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Ask Metro topic: Christmas Services and Fare changes 2017

In attendance:

Wayne Dixon, Metro Head of Station Delivery

Emma Mons-White, Metro Planning Manager

Huw Lewis, Nexus Corporate Manager for Customer Service and Communications

David Punton, Nexus Communications Officer

Q1. What will the last metro be Xmas eve?

From where to where?

Sorry from Haymarket to Hebburn

It'll be the 23:24

Thank you

Q2. I'm working Xmas Eve, and travel to/from Four Lane Ends to Wansbeck Road, changing at South Gosforth. What time does the service end of Xmas Eve please, just to ensure I can get home??

Which is the journey in the evening sorry?

From Wansbeck to Four Lane Ends

23:09 from Wansbeck Road to get there at 23:19, but then the next train from South Gosforth isn't till 23:46 to four lane ends. That will be the last service.

Think I'll be finishing work at approx. 8pm, am I right it presuming the service will be a lot more regular around that time??

No, you'll want 20:52 from wansbeck and then the 21:09 from South Gosforth.

OK cool, least that's not a long wait between stations. Thanks!!

Q3. What fare changes?

The average increase will be 1.4% which is below inflation for the fourth year, but changes vary by ticket so you'll need to check our ticket section of the website which lists the changes.

Q4. What steps are you taking to improve communications during disruptions to service? Or, indeed, prevent disruptions to service?

We brought the new social media team in, but we endeavour to improve on how we reach people on platforms. We have seen an improvement in customer satisfaction on this question, but we know we have further to go.

Adding updates about service failures as a new status instead of as a comment on an existing thread that gets lost amongst hundreds of angry commuters expressing their frustration would be good.

Q5. Hi can you tell me what time the last metro from monument going towards Byker is on Boxing Day please?

It'll be the 22:33

Many thanks

Q6. What time will the last service from Newcastle central station to regent centre be on Xmas eve please

It'll be the 00:25, so it'll technically be Christmas Day. Look out for Santa.

Ok cheers just I am going to my sisters in Cramlington for Xmas

I hope you enjoy it.

I will thanks

Q7. What's the service like on boxing day cheers

We have all out holiday timetables up on our website, give me a moment and I'll grab a link for you.

<http://www.nexus.org.uk/metro/updates...> here we are.

Q8. What time does the next metro train leave Newcastle monument heading towards Blaydon, Ryton Wylam and Prudhoe??? 2055??? Is that 5 to 9 or is that the year?

Haha! Though nexus is now working with northern to push for service improvements.

The rail line and stations are already there wouldn't cost that much surely. Or are we always going to be obsessed with the metro heading east towards the coast??

Tyne and Wear Metro Nexus would absolutely like the rail line west to have the same frequency, quality, and price as Metro enjoys. We are developing business cases, but it would need government investment to make it happen, and to give us more control.

Q9. As with the buses running Saturday services Wed to Friday is there any reason the metro aren't

As they are normal working days, we are running a normal service apart from the bank holidays

Q10. What exactly will the increased fare revenue go towards?

Nexus which sets fares makes no profit from metro, all the money from fares goes back into running the system.

I understand that. I mean what costs have increased within the system to justify increasing fares.

Main costs are high voltage electricity, wages and pensions. Average fare rise is below inflation so people will pay less in real terms in 2017

Q11. Is there any new funding coming for new trains?

Nexus is finishing a business case; government inspectors are here today to evaluate our bid for £540 million. We hope for a decision in the spring.

If the decision is positive, realistically when will we see new trains on the tracks and in use?

The early 2020s.

I'm afraid trains need to be designed and built specially for our service.

shakes head

2020's?! So your best bet is 4 - 10 YEARS? By the time that comes around people will have abandoned nexus and the service as they can't rely on it.

Will these 'funds' be specifically spent on new trains or on other pointless refurb / upgrades to stations?

This bid is for trains. Money spent on stations mainly goes to increase access for blind, wheelchair users etc – important stuff

Q12. What time metro would I need to get from Howdon to Newcastle on New Year's Eve to get there for 10pm

There's a train at 21:31 which will get you there before 22:00.

Q13. The top-up pop card needs this improvement: it needs to be able to pick the cheapest fare for your journey. The cost of a weekly saver should be deducted if usage means it's cheaper. Just like the oyster card. Any plans to implement this? We did pay £5 for it after all

It's a fair point, and it's something we would like to do if we could afford it as a public body, which makes no profit out of metro but has to make the costs of operating. But there are bigger discounts for pay as you go in 2017, which we hope will help younger people and those who need it.

It's a bit of a slap in the face when you can't implement a weekly saver into the top up pop card - especially after we've paid £5 for it and it's next to impossible to claim compensation for delayed journeys without a physical ticket

We are increasing the discount on POP PAYG in 2017 – singles are going down in price and most day prices frozen. We always try to offer value

Q14. Why are the fares increasing when the quality of the Tyne and Wear metro service has reduced in the last year?

In addition to this why are certain passengers getting reductions while commuters like me are getting increases? Does this not appear unfair to consistent passengers?

Performance has improved this year as a whole, though not as much as we would like. Commuters with MetroSavers will still enjoy great value and big discounts compared to buying day tickets.

However those discounts have lessened looking at your new fare proposals, which again puts me in a focus group where my fares increase however the quality of my areas service has been poor - especially in the last three months.

Sadly my question wasn't answered from your reply though. "Why are fares increasing...?"

That's right; the discount for annual passes has exceeded the discount for other season tickets, which is why we are now bringing them up above inflation. The £575 you pay this year was the same price we charged in 2005, before we put in the big discount that we are now taking out. Sorry, but the annual ticket is still great value compared to any other way to travel.

So to summarise, the reason you are putting the prices up of your tickets for the biggest amount in ten years is due to inflation right?

Also, I have a query about the timetable for New Years Eve - what time are the trains running between St James and South Shields?

You can find out timetable changes for the holiday period here:
<http://www.nexus.org.uk/metro/updates...>

I would also disagree with your view that it great value against any other method of travel. You only have "Metro" via nexus here - there are no other companies offering your type of travel to compare it against so it's a "It's great because we are the...See more

You also didn't confirm what I summarised - is the previous statement correct?

"The reason you are putting the prices up of your tickets for the biggest amount in ten years is due to inflation right?"

Our rail prices are the cheapest rail fares in the country, and we do want to improve service quality. The overall fare change meets the rising cost of running the system, but is below inflation. Some tickets have gone up more as we have hopefully explained.

Fair enough. I understand - I just wish more was being done, quicker and more efficient to get it to where it should be.

Could you forward the £50 increase I face next year to your employee who has put the spin into "performance has improved this year as a whole" I think they deserve it.

Q15. You first explained that "...we are now bringing them up ABOVE inflation." Then you said "The overall fare charge meets the rising cost of running the system, but is BELOW inflation". So which is it, above or below inflation? I mean really, in a Q & A session about fare increases and you can't even clearly tell me why they are going up. Very unprofessional.

Simples – a minority of tickets are going up above inflation, most are frozen or below inflation. Overall the change is below inflation, but it depends what you buy. A £50 increase is less than £1 a week.

Q16. How much will an adult monthly ticket for zones B & C be?

A 4 week Adult MetroSaver will be £53.80, so 80p more than previously
<http://www.nexus.org.uk/metrosaver-0>

Okay, thank you 😊

Q17. How are you justifying a 20% increase in all zones annual pass in two years, when zone A tickets have decreased again?

We changed the annual MetroSavers so that you buy only the zones you need. Since then the new 1 zone tickets got cheaper, the all zone has gone up to reflect the price of other tickets. It gives the same discount as other tickets and is still great value.

So the price of all zone pass subsidises the price of a one zone? Why is 1 zone price relevant to price of all zones?

No ticket subsidises another ticket; we want everyone to pay a fair price with discount for all zones with the same discount for any other ticket combination

Q18. What decision-making was there to increase the most expensive tickets and decrease the cheapest ones?

The annual tickets provide the cheapest travel over the course of the year; it is still great value and we to meet cost of running a railway

I don't deny the value of an annual pass over a day ticket. My question is more to do with zone decisions. So why decrease some? Why don't we all have the same increase as a percentage?

We're decreasing the 1 zone annual so there's more choice and it reflects the length of the journey. Also there are bigger discounts on Pop Pay As You Go to increase usage of these cards.

Q19. How much of our increased ticket prices will be reinvested in the service? As a %

100%. Nexus is a public body, all revenue goes back into the service.

In relation to this does "the service" include payments to staff, up to and including directors?

Yes all our staff is paid

And, if you're allowed to disclose that, how much did your director/CEO get paid last year/this year?

Nexus is a public body, all our accounts are available online here:
[http://www.nexus.org.uk/what-nexus/annual-reports-and-accounts ...](http://www.nexus.org.uk/what-nexus/annual-reports-and-accounts...)

How much did you pay to DB Regio?

Around £35 million each year, depending on performance

Q20. Do you have any plans or system in place for multiple refunds? So instead of individual claims we can make them monthly? Otherwise most people would/could/SHOULD make claims on about a 4/5 per month basis.

Thanks for the suggestion, we'll always look into ways to make refunds easier for passengers

Q21. Hi will there be metros on New Year's Day?

Hi, unfortunately there is no Metro service on New Year's Day

Thank yooou

Q22. Why did you refuse to run LRA train when trains were being delayed because of LRA?

The train will run whenever there is severe LRA, some days there may be lesser LRA but we get the train out when it is needed most

No-you stated on here you had no plans to run it again-so your reply is wrong. Why did you decide to not run it again this year? 1/2

We will run it again this year if there is further severe LRA

Why did you say on here it won't be running again this year then? (A number of times)

It isn't scheduled any more this year, but we will run it if there is a problem

OK - so there was a massive problem in November and it did not run. Why didn't you run it?

We've halved delays due to LRA this year. We learn day by day how to deal with LRA, thanks for the feedback

You're ignoring my question. You said it wouldn't run again this year. Now you're saying it can. So which is it?

It can

So why did you say it wouldn't run again? And why did it not run those mornings?

Q23. Is the hop-on-hop-off accordion busker on a morning an official Metro endeavour?

We know how much this annoys customers and we appreciate feedback telling us where and when they are on Metros.

Thank you, I've seen him several times around Hadrian Road/Howden, coast-wards about 9-9.15am.

Q24. How can u justify fare charge increases when metro has had the worst year of service in history the replacement bus service has been out more this year than any other the metros need replaced with brand new 1s some of the metros r older than me and I'm 30 years old

Nexus, which owns Metro and sets fares, is a public body which makes no profit, but must meet the cost of operating the system from fares and a national Government subsidy. The overall impact of the fare changes on passengers is a 1.4% increase, which is below the RPI level of inflation for the fourth year in a row and well below the average for UK train services. Many popular fares such as singles, Weekly MetroSavers and tickets for students and young people, are being frozen in price. Metro's punctuality has improved this year compared to last year, although we agree it needs to get better. Every penny raised in fares is re-invested in the service to help us do that.

Q25. I notice you have mentioned customer satisfaction has gone up this year? How is this customer satisfaction gathered and monetized? Thanks.

Nexus researchers carry out interviews with 1,000 passengers twice a year, in May and November asking their overall satisfaction and covering topics such as value for money, ease of buying tickets, station cleanliness and availability of staff. This is one of a number of measures that determines whether the company which operates trains for Nexus receives a bonus payment, or has some of its payment withheld.

Q26. Why is it only on the monthly tickets your giving the 10% discount?

There is no discount on Metro season tickets. We used to do this when you had to go into a TravelShop to buy them, because some people don't need to travel as many days as normal over Christmas. Now MetroSavers are sold online and via machines we leave it up to the customer to make a choice – eg: you could buy weekly tickets in December then go back to a four-weekly in January. Buying three weekly MetroSavers, for example, instead of a four-weekly works out cheaper than the old 10% discount and is easy to do. Network One, the separate company which sells tickets you can use across bus and Metro, still offers a 10% discount because they do not have smart tickets, and you still need to go to a TravelShop or have one sent out by post.

Q27. How can you justify price rises when the service has been appalling this year?

The average rise is 1.4% and below inflation so most paying less in real terms – Nexus makes no profit but must meet cost of operation