

OnRoute

Brought to you by Transport for London

The road ahead for private hire



Access all areas:

improving journeys
for disabled people

Your say:

we listen to
suburban taxi drivers

Love in London:

a cabbie's tale of
hearts and flowers

Airport patrol:

policing the
trade at Heathrow

A guide to assistance dogs for private hire drivers

Passengers with assistance dogs use private hire services to make their way around the Capital. In the UK there are more than 7,000 active working dogs. Assistance dogs are your passengers too.

Guide Dogs

'We wear **white** harnesses with **yellow** fluorescent stripes.'

Guide dogs are for young people and adults who are blind or partially sighted.



Hearing Dogs for Deaf People

'We wear **burgundy** jackets.'

Hearing dogs are for adults and children with hearing impairments.



Dog AID (Assistance in disability)

'We wear **red** jackets.'

Dog AID dogs are for physically disabled adults.



Canine Partners

'We wear **purple** jackets.'

Canine Partners' assistance dogs are for physically disabled adults.



Dogs for Good

'We wear **green** jackets.'

Dogs for Good assistance dogs are for people with physical disabilities, or children with autism.



Support Dogs

'We wear **blue** jackets.'

Assistance dogs for physically disabled adults, seizure alert dogs for people with epilepsy, and autism assistance dogs for children with autism.



Medical Detection Dogs

'We wear **red** jackets.'

Medical detection dogs are for adults and children with complex health conditions.



Did you know it is against the law to refuse or charge a passenger more because they have an assistance dog? Taxi drivers or private hire drivers and operators doing so could risk losing their licence or facing a fine.

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Contact us at OnRoute@tfl.gov.uk

London Taxi and Private Hire
230 Blackfriars Road, London SE1 8PJ
For general enquiries email: tph.enquiries@tfl.gov.uk
Visit the TfL website: tfl.gov.uk/tph
0343 222 4444 (lines open from 08:00 to 18:00, Monday to Friday) for operator and driver licensing enquiries

and the Knowledge enquiries 0343 222 5555 for vehicle licensing appointments and enquiries
TPH news on Twitter: @TFLTPH
For constant updates on diversions, congestion and accidents: @TFLTrafficNews (roads)

TfL produces a weekly email with information on current and forthcoming road closures and diversions. If you would like to receive this, please contact tph.enquiries@tfl.gov.uk
The views expressed in OnRoute are not necessarily those of TfL

Welcome.

New technology has fundamentally changed the way in which the private hire trade operates in the Capital.

In response TfL has unveiled its proposals for modernising and enhancing the industry. We look at the measures it has put forward on p7 as well as your reactions to them.

We've also been to Heathrow to see how the taxi and private hire trades are policed at Europe's largest airport in the run up to Easter. From p10 you can read about TfL's compliance team and its work alongside the airport authorities and the police.

The final suburban taxi drivers' roadshow was held last month, giving yellow badge holders a chance to question the TPH team and voice any concerns. We outline the issues raised, and what action is being taken, on p15.

It can be hard to imagine the difficulties faced by disabled people as they travel around the city. Our feature on accessibility (p19) covers everything from guidance on the law for drivers to advice on recognising assistance dogs.

There's also a touch of romance, information on compliance technology, answers to questions about out-of-towners and even a singing cabbie.

But if there's something you'd like to read about that we haven't included, email OnRoute@tfl.gov.uk and we'll do our best to cover it in a future issue.

D Pilgrim
Editor

In our next issue...

- How you can get your point of view across more effectively
- Top five topics on Twitter
- A taxi marshal's tale
- What happens during a vehicle recall
- A new chapter for the London Taxi Company

News

New head of compliance

Anand Nandha has been confirmed as TfL's new head of TPH compliance. Anand has extensive experience within TfL, including time as head of TPH licensing and, more recently, leading on a number of business improvement projects for the organisation. An interview with Anand will feature in a future edition of **OnRoute** magazine.



Driver to the stars

Congratulations to 72-year-old cabbie Rodney Lewis who has just celebrated 50 years as a London taxi driver.



Rodney completed the Knowledge back in 1965 and his first taxi was an FX3. Since then he has seen more stars in the back of his cab than you can spot in the night-time sky above the Capital. From Mick Jagger to Shirley Bassey, Rodney's ferried them all with a smile.

His favourite runs are from Eurostar, King's Cross station to Paddington and reverse, because you can use the bus lane in both directions. And after all these years he still gets a buzz going past Buckingham Palace.



Two's company

The Elephant and Castle junction (above) has returned to two-way traffic, thanks to a £25m investment by TfL

The southeastern arm of the current roundabout between New Kent Road and the Elephant and Castle Link Road has closed and general traffic cannot turn left from Newington Causeway into New Kent Road. It is also unable to turn right from New Kent Road into Newington Causeway.

As part of the work a dedicated cycle route has been created through and around the junction to make it safer.

Caution at Victoria station

From midnight to 04:00 a marshalled taxi rank is operating in Terminus Place, Victoria station. Taxi drivers should only enter Terminus Place while the rank is marshalled. However, some drivers have been using the rank outside

these hours and this has been causing problems for buses at the station. If the problem continues it could mean the late night rank will be removed completely, so drivers are being asked to use the rank in Hudson's Place during the day.

TPH licensing in numbers

25,053

Taxi drivers

22,225

Black taxis

97,288

Private hire drivers

75,717

Private hire vehicles

2,863

Private hire operators

Card readers in all cabs

From October this year, every London taxi will be required to accept card payments for their fares. The move was approved by the TfL Board following a consultation in which 86 per cent of respondents backed the proposal.

With cards accepted in all taxis, Londoners and visitors will know they can always pay with plastic if they are short of cash. Customers using cards will not pay any surcharge on their fare.

All card-reading equipment will be approved by TfL, ensuring that drivers have a wide range of options to choose from.



An article on card readers in cabs was in the second issue of **OnRoute**. Go to tfl.gov.uk/tph



Taxis on top

Digital advertising boards on taxi roofs are displaying the latest traffic updates to cut congestion in the Capital.

Using GPS technology, the screens show traffic information for areas where there are delays, and in future could also be used to provide real-time updates on incidents across the road network.

The screens will be trialled for six months on 200 London black cabs.



Good enough to drink

Private car hire firm Green Tomato has introduced two hydrogen-powered vehicles that emit nothing but water vapour that is pure enough to drink

The Toyota Mirai saloons have fuel cells that use hydrogen gas – stored in two tanks behind the rear seats and under the back axle – to generate electricity. There is also a conventional battery as back-up.

The only by-product is water vapour emitted through a plastic tailpipe that condenses as it hits the cooler air.

The vehicles have a range of up to 300 miles in town with a full tank and only take about three to five minutes to refill. Additionally, they have a top speed of more than 100mph.

Josh Greedy, Green Tomato's director of marketing, said he hoped to add another five hydrogen vehicles to the fleet early this year.

Want to know more about ULEVs?

TfL is supporting the Cross River Partnership's Clean Air Better Business campaign by running an Ultra Low Roadshow for private hire drivers and operators from 09:00 to 13:00 on 24 February at St Martin-in-the-Fields, Trafalgar Square.

Backed by the Mayor's Air Quality Fund, the roadshow will explain the

changes to licensing requirements for private hire vehicles from 2020. It will give guests the chance to take a look at the ultra low emission vehicles on the market, and meet manufacturers and leasing companies to find out what they can offer.

To book your place, go to tfl.gov.uk/ultralow

Latest trend



As we went to press, two hot topics were trending on **@TfLTPH**. The first was the announcement of changes to private hire regulations, subject to TfL Board approval (see p7). The second was private hire drivers who park or wait on taxi ranks risk having their licence suspended or revoked.

The **@TfLTPH** Twitter feed now has 7,872 followers.

Talk to TPH

We're working to make it easier for customers to complain about poor service, or comment on great service. Share your taxi and private hire experiences at tfl.gov.uk/tph-comments

News

Cutting congestion

Last year, a scheme that saw TfL share its road trenches with London boroughs, utility companies and developers helped avoid the equivalent of 144,000 hours (16 years) of traffic congestion.

Consultation round-up

Private hire proposals

As part of TfL's review of private hire regulations, an independent consultancy, Mott MacDonald, has assessed the impacts of the proposals.

TfL now wants to hear the views of the private hire industry and other interested parties.

The consultation closes on Wednesday 24 February.

Hammersmith gyratory

A safer and more direct cycle route through Hammersmith gyratory is being proposed, with a larger taxi rank on the north side and a new bus lane on Beadon Road.

The consultation closes on Sunday 13 March.

North-South Cycle Superhighway

TfL is seeking views on continuing the North-South Cycle Superhighway (CS6), from Stonecutter Street to King's Cross.

The consultation closes on Sunday 20 March.



To view all TfL consultations, go to consultations.tfl.gov.uk



Driving down delays

A team of enforcement officers is busy tackling illegal driving in the Capital in a bid to cut congestion levels

The Road and Transport Enforcement team is focusing on problems such as illegal stopping or unloading of deliveries. Officers help at breakdowns and collisions and will send on-street intelligence and data back to TfL's control room. It's the first time that TfL's own officers have the power to direct traffic around congestion on London's roads.

The 40-strong unit – set to double in size this spring – is working closely with the TfL-funded Metropolitan Police Roads and Transport Policing Command. For more information, visit tfl.gov.uk/roadsafety

And finally...

Noises from taxis and the Eurostar have inspired a string quartet to create its latest musical piece, Metropolis. The Hermes Experiment (right) will be performing at St John's Smith Square on 19 April at 19:30. Tickets cost from £7. For more information, visit www.sjss.org.uk/events



Round-up on the roads

A406 Neasden

Several repair and improvement schemes are being carried out on and around the A406 North Circular Road at Neasden.

Work is under way on the eastbound side of the iron bridge and to the Drury Way junction. This will continue until May 2016.

Town centre transformation

The Archway gyratory is being given a facelift to make the town centre more pleasant, accessible and safe.

TfL is liaising closely with Islington Council on the improvements, which will include a new public space in the heart of the town, a two-way traffic system, dedicated cycle lanes and better pedestrian crossings.

Work has just started and is expected to end in summer 2017.

Find out more at tfl.gov.uk

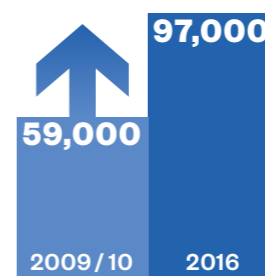
New horizons for private hire



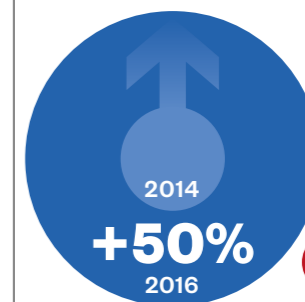
As modern technology and new ways of working radically change London's private hire industry, it's vital the regulations move with the times

Smartphones and apps are making it easier for customers to book PHVs and the effect on the industry has been dramatic, with driver numbers surging from 59,000 in 2009/10 to more than 97,000 today. TfL also estimates a 50 per cent rise in the amount of PHVs in the Congestion Charge zone over the last two years, meaning they now account for 10 per cent of all vehicles entering the area.

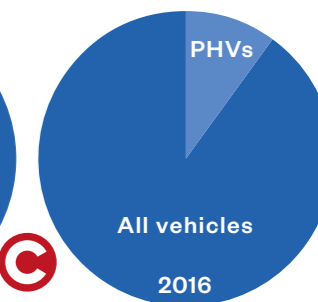
This increase has put pressure on the Capital, with congestion and illegal parking both on the up. That's why TfL held a public consultation at the end of last year on a wide range of measures – and received 16,000 responses from the public. The comments have helped TfL develop a set of proposals that will improve safety and customer service standards in the trade.



PHV driver numbers have increased from 59,000 in 2009/10 to more than 97,000 today



TfL estimates a 50 per cent rise in the amount of PHVs in the Congestion Charge zone over the last two years



Figures suggest PHVs now account for 10 per cent of all vehicles entering the Congestion Charge zone

‘The Mayor has asked TfL to investigate whether the Congestion Charge exemption can be removed for PHVs in central London to help cut congestion’



The proposals

TfL is taking forward 13 proposals, plus five amended proposals. These include:

- Private hire operators ensuring customers can speak to someone if there is a problem with their journey
- Operators recording the main destination for each journey before the trip begins
- Operators retaining all records for a year
- More robust ‘hire and reward’ insurance requirements
- Drivers carrying or displaying a copy of insurance details at all times
- A driver’s PHV licence to be revoked if their private hire driver’s licence is revoked

A decision has already been made not to take forward the following:

- Operators having to provide booking confirmation details to passengers at least five minutes before the start of their journey
- Operators having to offer the ability to pre-book up to seven days in advance
- Private hire drivers only being able to register with a single operator at a time
- Operators being prohibited from showing vehicles as available for immediate hire either visibly, for example through signs, or virtually, say via an app

The proposals include a formal English language requirement for drivers, guaranteed fare estimates for customers before their journey begins and driver and vehicle details (including a photo of the driver) also being issued to customers before the start of each trip. There are also more stringent requirements around record-keeping and providing driver and vehicle information to TfL, which will lead to better enforcement.

‘Londoners have given a very clear indication of how they would like us to shape the regulation of the private hire industry to deliver improved safety and customer service,’ said Garrett Emmerson, TfL’s chief operating officer for Surface Transport.

‘This will create the environment for a flourishing private hire industry and wide choice for customers alongside London’s iconic and world-class taxi service.’

Next steps

Three proposals will be investigated further before any decisions are taken. These are:

- Asking operators that use apps to allocate drivers to a fare to introduce safety measures preventing the app being used by someone other than the licensed driver
- Looking at whether operators should be required to indemnify customers against any failing of their driver to provide hire and reward insurance
- Developing ride-sharing guidance in conjunction with the Department for Transport

The final decision on the proposals will be taken at the TfL Board meeting being held on 17 March.

Helping London breathe easy

The Mayor has also asked TfL to investigate whether the Congestion Charge exemption can be removed for PHVs in central London to help cut congestion.

Another proposal would alter the structure of licence fees paid by operators of different sizes to better reflect compliance and enforcement costs. This would give them a financial incentive to make sure their operations are as efficient as possible, including reducing the number of vehicles being used.

What’s already happened?

Some changes have already been made to improve customer service. There will now be an enhanced topographical test for new private hire drivers covering English language

comprehension, map-reading skills and navigating to and from important London locations.

Disability equality training will become mandatory (see our feature on page 19) and a new complaints system is being introduced so customers can contact TfL if they receive poor service from a private hire company or driver.

Fast forward

As technology continues to evolve, further changes to the private hire regulations are likely to be needed. TfL will continue to review them so they meet the requirements of a changing industry and support a modern and thriving trade.



The proposals can be seen at tfl.gov.uk/consultations

» Powers over pedicabs

The Mayor has secured a commitment from the Government to take forward separate legislation that would enable TfL to regulate pedicabs. This will help tackle fare abuses and the congestion they cause in central London, particularly in the evenings.

» What you said

A lot of feedback was received by TfL after the proposals were announced.

“Introduction of English test is an excellent idea.”

“I’m surprised that some of the new regulations being touted (excuse the pun!) aren’t automatically in place already, particularly those regarding the safety and welfare of the travelling public.”

“I cannot understand why the Government is not letting TfL put a cap on PHV drivers in London.”

“More enforcement officers are required on the ground.....what good are rules, if there is nobody to ensure they are applied?”



“Congestion Charging for private hire is unacceptable. Taxis don’t pay so private hire should not either. Very unfair. Cost will be pushed on to the customer.”

“Pedicabs definitely need to be banned completely.”

In plane sight: the eyes of the law on Heathrow

More than 73 million passengers pass through Europe's largest airport each year – a potential goldmine for law-abiding drivers. But where there are rules, there are also rule-breakers...



Cliff Llewellyn, TPH compliance manager, has sound advice for any driver heading to the airport: 'When you leave the house you need your car keys and your badge or photo ID. Without them, you'll be in trouble.'

He is heading up a joint operation targeting taxis and PHVs flouting the law at Heathrow's teeming terminals. His officers are working with the Airport Authority and Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) Heathrow police team, plus trade bodies, local boroughs and others. Over the past six months, they've stepped up activities at the busy London hub.

Spend a day with them and you'll spot thousands of taxi and private hire drivers playing by the rules. But you could also see fraud, parking in pick-up and drop-off areas, incorrect licences, unfit vehicles and people illegally plying for business. That's as well as those who ignore Cliff's advice about their badge – or don't have one in the first place.

'Zero tolerance – that's the message we want to get across,' Cliff explains. 'If you comply it's a 30-second interaction with us. If drivers don't comply, it's going to take more time. We're here to protect their industry.'

» **Why is it important to wear your badge / photo ID?**

- It helps reassure passengers that you are legitimate
- Compliance officers can easily see that you are licensed
- It makes it easier to do checks
- You should wear it with pride

“ We all want the same thing: safe, legal and compliant PHVs and taxis providing the best possible service to their customers. If drivers are operating illegally, the customers are not getting this service ”

Graham Daly, head of enforcement and on-street operations at TFL

5 main airport violations

1 Drivers not wearing a badge / photo ID

This is probably the most common infringement. Drivers receive a warning letter for a first offence. If they're caught without a badge three times, they can be suspended or have their licence reviewed.

2 Private hire drivers parking in the pick-up and drop-off areas

'It's illegal,' explains Cliff. 'They will be given a ticket straight away. If we find anyone there, and they say "I'm a licensed private hire driver," we ring their operator. If they don't have a booking we will also put them forward for prosecution for plying for hire.'

3 No MOT/insurance

Vehicles with no MOT will be placed on the unfit list and the driver won't be allowed to work until they have one. Cliff explains: 'One of the big things is vehicle insurance. You can have the right hire and reward insurance, but if you're working illegally it's null and void, such as if a minicab driver takes a job without going through an operator.'

'If you have no MOT, technically you have no insurance. If we find anyone working illegally we add in no insurance. We have 100 per cent success rate on that; if they are prosecuted it's upheld in court and can attract six points and a fine of up to £500.'

4 Drivers not having the correct licence

Anyone found to be unlicensed will be arrested and their vehicles seized if police are present. Genuine licensed drivers should have their licence on them at all times.

5 Touting

TPH compliance officers work with the police to make sure all jobs are pre-booked. Declan Calvey explains: 'If we check a PHV driver with passengers on board we always make sure the booking has been made lawfully, either via the driver's PDA or by calling their operator. We ask the passengers how they came across the minicab and how they booked it.'

'Any driver caught accepting jobs without being pre-booked would be cautioned and questioned, which would lead to a prosecution.'

Visible deterrent

The TPH compliance team park their liveried vehicles in clear view at the Terminal 3 drop-off area, a strong signal to the trade and public. They don't have an office, instead they're split into smaller groups across all terminals and are out talking to drivers and customers all day.

Operations involve up to 14 officers and take place at least once a week, in eight-hour shifts. On top of this, there are a minimum of four people on duty patrolling the airport at all times.

'We can target any vehicle that stops, be it taxi or PHV, or any vehicle where we see money exchanging hands,' continues Cliff. 'We will then talk to the driver and passengers.'

Technically, customers can also be prosecuted for aiding and abetting but, by Cliff's own admission, that's pretty harsh. They would rather concentrate on the driver.

Assistant compliance manager Declan Calvey adds: 'It's busy – on my last operation we checked approximately 200 cars. I really enjoy the bustle as it's always different and it's great to meet the drivers. We never know what we are going to find.'

'It's very friendly at Heathrow. The vast majority of the drivers are really nice and cooperative and we build a rapport with them and tell them what's going on. Generally, the ones who aren't friendly are those who are doing something they shouldn't. The Heathrow staff are also great.'

Compliance officer Perry Kissin says the reaction of drivers is nearly always positive. 'They're pleased to see us doing checks. Compliant drivers are happy to know that we are out there. We try not to keep them pulled over for any longer than we have to as we recognise they have jobs to do.'

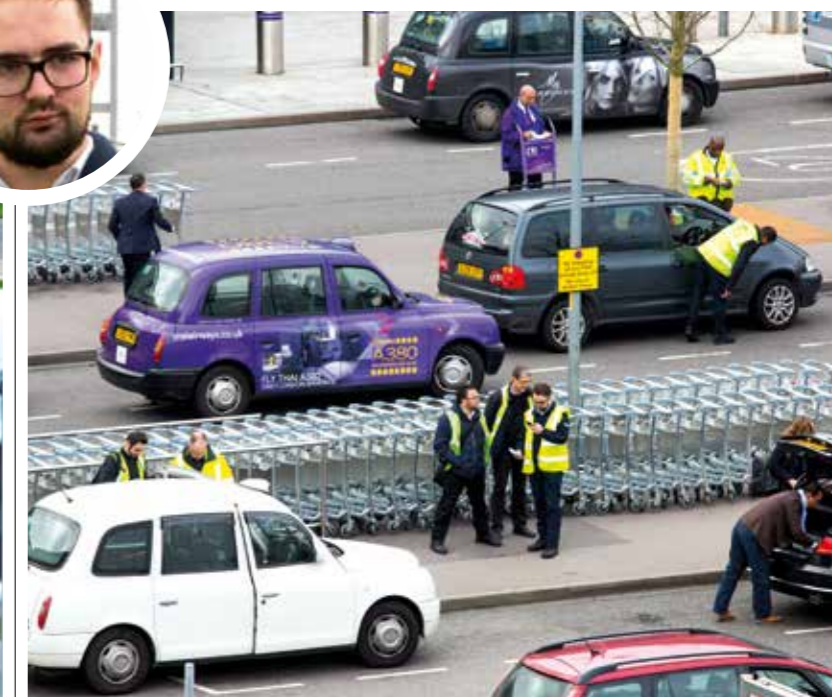
Important identification

A recent operation saw 43 per cent of the drivers checked not wearing their badge or ID – it's one of the biggest problems facing the officers at Heathrow. Without it, the individual behind the wheel could be anyone.



“ The best advice I can give to drivers? Make sure you are wearing your badge or photo ID. Also, if you're found loitering without a booking, that could be deemed as plying for hire ”

Declan Calvey, assistant compliance manager



Touting is less of an issue than people actually think. 'It tends to be more of a problem on specific, usually non-English flights,' continues Cliff. 'The drivers will be standing in the terminal with signs saying "taxi" in a foreign language and they think we won't understand it. We have a number of strategies and tactics for catching these sorts of touts – but we don't want to give too much away!'

Cliff coordinates when and where operations take place, and who the team will be working with. They join forces with any organisation able to enforce against illegal activity, including the Heathrow police and the MPS Cab Enforcement Unit, the Department for Works and Pensions and Border Force.

They also involve local authorities and other police forces as their crack-down is pushing illegal drivers away from the airport and into neighbouring roads. 'That has a knock-on effect for the residents – everyone parks in their bays,' Cliff explains.

A word of advice

The approach at Heathrow is proving effective and fewer drivers are trying their luck. The team knows the vast majority of people working the airport

follow the rules, they just want to single out those who don't. It is, after all, in the interests of the industry.

And, Cliff adds, it's easy to stay on the right side of the law if you're a bona fide cabbie or private hire driver. 'Anyone who is licensed gets a booklet that pulls out the most important things you need to know about being a driver and running a vehicle,' he says. 'TfL also gives regular compliance talks to taxi drivers who have just passed the Knowledge.'

'We say these are the dos and don'ts; if you follow them, our interaction is very pleasant and it allows us to go after the people who are stealing money from your pocket by operating illegally.'

And a final word of advice? 'The legislation is easy to abide by,' says Cliff, 'people spend more time and effort trying to get round it than actually complying. There is no excuse, it's not rocket science.'



Do you work at Heathrow? If so, and you spot something illegal, report it. Go to tfl.gov.uk/tph-report

Read more from Cliff about how technology is helping the compliance team on page 22.

Please keep it clean

Switch off your engine and give the Capital some breathing space



Estimates from TfL suggest around 59 per cent of drivers leave their engines idling when parking or loading at the side of the road in central London.

Cutting engine idling can reduce pollution, which helps to ease and prevent illnesses such as asthma, as well as heart and lung conditions. It brings down fuel costs and also limits noise nuisance.

Idling is an offence under the Road Traffic (Vehicle Emissions)

Regulations 2002 – if you fail to turn your engine off after being spoken to by a council enforcement officer, you risk a £20 fixed penalty notice.

Don't be an idler

- If you're going to be parked and stationary for more than a minute, turn off your engine as this helps reduce pollution levels both outside and inside your vehicle

In September 2020 the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) comes into force in central London. With the exception of black cabs, all cars, motorcycles, vans, minibuses, buses, coaches and HGVs travelling in the Congestion Charging zone will need to meet ULEZ exhaust emission standards or face an additional daily charge.

To find out more about ULEZ go to tfl.gov.uk/driving and click on **Ultra Low Emission Zone**

‘Approximately 9,400 equivalent deaths are attributed to poor air quality in London. This is based on levels of PM₁₀ and NO₂ measured in 2010’

» Pollution red alert

On 21 January this year, 15 civilian parking enforcement officers, nine street enforcement officers and eight environmental officers in the Square Mile were told to focus on encouraging motorists to turn off idling engines to limit killer fumes as the City was on 'black pollution' alert for a third day.

Knowing your PM₁₀ from your NO_x

Particulate matter (PM₁₀)

Road traffic emissions, particularly from diesel vehicles, are the main source of airborne PM₁₀ in cities. PM₁₀ particles in the atmosphere are small enough to penetrate deep into the lungs so can pose significant health risks ranging from changes in the respiratory tract and impaired pulmonary function, to increased risk of death from respiratory diseases or lung cancer.

Nitrogen oxides (NO_x)

NO_x is emitted when fuel is burned and is a term used to describe a mixture of nitric oxide (NO) and nitrogen dioxide (NO₂). NO is produced in much greater quantities, but it turns to NO₂ in the atmosphere. NO₂ can harm the bronchial system and concentrations frequently exceed air quality standards in many European cities.

» Did you know?

Switching off a vehicle's engine when it's stationary for more than one minute could reduce PM₁₀ emissions by around

290g
per day

or at least

90kg
per year

This is the equivalent of a medium-sized diesel car travelling

2.5
million
kilometres

– or

62
trips around
the world

Sound of the suburbs

The talking's over – now it's time for action

A suburban taxi driver makes his point

In December and January TPH hit the road so London's yellow badge drivers could have their say.

At nine suburban taxi roadshows, drivers from each sector put their concerns to some of the TPH senior management team. A long list of issues was compiled, covering everything from area extensions and island ranks to touting and taxi marshalling at City Airport. These will now be investigated by TPH and updates will follow shortly.

'One action that has already been implemented is to improve the TfL website,' says Silka Kennedy-Todd, senior relationship manager for TPH. 'A page for suburban taxi drivers has been added and can be accessed at

tfl.gov.uk/suburban-forum. All the actions that came out of the roadshows will be logged and published on this page and progress will also be communicated through Twitter and our weekly email.'

We'll keep people updated through this magazine too – a page for suburban drivers will appear in future issues.

Question time

During the events, many questions focused on new and existing ranks, compliance issues, regulations and problems with signage.

Some people were worried there were already too many licensed drivers in their sector and wanted a

cap on numbers. Others voiced their frustration that they can set down passengers outside their sector, but cannot pick up in that area. But, as Helen Chapman, general manager TPH, explained, TfL does not have the legal power to implement a cap on numbers.

Other topics covered included the Night Tube, card readers in cabs and the Ultra Low Emission Zone.

'I think having these roadshows is a good idea. I'd like TPH to take our views on board and implement the concerns of drivers early,' said sector one driver Wendy Bell. 'We all know drivers are struggling to make ends meet and it is difficult for all parties, but I hope behind closed doors TfL is working hard to protect the black cab industry.'

Join the forum

Following the roadshows, TPH is setting up a forum for suburban taxi drivers. Initially, plans for the forum were for drivers who took part in the roadshows to nominate two representatives from their sector to attend.

Instead, a decision has been taken to issue an open invitation to anyone keen to join, and deal with sector-specific issues separately.

TPH will meet with each sector

once a year. The meetings will be open to all suburban drivers from the particular sector on a first come first served basis. Trade representatives are also welcome

The meetings will last for two hours. Dates will be sent to drivers shortly, with a link to actions from the roadshows and updates on any progress made.

To find out more, contact tph.enquiries@tfl.gov.uk

Top: suburban drivers at the roadshows giving their opinions

Below: a driver shows Helen Chapman evidence of touting



Making progress

As well as launching a vastly improved Twitter feed, this magazine and a weekly bulletin, other good work is already being done within TPH.

For instance, research has been carried out into supply, demand and market sizes for taxis and private hire vehicles in London and will be used to influence future initiatives to benefit the trade. The research included:

- 1,500 on-street surveys among the public
- Taxi wait-time investigations at 310 locations
- Around 650 mystery traveller surveys

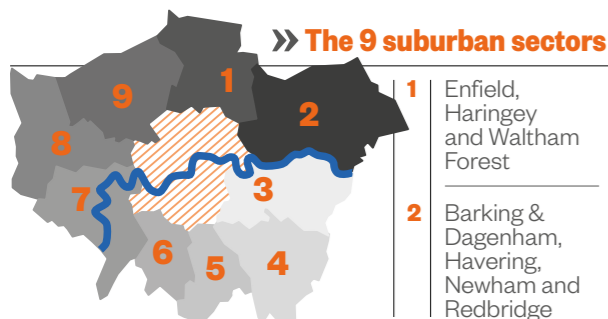
- Asking 300 taxi drivers to keep diaries covering two days of hires to provide more detailed journey information

Later this spring, an investigation will look at all London taxi ranks to identify any improvements that could be made, for instance changing kerb heights and making them more wheelchair accessible.

Taking action

A selection of actions from the first four sector roadshows can be found on p17 – we'll publish more from the remaining sessions in a future issue.

If you would like to share your thoughts on the events or the issues raised, email OnRoute@tfl.gov.uk



A word from the drivers



Lee Scarborough, sector 5

“I'll definitely be coming along to the forum and I think this

roadshow is a very good thing; it's given me a lot more confidence in TfL. If they can get more ranks for us that would be ideal. We used to have 12 ranks in Croydon, now we

are down to six. The main trouble in Croydon is we don't have one main venue where we could all work, so we rely on the station and it is just getting crazy down there.”

Larryns Geoghegan, sector 4

“It's been really good to get some reassurance on the future of the suburban taxi trade

because we all want to save it. It's hard out there and drivers are all having to work longer hours to make a living. Getting more ranks is really important because it gives us more options for picking up customers; it's like another bite at the cherry.”



Nicholas Reeves and Sandra Lawrence-Reeves, sector 4

“We're both drivers in the

Bromley and Orpington areas and the most important thing for this sector, not just for the cabbies but also for the customers, is that we need more ranks because we've lost

quite a few. Also better signage. It's a really positive thing to have these roadshows, some drivers will moan about the same things, but it's great that we are being listened to.”

Graeme Howgate, sector 5

“I've been doing this for 22 years and I want to maintain a certain standard of living,

but looking forward I fear for the suburban industry. There are so many people vying for the same customers I think fares will have to rise. There will always be people who want to use black cabs but I think our work will continue to drop off.”



What you asked for

Sector 1

- Investigate implementing a taxi rank by White Hart Lane for Tottenham Hotspur home games
- To see what is being put in place for taxis with the new stadium and area redevelopment
- Look at allegations of touting at Tottenham Hale station
- Can a taxi rank be placed directly outside Alexandra Palace?
- Consider a feeder rank on Stroud Green Road and/or Rock Street to ease congestion at Finsbury Park station

Sector 2

- Investigate allegations of touting outside clubs in Woodford and Romford
- Look into requests for ranks at Queen's Hospital, ExCeL Arena, Hornchurch station and Trotsky's nightclub, Commercial Road
- Investigate green badge drivers using Hornchurch station, Canning Town station and Westfield taxi ranks to rest
- Contact City Airport regarding insufficient marshalling support

Sector 8

- At present, Tube staff use cabs booked via Radio Taxis to get to and from night shifts. Check what will happen to the contract when the Night Tube is launched
- Update the TfL website so the distinctions between yellow badge and green badge licensees are clearer
- Consider implementing new taxi ranks when Crossrail begins operation at Hanwell, Hayes and Harlington, Southall, West Drayton and West Ealing stations
- Look at introducing new ranks at Acton High Street (outside Morrisons), and Harefield, Hillingdon and Ealing hospitals

Sector 9

- Investigate the location of taxi ranks at Edgware, Golders Green and Hendon Central stations, which are too far away for wheelchair users (although the stations are fully accessible)
- Investigate poor signage at Golders Green
- Find out why drivers are currently having to pay to use the Edgware Road station rank
- Look into implementing a rank at Wembley Central station and investigate private hire drivers misusing the Hilton Hotel rank by Wembley station
- See whether sector 9 could be extended to cover NW3, the Royal Free Hospital, Belsize Park and NW6

For more information on island ranks and extension areas, go to tfl.gov.uk/tph
Full actions for all nine sectors are available at tfl.gov.uk/suburban-forum

My road will be more welcoming

Iddo, Elephant and Castle



We're transforming junctions and pedestrian areas, including making them greener and improving accessibility. Find out how our plan will make life better for Londoners at tfl.gov.uk/roads



At your assistance



London's taxis and minicabs are a vital lifeline, offering independence and freedom to many disabled people. But what are your obligations as a driver?

A helping hand and a smile are always welcome

The Capital has a wide range of accessible transport options to help everyone get around. All taxis are fully accessible,

while many private hire companies pride themselves on the service they offer their disabled customers. But, for some passengers, their

journeys are made more difficult by drivers who don't know or fail to fulfil their obligations, or don't know how much help they should offer.



‘It’s illegal for taxi and private hire drivers and operators to refuse a passenger with an accredited assistance dog. It’s also illegal to charge them extra’

Low-down on the law

Although it’s illegal for drivers to refuse a passenger with an accredited assistance dog, this does sometimes happen particularly in PHVs.

It is also an offence for those customers to be charged more, however this is an increasing problem in London. Drivers or operators who are caught doing this risk prosecution and fines of up to £1,000. In addition their licence may be revoked.

The Guide Dogs UK charity gets up to three complaints a week from visually impaired passengers who have been refused a ride, charged extra for their dog or have received bad treatment.

Roy Benjamin, 73, has been blind since the age of 25. He says: ‘Most black cab drivers are excellent. My biggest complaint has been with licensed minicabs. I’ve been refused on occasions and had to report one company as they would only take me if I paid £10 to have the car valeted because of my assistance dog.’

Winnie Lam, a policy support officer with TfL, also has an assistance dog. She has had similar experiences to Roy when travelling around the Capital.

‘They’ve said, “I can take you but not your dog,” and if they do take us, I’ve had instances of either the driver or the operator, when I pre-book, saying they’ll have to charge extra as they need to clean the vehicle afterwards,’ she says.

Instead she just wants drivers to make her and her dog feel welcome.



Did you know? TfL takes complaints seriously and prosecutes where there is enough evidence to do so.

- Since March 2015, TPH has received 46 complaints from customers whose guide dogs have been refused by private hire operators or drivers, which have all been investigated
- So far, there have been four convictions (one operator and three drivers) and all have received fines
- Ten of the complaints are currently going through the court process and six are awaiting summons to be issued. A further six investigations are being actively pursued
- Currently, there is one ongoing investigation into an extra charge for carrying an assistance dog

An aid to understanding

As a driver it can sometimes be hard to know what your responsibilities are, so TfL has just launched a new campaign to help. Posters and leaflets will be made available to private hire drivers and operators. They will make them more aware of their obligation towards disabled people – busting some of the common myths around assistance dogs – and provide clear guidance on the law.

The posters will also be placed at all six vehicle inspection centres and the TPH counter service.

A leaflet, available in accessible formats including Braille and large print, will also give customers a greater understanding of their legal rights in both taxi and private hire vehicles. It also outlines how they can complain about bad service.

Mindful and patient

And it isn’t just about the needs of people with assistance dogs or wheelchair users. Other passengers may have learning difficulties or face communication barriers, or might experience mobility problems because of age, illness or recent hospital treatment.

Winnie explains: ‘Disability is not always obvious; it can be easy to dismiss someone with a learning disability as being drunk. Drivers need to be mindful, patient, and ready to adapt and be flexible.’



On Twitter

TfL's accessibility Twitter feed (@tflaccess) now has more than **16,500** followers. Customers can get updates on accessibility issues and can make complaints.

“I make sure I come out of my vehicle and offer assistance; passengers will request you as a driver if they have received a good service from you and know they will get it all the time”

Patrick Hunter, PHV driver for 30 years



With thanks to Dave Kent, Guide Dogs and Lauren West, Trailblazers



Assistance dogs



Guide dogs

Help: Blind and partially-sighted people
Wear: White harnesses with yellow fluorescent stripes

Hearing dogs



Help: Hearing impaired adults and children
Wear: Burgundy jackets

Dogs for Good



Help: Physically disabled people or children with autism
Wear: Green jackets

Canine Partners



Help: Physically disabled adults
Wear: Purple jackets

Dog A.I.D



Help: Physically disabled adults
Wear: Red jackets

Support dogs



Help: Physically disabled or autistic people. Can also offer seizure alerts
Wear: Blue jackets

Medical detection dogs



Help: Adults and children with complex health conditions
Wear: Red jackets



Need more help?

- TfL has produced a number of short films about accessibility and transport in London. These give a broader view of the measures in place to help disabled people get around the Capital. Go to tfl.gov.uk/transport-accessibility
- You can find out more about accessibility and guidance for drivers at tfl.gov.uk/tph. Click on ‘ranks, regulation and policy’
- If you have further questions you can contact TfL by using the online form at tfl.gov.uk/tphcomments
- You can also email at tph.enquiries@tfl.gov.uk, or write to **London Taxi and Private Hire, PO Box 71087, London SE1P 5TH**
- If you’d like to talk to someone, you can call **0343 222 4444** between 08:00 and 18:00, Monday to Friday

Digitally enhanced

Forget old school pen and paper – the TPH compliance team is embracing the digital age

Back in the day, compliance officers relied on their notebooks to record offence details. Now, a small hand-held device connects them to a vast bank of vital data in seconds.

Looking just like a mobile phone, it contains a scanner that reads bar codes to check taxi and private hire licences. The built-in camera is essential – photos of people, places and vehicles can be used as evidence. And information on all licensees is just a tap away.

‘We can pull up details of anyone who is licensed with us – a driver, operator or vehicle,’ explains TPH compliance manager Cliff Llewellyn. ‘We can access photographs so we can verify the person driving the vehicle is actually the person we should be speaking to. It’s a very good tool for us.’

The kit is also linked to the Operation Neon database. The joint initiative between TfL, Westminster City Council and the Capital’s police authorities was launched last May, with officers out every weekend to tackle illegal taxis and minicabs.

Says Cliff: ‘The database contains details of everything recorded since Neon began – from unlicensed vehicles and drivers not having their ID with them, to repeat offenders. This information helps determine where our compliance activity should take place.’

The technology is a massive advantage in the team’s work to regulate the trade. It’s making enforcement operations more effective, offers data in an instant, is a time saver and links officers on the ground to those back at base.

‘We have to record the time, location and nature of any offence,’ Cliff continues. ‘If we find anything amiss and decide to take it further, we input it through the device so the action is automatically generated back in the office. We can even capture the person’s signature on the hand-held so they can’t argue that they weren’t there when the offence was committed.’

“ We can pull up details of anyone who is licensed with us – a driver, operator or vehicle ”

Cliff Llewellyn,
TPH compliance manager

(Anti-clockwise)
Compliance officers on patrol; a handheld device to check data; using the device’s scanner to read a licence bar code; an officer checks tread depth with a torch



Joint force

Officers also have smartphones that allow them to check information held by other agencies, such as MOT and road tax details from the DVLA. The team is now working with the Motor Insurance Bureau on ways to get automatic access to its database via a vehicle’s registration number. This will help on-street officers quickly identify uninsured drivers who could be putting the public at risk.

Another valuable resource is the Transport Policing Online Mapping Application. This contains intelligence on illegal activities gathered by police, the compliance team, road traffic inspectors, HMRC and even the public.

All this information is analysed by TfL compliance delivery manager Edgerton Rodgers and his colleagues.

‘It is basically an intelligence store that is constantly being updated,’ he explains. ‘It allows us to spot trends and produce analysis to support future compliance operations.’

Higher spec tech

Plans for 2016 include refining the quality and frequency of the information Edgerton’s team provides to help make compliance operations even more effective.

It’s also hoped that, in the coming years, advances in technology will lead to a new app-based device that can be used by all of London’s enforcement officers. They’ll be able to report anything they see out on the street – from damaged bus shelters and street furniture to driving offences, fare dodging, touting and uninsured vehicles.

Edgerton says: ‘Ultimately what we are looking at is an enforcement team where everyone is using the same tools. This will help us target, more effectively, those who choose to operate illegally.’

Tell TPH via Twitter

One tool you can use to help the compliance team is the Twitter feed @TfLTPH.



To report touting or other illegal cab activity, please provide as much detail as possible including the licence plate number, date, time and location of the offence. A picture of the vehicle is helpful.



Under inspection

Kevin Dorsett and his colleagues check around 100 vehicles a day at Staples Corner inspection centre. He explains what they look for



The first thing we inspect is the documentation including log book, insurance and MOT if the vehicle is over a year old.



We also check the vehicle identification number (VIN) corresponds to the vehicle registration document.



We then do a full check of the interior. We look for wear and tear and make sure the vehicle is presentable, safe and comfortable.



We have to ensure all the seats are securely fixed in their frames.

“ Please check you have ALL your documentation with you. If you are unsure about what to bring, look on the TfL website. Recently we’ve had drivers showing us a PDF of paperwork on their mobiles, which we cannot accept ” Kevin Dorsett, vehicle inspector



It's really important to check the seatbelts are not sticking or locking.



In taxis we have to make sure both the taximeter and door locking systems are in full working order.



Also in taxis, we make sure that the ramp is fully operational.



We use a special device to check the rear stop lights are working.



We then inspect the exterior including the bodywork, paintwork, lights, windscreen and mirrors.



The tyres should have no cuts or blisters and still have the correct amount of tread on them.



We use mirrors to look under vehicles for fluid leakage, damage to the exhaust and corrosion.



We raise taxis and private hire vehicles on a ramp to inspect their undercarriages.

Words of wisdom

- One very simple thing could mean your vehicle fails its examination, so please check you have everything you need before you come to the centre
- Also, have a walk around your vehicle and ask

yourself whether it needs to be cleaned? Are any of the mirrors cracked or does anything else need replacing? Have a look your at vehicle from the customer's point of view – would you want to get into it?

●●● To download the vehicle inspection manual go to tfl.gov.uk/tph. Go to licensing and then applying for a vehicle licence.

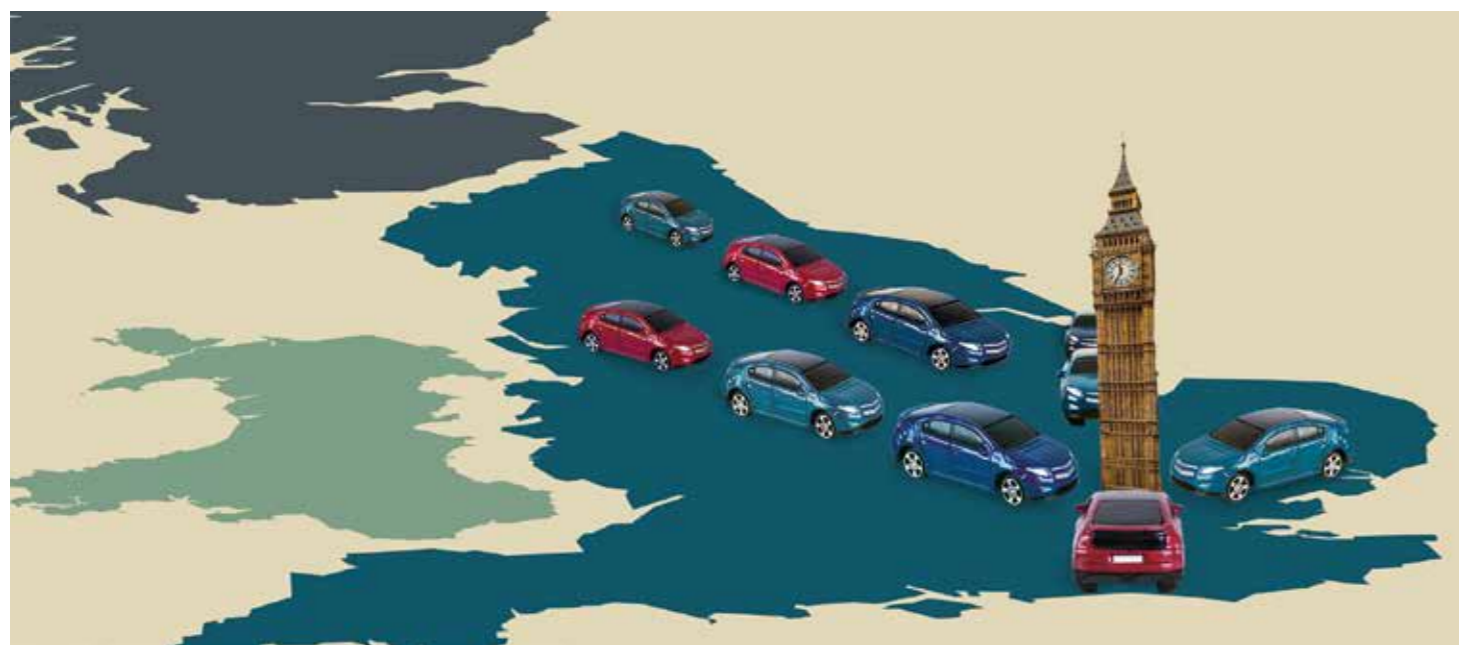
Did you know?

TfL also has a Mobile Inspection Unit. This is a modified van that Kevin drives to the main dealerships and clients with large fleets so he can check all their vehicles.

Going with the territory



The TPH Twitter feed is full of sightings of out-of-town private hire drivers picking up and setting down in central London. But are they breaking the rules?



Q. There are private hire vehicles from all over the UK working in London. What is the legal position?

A. If a private hire operator licence, driver licence and vehicle licence have all been issued by the same licensing authority, a private hire vehicle can undertake pre-booked journeys anywhere in England and Wales. It doesn't matter where the journey starts, passes through, or ends.

This is also the case for a London licensed private hire operator. They can pick up or drop off a pre-booked passenger anywhere in the UK as long as the booking was accepted at its London operating centre.

All PHV journeys must be pre-booked. It is illegal for any private hire driver, regardless of which authority they are licensed by, to ply for hire in London.

» **Provided the operator, driver and vehicle licences have been issued by the same licensing authority, the law permits a private hire vehicle to undertake pre-booked journeys anywhere in England and Wales**

Q. What is TfL doing to stop out-of-towners plying for hire in London?

A. TfL's enforcement and compliance team has investigated every out-of-towner report from the Twitter feed, and none have been found to be acting illegally.

However, TfL is concerned about the number of out-of-town private hire vehicles coming into London and is lobbying the Government on issues such as greater enforcement powers and a clearer definition of 'plying for hire'.

Q. Can out-of-town taxis use ranks in London?

A. No, only TfL-licensed black cabs can ply for hire or use taxi ranks in the Capital. Any non-London licensed taxi parked at one of the city's ranks will be reported and asked to move if seen by a compliance officer.

Private hire vehicles are not permitted to use taxi ranks under any circumstances.

Q. Do out-of-town drivers have to be registered with TfL to accept a booking that starts or finishes in London?

A. No, but they must be licensed by the same authority as the operator that accepted the booking.

Section 11 of the Deregulation Act 2015 makes it legal for private hire operators outside London to sub-contract bookings to other operators, including those licensed by a different authority.

‘ **There is no geographical restriction in the 1998 Private Hire Vehicles (London) Act as to where journeys can start and finish** ’

Top hats and taxi tales

From matches to dispatches, cabbie Ian Beetlestone takes a rear-view look at love in London.



There is something romantic about the black cab. The long history; the association with simpler, older times; the beautiful, classic curves, and the sense of privacy you have in your own secluded space as the bustling city blurs by.

The most romantic thing that's ever happened to my cab was when I was hailed by a top-hat-and-tailed chap while driving past All Souls Church, Langham Place. He was best man at a wedding that had just taken place and he asked me to wait a few moments. Shortly after, the newlyweds and entire wedding party emerged. There were a few quick photos on the steps and then the bride, groom and photographer jumped in the back of the cab and had me run them up to Regent's Park for more pictures.

Leaving them at the gardens in Park Square East I drove away beaming, the back of the cab littered with rose petals. Mainly I just loved that they'd walked straight out of the church and hailed a cab in the street – no pre-booking and white ribbons on the bonnet, instead an arm thrust out and a real, working, metered black cab commandeered the old-fashioned way. I thought it wonderfully romantic, and wonderfully London. And it made me enormously proud of my trade, and happy that this was what they'd wanted to do as part of their perfect day. It was a privilege to oblige.

“ **You do occasionally wonder what's going on back there in that private space, but you don't look** ”

You do occasionally wonder what's going on back there in that private space, but you don't look. My rear-view mirror is angled to get the back window and the top of their heads, and I ain't turning around. One couple – quite drunk and good fun – asked for music. All I had was an album by a pretty sensuous New Orleans Latin jazz band. They seemed to like it. They ended up on the floor and there was quite a lot of giggling. I think it was mainly the booze that got them there. I think they just fell off the seat. I think they still had all their clothes on.

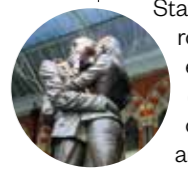
I picked another couple up with loads of bags and took them to a block of flats in Vauxhall Bridge Road. Only some of the bags came out, and then they stood in each others' arms for an eternity in the forecourt. Eventually he got back

in and asked me to take him on to the Gatwick Express. I'm really not all that sentimental but I have to say it was heartbreaking as we drove down the road with him sitting there, bleakly silent. I helped him out with the bags at Victoria, rounded the fare down and found I couldn't stop myself giving him a little pat on the shoulder as I bade him safe travels.

He went through the barriers to get his train and I put my 'for hire' light back on and drove out into Buckingham Palace Road. Plenty more fish in the sea, you know.

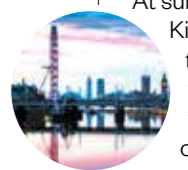
Ian's top romantic spots

St Pancras station



Stations are intrinsically romantic but this one especially, with the coming and going of trains to Europe and the platform-side Champagne bar for a long, drawn-out goodbye.

Waterloo Bridge



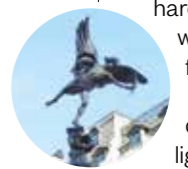
At sunset, to quote The Kinks, it's 'paradise' – though I prefer the view east towards the City. I can't think of a better place to stand with your arm around the one you love.

Oxo Tower Wharf



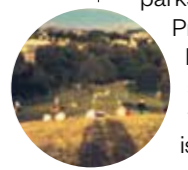
Specifically, the two old piers that jut out from the Thames Path here. You can often stand at the end and have the river and that breathtaking view of St Paul's all to yourself.

Piccadilly Circus



A list such as this would hardly be complete without this most famous meeting place of lovers, the quintessence of city lights and adventure, topped off with Eros.

Primrose Hill



There are more beautiful parks in London, but Primrose Hill has the loveliest view. The sea-side feel of the painted houses is utterly charming.



On the road with the Singing Cabbie

How Ol' Blue Eyes caught taxi driver Aiden Kent's ear

Plenty of drivers have stories to tell about fares they've picked up and the weird and wonderful things that get left behind in their taxis, and Aiden Kent is no exception.

But the cabbie, who hails from Bromley, has special reason to remember the day he gave a record producer a lift. 'We got chatting and after he got out I found he'd left behind a pile of CDs,' says Aiden.

'I was stuck in traffic in Baker Street and just picked up one of the CDs and put it on. It was a Frank Sinatra record. I couldn't believe it. It blew me away.'

A cabbie for a dozen or so years and keen to try something new, he had just completed a tour guide course. But with the voice of Ol' Blue Eyes purring through his speakers, he came to a life-changing decision.

'I phoned my wife and told her I had made up my mind – I'd become a singer, not a tour guide.'

As a kid, he says, he'd sung in bands and done his fair share of karaoke, but never taken it further. Now, he decided to employ

a singing teacher. 'It's the best thing I ever did,' he says, looking back. 'After three months she said: "You definitely have something. You should do it".'

Aiden got some business cards printed, made a demo tape and started with a few gigs in local pubs. That was 14 years ago, and his second career as the Singing Cabbie has been growing ever since.

Nowadays he performs at birthday parties, weddings and corporate events as well as at pubs, restaurants and even care homes in his neighbourhood. His musical tastes are varied but he models himself on

the cabaret crooners of the '50s and '60s, such as the so-called Rat Pack of Sammy Davis Jr, Joey Bishop, Dean Martin and Sinatra.

'I like lots of genres and artists but I always come back to Sinatra in the end,' he says.

Not surprisingly his best calling card is his cab. Emblazoned with his image, name and Singing Cabbie logo, it's certainly an eye-catcher. The interior doesn't disappoint, either – red carpet, red leather upholstery and Aiden himself in his work outfit of white shirt and bow tie.

And when passengers ask him about it he'll give them a few bars of a favourite number and offer them his business card. It works a treat. 'I get a lot of bookings that way,' he says.

'I picked up a woman at the Savoy once, who waved a ring and said "look, I've just got engaged".'

I sang to her and she was blown away. I ended up singing at her wedding.'

There has been the occasional disappointment, such as an unsuccessful audition for the TV show *The Voice*. 'They

loved the Singing Cabbie idea but I didn't get a chair turn and it didn't go out live unfortunately.'

Alongside his cabaret engagements, Aiden also takes bookings for private London tours in his taxi (bottle of champers included) and the cab remains integral to his singing career.

Would he ever give up driving? 'If a big enough offer came along, yes,' he says. 'But the great thing about driving is that you are your own boss in the cab and you can work around both jobs.'

The compliments undoubtedly help, too. 'When they get out, some people say "that's the best cab ride I've ever had".'

“ I phoned my wife and told her I had made up my mind – I'd become a singer, not a tour guide ”

» Top 10 songs for the road

- 1. Big Yellow Taxi**
(Joni Mitchell)
- 2. King Of The Road**
(Roger Miller)
- 3. Rearview-mirror**
(Pearl Jam)
- 4. Taxi Driver**
(3 Mustaphas 3)
- 5. Midnight Shift**
(John Cooper Clarke)
- 6. Taxi Ride**
(Tori Amos)
- 7. Tijuana Taxi**
(Herb Alpert & the Tijuana Brass)
- 8. Taxi Cab**
(Vampire Weekend)
- 9. Death Cab For Cutie**
(Bonzo Dog Doo Dah Band)
- 10. Final Taxi**
(Wreckless Eric)

Are you a taxi or private hire driver who also has a secret talent? Email OnRoute @tfl.gov.uk and let us know.

Letters

Contact us at OnRoute@tfl.gov.uk. We will print a selection of emails every issue – and there's a £20 Amazon voucher on offer for the best.

Star letter Tavistock Place Road trial

Never in my 15 years of working in London as a proud cab driver have I been more desperate to see the Tavistock Place Road closures changed. Surely common sense has to prevail?

A begging cab driver

The Tavistock Place Road trial is a London Borough of Camden initiative planned to be in place for 12 months. During the trial the council will write to local residents and businesses to see if they feel the changes should be made permanent.

The road forms part of an important east/west cycle link, but because of its width it is not possible to provide more space for walking and cycling without reducing the space for motor traffic. The trial will test a potential solution to these issues.

Details are available at camden.gov.uk (go to **transport and streets**). You can respond at torringtontavistocktrial@camden.gov.uk

Nigel Hardy, head of sponsorship, road space management, TfL

»» Road rage

I would just like you to have some idea of the bottomless rage I feel towards your organisation as I watch the slow decline of what has always been regarded as the finest taxi service in the world.

Driving a taxi for 10 to 12 hours a day used to be reasonably rewarded. And so it should.

Now the job is barely worth doing. Nobody's making any money. We're all in a race to the bottom.

Murray Gordon



We have the utmost respect for taxi drivers. Our city's taxi trade is seen as the gold standard across the world and we want to ensure that the industry flourishes for many years to come. To support this, in late September we published our Taxi and Private Hire Strategy, which sets out our vision for the future of taxi and private hire services in London.

Clearly, the private hire market in London has changed significantly in recent years, given the rise in technology. With this in mind, we are looking to modernise the private hire regulations we have in place – which haven't been changed since they were implemented in 1998 – to ensure that they reflect the world in which we now live.

I can assure you that we are committed to improving the overall standards of both trades to ensure they continue to prosper.

Silka Kennedy-Todd, taxi and private hire senior relationship manager

»» Insuring the public's safety

What's happening re: H and R insurance for private hire drivers? Do they need it full time and have to display it?

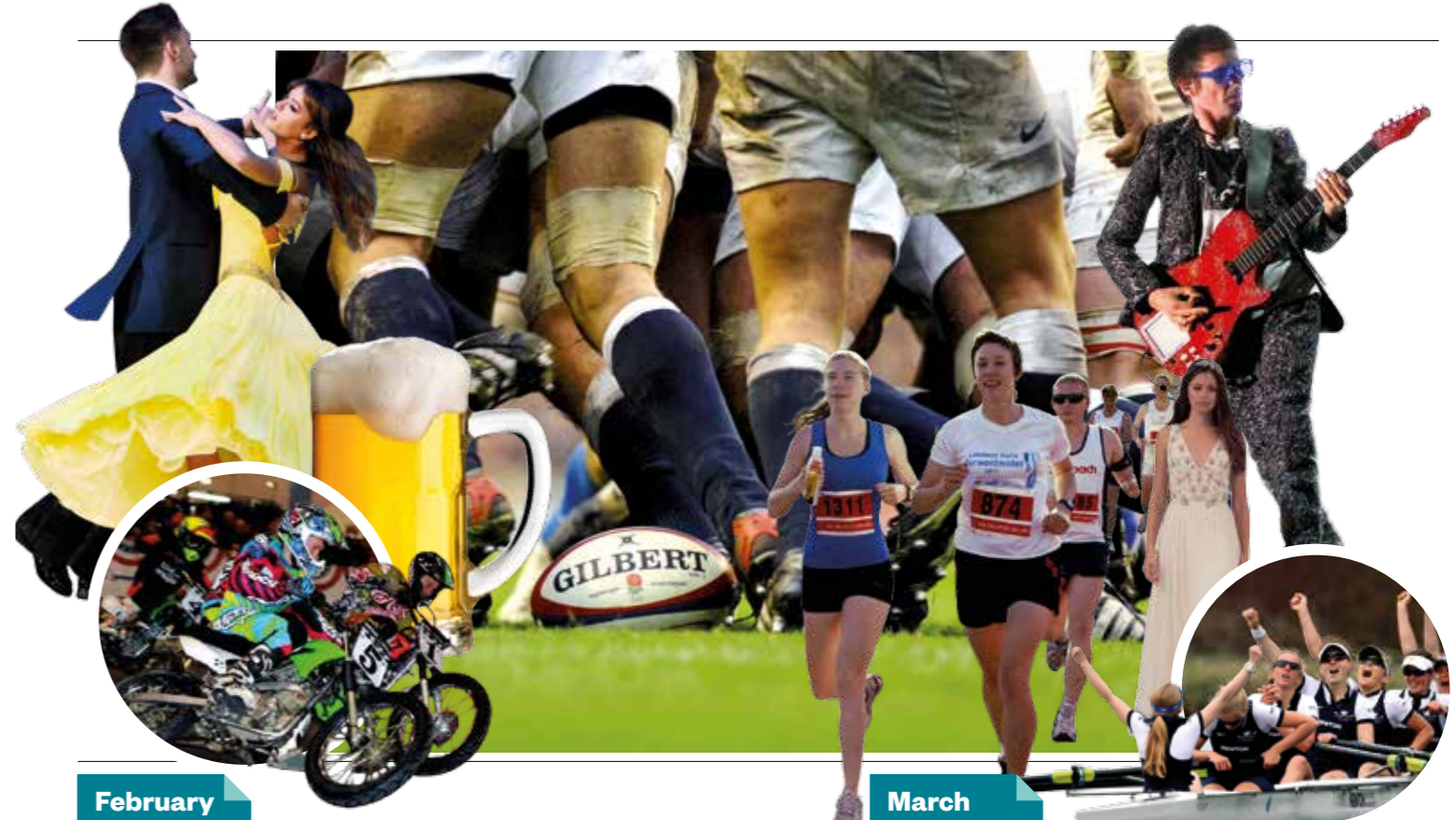
Ken G Taxi (via Twitter)

TfL is proposing that drivers will be required to have hire and reward (H and R) insurance in place at all times while registered to an operator. This is an amended proposal from TfL's recent private hire regulations consultation.

At present, H and R insurance is only required to be in place when a vehicle is actually being used as a private hire vehicle, which can be difficult to enforce. The proposal would prevent them being allocated jobs unless they have H and R insurance in place.

TfL is also proposing that private hire drivers must carry or display a copy of their H and R insurance at all times.

Calendar



February

- 11 February**
Strictly Come Dancing, Wembley Arena (also 12 February)
- 12 February**
MCN motor cycle show, ExCeL Arena (until 14 February)
- 13 February**
The Who, Wembley Arena
- 15 February**
25 Years of Reeves and Mortimer, Hammersmith Apollo (also 16 February)
- 16 February**
Ennio Morricone, O2 Arena
- 19 February**
The Baby Show, ExCeL Arena (until 21 February)
- 20 February**
Saracens vs Gloucester rugby match, Allianz Park
- 24 February**
BRIT Awards, O2 Arena
- 25 February**
Business Travel 2016, Olympia (also 25 February)
- 26 February**
The National Wedding Show 2016, Olympia (until 28 February)
- 27 February**
Ultimate Fighting Championships, O2 Arena
- 28 February**
Professional Beauty, ExCeL Arena (also 29 February)
- 25 February**
Music Education Expo 2016, Olympia (also 26 February)
- 19 February**
The Baby Show, ExCeL Arena (until 21 February)
- 20 February**
Saracens vs Gloucester rugby match, Allianz Park
- 16 February**
Ennio Morricone, O2 Arena
- 13 February**
The Who, Wembley Arena
- 12 February**
MCN motor cycle show, ExCeL Arena (until 14 February)
- 11 February**
Strictly Come Dancing, Wembley Arena (also 12 February)

March

- 2 March**
CAMRA North London Beer Festival, The Camden Centre (until 4 March)
- 3 March**
Spring Knitting and Stitching Show 2016, Olympia (until 6 March)
- 5 March**
Saracens vs Northampton rugby match, Allianz Park
- 11 March**
Country 2 Country concert, O2 Arena (also 13 March)
- 12 March**
X Japan concert, Wembley Arena
- 14 March**
Muse, O2 Arena (also 15 March)
- 18 March**
Ideal Home Show, Olympia (until 3 April)
- 19 March**
WE Day youth celebration event, Wembley Park
- 20 March**
North London Half Marathon, Allianz Park
- 25 March**
Good Friday
- 27 March**
BNY Mellon Boat Race, Putney
- 28 March**
Easter Monday
- 19 March**
Harlequins vs Worcester rugby match, The Stoop
- 24 February**
BRIT Awards, O2 Arena
- 25 February**
Business Travel 2016, Olympia (also 25 February)
- 26 February**
The National Wedding Show 2016, Olympia (until 28 February)
- 27 February**
Ultimate Fighting Championships, O2 Arena
- 28 February**
Professional Beauty, ExCeL Arena (also 29 February)
- 28 February**
Capital One Cup final, Wembley Stadium
- 25 February**
Music Education Expo 2016, Olympia (also 26 February)
- 19 February**
The Baby Show, ExCeL Arena (until 21 February)
- 20 February**
Saracens vs Gloucester rugby match, Allianz Park
- 16 February**
Ennio Morricone, O2 Arena
- 13 February**
The Who, Wembley Arena
- 12 February**
MCN motor cycle show, ExCeL Arena (until 14 February)
- 11 February**
Strictly Come Dancing, Wembley Arena (also 12 February)

From our Twitter feed



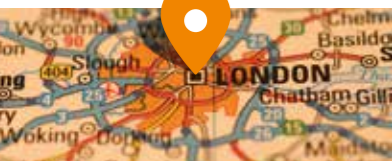
»» We say...

- Don't forget vehicles over 12 months old now require a six-monthly MOT
- If your badge or licence is lost or stolen you can email tph.enquiries@tfl.gov.uk providing the appropriate police reference number to request a replacement

- Want to be warned about events and roadworks? Sign up for our weekly alert email at tph.enquiries@tfl.gov.uk
- If you need a door sticker to warn passengers to look out for cyclists when exiting your vehicle, contact tph.enquiries@tfl.gov.uk
- For vehicle licensing enquiries, including booking inspections and refunds, contact NSL on 0343 222 5555

»» You say...

- Knowledge Point to remain open. Moving to new premises at LTC in Brewery Road, on the same day it is announced numbers signing on to the Knowledge of London are up!
- The LTDA @TheLTDA



Where am I?

- On which London street can you find a statue of Mary Queen of Scots?
- Name the Royal Palace that was built on the site of a London lepers' hospital in the 16th Century.
- Where in the Capital can the Magna Carta be seen?
- At which hotel did President Theodore Roosevelt stay during his honeymoon in 1886?
- Which hospital was bequeathed the rights to Peter Pan by its author JM Barrie in 1929?

Where am I? Answers: 1 Fleet Street 2 St James's Palace 3 British Library 4 Browns Hotel 5 Great Ormond Street

A woman with blonde hair, wearing a yellow top and blue jeans, stands on a grassy area next to a road junction. She is holding a young child in a green jacket and orange pants. Another child in a blue jacket and colorful patterned pants stands in front of her. In the background, there are traffic lights and a road. A large red semi-transparent box is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing text.

Malden Rushett's new junction is improving safety and traffic flow

Sarah, Lyra & Finn,
local residents

As part of our Road Modernisation Plan, the Malden Rushett junction now has wider roads and a new pedestrian crossing to make it safer. This is one of the ways we reinvest all our income to run and improve your services. Find out more: tfl.gov.uk/roads