

# In Touch

Your Dial-a-Ride news



## Helping you get there safely

All the latest from Dial-a-Ride and TfL's other accessible services



Dial-a-Ride offers a door-to-door service

## Welcome to In Touch

As the new Director of Bus Operations at Transport for London (TfL), it's my pleasure to introduce our latest edition of In Touch.

As with all of our services, Dial-a-Ride has been affected by the coronavirus pandemic and has experienced reduced demand.

While recovery has been slow, our dedicated team has worked tirelessly to ensure you've been able to travel safely.

Now that restrictions have been lifted and we move into a more stable time, we are hoping to welcome many more of you back on our buses for the local journeys you want to make.

For peace of mind and commitment to your safety, our vehicles are still regularly cleaned with anti-viral fluid and even though face coverings are no longer mandatory, we still strongly recommend wearing them when you use Dial-a-Ride and all other TfL services.

In this edition, we will outline our current operating hours and booking procedures, which have changed owing to the pandemic, including helpful hints and tips on how to get the most out of your membership. You will also hear more about the fantastic and crucial work that Dial-a-Ride performed during the various lockdown periods to support London.

We have also enclosed the latest Accessible travel in London leaflet, which outlines all the accessibility features and services available to help you to travel independently on our network.

The recently opened Elizabeth Line is fully accessible and offers even more options for travel in London.

Wishing you all a safe and enjoyable travel experience with Dial-a-Ride throughout the coming year.



**Louise Cheeseman**  
Director of Bus Operations





Our drivers will ensure you travel safely on every journey

## How Dial-a-Ride helped key workers and vulnerable Londoners during the pandemic

Dial-a-Ride operated throughout the pandemic, offering essential journeys to customers. As demand for the service was very low during this time, we looked for other ways to assist.

When lockdown was announced, our interim Head of Customer Operations, Ibrar Akram, worked quickly to adapt Dial-a-Ride services

from providing transport to enable older and disabled people to get around London, to using it to deliver food and shopping to them. He organised and led the support effort from Dial-a-Ride, partnering with the London Emergency Planning Group (LEPG) to identify where help was most needed.

Akram designed the support programme to get deliveries to essential workers and vulnerable people.

Initially, the programme worked to get 100 deliveries of personal protective equipment (PPE) to different NHS hubs, but within a few days he made further arrangements to manage and schedule deliveries across the London borough of Newham to carry around 130 food, and up to 350 pharmaceutical deliveries, a day. This later expanded to include up to 450 shopping parcels to vulnerable Londoners who were unable to leave their homes.


Through the pandemic, Akram also made arrangements with the Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha in Southall to distribute hot food to those shielding at home, as well as weekend lunches to those working for the local NHS trust. He also worked to ensure Dial-a-Ride staff would be available to make ad-hoc deliveries of PPE to NHS Nightingale in east London.

In total, Akram led and managed the scheduling and delivery of around 60,000 deliveries across London, providing food and deliveries to thousands of people. His unwavering dedication to this work, which he completed alongside his day-to-day duties, led to glowing feedback from the LEPG, customers and his colleagues, as he worked around the clock to ensure those in need got the support they sought.

Akram was recognised in the Queen's Birthday Honours and was awarded a British Empire Medal (BEM) for his outstanding work.



**Ibrar Akram**  
Interim Head of Customer Operations



Let the reservationist know if you can accept one part of the journey only

## Dial-a-Ride's current booking guidelines and operating hours\*

You can travel every day between 07:00 and 22:00, and request bookings through our contact centre seven days a week between 09:00 and 16:00.

You can request one advance booking any day of the week, up to seven days ahead of travel. Advance bookings are limited to a maximum of one return journey per week. There are no limits to next day and same day bookings.

For same day bookings, please call us giving us at least two hours' notice before your requested time of travel.

Our phone lines can get very busy at certain times of the day. To avoid waiting in a queue, you can email your booking requirements to us at [dar.reservations@tfl.gov.uk](mailto:dar.reservations@tfl.gov.uk) and we will process your request.

\*Our operating terms and conditions are subject to change. Any changes will be available on our website, [tfl.gov.uk/dialaride](http://tfl.gov.uk/dialaride), our email responses and phone messages.



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# Helpful hints when booking and travelling with Dial-a-Ride services

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When you request your Dial-a-Ride transport for your local trip, it helps if your timings are flexible.

Let us know:

- ♦ How long you want to spend at your destination
- ♦ The time you wish to travel in each direction
- ♦ The time you need to arrive by

Let us know the earliest and latest times you can leave home and approximately how long you want to spend at your destination. This gives us flexibility and the best chance of finding transport for you.

Dial-a-Ride operates a shared bus service, which means you will often travel with other customers, so you may experience a longer journey.

You can help us keep you safe by waiting for the driver to assist you on the bus, always wearing your seatbelt and staying seated until the driver

can help you get out of the bus.

If your journey is not available when you initially request it, you will be placed on a stand-by list. We will only contact you if we can offer the journey.

Please be ready 15 minutes before your agreed time as our vehicles can arrive up to 15 minutes before or after this.

If you need to cancel your journey, please give us as much notice as possible so that we can offer the space to someone else.

You can travel with up to two shopping bags or one shopping trolley. If you arrive with more shopping than this, your driver won't be able to transport you.

Requests for rides to NHS hospital appointments, school or local authority day centres will not be accepted as other services are available for these journeys.

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## Regular bookings

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Dial-a-Ride can sometimes offer you a regular booking if you travel to the same destination at the same time every week.

Your booking is automated, and you only need to call to cancel if you are not travelling. There is no application process for regular bookings; they will be offered if we have the resources available. Just request the same journey each week and if we can offer it as a regular arrangement, we will contact you.

All regular bookings are kept under review and, depending on demand for the service, they may need to be renegotiated or cancelled to ensure we can offer a fair service to all our members wishing to travel.

Regular bookings will be cancelled if you cancel your booking at the door, if you are



The Dial-a-Ride contact centre is open seven days a week

not at home for four weeks in a row, or if you suspend or cancel your booking eight weeks in a row.

All regular bookings that haven't been used since March 2020, or that fall outside of our revised operating hours, have been cancelled so that we can offer regular bookings to customers who are currently travelling.

There is no application process for regular bookings; they will be offered if we have the resources available.



# Accessible travel in London

Enclosed is our latest Accessible travel In London leaflet to guide you through all of TfL's accessibility features and assisted transport services.

TfL's travel mentoring service is an option to consider if you wish to make the most of TfL's accessible network and broaden your travel options throughout London. Contact our team to find out how they can assist you in learning how to travel confidently and independently on all our network.



Local journeys with flexible timings are the easiest for Dial-a-Ride to accommodate



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# Making the most of your travel options on TfL's network

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## Mobility scooters on Dial-a-Ride

Please keep us up to date if you change or purchase a mobility scooter and would like to use it on Dial-a-Ride. Once you register to use your new scooter on Dial-a-Ride, you'll receive a visit from the travel mentoring team.

Smaller mobility scooters can also be taken on all London buses. Our travel mentors give tips and guidance and can issue you with a Mobility Aid Recognition Scheme (MARS) card to allow you to travel confidently with your scooter on London buses.

The MARS card helps our bus staff better understand the service you would like so

they can take appropriate action when you are travelling, including pulling in close to the kerb and lowering the wheelchair ramp when you are boarding a bus.

Email [travelmentor@tfl.gov.uk](mailto:travelmentor@tfl.gov.uk) or call **020 3054 4361** between 09:00 - 16:00, Monday to Friday, to find out more or to book an appointment.

You can take smaller mobility scooters on all London buses







Customer Charlie with Brian from TfL's travel mentoring service

Here is a testimonial from Charlie from Camden, an electric chair user, who has cerebral palsy and autism. Charlie has recently used the travel mentoring service.

'I rang up TfL regarding travel mentoring after I spent some time on Google seeing if someone could help me know the right and wrong ways to get on the buses and Tube network.

'I rang up the travel mentoring team and spoke to Brian, who booked me in to come to my home and take me around London.

'There was no time limit on my meeting and being autistic this was great as I didn't feel

rushed in being shown the right way to get on and off the bus and the Tube. I felt so happy that I was shown this as now I feel like I can go about London all by myself. Without someone like Brian, I would still be at home with no social life and getting bad mental health.

'It is amazing that TfL has put travel mentoring in place for the disabled, and after all my training, it made me feel not nervous or anxious at all anymore and very excited to move around all by myself. Thank you so much to Brian for all his help.'



# Save time and email us!

Making bookings by email is easy and will save you time waiting on the phone.

You can also use it to book on behalf of groups. Simply email your requests to [dar.reservations@tfl.gov.uk](mailto:dar.reservations@tfl.gov.uk)

If you prefer an email version of In Touch please email us at [dar@tfl.gov.uk](mailto:dar@tfl.gov.uk)

Please ensure we have your most up-to-date contact details, including your mobile phone, email address and any emergency contact numbers.

# Get in touch

Call: 0343 222 7777\* then select one of the options below

## Option 1

Bookings

Seven days a week,  
09:00 to 16:00:

Email:

[dar.reservations@tfl.gov.uk](mailto:dar.reservations@tfl.gov.uk)

## Option 2

Cancellations, or to check where your bus is.

## Option 3

Membership enquiries and feedback:

Monday to Friday,  
09:00 to 16:00

Email: [dar@tfl.gov.uk](mailto:dar@tfl.gov.uk)

Check out our website: [tfl.gov.uk/dialaride](http://tfl.gov.uk/dialaride)

\*Service and network charges may apply. Visit [tfl.gov.uk/terms](http://tfl.gov.uk/terms) for more details. Please note that calls may be recorded for training, investigation and security purposes.