	Sheffield Student Bus Xtra	£1.20	£9.00	£36.00	-	-
	Sheffield student tram Megarider	-	-	£39.00	-	-
	Sheffield student bus and tram Megarider	-	-	£43.00	-	-
West Midlands		-	-	-	£135.00	-

4.4. The student ticket offer is quite varied across the different areas. Only in South Yorkshire is a single ticket advertised for students over 18 years of age. In Other areas there are only term and annual tickets

**Table 15. Stagecoach Other Zones**

		Adult day	Adult weekly	Adult monthly	Adult annual
South Yorkshire	Sheffield Megarider (bus and tram)	£4.20	£14.50	£56.00	-
	Sheffield Megarider Plus (bus and tram)	£4.60	£15.50	£60.00	-
North East	Tyne and Wear Plus	£5.05	£18.00	£69.50	£828.00
	Newcastle	-	£14.50	£55.00	£495.00

4.5. In South Yorkshire, the main “other” zones involve the inclusion of tram tickets. This increase the price of the ticket, but is cheaper than buying separate bus and tram tickets.



## 5. Go-Ahead

**Table 16. Go-Ahead Adult Tickets**

	<b>Adult day</b>	<b>Adult weekly</b>	<b>Adult monthly</b>	<b>Adult annual</b>
North East	£6.70	£30.00	£94.00	-

- 5.1. The Go-Ahead group only operates in one of our members areas, meaning it is not possible to analyse price across areas.
- 5.2. There was no annual ticket available through the Go-Ahead website only pay monthly tickets that can be rolled over to make up an annual ticket. This provides no saving on the monthly ticket so has not been included as an annual product.

**Table 17. Go-Ahead Child Tickets**

	<b>Child day</b>	<b>Child weekly</b>	<b>Child monthly</b>
North East	£4.00	£17.00	£68.00

- 5.3. A range of child tickets are available of Go-Ahead buses. The £1.10 single fare is available on most services. The monthly ticket must be paid in advance by direct debit.

**Table 19. Go-Ahead Student Tickets**

	<b>Student day</b>	<b>Student weekly</b>	<b>Student monthly</b>
North East	£4.00	£17.00	£68.00

- 5.4. These tickets are available to anyone in full time education and include apprentices. They are the same price as the child tickets, although there is no single ticket available.

**Table 20. Go-Ahead Other Zones**

		<b>Adult day</b>	<b>Adult weekly</b>
North East	North Tyne Saver	£4.00	£14.00
	South Tyneside Saver	£4.00	£12.50
	Sunderland Saver	£3.60	£15.00

- 5.5. Monthly tickets are priced by the number of zones that you need to travel in. The pricing structure is as follows





**Table 21. Go-Ahead Annual zone tickets**

Zones	Adult Monthly
One Zone	£72.00
Two Zones	£94.00
Three Zones +	£110.00

- 5.6. Whilst the price of day and week tickets varies across the zones, the price of monthly tickets is set across the region.

## 6. National Express

**Table 22. National Express Adult Tickets**

	Adult day	Adult weekly	Adult monthly	Adult annual
West Midlands	£4.50	£17.90	£63.90	£732.00

- 6.1. National Express only operate in one of our members areas, meaning it is not possible to analyse price across areas.
- 6.2. National Express offer an adult ticket for all time periods. Pay as you go tickets and direct debit tickets are available at a lower price than the cash alternative.

**Table 23. National Express Child Tickets**

	Child Day	Child weekly	Child monthly	Term Ticket
West Midlands	£3.10	£9.00	£32.75	99.90

- 6.3. Child tickets are offered for periods from Day to Term Rickets. Apart from the Day Ticket, these are around half the adult fare.

**Table 25. National Express Other Zones**

		Adult day	Adult weekly	Adult monthly	Adult annual
West Midlands	Black Country	£4.40	£15.95	£55.90	£634.80

- 6.4. Tickets were available for all time periods apart from a day ticket for the Black Country zone.



**Table 26. National Express Student Tickets**

		4 Week	Academic Term
West Midlands	West Midlands	£41.90	£164.90
	Black Country	£36.90	£144.90

- 6.5. Student tickets are available for a number of zones across the West Midlands. There is no Birmingham ticket listed.

## 7. Transport for London

**Table 27. Transport for London Adult Tickets**

	Adult day	Adult weekly	Adult monthly	Adult annual
London	£4.50	£21.20	£81.50	£848.00

- 7.1. Tickets in London cover use of both the bus and the tram and can be used on the entire transport for London network.

**Table 28. Transport for London Child Tickets**

	Adult day	Adult weekly	Adult monthly	Adult annual
London	£2.25	£10.60	£40.80	£424.00

- 7.2. Child ticket prices in London are for under 16s. Anyone under the age of 11 is able to travel for free.
- 7.3. This discount is also available to jobseekers. Although they are not able to access an annual pass at a discounted rate.

**Table 29. Transport for London Student Tickets**

	Adult day	Adult weekly	Adult monthly	Adult annual
London	£4.50	£14.80	£56.90	£592.00

- 7.4. Student tickets are for anyone over the age of 18 in fulltime education and are also available to apprentices.



**Table 30. Transport for London Single and Return Tickets**

	<b>Pay as you go</b>	<b>Daily cap</b>
Adult	£1.50	£4.50
Child	£0.75	£2.25

- 7.5. No cash fares are available on the TfL network. Payment must either be made with an Oyster card or using contactless payment. Daily capping automatically means that you get a day ticket if this is the best value journey for your tickets. You do not have to select this in advance.