Rail safer than road during Covid-19

Passengers should be more confident about travelling by train safely according to the Rail Safety and Standards Board (RSSB), with the risk of Covid-19 infection being less than 0.01% on an average journey.

This is equivalent to a chance of 1 in 10,000 journeys based on an hour-long train journey in a carriage with no social distancing or face coverings. On safety grounds alone, for an individual traveller per kilometre travelled, the car is 25 times less safe than rail, cycling is 403 times, walking is 456 times, and travelling by motorcycle is 1,620 times less safe.

When the effect of the virus is taken into account and compared against the average road safety risk, the risks are almost the same (road is 1.14 times the risk of rail). Across all transport modes risks of catching the virus are very low, and certainly tolerable. Experts accept that most people will want to use a combination of different modes of transport to get around.

The report also shows that the risk more than halves if passengers wear a face covering. These have been mandatory when travelling by train since June, unless exempt. Further details and charts of the relevant risks can be found here.