

OnRoute

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Share the road

Top brass service

from the military to chauffeuring

Digital friends

the most useful apps to tap on

Talent show

taxi drivers with other skills

Watching the detectives

out with the police

Have your say on introducing the Ultra Low Emission Zone in April 2019, to help protect the health of Londoners and clean our filthy air.

The Mayor is proposing early delivery of the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) in April 2019. This is 17 months earlier than the current September 2020 start date.

Cars, vans, motorbikes, minibuses, buses, coaches and lorries will need to meet certain emissions standards or pay a daily emission charge to drive within the zone.

The ULEZ will initially operate within the central London Congestion Charging zone 24/7 every day of the year.

The required emission standard for diesel vehicles will be stricter than those for the T-Charge (Emissions Surcharge), which starts on 23 October 2017. The T-Charge will remain in place until the ULEZ comes into operation.

To have your say visit tfl.gov.uk/airquality-consultation or write to us at: FREEPOST, TFL CONSULTATIONS

Consultation ends 25 June 2017

Have your say



Contents

- 8**
May the force be with you
In the driving seat with ex-military personnel
- 10**
Easily app-plied
Mobile apps to make your life easier
- 12**
London's got talent
Taxi drivers discuss their other lives
- 14**
Changes in central London
Bus routes revised in the West End
- 16**
On patrol
Out with the police at King's Cross
- 18**
In for questioning
OnRoute chats to Neil Billany, head of the cab unit
- 20**
Share the road
Looking out for London's cyclists
- 23**
In plane view
More compliance operations at Heathrow



Welcome.

In March, OnRoute spent a very interesting afternoon with the Metropolitan Police Service's Taxi and Private Hire unit down at King's Cross, and you can read about what happened on p16. Tfl's own compliance team has grown in numbers and stepped up its Heathrow operations with impressive results. Find out more on p23.

With the city's streets busier than ever, it's important that we all look out for other road users. On p20 a cycling blogger gives his top tips for sharing the road safely.

From a life in the services to service with a smile, we meet ex-military personnel who are making their mark on the private hire trade on p8, while three talented taxi drivers reveal their other lives on p12.

If you have a hidden talent, or if there is anything you'd like to tell us about, we'd love to hear from you at OnRoute@tfl.gov.uk

D Pilgrim
Editor



In our next issue...

- Be the eyes and ears of London
- Looking after your back
- Out with Operation Border

Contact us at OnRoute@tfl.gov.uk

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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](https://twitter.com/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.



News



Grand opening

Addison Lee has opened what it says is Europe's biggest and most advanced private hire service and driver training centre. Called Grand Union, the facility near Heathrow provides a one-stop shop for its drivers. It cost £5m to build and boasts new, eco-technology with 22 electric charging stations for the company's fleet of hybrid vehicles and a car wash using a water recycling system that reduces water usage by 80 per cent.



Sounds of the suburbs

From this summer, TfL will be making changes to its suburban taxi forums. There will now be four meetings to cover all nine sectors

TfL is updating how it manages its yellow badge taxi forums, so drivers can find out what's happening in their local areas. Many issues raised at previous forums were very similar, so these

meetings will give drivers the chance to share their views with counterparts from other areas and discuss topics such as compliance and taxi policy. The forums will cover the following areas:

● Northeast London

Sector 1 Haringey, Enfield and Waltham Forest
Sector 2 Barking and Dagenham, Havering, Newham and Redbridge

This forum will take place on Thursday 27 July from 11:00 to 13:00 at Stratford Market Depot, Burford Road, E15 2SB (next to Stratford station).

● Southeast London

Sector 3 Bexley, Greenwich and Lewisham
Sector 4 Bromley
Sector 5 Croydon

The southeast forum will take place on Tuesday 3 October from 11:00 to 13:00 at Westferry Circus Auditorium at 15 Westferry Circus, Canary Wharf, E14 4HD.

● Southwest London

Sector 6 Merton and Sutton
Sector 7 Hounslow, Kingston and Richmond

The forum will take place on Tuesday 21 November from 11:00 to 13:00 at Palestra, 197 Blackfriars Road, Southwark, SE18NJ. This is directly opposite Southwark Tube station.

● Northwest London

Sector 8 Ealing and Hillingdon
Sector 9 Brent, Barnet and Harrow

The northwest forum will take place on Thursday 25 January from 11:00 to 13:00, also at Palestra (details as the entry on left).

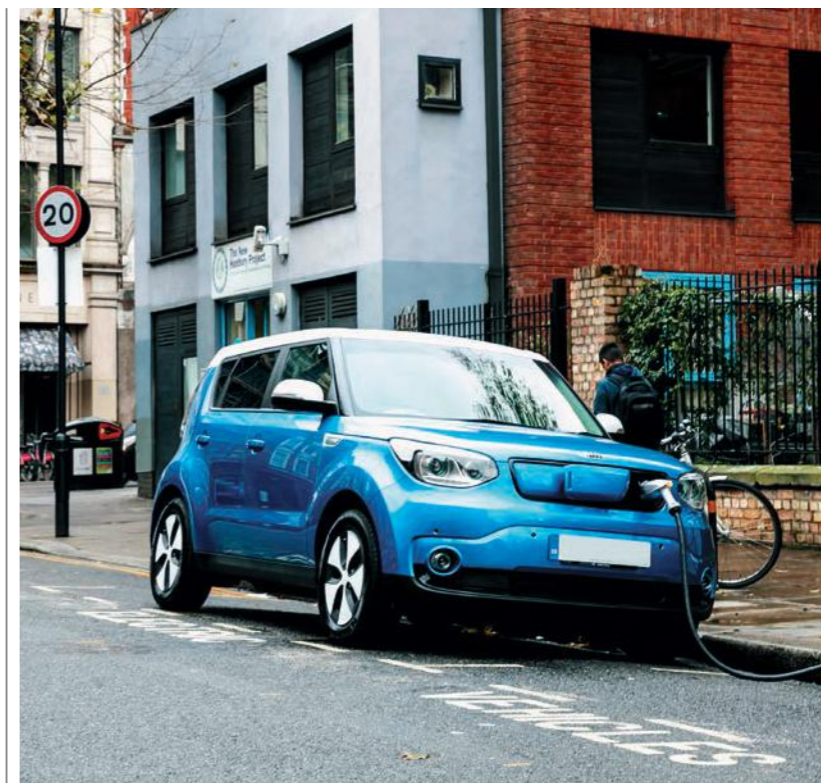
Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) consultation

From 8 April 2019, the Mayor is proposing to introduce the world's first Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) in central London. The most-polluting vehicles will have to pay a daily charge to drive through the zone.

The ULEZ will apply to all vehicle types, except black taxis, as licensing stipulations requiring all newly-registered taxis to be Zero Emission Capable are being introduced from 1 January 2018. It is estimated that introducing ULEZ in central London will result in nearly a 50 per cent reduction in road transport nitrogen oxide emissions in 2020.

Another consultation is planned later this year, which will examine proposals to extend the zone further. Depending on feedback, the Mayor will ask TfL to develop these potential options into detailed statutory proposals for consultation next year.

● ● ● **The consultation closes on Sunday 25 June 2017. To have your say, go to tfl.gov.uk/airquality-consultation**



The rise of the rapid charger

New electric chargers to help clean London's air

Five suppliers have been chosen by TfL to provide rapid charging points across the Capital. In the coming months, the Centrica Consortium, BluepointLondon, Chargemaster, Electricity Supply Board (ESB) and Fastned will install the network of chargers that can power electric vehicles in just 30 minutes. By 2020 there will be chargers across London at TfL and borough sites, and on private land including Heathrow Airport and Shell service stations.

The contract is set up to create the best possible experience for all drivers, who will be able to pay at the charge point using a credit or debit card. By the end of 2018, there will be a number of points for the exclusive use of taxis.



Marathon marvels

Congratulations to all the drivers who took part in this year's Virgin Money London Marathon. Andy Wilkins, 52, has been a taxi driver for four years. He last took part 15 years ago, but decided to run again this year for the charity MIND. He raised £4,350 and successfully completed the marathon in five hours and 15 minutes.

● ● ● If you would like to make a donation to MIND, please go to www.mind.org.uk

Round-up on the roads

Work on Westminster Bridge south

TfL is building new segregated cycle lanes on Addington Street and York Road and there will be 24-hour lane closures in the area until mid-June. Drivers are asked not to queue on Addington Street as this blocks the southbound lane access to Westminster Bridge Road.



The Westway

Costain has been awarded the contract to plan the refurbishment of the A40 Westway dual carriageway and the Marylebone flyover. The structures were built between 1964 and 1970 and the work will secure their long-term reliability.

Costain is currently inspecting the Westway and by December 2017 a feasibility study will be produced. In 2018 and 2019 the concept and detailed designs will be created for the work, and construction will follow that.

● ● ● For more information, go to tfl.gov.uk and search under A40 Westway

Latest trend



These are the hot topics trending @TfLTPH:

Tweets about compliance activity by TfL's compliance team have been widely shared and positively received.

On 12 April, during the broadcast of the Knowledge TV show on Channel 4, #TheKnowledge was the UK's #1 trending hashtag.

The @TfLTPH Twitter feed now has 12,195 followers.

News

How clean?

At the end of March, the Mayors of London and Paris, Sadiq Khan and Anne Hidalgo, jointly announced the launch of an online tool to help motorists identify the most polluting vehicles before they buy them.

The online vehicle checker will use 'on the road and real-world' emissions testing provided by Emissions Analytics and the International Council of Clean Transportation.

The checker will go live in the autumn, helping people make an informed choice when purchasing vehicles in order to minimise the number of more polluting vehicles being bought and used in London. It will also encourage manufacturers to produce vehicles that conform to the EU's full 'real-world driving emissions' standards much sooner than when legally required by 2021.



A helping hand

The law on wheelchair accessibility

Many disabled people in London rely on taxis and wheelchair-accessible private hire vehicles to get around. Section 165 of the Equality Act 2010, enacted in April this year, obliges drivers of wheelchair-accessible taxis and private hire vehicles to carry wheelchair users and provide assistance where needed without additional charge.

Drivers who refuse to take wheelchairs, or try to charge more for doing so, could be liable to prosecution and fines of up to £1,000, and their continued fitness to hold a licence may also be reviewed.



You can find out more at tfl.gov.uk/tph-access

Fab cab is electric

In March, the London Taxi Company opened its new factory in Coventry where it is producing its first electric taxi.

The taxi will go on sale in London later this year and then around the world in early 2018, with 5,000 vehicles produced by 2019.

Steve McNamara, general secretary of the Licensed Taxi Drivers' Association, is optimistic that the public will welcome these electric cabs. He said: 'By



the end of 2023, diesel black cabs will be a thing of the past.

'There will be a customer-driven switch to electric models and the public will be choosing them over diesel. It will be like the switch from horse-driven to motor cabs which took around seven years in the early 1900s.'



To register to receive information about when the new taxi goes on sale, please go to www.theelectrictaxi.co.uk

How you can help keep London safe

Here in London, we've seen that terrorists can strike at any time and any place without warning. The Metropolitan Police Service plays a crucial role in keeping the Capital safe, but is asking for your help and support in detecting and combating terrorism. You can find out how to spot possible terrorist activity and report anything suspicious that you've seen or heard at www.met.police.uk and search under terrorism.

TPH licensing in numbers

24,429

Taxi drivers

21,424

Taxi vehicle licences

117,396

Private hire driver licences

87,250

Private hire vehicle licences

2,430

Private hire operators

New requirements for private hire



Last year, TfL made a number of regulatory changes to raise standards across London's private hire industry. Some of these have been subject to a legal challenge and this notice provides an update on the current arrangements.

English language

The Court upheld the decision to introduce the English language requirement. This means applicants for either a new or renewal private hire vehicle (PHV) driver's licence must demonstrate they understand English at an appropriate level for speaking, listening, reading and writing.

Anyone whose application for a new or renewal PHV driver's licence was received on or after 14 October 2016 has until 30 September 2017 to provide evidence that they can comply with this requirement.

Current licence holders whose application was received before 14 October 2016

will need to satisfy the English language requirement when they apply to renew their licence.

Insurance

The requirement for PHVs to be insured to carry passengers for hire or reward at all times, for the duration of the licence, no longer applies. However, they must still be covered by hire or reward insurance at the point of licensing, and when in use as a PHV.

Telephone

In addition, the requirement for private hire vehicle operators to make someone

available for passengers to speak to during operating hours – should they want to make a complaint or discuss other matters relating to their booking – no longer applies.

If you need advice about your private hire licence or application, please email tph.enquiries@tfl.gov.uk or call the TPH licensing team on **0343 222 4444** (Monday to Friday, 08:00 to 18:00).

Helen Chapman
General Manager
London Taxi and Private Hire

With military precision

One chauffeur company is using the skills and experience of ex-military personnel to offer an exclusive service to its discerning customers

Capstar was founded in 2013 by ex-army officers Rob Bassett Cross and Charlie Bowmont. After leaving the military they successfully set up their own businesses, but knew other former servicemen and women, especially those who'd been injured during their careers, struggled to find work.

Today, the company employs up to 40 drivers – full and part-time, men and women – from the army, navy and air force, and from different regiments.

Henry Newton is head of training and veteran engagement. The ex-Garrison Major, who has 25 years' experience, explains that discipline, civility and opportunity are at the heart of what Capstar's about.

'These are guys who have been injured or discharged for post-traumatic stress disorder and joining us gives them a stepping stone to other career paths,' he explains. 'Our ethos resonates well

with them because there is a military feel to our set-up and our core values are those of the military, so they can adapt what they learnt in service to being a chauffeur.'

Capstar has offices in New York (overseen by a former Grenadier Guards officer) as well as England and caters for a discerning clientele. From its base in the beautiful grounds of Syon Park in Brentford, it runs a fleet of Jaguars and Range Rovers. It is also one of the six TfL-approved topographical assessment centres and offers training for private hire drivers prior to them sitting the TfL assessment.

Henry concludes: 'We are still looking for drivers and I have contacts with all the regiments. We definitely have that bond and connection with them.'

● ● ●
If you are ex-military and interested in Capstar, contact Henry at www.capstar.co/careers

“ We pride ourselves on our ability to plan and manage our services with military precision and immaculate attention to detail ”

Henry Newton, Capstar



Above: Henry Newton (centre) with Capstar drivers at its base in Syon Park

A driver with dash

Andrew Slater (right) is one of Capstar's most popular drivers, with one client specifically asking for him each day. After spending six years with the Royal Horse Artillery, he left in 2009 on the grounds of ill health. He drove a transit van before joining Capstar's team of chauffeurs.

'One of the guys I had served with already worked for Capstar and suggested I send Henry an email,' he explained. 'Going from a

clapped-out van to driving a Jaguar was a real treat and I liked being smart because before I was always covered in dirt. Now, when I look at all my white shirts lined up for the week, I feel real pride. I also like the atmosphere here – it's like walking back into your old squad room.'

When Andrew first returned to civilian life he discovered that employers didn't always recognise the benefits that came with a military

background. But Capstar was different.

'Here, it's about the whole package – it's the way you look and talk to people, the way you hold yourself and the way you carry out every job,' Andrew continues. 'I feel my experience means I can contribute so much more in the workplace and seeing that I am being appreciated has helped my confidence. And to have clients ask for me by name – including one rock



star – is just brilliant.'

He adds: 'To do this job you need an air of confidence because that makes your clients feel confident about having you as their driver. People can immediately see I'm ex-military and they are impressed by that. I think I'll probably be doing this for the rest of my career and Henry has already offered me the opportunity to become one of Capstar's topographical trainers.'

» Capstar in numbers

2 offices:
London and New York

2013 founded

40 drivers

25 vehicles

App-ealing to everyone

Here's a small selection of the many useful apps available. It is illegal to use your handheld device while driving, so just make sure you're safely parked before viewing them

Apple Map

Free

Along with directions, this navigation app gives you real-time traffic information and if there's congestion, offers alternative routes to save you time.

●●●

www.apple.com/uk

Whatgas

Free

This interactive map app helps you find your nearest petrol station in seconds. Search by postcode or town and when you click on a station the prices will also come up.

●●●

www.whatgas.com/

Flush toilet finder

Free

This free app lists more than 190,000 public conveniences across the globe. Simply open the app to find the nearest one to you, including disabled toilets.

●●●

www.jrustonapps.com/

Cabbie's Mate

Annual subscription £29.99.

Cabbie's Mate is useful for anyone who uses A-Z maps. It's easy to navigate and you can find a street, postcode or point of interest in under 10 seconds. Maps are updated twice a year.

●●●

www.navigationmaster.com/

ParkRight

Free

The City of Westminster's ParkRight app lists more than 41,000 on and off-road parking spaces. Using real-time information from sensors in more than 3,000 bays throughout the West End, it can tell you if they are available or in use. It even gives directions to a specific bay via your sat nav. Taxi drivers can also filter to find taxi ranks.

●●●

www.westminster.gov.uk/parkright

Waze social GPS

Free

Waze is a community-based traffic and navigation app. It has 600,000 users in London sharing real-time information. It can alert you to accidents, road hazards or traffic jams. It also lists all upcoming large-scale events and major roadworks in the Capital.

●●●

www.waze.com/

Met Office weather app

Free

Find out what the weather will do with the most accurate forecasts and local weather coverage from one hour to seven days in advance. The app also lists pollen count predictions and official national severe weather warnings. The app includes the latest TV weather forecasts, updated four times a day from Monday to Friday, and three times a day at the weekend.

●●●

www.metoffice.gov.uk/services

Taximanager

Standard annual subscription £19. Pro annual subscription £99

This is a simple accountancy app for any self-employed driver. It helps you keep a record of your income and expenses, and any additional notes, in a database that you can update anytime and anywhere. At the end of the tax year, you can either do your own tax return or Taximanager can submit it for you.

●●●

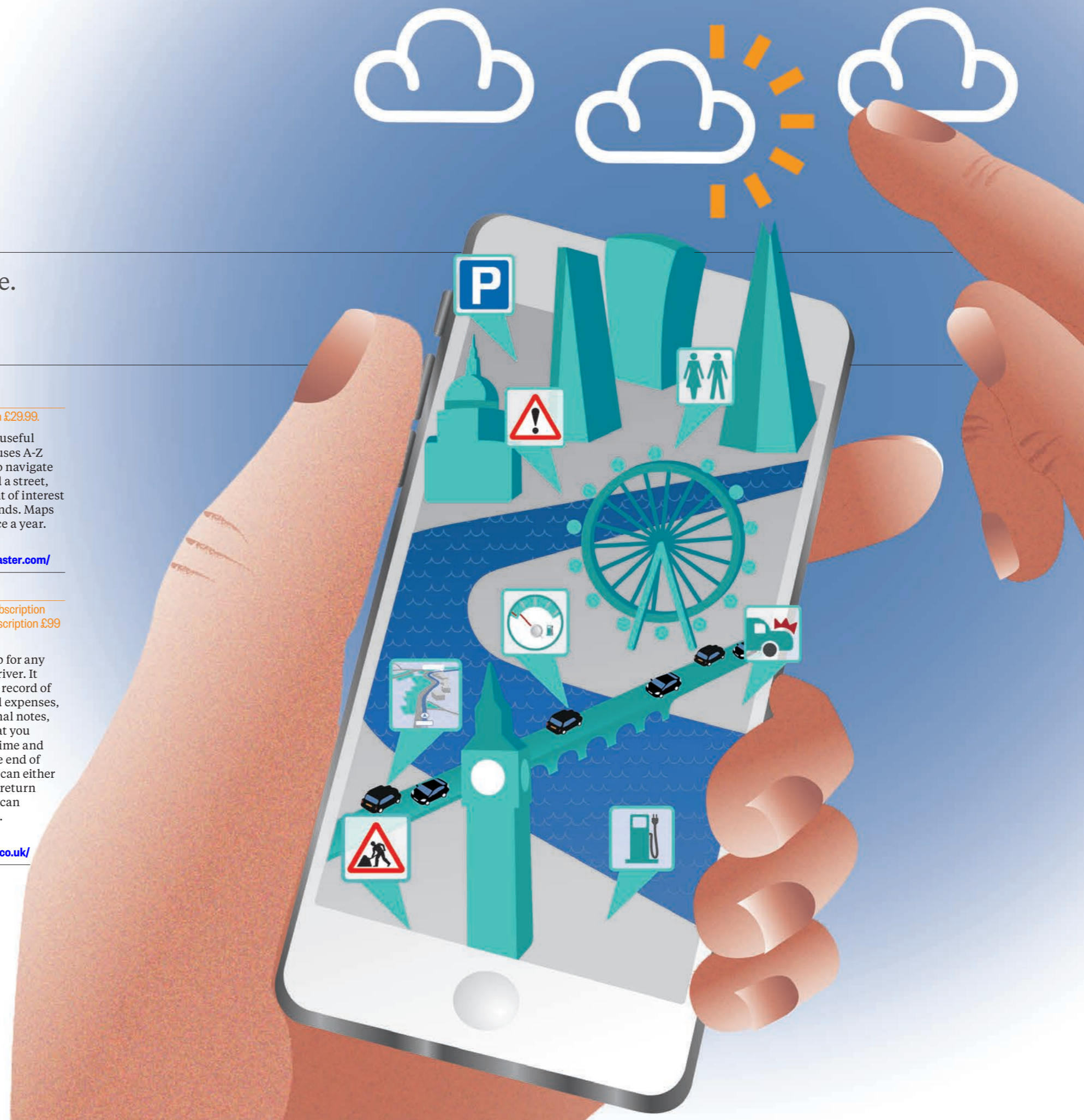
www.taximanager.co.uk/

What is an app?

An app (derived from the word application) is a computer programme that can be downloaded to your mobile device and accessed by clicking or tapping on an icon on the screen of your mobile or tablet.

●●●

Are there any apps you just couldn't live without? Let us know at OnRoute@tfl.gov.uk



They're really some thing else!

London's taxi drivers are a talented bunch, as Ian Beetlestone discovers

One of the greatest appeals of being a London taxi driver has always been working for yourself and nobody else, setting your own schedule. This flexibility means you can do pretty much anything alongside it. Some drivers go into other aspects of the trade – examining, running schools, setting up garages and renting out cabs. Others build companies, do seasonal work abroad, drive between jobs as an actor or a musician, or even write novels.



“While waiting for a fare some 15 years ago, I just started writing about my life. It kept flooding out”
The poet – Michael Dennis

Styling himself as the Black Cab Poet, Michael leaves poems on the back seat of his cab for passengers to find. It's a lovely, simple idea that has led to national media coverage and a collection of his work available on Amazon.

'I write poetry, prose, lyrics, songs and I'm a some-time performance poet/recording artist,' Michael tells me. 'Writing is the last thing I – along with most people who have known me for a long time – ever thought I would do.'

'One afternoon, while waiting for a fare some 15 or so years ago, I just started writing about my life. It kept

flooding out and for the next six months every spare minute I had, I would write.'

The flexibility of taxi driving is the perfect counterpoint to Michael's poetic alter-ego, as he explains: 'As long as I'm not driving I can write. If an idea comes, I can get scribbling and as I work days, I can go to an open mic in the evening. I would, one day, like to be able to call myself a writer who drives a cab as opposed to a cabbie who writes.'



To sample Michael's poetry, go to www.youtube.com/theblackcabpoet or www.amazon.co.uk/books and search for black cab poet

“Some years ago I was flagged down by a woman who worked in publishing. As with many passengers, an interesting conversation soon sparked up”

The writer/blogger – Rob Lordan

It was his unique position as a taxi driver that gave Rob his way into writing too: 'Some years ago I was lucky enough to be flagged down by a woman who worked in publishing. As with many passengers, an interesting conversation soon sparked

up and when I happened to mention writing was something that interested me, she suggested I should start a blog and advised me on ways I could promote it with social media. I wrote my first piece as soon as I returned home that evening.'

That became Rob's blog, View from the Mirror. In the intervening years, it has gone from strength to strength and sent international journalists and TV crews his way, making features on London and the taxi trade. It has also led to regular work writing for the LTDA magazine TAXI as well as Time Out.



Go to www.blackcablondon.net/



“I needed a job that would not only fit neatly around acting work, but was well paid enough that I could still lead a normal life rather than that of a destitute and bitter unemployed/resting actor”

The actor/vlogger/small business launcher – James Grant

I met James while doing the Knowledge and approached him for this article because I knew he was also an actor and runs the excellent YouTube channel, The Gentleman Cabbie. But James has taken on even more now, setting up a business with his fiancée Leila, selling products for women suffering from polycystic ovary syndrome.

'We started up the MyOva food supplements brand because Leila suffers from PCOS and couldn't find many companies offering

natural ways to manage her symptoms in the UK,' says James. 'We are still in the early stages of building the brand, but the intention is that it will become our main source of income and I'll drive the cab one or two days a week so I don't lose the Knowledge and can film my Gentleman Cabbie interviews.'

Again, it was the flexibility of taxi driving that attracted James. 'I needed a job that would not only fit neatly around acting work, but was well paid enough that

I could still lead a normal life rather than that of a destitute and bitter unemployed/resting actor – and believe me, there are plenty of those in London! 'Being a cabbie is the best thing I've ever done as it's allowed me the freedom to pursue many different avenues, none of which I would have been able to do if I had a 9-5 job.'



View James' vlog here: www.youtube.com/TheGentlemanCabbie

» In our next issue, it's the turn of private hire drivers to reveal their hidden talents. If you are a driver who also does something else, please get in touch at OnRoute@tfl.gov.uk



Central London changes

Following consultation, 23 bus routes in central London will be revised over the summer. This will mean services are more closely matched to customer demand as people choose to travel in different ways. It will also cut congestion and improve air quality.

“As our city changes around us, we need to ensure the bus network changes too. Making sure we have the right level of buses in central London is key to keeping our city moving”

Leon Daniels, director of Surface Transport, TfL

This is just one of the ways TfL is looking to reduce congestion on London's roads. For further information on the changes, please visit tfl.gov.uk/west-end-bus-changes

Going undercover



In March, we joined the Metropolitan Police Service's Taxi and Private Hire team at King's Cross

Above: on the rank at King's Cross

When we arrive at the police station, we find the two officers we will be accompanying – Rich and Chris. They are just about to head down to the taxi rank and waiting area in their 'mock' private hire vehicle (it's actually a police car complete with discreet blue lights).

They are both casually dressed in 'civvies', because as Rich explains: 'The things we detect we can only detect covertly'. However, underneath their jackets they are both wearing CCTV video cameras that can record video and audio, so if a driver ever queries their evidence, it can be verified.

The team aims to improve the safety of the taxi and private hire trades and to clamp down on illegal touting across London. Today's operation is at King's Cross station, but it could be anywhere intelligence has pinpointed as a hotspot for criminal activity. 'In relation to other large stations in London, King's Cross is quite unique because of the sheer amount of space the ranks, dropping off, picking up and waiting areas cover,' explains Chris. 'That makes it a good place to find illegal drivers and vehicles, and during a shift (07:00 to 17:00) we can check more than 30 vehicles.'

As we drive past the head of the taxi rank outside the station we see a group of TfL's compliance officers and Rich comments that the police work with them all the time. 'It's much better to have a compliance officer with us because they have handheld devices with them, which we don't have, and they can check data such as a driver's licence and other records straight away. It works both ways – if they see

» **The taxi and private hire policing team – in numbers**

1
Inspector

5
Sergeants

55
Police Constables

6
teams

Covers the whole of London

something or someone they want to question, as police officers we have the powers to stop that particular vehicle.'

Today we are headed further down the rank to where taxis frequently over-rank to make sure no one is blocking the road. They're not, but Chris immediately spots a private hire vehicle waiting in a disabled bay. Rich pulls in behind and Chris gets out to check the driver's badge, inspect the vehicle and have a word.

We are parked almost at the end of the waiting area and while Chris chats to the driver, another private hire vehicle tries to pull in behind the police car. There's no space, so he stops in the road and Rich gets out of the car and tells him he has to move on if he doesn't want a £40 fine for obstruction of the highway. Rich explains in these instances the driver is reported to TfL and gets a warning. If a driver is repeatedly reported to TfL, this can lead to further action being taken and could result in their licence being revoked.

We then move over to the taxi rank and Chris notices a taxi with an illegal rear tyre. It turns out the driver only got his badge two weeks earlier, but he's going to lose a day's business today as he's sent home to get the tyre replaced.

Next up is a private hire driver, who pulls their vehicle up across the entrance to the head of the taxi rank, blocking both it and the main road in the process. Rich has a long chat with the driver, who will definitely be reported to TfL as he's also not wearing his driver identification.

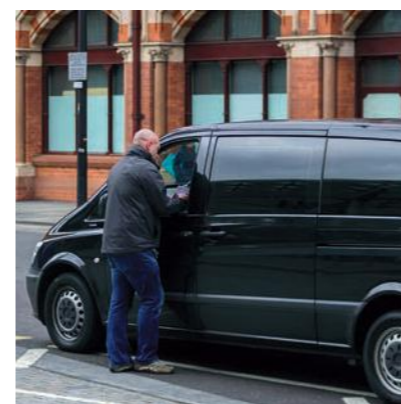
Before Rich can finish there, Chris notices a taxi that doesn't have its second MOT. It turns out the taxi is rented, so this could result in a £1,000 fine for the owner. The driver is also not wearing his badge and his licence is unsigned so he, too, will be reported to TfL.

'Sorry it's been such a slow day,' says Chris as we prepare to leave. 'Slow?', I questioned. 'I'd say it wasn't a bad day's work!'

Below: at the dropping off area at St Pancras

“Some of the drivers really love us and the fact we are policing the trade. Others don't, but they're usually the ones who have been caught doing something illegal”

Chris, police officer



A quick word, Sir?

Inspector Neil Billany heads the taxi and private hire policing team, Metropolitan Police Service (better known as the #cabsunit on Twitter). OnRoute brings him in for questioning

Q Can you tell us how long you have been with the service?

A I joined the Met in 2001 and was initially based at Holloway and then Highbury. Since then I've worked all over London, including the Palace of Westminster, and more recently I was staff officer to Assistant Commissioner Mark Rowley.

Q What does your team do?

A Our main priority is the investigation of and reduction in sex offences. We also investigate other offences committed by drivers such as frauds and assaults, and carry out joint operations with TPH Compliance, such as Ops Neon, Globe and Safer Travel at Night. I now have named police contacts for each borough and suburban area, and I'm hoping this will make it easier for the trade to report issues to us and for us to develop a better relationship with drivers and operators.

Q What does a typical work day look like for you?

A I get in the office early to read through what has happened in the last 24 hours including all taxi or private hire-related sex

crimes and anything else where a driver is named as a suspect. If I identify a risk I will make a disclosure to TPH to consider making a decision on their licence. I also like to keep an eye on social media – we get a lot of good results from what drivers are talking about on Twitter.

Q Seen anything funny or surprising while out on operations?

A I stopped a private motorist for speeding and nothing the driver or his two passengers said added up so we searched the car. There was a loaded handgun under the passenger seat and we found a load of stolen gear in the boot, along with balaclavas from an armed robbery they had just committed nearby.

Q How often do you use taxis or private hire vehicles?

A Not as much as I used to since having kids and not going out so much. Given

my wife is a Londoner we had a black cab as our wedding car (her family having a number of friends in the trade).

Q Do you have a talent outside work?

A I'm a keen guitarist and have played for 25 years. I used to love visiting Tinpan Alley and playing some of the vintage Gibson and Fender guitars.

Q Walking, cycling or driving?

A I spent enough time driving round London as a Constable so I like to walk nowadays.

Q What's been your best and worst moment at work?

A One of my personal highlights was working at Arsenal in the 2003/04 season – I was posted to the bottom corner of the west stand and managed to watch some of the football while doing my job. Recent events at the

Palace of Westminster were a low point, given I spent a year there recently and have friends working there.

Q If you were in charge of London, what would you do?

A We need to do more to deal with youth crime; the number of children stabbing children is deeply worrying and the solution is not just about policing. I would look to invest more money into youth clubs, training and apprenticeships to encourage kids away from gang crime and into productive careers.

Q What do you always keep in your car?

A A DVD player in the back to keep my three kids amused on longer journeys. I've also got a ridiculous amount of 'bags for life' in the boot, however I always forget to take them into the supermarket and end up buying more.

“ There was a loaded handgun under the passenger seat and we found stolen gear in the boot ” Neil Billany



Take the high road

With cycling in London becoming even more popular, OnRoute takes a look at how everyone can safely share the road

The number of people cycling has more than doubled in the past decade, creating more competition for space on London's roads.

Whether you are a motorist, cyclist, pedestrian or motorcyclist, no one likes to be cut up or beeped. Being aware of each other can not only improve our journeys, it could save lives.

Research shows that while Londoners are concerned by safety, they tend to think it is other people who need to change their road habits.

A different perspective

As a driver you make decisions based on your assumptions and expectations of other road users. Having more knowledge of how cyclists ride can help you to drive more safely around them.

In 2016, Addison Lee partnered with the London Cycling Campaign (LCC) to review the training it delivers at its school. Cyclist awareness is a module of driver training and LCC made recommendations for improvements. These have now been included

» Did you know?

Although the number of cyclist casualties between 1 April and 30 June last year was down six per cent from the same period in 2015 (1,196 as opposed to 1,267), the Mayor has a 'Vision Zero' approach, where he wants to eliminate all road danger.

in training methods as well as introduced in its e-learning portal and in-car training.

Drivers commented that 'it opened my eyes. I will give cyclists more consideration' and 'it was great to be in the cyclist's shoes and feel what they are up against'.

If you're interested in looking at London's roads from the saddle, Cycle Training UK runs the Cycle Awareness Seminar for drivers. The one-hour classroom session looks at the driver's experience of interacting with cyclists. It encourages drivers to empathise with them and to minimise the risk between drivers and cyclists.

TfL also offers a number of free safety courses for drivers, including Van Smart. This one-day course aims to reduce work-related road risks and is delivered in two sections; a classroom theory module and a practical cycling module where drivers experience a cyclist's view of the road.

For Cycle Training UK courses: info@cycletraining.co.uk
For TfL courses: [fors-online.org.uk/cms/training/](https://www.tfl.gov.uk/roadways/cycling/training)



Space for all
Share the Road is a TfL campaign asking everyone to think about their attitudes on the road. The idea behind it is that if we were all a bit more aware of each other, then we'd all have better, safer and less stressful journeys.



Andreas Kambanis (left), founder of blog Londoncyclist.co.uk, has been cycling since he can remember. These are his top tips for sharing the road from a cyclist's point of view.

- 1 It can be intimidating to ride around fast moving traffic, so it's always much appreciated when drivers give cyclists plenty of space
- 2 On narrow roads, cyclists are instructed to ride in the middle of the lane. This isn't to hold up traffic, this is a safe spot for a cyclist to be
- 3 Cyclists are instructed to ride further out from the pavement as it is a more prominent position where they are more likely to be seen. Hugging the pavement gives cyclists minimum options when avoiding an obstacle, so they have to move into the path of traffic
- 4 When moving off from a traffic light, a cyclist is meant to be positioned in the middle of the lane. This prevents dangerous overtaking
- 5 The door zone is a big potential danger for cyclists, so they are instructed to ride further away from parked cars. This same danger is present when cars unload passengers and open their doors unexpectedly

Points of conflict					
Conflict	1	2	3	4	5
Manoeuvre description	Vehicle turns right across path of cyclist	Cyclist hits open door/swerves to avoid open door of vehicle	Cyclist and vehicle travelling alongside each other	Vehicle turns left across the path of cyclist	Vehicle fails to give way or disobeys junction control and collides with cyclist

LET'S LOOK OUT FOR EACH OTHER



DRIVERS AND CYCLISTS ARE MORE ALIKE THAN YOU THINK

WITH 80% OF CYCLISTS HOLDING A DRIVING LICENCE, AND 1 IN 5 DRIVERS CYCLING AT LEAST ONCE A MONTH¹, THEY'RE OFTEN THE SAME PEOPLE.

¹ NATIONAL TRAVEL SURVEY STATISTICS, 2010



DIRECT.GOV.UK/THINKCYCLIST

Flying high

With more than 150 new officers, TfL's compliance team now patrols high priority areas such as Heathrow and the mainline stations more frequently

Working in partnership with other agencies, officers tackle illegal activity and take action against non-compliant drivers, vehicle owners and operators. They also provide reassurance to drivers and the public and help improve the service offered to customers.

In March this year, with more officers on the street, 28,686 checks were carried out, which resulted in 2,805 issues being reported. While most of non-compliance cases are still relating to drivers not wearing their badge or identifier, or not carrying the correct documentation, more serious issues are being detected such as illegal operator, refusing to carry guide dogs, touting and unlicensed drivers, which have led to 52 convictions in the last year.

The increased number of officers means the team now has the capacity to operate a 24/7 service over a wider area and this is having impressive results down at Heathrow.

» Vehicles and drivers checked in the last year

51,984 taxi vehicles and drivers

105,121 private hire drivers and vehicles

21,000 number of compliance issues

Operation Land

With Heathrow Airport Limited, the police and local authorities, the team has been working on Operation Land to improve compliance of taxi and private hire drivers at the airport.

In October 2016, around 600 taxi and private hire drivers were checked by compliance officers at Heathrow. By February 2017, with additional officers working more days at the airport, this figure had increased to nearly 4,500 drivers being checked.

The team uses the intelligence it gathers to make better decisions about where resources should be deployed as well as the tactics to apply.

Operation Land aims to:

- Improve the compliance rates of taxi and private hire drivers/vehicles inspected at Heathrow Airport, while reducing opportunities for non-compliance
- Provide regular reassurance through high-visibility patrols across multiple locations
- Foster positive, collaborative joint working relationships with other enforcement agencies to support prevention and enforcement
- Introduce new joint working tactics to deter and disrupt non-compliant drivers and vehicles
- Support the London Borough of Hillingdon environmental enforcement team to manage taxi and private hire vehicles parked in residential streets and encourage their drivers to use the Authorised Vehicle Area (AVA) instead

“ The compliance team now has the capacity to resource staff across London and have more officers located at high priority locations at the right times ”

Anand Nandha, head of compliance, TfL





Music in the city

Take taxi driver Ian Beetlestone out of his cab and sit him on a piano stool and you'll find he's a man of many talents

“ One of the many reasons taxi driving appealed to me was I could fit it in around my second job as a musician. I've been playing piano in bars since I was 14 (it was a lot cooler than a paper round) and I always intended to move to London to try and get work on the music scene. I started classical lessons when I was six but was always more interested in hammering the thing and seeing what happened than learning the pieces, which is, I suppose, how I came to jazz and writing my own music.

I play with several bands in London now, but mainly the Fallen Heroes – a rollicking six-piece that plays everything from New Orleans jazz to ska – and my own band, Ian Beetlestone & the Drowning Rats, which is a vehicle for my own songwriting. For want of a better way of describing it, we call what we do ratty jazz and drowned pop. I hope it's catchy, melodic and engaging while maintaining a jazzy feel, and a tiny bit complex from time to time.

I don't get to go to other people's gigs as often as I used to, though my London gigging highlight has to be seeing Prince just a couple of metres away from me at Camden's Electric Ballroom for £10 during the



Hit & Run tour a few years ago, after queueing in the street for hours on a freezing February Tuesday (it was the flexibility of taxi driving that allowed me to do that too, come to think of it).

I've only had two rock stars in the back of the cab. They were Ed Tudor-Pole, who I took from King's Cross to his gig at the Kentish Town Forum, and who

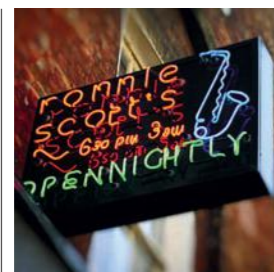
sulked all the way there after I admitted I'd never heard of him. The other was Pete Doherty, who hailed me outside an antique shop off Camden Road to take him, a massive mahogany chest and a friend to a cheap hotel on the other side of the road. They giggled like children the whole three minutes and when he got out he told me to keep the change from a twenty. I liked him the best.

My favourite five London music venues



1 The Green Note, 106 Parkway NW1.

An inconspicuous frontage at the Regent's Park end of the street hides two small venues. Probably the loveliest place I've ever played.



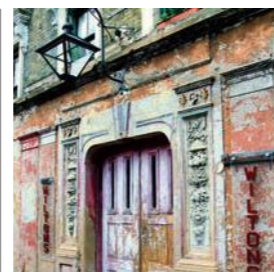
2 Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith St W1D.

Beautiful 220-capacity jazz club, the original and the best, hosting everybody who's anybody for nearly 60 years.



3 606 Club, 90 Lots Rd SW10.

Less famous and less glamorous than its Soho rival, the 606 is Chelsea's super-friendly jazz club and restaurant, hosting at least two shows a day all year round.



4 Wilton's Music Hall, 1 Graces Alley E1.

The world's oldest surviving music hall, and an absolute gem.



5 Brixton Academy, 211 Stockwell Rd SW9.

The ultimate classic gig venue. A beautiful art-deco interior and always an electric atmosphere.

Letters

Email 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

Fairway fun



Dear OnRoute,

The Taxi Driver of the Year Charity Fund (TDYCF) is holding a golf competition on 8 June this year, and drivers can enter individually or as a team of up to four with friends.

It's a great day out and there's the chance to win a car worth up to £10,000 – all you have to do is get a hole in one!

The sporting action takes place at Hendon Golf Club, Devonshire Road, Mill Hill, NW7 1DG. Entrance is via a donation of £70 per person, which entitles you to breakfast, 18 holes and a buffet lunch. Breakfast is from 09:00.

You can book your place by completing an entry form with a

£10 deposit. All cheques should be made payable to TDYCF.

Forms are available from brussella@talk21.com

All forms and full payment should be received by 25 May 2017.

The prize presentation will be held after the event and the money raised will be shared between five taxi charities, with cheques being presented at the TDYCF annual dinner dance on 25 November.

So come and have some fun while supporting these very worthy causes.

Russell Poluck MBE
Honorary chairman

Bus stops stopping

As I'm a licensed private hire driver, can I drop off and pick up customers at bus stops without receiving a PCN? Can OnRoute help me please?

Paul Canela

There is a whole page on parking dos and don'ts in the TPH section on the TfL website. Go to tfl.gov.uk/tph and then search under ranks, regulation and policy.

However, to help you with your specific query about bus stops, here is the relevant passage:

Private hire vehicles cannot stop at 'bus stop clearways' marked with a wide yellow line by the kerb. On red routes, both taxis and private hire vehicles cannot stop at bus stops marked with a wide red line by the kerb. At other red route bus stops, taxi and private hire drivers should avoid stopping to avoid disruption to the bus network.

From our Twitter feed



» We say...

✔ Don't forget vehicles more than 12 months old require a six-monthly MOT

✔ Missed questions are one of the most frequent causes of incomplete applications so make sure you answer them all

✔ Electronic copies of insurance certificates are not acceptable. Insurance certificates must be in paper form

» You say...

✔ What is classed as touting and what is classed as plying for hire regarding the regulations?

A Touting is defined in the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act (1994). TfL and the Mayor are lobbying the Government for

a statutory definition of plying for hire. Read more about this at tfl.gov.uk/taxi-and-private-hire-action-plan-2016



Do you know?

1 What is the longest numbered road in the UK and how long is it?

2 The Fleet River – one of the Capital's many buried waterways – still runs under the cellars of which pub in Fleet Street?

3 Where is the original site of Tyburn Tree, London's infamous public gallows?

4 When was the new Road Safety Bill passed?

5 In what year was breathalysing first introduced?

Calendar



May

June

July



17 May
The Business Show
ExCeL Arena (and 18 May)

18 May
The Beach Boys concert
Royal Albert Hall (and 19 May)
ExCeL Arena

2017 Betway Premier League Darts
O2 Arena

19 May
Bellator MMA match
Wembley Arena (and 20 May)

Foodies Festival
Clapham Common (until 21 May)

Metronomy concert
O2 Academy

20 May
Roger Hodgson concert
Royal Albert Hall (and 21 May)

21 May
London Symphony Orchestra concert
Trafalgar Square

22 May
The London Wine Fair 2017
Olympia (until 24 May)

23 May
Chelsea Flower Show
West London (until 27 May)

24 May
Eric Clapton concert
Royal Albert Hall

25 May
Ariana Grande concert
O2 Arena (and 26 May)

Gala Festival
Brockwell Park

26 May
London Expo event
ExCeL Arena (until 28 May)

Professor Brian Cox Live
Wembley Arena

27 May
Heroes and Villains 2017 event
Olympia (and 28 May)

Rinse Festival
Finsbury Park (and 28 May)

We Are FSTVL, dance festival
Upminster (and 28 May)

Iron Maiden concert
O2 Arena (and 28 May)

Sigma Live concert
Royal Albert Hall

Rugby Aviva Premiership Final
Twickenham

Kate Tempest concert
O2 Academy

28 May
Paul Rodgers concert
Royal Albert Hall

Westminster Mile run
Central London

Chronixx concert
O2 Academy

29 May
England vs South Africa cricket
Lord's

Running Vitality
Central London

30 May
Mac DeMarco concert
O2 Academy (and 31 May)

31 May
KISS concert
O2 Arena



1 June
Shawn Mendes concert
O2 Arena (and 2 June)

England vs Bangladesh cricket
Oval

3 June
Field Day event
Victoria Park

Epsom Derby
Surrey

Fat Freddy's Drop concert
Alexandra Palace

Depeche Mode concert
London Stadium

Sri Lanka vs South Africa cricket
Oval

4 June
Phil Collins concert
Royal Albert Hall (and 5, 7, 9 June)

5 June
Australia vs Bangladesh cricket
Oval

8 June
India vs Sri Lanka cricket
Oval

9 June
Take That concert
O2 Arena (until 12 June)

10 June
World Naked Bike Ride
Central London

FOUND Festival
Brockwell Park

11 June
Tour of Britain Women's Road Cycling Race - Stage 5
Streets surrounding Westminster

India vs South Africa cricket
Oval

Rathayatra Procession
Central London

Colour Run 5k
Wembley Park

15 June
Hockey World League
Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park
Stratford (until 25 June)

16 June
Space Spectacular
Royal Albert Hall (until 19 June)

17 June
Fit London event
Clapham Common (and 18 June)

Stone Free Festival
O2 Arena

The Stone Roses concert
Wembley Stadium

18 June
London to Brighton Bike Ride
Clapham Common

ICC Champions Trophy Final
Oval

19 June
Aegon Tennis Championships 2017
Queen's Club, West Kensington (until 25 June)

20 June
Celine Dion concert
O2 Arena (and 21 June)

Royal Ascot Berkshire
(until 24 June)

21 June
Kraftwerk concert
Royal Albert Hall (until 23 June)

House & Garden Festival 2017
Olympia (until 24 June)

22 June
BBC Worldwide - Strictly Spectacular
ExCeL Arena

24 June
Jeff Lynne's Electric Light Orchestra
Wembley Stadium

Jimmy Carr
O2 Academy

25 June
Hampstead Summer event
North London

28 June
Adele concert
Wembley Stadium (and 29 June, 1, 2 July)

29 June
The Maccabees concert
Alexandra Palace (until 1 July)

30 June
Phil Collins concert
Hyde Park



1 July
World Power Show event
ExCeL Arena (and 2 July)

World League Hockey semi-finals
Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, Stratford

Domestic One-Day Final cricket
Lord's

Status Quo concert
Royal Albert Hall

Eat Drink Ealing event
Ealing Common

Richard Ashcroft concert
O2 Academy

Green Day concert
Hyde Park

2 July
Eid event
Trafalgar Square

Justin Bieber concert
Hyde Park

3 July
Wimbledon Tennis Championships 2017
Wimbledon (until 16 July)

4 July
World League Hockey semi-finals
Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, Stratford

6 July
England vs South Africa cricket
Lord's (until 10 July)

Kings of Leon concert
Hyde Park

7 July
Wireless Festival
Finsbury Park (until 9 July)

8 July
U2 concert
Twickenham (and 9 July)

The Killers concert
Hyde Park

Pride Parade
Central London

9 July
Red Bull Soapbox Race
Alexandra Palace

Surrey vs Somerset cricket
Oval

British 10k Run
Westminster

Tom Petty concert
Hyde Park

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