

**P-05-716 Free Train Transport for school pupils with Arriva Trains Wales – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 02.05.17**

To whom it may concern,

In response to the correspondence received I still stand by the view that the safety issue was not the main priority of Arriva Trains Wales and the reason why they chose to start to charge Treorchy pupils for these transport services, even though the company claim that these barriers are safer to pupils, I have witnessed first-hand the Arriva staff pushing these barriers into pupils further enclosing them into the already claustrophobic space a 'precaution' I fail to believe is for safety reasons only.

When asked the question about why bus transport is free and not train transport which is the only means of transport to and from school for many pupils out of the catchment area they have labelled it as a "consequence" yet by charging pupils over £60 per term for these passes I don't see why pupils should suffer because Arriva need to employ more staff. I have witnessed that pupils that have to buy their tickets from the ticket office are being prevented from boarding the train due to the time it takes to dispatch these tickets and the staff are physically bordering and preventing these pupils from boarding the train which I don't think is fair because majority of pupils are unable to pay the price of the season ticket that Arriva want. Even though Arriva repeatedly mention how this money contributes towards the safety of the pupils I have not yet seen the effect of this money being put towards this, if anything the barriers that are put up on the platform are even more restricting and to reiterate the staff push these barriers in towards pupils which causes the area to be very restricted and tight which contradicts the 'safety' that Arriva repeatedly say charging pupils contributes towards.

Arriva have stated that this discounted ticket price is affordable yet the price of these tickets are increasing per term seeing them going from around £52 to £60 which I cannot see the reason for the inflation in prices as there has not been more staff employed nor any safety implications installed. I have witnessed when standing on the platform that members of the public are repeatedly asking Arriva why they have used such a small enclosure for pupils and have raised concerns about it not being very safe and Arriva respond with very little answers or explanation and often say that it's because of the behaviour of pupils which in my opinion behaviour on the train platform has only increased since the barriers were installed as pupils become very agitated and anxious in such a small enclosure.

To conclude I still stand by my original response to the issue and hope that Arriva Trains Wales take into consideration my views and opinions on the charging of school pupils.

Yours sincerely, Elin Tuckwood