

OnRoute

October 2021

The magazine for London's taxi and private hire trades



Stay safe

Our new interactive
safeguarding course

On the road again

Getting back to business after lockdown



ULEZ
expands

Personal safety
while working

The latest on
rapid charging

Talking about
Taxicard

A guide to assistance dogs for private hire drivers

Passengers with assistance dogs use private hire services to make their way around the Capital. These are some of the dogs you might come across. Please remember not all assistance dogs have a jacket to identify them. If in doubt, you should allow the assistance dog to travel with their owner. 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?
Private hire drivers and operators doing so could risk being prosecuted or losing their licence.

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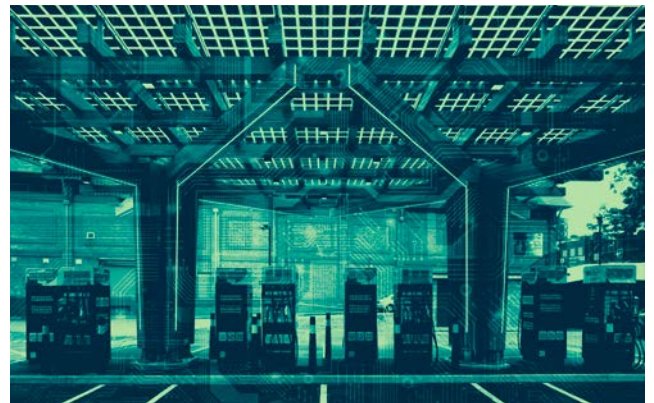
59 Thank you

Highlights this issue



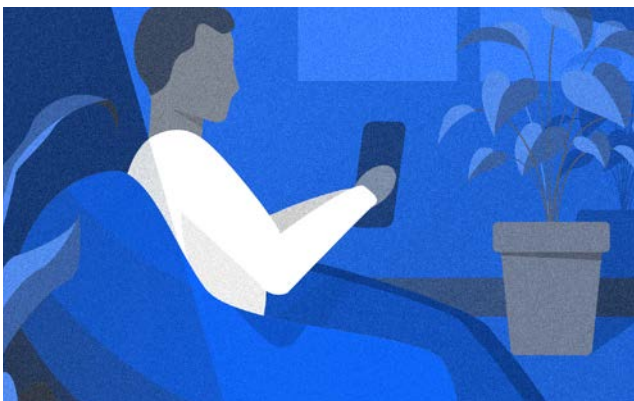
p16. Top talk

TPH's General Manager, Graham Robinson, discusses what has been happening during the pandemic



p23. Green zone

How London is moving to become a carbon-free city



p35. Wellbeing

Giving yourself some TLC after all the stresses of lockdown



p42. Security

How to keep yourself and your customers safe and sound

Infocentral

For any licensing queries please see the following list of email addresses for each type of query. Please include your application or licence number in the subject field of your email and only use one of the email addresses below. This will help us to resolve your enquiry as quickly as possible.

Medical information

If you have been asked to provide any medical information, email tphlicensing@tfl.gov.uk

Driver renewal application enquiries

To ask a question about your taxi or private hire driver renewal application, email TPHRenewals@tfl.gov.uk

Online driver renewal assistance

For help with your online driver renewal application, email tphonline@tfl.gov.uk

Please include a telephone number within your email as it may be necessary for one of our team to call you to resolve your issue.

Change of address for drivers

To inform us of your address change, email TPHAddress@tfl.gov.uk

Please allow 10 working days for the receipt of your updated licence.

Notification of any change in your personal circumstances

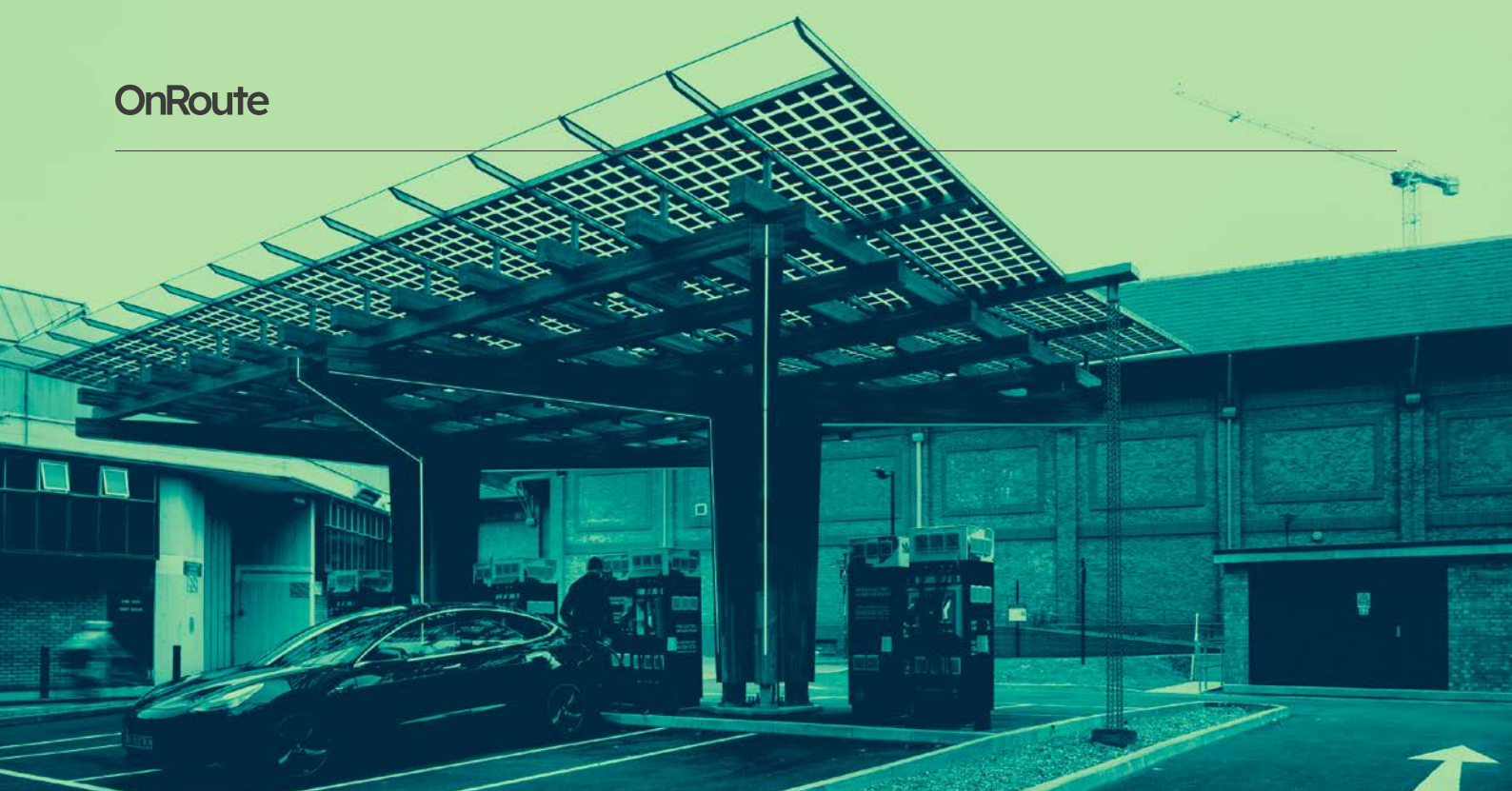
To notify us about any change in personal circumstances, including medical health, convictions, cautions or charges, email tphlicensing@tfl.gov.uk

Private hire operator queries

To ask a question about your application or any other aspect of being a licensed operator, email tphoperators@tfl.gov.uk

Other

To contact us about any other type of enquiry related to licensing, email tphlicensing@tfl.gov.uk



Welcome

It has been more than a year and a half since our last issue of OnRoute, since then life in London has changed dramatically. We had no inkling at the time that the coronavirus would have such a significant impact on the city and so many aspects of our everyday lives.

Thankfully, with the easing of lockdown, London seems to be coming back to life. Just what that means for the trades is explored by TPH's General Manager, Graham Robinson on p15.

If your mental and physical health have suffered during the pandemic, have a read of our Wellbeing section from p34. Here you'll find lots of tips on simple changes you can make to your lifestyle to get back to fighting fitness. There's also a list of resources where you can find more help.

Although London may have been quiet, a lot has been going on behind the scenes

and in the Green zone, from p22 onwards, we look at the actions being taken to turn the Capital into a zero-carbon city by 2050. A major step to achieve this will be the extension of the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) from this October.

There have been some important changes to the regulations for private hire drivers concerning the English Language Requirement, where they will now need to take two assessments. There is also a new assessment on safety and equality. Find out more from p51.

It may have been a long time since our last issue was published, but it is great to be back with our new look OnRoute as London opens up and everyone can start travelling freely around our city again.

Keep well and safe and if there's anything you'd like to see us cover in the magazine, just drop us a line OnRoute@tfl.gov.uk.

Driving seat

Putting you at the heart of taxi and private hire



Taxi Charity volunteers like Joseph Theodore, lend a helping hand to World War II veterans **p11**

p8 Soho's streets have re-opened

p10 Join up with the Poppy Cabs

p11 Award for the London Taxi Charity



Are you going to (Lewisham) market soon?

Access to the service roads for Lewisham Market are for permit holders only and strict enforcement via camera will be starting soon, resulting in the issue of penalty charge notices (PCNs). Although the London Borough of Lewisham has exempted taxis from penalties, taxi drivers who require access will need to email Lewisham [Parking Client Team](#) with their name, taxi licence number and vehicle details. They will then be added to the database, so they are not issued with a PCN.

DBS update

Have you registered with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Update service yet? Subscribers to this service do not have to apply for a new check when renewing their licence, eliminating the risk of delays in the processing of applications. It costs just £13 per year and saves you money on the cost of a new DBS check. Once you've registered, you can sign in to the service to:

- ✓ Add or remove a certificate
- ✓ Give employers permission to check if anything's changed on your certificate
- ✓ See who's checked if anything's changed on your certificate
- ✓ View your details

More information about the DBS Update service is available on the [Government website](#).



Soho says goodbye to street eateries

Westminster City Council has announced al fresco dining will end on Soho's streets. The roads, which have been temporarily closed to enable restaurants and bars to use them for the socially distanced seating of diners and drinkers, were re-opened to traffic on 30 September.

Restaurants and cafes will still be allowed to put seats and tables on pavements, but not in the road. However, Westminster City Council is consulting with residents in six areas, including Covent Garden, to see if they want the scheme to continue.

For more information about the scheme, visit [Temporary al fresco, Westminster City Council](#).

Soho streets reopening to traffic include:

- 📍 Berwick Street
- 📍 Brewer Street
- 📍 Broadwick Street
- 📍 D'Arbly Street
- 📍 Dean Street
- 📍 Frith Street
- 📍 Greek Street
- 📍 Old Compton Street
- 📍 Poland Street



A taxi marshal on duty at the busy rank outside Novikov nightclub in Mayfair

Taxi rank news

While a new hotel is being built at Wilton Road, Victoria station, the rear 30 metres of the taxi rank will be suspended until May 2022.

Construction work at No1 Knightsbridge, Grosvenor Crescent, has seen the whole rank suspended until at least April 2022, while in Grosvenor Street, the whole rank is suspended until December for demolition work. A temporary rank has been made available in front of the original rank.

New ranks with two bays have now been installed at Forest Gate station, Woodgrange Road and Manor Park station, Manor Park Road. A new rank with three bays has also been installed at Maryland station, Leytonstone Road.

The following events at the [Printworks](#) will have marshalled ranks:

- October 15, 16, 22, 23, 29, 30
- November 5, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 20, 21, 26, 27, 28
- December 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, 12, 17, 18 and then 31
- January 1 2022



Wearing your badge/driver ID with pride!

Drivers are being reminded they must wear their taxi badge/private hire driver ID at all times when working. These items are proof that you are a licensed driver, so wearing them will reassure your passengers when they are travelling with you.



Chelsea Pensioners stand beside their heritage taxi rides on Remembrance Sunday

Here come the Poppy Cabs

On Remembrance Sunday, hundreds of taxi drivers provide the free Poppy Cabs service to help move veterans around London from train and Tube stations to the Cenotaph.

Mike Hughes, Poppy Cabs coordinator, is hoping even more drivers will volunteer this year. He said: 'I expect this year's event to be even more poignant as 2021 marks 100 years since the Royal British Legion was founded and this will be the

first opportunity for this parade to take place since the start of the coronavirus pandemic. In addition to looking after the veterans, we also want to offer support to ninety family members who will be attending the parade from a special charity, Scotty's Little Soldiers.'

If you would like to support the Poppy Cabs service, you can contact Mike Hughes by emailing mike@mikehughes.org.uk.



Ian Parsons, Chairman of the Taxi Charity, takes tea with veteran Marie Scott

Taxi Charity gets well-deserved award

Congratulations to The Taxi Charity for Military Veterans, which has been awarded the prestigious Queen's Award for Voluntary Service. The Taxi Charity has been supporting veterans since 1948 and the London taxi drivers who volunteer are immensely proud to have been recognised with the award for providing social events and commemorative trips for veterans intended to combat loneliness and isolation.

For more than a year, the charity's events have been cancelled owing to pandemic restrictions, but it has worked hard to

ensure veterans received regular contact by sending a greeting card each month, gifts to mark the 75th anniversaries of VE and VJ Day, stockings at Christmas and arranging guards of honour at veterans' funerals. Volunteers have also helped with regular phone calls, food shopping, transport to hospital appointments, and more recently, taking veterans for their coronavirus injections.

You can find information about the support the Taxi Charity offers, and details on how to get involved on its [website](#).



Orange ribbons for remembrance

London Taxi PR has launched a campaign to remember and commemorate all of those associated with the trade who have sadly lost their lives to COVID-19. The campaign will also raise much-needed funds for all the charities associated with the London taxi profession.

The Orange Taxi Remembrance Ribbon has been designed to reflect and symbolise the taxi For Hire light and should be worn with the same pride licensed taxi drivers wear their badges.

The ribbons are now available for a minimum donation of £5 from the Russell Square cabmen's shelter, A&S Services at Hoddesdon, KPM and Cabvision at Lukin Street E1, and both the London offices of Sherbet Media in Dalston and in Putney.

For more information, visit [London Taxi PR](#).

Safety first

London Taxi PR's latest safety campaign, in conjunction with Colts Cabs, has seen a number of taxis around the Capital sporting eye-catching yellow and black side panels. These display the ways in which taxis are combating transmission of the coronavirus. 



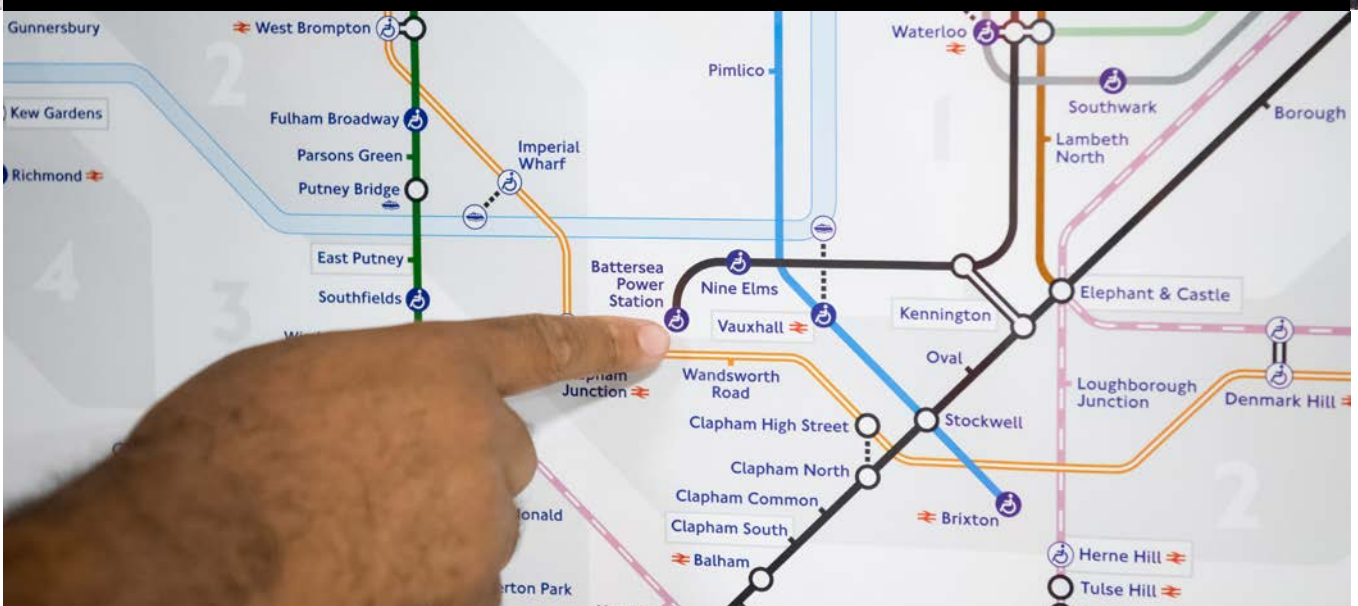
Some taxis now have eye-catching safety messages on their side panels

New Northern line stations

The new Northern line Tube stations at Battersea Power Station and Nine Elms opened on 20 September. To serve Battersea Power Station, there will be a new taxi rank on Battersea Park Road, roughly opposite number 103.



The new Battersea Power Station on the Northern line



Over-ranking is causing disruption

As London emerges from lockdown and traffic volumes are increasing, there are still locations around town where over-ranking of taxis is causing traffic congestion. This is leading to disruption to residents and businesses in the area.

For instance, in Paddington, at the junction of Edgware Road and Harrow Road, over-ranking is blocking the pedestrian crossing. As a result, there are now plans by Westminster City Council to issue PCNs to taxi drivers who are over-ranking.

Private hire drivers are reminded taxi ranks are for taxis only. Private hire vehicles are not permitted to stop on them at any time.



Message from Anand Nandha,
outgoing Senior Operations Manager

Thank you and goodbye

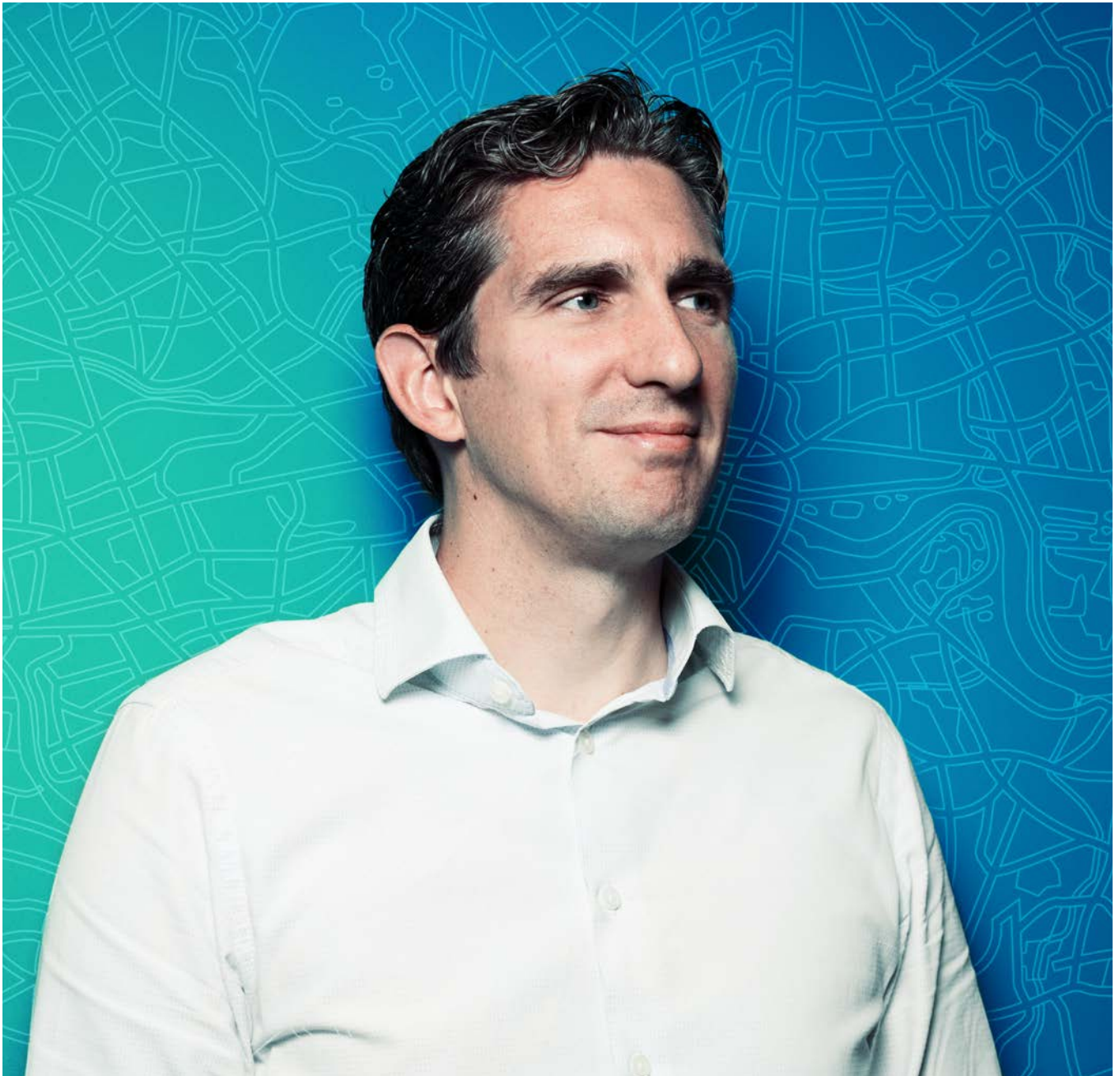
‘I recognise the impact of COVID-19 on the taxi and private hire trade has been immense and it’s been a difficult time for people including many of our officers who have had the same concerns and fears that many others have had. Some of our officers have also lost loved ones through this period. Despite this, they have continued their regular compliance activities.

‘We have also used the time effectively to bring in new technology to support the teams and we have provided additional training to staff to prepare them for the recovery and to improve their knowledge. I am very proud of the courage and resilience they have shown through this pandemic and now that there appears to be some light at the end of the tunnel, with many people now vaccinated, we are already seeing signs of a speedy recovery.

‘Going forward, our teams are now better prepared, we have more resilience in our resource capability and the teams are keen to help keep our taxi and private hire services safe for drivers and passengers.

‘I have now been leading the operations team for five years and have decided to move on to a new role, which I will be taking up in October.’

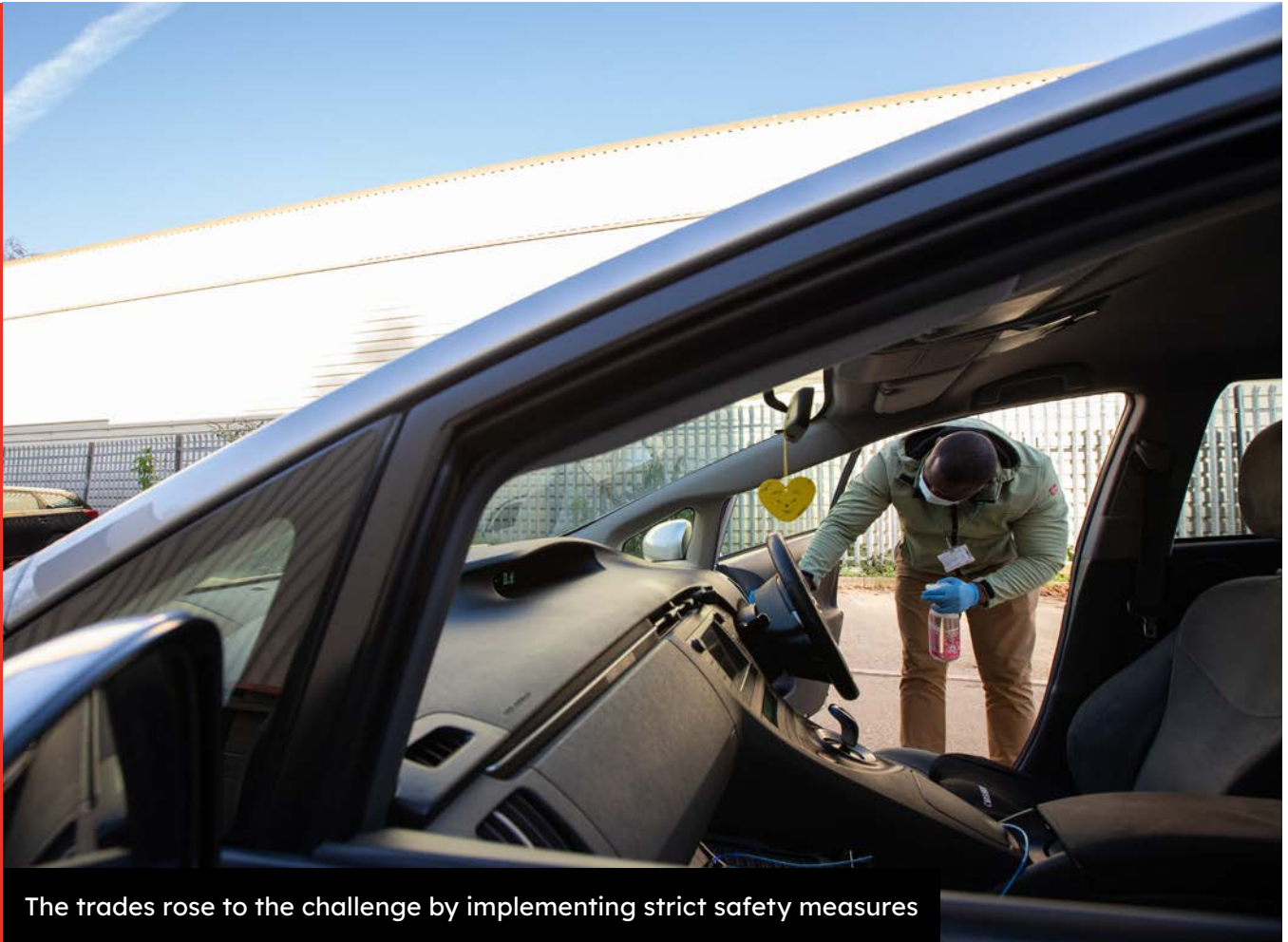
Top talk



Graham Robinson, General Manager of TPH, talks about the challenges the coronavirus pandemic has presented

The coronavirus pandemic has fundamentally changed the way we live our lives; from our work and travel practices, to how we socialise and keep in contact with family and friends. OnRoute talks to TPH General Manager, Graham Robinson, for his thoughts about what the future holds.





The trades rose to the challenge by implementing strict safety measures

To start, Graham acknowledges what a huge impact coronavirus has had on the trades, but also remarks: ‘We are seeing some shoots of recovery and it’s good to see more drivers working now, but we still have a long way to go.’

Amid all the stress and anxiety the pandemic has caused, Graham says one positive lockdown brought about was a lot more engagement between TPH and trade representatives.

‘During these extraordinary circumstances, we had very regular meetings with them to discuss the policies and guidance from the Government and what it meant to the trades, and also what we were putting in

place to deal with the pandemic, and we feel that has been very successful.

‘It enabled us to introduce a number of measures that helped ease the impact on the trades as much as we could. These included measures required as a result of the national lockdown restrictions to allow some vehicles to remain licensed for an additional six month period and the distribution of PPE to drivers.

‘We also made the difficult decision to close our telephone service. However, this has actually allowed us to address queries much more quickly, with the team looking to fully resolve queries on the first occasion wherever possible.’ ➔

Gearing up for change

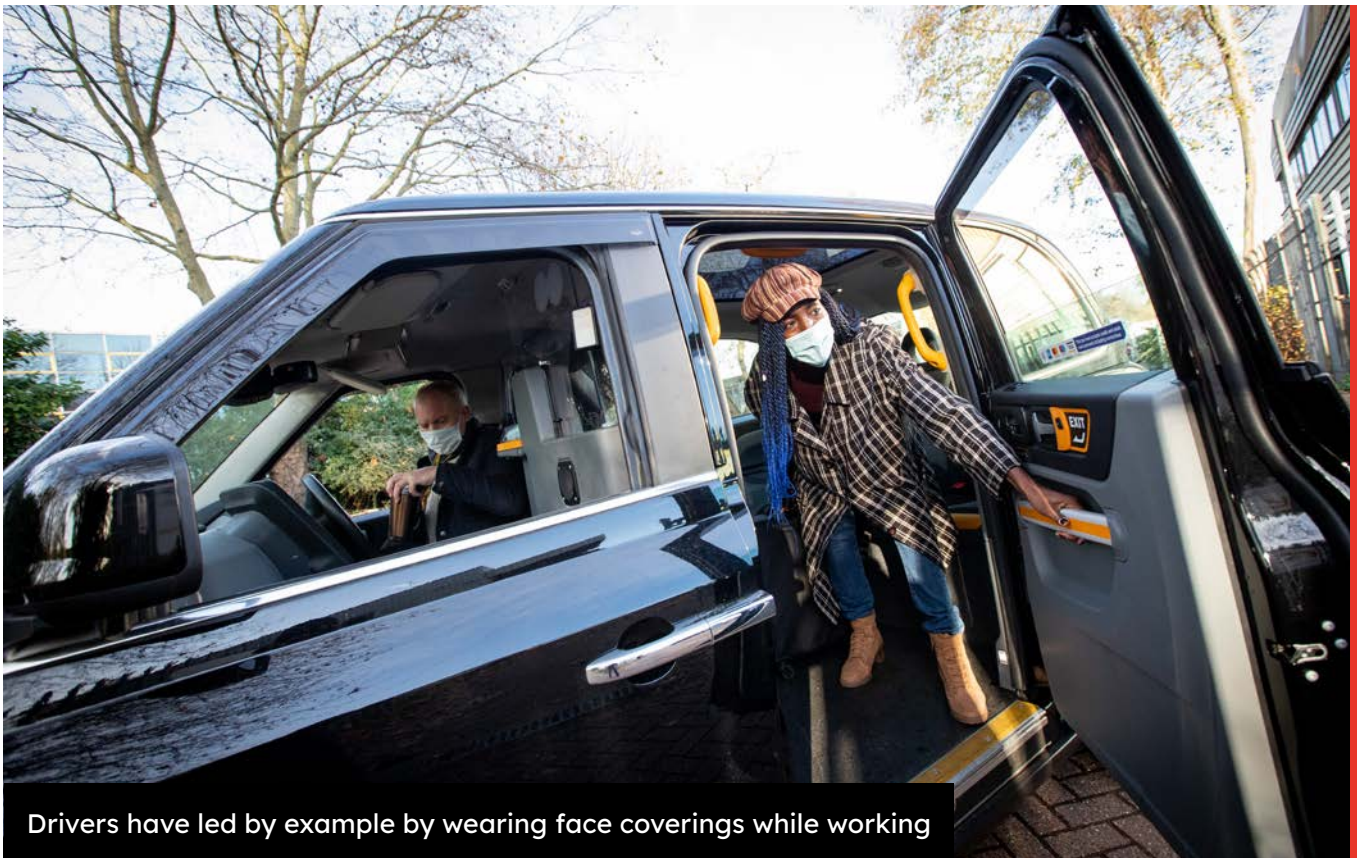
Now, as London moves out of lockdown and things are getting closer to normal again, further major changes to the trades are being made. Graham explains: ‘We are committed to introduce the recommendations made in the Department for Transport’s (DfT) Statutory Standards report, wherever possible. These will impact both the taxi and private trades, but there are some complex items where we are looking at what the impact will be and will publish a consultation to allow the trades to comment on how they will be implemented.’

There are some significant changes to private hire driver licensing requirements including the introduction of a Safety, Equality and Regulatory Understanding requirement, the way we assess whether applicants or licensees meet the English Language Requirement (see p52) and a new interactive safeguarding training course.

Throughout the pandemic TPH has been working on the vehicle licensing service and has been trialling having the contact centre open seven days a week, allowing drivers to book in vehicles over the weekend, and has also introduced a webchat service so licensees will be able to self-serve. With the delivery of new contracts to operate its IT and vehicle licensing systems, it will continue to improve its online offering in late 2022/early 2023.

Graham says there is now reason to feel optimistic about the future, commenting: ‘We know it has been a terrible time for the trades, but the whole of TfL is doing everything it can do to help London recover from the pandemic and move forward.

‘I would urge all of our licensees to continue to follow the Government coronavirus guidelines, so we can all stay safe and well.’ OR



Drivers have led by example by wearing face coverings while working



Coronavirus update

The latest advice on tackling the spread of the pandemic

The taxi and private hire trades in London went above and beyond during lockdown ensuring both drivers and their passengers, including many key workers such as NHS staff, could travel as safely as possible. Lockdown measures may have now eased, but there is still plenty you can do to ensure everyone's safety.

Face coverings

TfL expects and recommends that all taxi and private hire drivers and passengers continue to wear face coverings at all times while in the vehicle, unless they are exempt. Private hire operators and taxi booking platforms are advised to communicate the guidance on face coverings to passengers as part of the booking process.

If your passenger refuses to wear a face mask without a good reason you could try explaining the measure is there for their own safety and the safety of others. If they continue to refuse to put a face covering on, and they are not subject to an exemption, you can refuse to take them. ➔

Cleaning regime

After each journey, you should prepare your vehicle for the next passenger by thoroughly cleaning all surface areas that your customers may have touched while inside the vehicle. To protect yourself, you should wear PPE including gloves and a face covering while cleaning, and make sure your vehicle is well ventilated by leaving windows and doors open.

Use an anti-microbial cleaning fluid in a spray bottle and then use paper cloths to wipe surfaces clean. The cloths should be discarded after use by placing in a general waste bin. They should not be disposed of in a recycling bin.

Areas to give special attention to include the door handles (both inside and out), window controls, internal grab handles, seats, seatbelt and clips, light switches and your payment terminal. If your vehicle has a partition screen, this should also be properly cleaned as your passenger may have touched it or breathed on it.

Once clean, continue to leave the vehicle's windows and doors open for a further five minutes. A thorough clean of the vehicle should also be completed at the end of each shift or working day. Finally, discard your gloves and wash your hands for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser. ➔



Touch-points should be cleaned with anti-microbial fluid



Passengers should be reminded to always wear a face covering in taxis and private hire vehicles

Advice you should give to your passengers

Passengers should be reminded to wear a face covering and to wash or sanitise their hands after the journey. They should pay by contactless payment wherever possible. Ask them to sit as far away from you as possible, ideally in the rear passenger-side seat, and to keep the windows open in order to properly ventilate the vehicle.

PPE

TfL has distributed more than 600,000 medical grade face coverings and 12,000 bottles of Dettol hand sanitiser to taxi and private hire drivers at Heathrow and the vehicle inspection centres.



The wearing of PPE, such as face coverings, gives protection to both drivers and their passengers

Individuals who are exempt from wearing face coverings

- ✓ Children under the age of 11
- ✓ People who cannot put on, wear or remove a face covering because of a disability, or a physical or mental illness or other impairment
- ✓ Where putting on, wearing or removing a face covering will cause severe distress
- ✓ If someone is speaking or providing assistance to someone who relies on lip reading, clear sound or facial expressions in order to communicate

Green zone

Everything you need to know about making London a clean, green, carbon-free city



A new rapid charger hub has opened in Woolwich **p29**

p23 News on the expansion of ULEZ

p26 The roll-out of rapid chargers

p28 The Government's plug-in car grant

The inside story on ULEZ expansion

From 25 October, the existing central London Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) will expand to create a larger zone up to, but not including, the North Circular Road (A406) and South Circular Road (A205). It will continue to operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week and every day of the year except Christmas Day. Taxis will continue to be exempt.

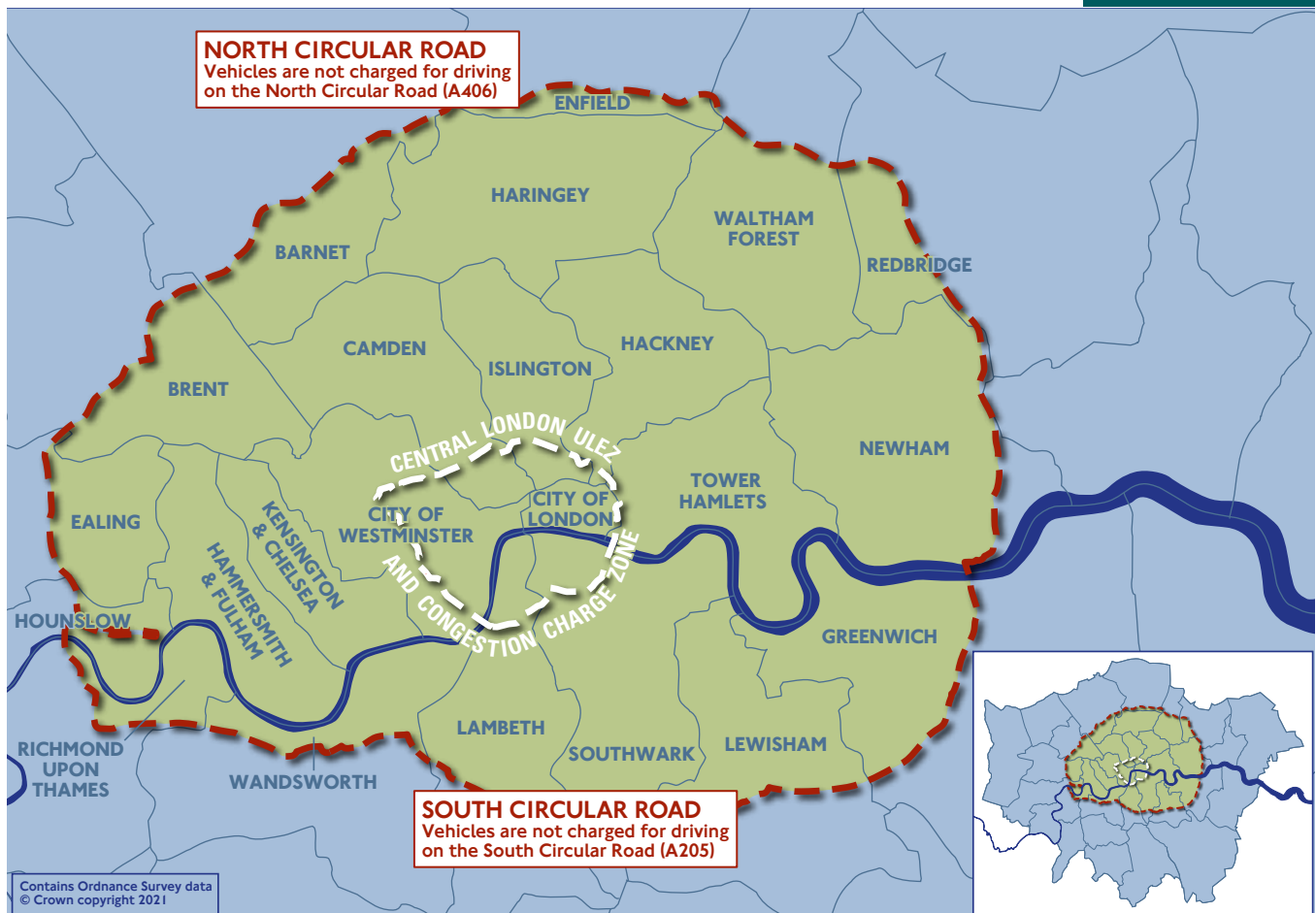


New signage is in place, reminding motorists about the ULEZ boundary changes

Despite recent improvements in air quality, toxic air pollution across many areas in London remains the biggest environmental risk to the health of all Londoners. Traffic emissions are the biggest source of poor air quality and during the pandemic, as the amount of traffic fell, so did pollution. Now levels across the Capital are returning to where they were before the pandemic.

The background

ULEZ was introduced in central London in April 2019 and has seen the number of vehicles meeting the tough emission standards reaching more than 80 per cent. It has also had a transformational impact on air pollution, contributing to a 44 per cent reduction in roadside nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) within its boundaries. It is expected the new expanded ULEZ will contribute to a fall of harmful (NO₂) of around another 30 per cent across the whole of London. →




A map showing the ULEZ expansion zone

The expanded ULEZ is 18 times the size of the current ULEZ zone and it is expected it will contribute to a further fall of harmful nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) of around 30 per cent across the whole of London

What this means for you

While taxis are exempt, private hire vehicles that do not meet the emissions standards and are not wheelchair-accessible must pay the full ULEZ charge to drive within the zone.

Designated wheelchair-accessible private hire vehicles will be granted a grace period until 26 October 2025. During this period, when these vehicles are used to carry out a private hire booking for a TfL-licensed private hire operator, they will be exempt from the ULEZ daily charge. At all other times they will have to pay the charge. A list of wheelchair accessible PHVs is published on the [TfL website](https://www.tfl.gov.uk).

If you feel your vehicle should be on the designated wheelchair-accessible list, you should send an email to tph.enquiries@tfl.gov.uk. 

ULEZ emissions standards

Euro 4 nitrogen oxides (NOx)

for petrol cars, vans and other specialist vehicles (up to and including 3.5 tonnes gross vehicle weight) and minibuses (up to and including five tonnes)

Euro 6 (NOx and particulate matter)

for diesel cars, vans and other specialist vehicles (up to and including 3.5 tonnes) and minibuses (up to and including five tonnes)

Four out of five cars already meet the ULEZ emissions standards, but you can check if your vehicle does at [Check your vehicle](#).

For more information, including how to pay, visit [ULEZ expansion - Transport for London](#).



From 25 October, ULEZ will expand up to the North and South Circular roads



Charging across the Capital

The electric charging network across London continues to expand

The future's electric

A rise in demand for electric charging infrastructure is expected over the next few years as the take-up of electric vehicles increases. The Mayor's Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Delivery Plan estimates that by 2025, London may need up to 4,000 rapid charging points and up to 48,000 residential chargers as more and more people and businesses move to electric vehicles.

A new Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy will be published later this year, setting out the steps being taken to improve the provision of chargers and addressing future forecasts. It will include analysis of long-term demand, further information on how the Greater London Authority land can be used to ramp up the density of charging points and how the public and private sector can remove barriers to their construction. ➔



Brent is trialling new on-street charge points


Plug in to your street

An on-street electric charge point project has begun in Brent. Five charge points have been installed in Mortimer Road for a group of trial participants to carry out real-world testing of the prototype system.

The charge points, delivered through start-up company Trojan Energy, sit flush within the pavement, with no permanent raised street furniture at the pavement edge. The system has been designed with input from Disability Rights UK to improve safety for all street users.

These first charge points are part of the three-year Subsurface Technology for Electric Pathways (STEP) project funded by the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles and delivered by Innovate UK.

Ian Mackenzie, CEO, Trojan Energy Limited, commented: 'With the launch of the STEP trial, we are demonstrating a new kind of electric vehicle charger to Londoners, and the people who make their living here but live elsewhere. We think this will help London's transition to a zero-emission taxi and private hire fleet by giving every single driver the capability to charge at or very near their home, regardless of whether they have off-street parking. As it happens, a fully electric private hire driver is our biggest trial-user to date, and they're very happy at being able to charge so close to home.'

The full trial of 150 charge points across Brent and Camden will go live later in the year, with the charge points across six streets in Brent and four streets in Camden. 

Plug in and save money



The [Government's grant scheme](#) for electric cars has been updated to target less expensive models, allowing the scheme's funding to go further and help more people make the switch to an electric vehicle.

The grant will now pay for 35 per cent of the purchase price for these vehicles, up to a maximum of £2,500 on cars priced under £35,000. This is the recommended retail price and includes VAT and delivery fees.

The number of electric car models priced under £35,000 has increased by almost 50 per cent since 2019 and more than half of the models currently on the market will still be eligible for the grant.

The scheme was renewed last year, with £582 million of funding intended to last until 2022 to 2023. Only vehicles that have been approved by the Government are eligible for a grant.



Join the hub

TfL has opened a new rapid charging hub at Glass Yard in Woolwich. The hub has eight charging points, including one dedicated for the use of taxis, and allows electric vehicle drivers to charge up in about 20 to 30 minutes.

TfL plans to open a rapid charging hub in every one of the Capital's five sub-regions. The first was in east London at Stratford International, and a site at Baynard House in the City of London is currently being constructed. More will follow in the north and west.

Cars eligible for the Government's grant scheme

These vehicles have CO₂ emissions of less than 50g/km and can travel at least 112km (70 miles) without any emissions at all



Citroën e-C4



Hyundai IONIQ Electric

- Premium
- Premium SE



Hyundai KONA Electric

- (39kWh) SE Connect
- (39kWh) Premium
- (64kWh) Premium



Kia e-Niro

- (39kWh) 2
- (64kWh) 2



MG MG5 EV

- (52.5kWh)
- (61.1kWh)



Nissan e-NV200

- (5-seater)
- (7-seater)



Nissan Leaf



Peugeot e-208



Peugeot e-2008

- Active Premium
- Allure,
- Allure Premium



Renault ZOE



Vauxhall Corsa-e



Vauxhall Mokka-e



**Vauxhall Vivaro-e
Life Combi**



Volkswagen e-Golf



Volkswagen e-up!



**Volkswagen ID.3 Pro
Performance**
• (58kWh 204PS) Life



Volkswagen ID.3 Pure
• (45kWh 150PS)



Volkswagen ID.4 Pure
• (52kWh 148PS) Life

In the headlights



Taxi driver David Fathers finds working for Taxicard a very rewarding experience

The **Taxicard service** provides subsidised door-to-door journeys in taxis and private hire vehicles for customers with mobility or visual impairments. Here, 53-year-old David Fathers, who has been a licensed taxi driver for more than 21 years, describes his experiences of working with Taxicard

What's it like?

I find Taxicard an extremely rewarding way to work. I've got to know many of my passengers very well on a personal level over the years, and this means I know their assistance needs before I reach the pickup. Whether it be an elderly person who just needs an arm to assist them, a parent who needs help with the buggy, a disabled person who needs help with the shopping, someone who is in a wheelchair, or a woman who has a son with autism and he likes Capital Extra on the radio.

I really like the way the scheme works with a fixed price. The passenger knows their contribution before they travel and if traffic affects the journey, the passenger doesn't get stressed by how much they will have to pay, so it's a much more relaxing experience from a driver's point of view. →


What changed during the pandemic?

Initially, back in March 2020, Taxicard work all but dried up. Taxicard holders, by the nature of the scheme, are elderly or vulnerable people who were being told by the Government to stay at home and not go out. Day centres and resource centres were closed, and hospital appointments cancelled. Allowing other people to travel on the cardholder’s behalf and the click and collect of prescriptions from pharmacies service we provided, did help give us some work and I know that speaking to people at the time, this was much appreciated. I also did some other work on behalf of Newham Council, delivering food parcels to residents.

What is happening now restrictions have eased?

As hospital appointments began to start again and people became more confident in leaving their homes, the work grew. Trips to the pub, restaurants, to see family and friends or just going out to get their own shopping are now daily occurrences. It’s been so nice to see people who I haven’t seen for more than a year and have a catch-up on the journey. It’s always nice to be remembered and see the smile on a passenger’s face.

Would you recommend doing Taxicard work?

This is the most rewarding way I have found to work and it’s a much nicer way to go about your day. The 90 per cent of fare, if the fare goes over the fixed price, is a reasonable way of calculating things and I have no problem with it. Since the pandemic I’ve worked in the southeast of the city and I must say I really don’t miss the traffic of central London. 

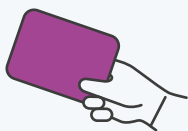


How to sign up

You can apply to become a Taxicard driver by emailing join@comcab.co.uk, phoning 0207 432 1600 or texting 07542395059.

Private hire operators who want to subscribe to the scheme should contact [City fleet](#).

Taxicard in numbers



Around
60,000
Taxicard
members



98%
Journeys
made by taxi



2,275
Taxicard
drivers



2%
Journeys made by
private hire vehicle

Wellbeing

Fit to face the future



Find out how to boost your mental health on [p36](#)

p36 Help for your mental health

p39 Autumn health check

p41 Health support services



Sound of mind

According to Mind, the mental health charity, every year, one in four of us will experience mental health problems including the two most common, depression and anxiety

Living through the pandemic has exacerbated both problems with people worrying about their own health and that of their loved ones, and suffering anxiety over their finances and whether or not they would have a job as we came out of lockdown. You may be feeling angry, isolated, frustrated, panicked, fearful, unmotivated or generally low.

The thing to remember is that these are all normal symptoms of depression and anxiety and you are not alone - many people experience the same feelings.

There are plenty of organisations out there that can help with stress-busting advice and tips, as well as many things you can do to relieve these symptoms yourself. ➔

1

It's good to talk

The most important way you can help yourself is to share how you are feeling with someone else. This could be one of your family or friends, or one of the many support organisations listed later in this article. Even if you find it difficult to talk about how you are feeling, just admitting that something isn't right is the first step to getting the help you need. You may also find just talking about your worries over a cuppa with a friend puts them into perspective and reassures you.

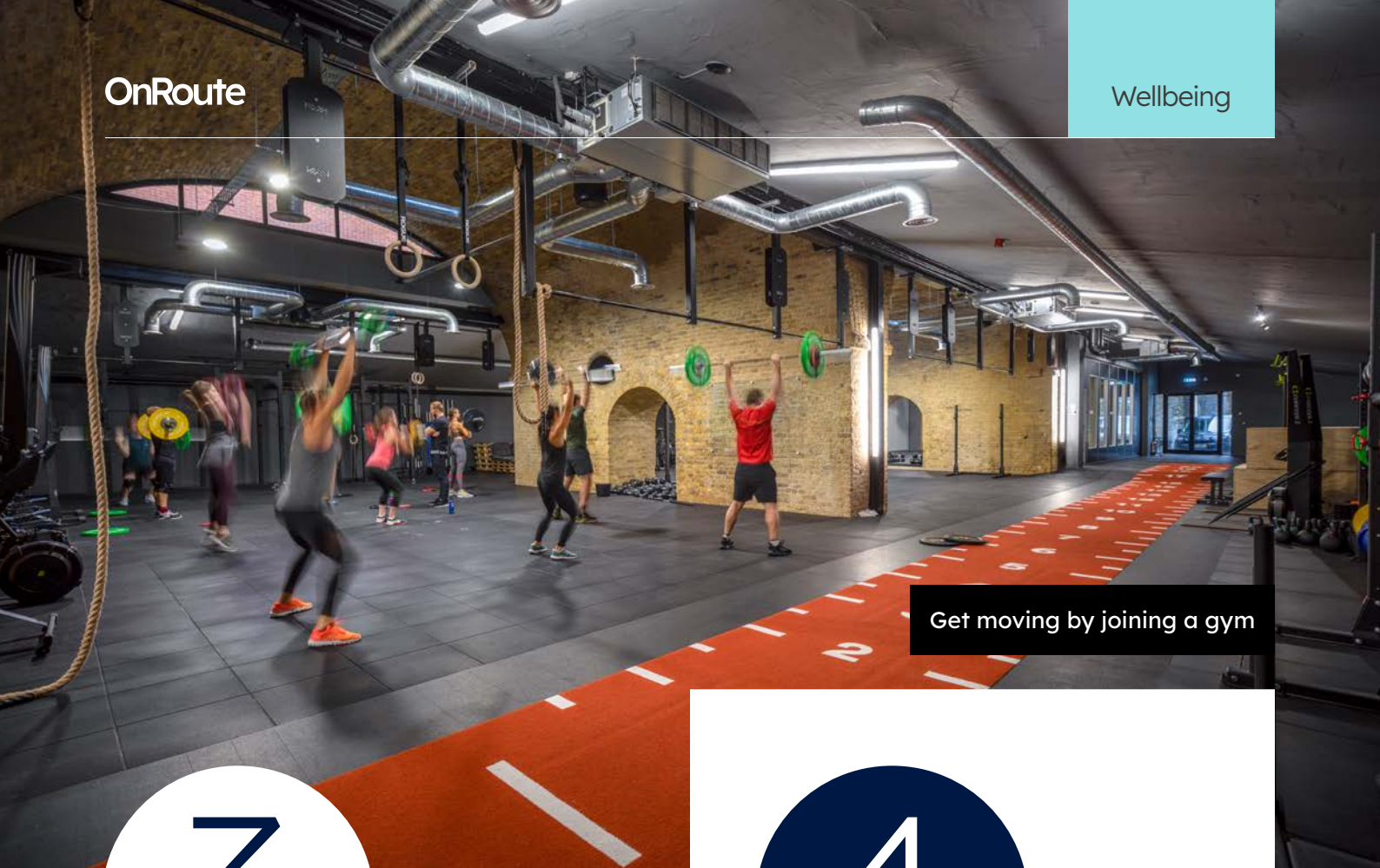
2

Live in the moment

Rather than stress out about what might or might not happen in the future, by concentrating on the here and now you centre your thoughts and cut down the endless babble of worry. This is known as mindfulness and there are many tried and tested mindfulness techniques out there. Some people find engaging with nature calms their thoughts, for others it could be breathing exercises, yoga, or meditation. →



Yoga is good for both mental and physical health



Get moving by joining a gym


3

Keep moving

As a driver, you spend many hours of the day behind the wheel, but you really should try to incorporate some physical exercise into your daily regime. Studies have shown doing as little as 20 minutes exercise a day can reduce stress and anxiety and has been proven to reduce the risk of depression by 20 to 30 per cent. It will also boost your physical wellbeing by reducing the risk of Type 2 diabetes, heart disease and cancer. So, go for a walk or a swim, or take your children to the local playground. Joining in some group exercise is even better because it makes you feel connected to other people, so go for a game of football in the park or join a gym or sports club.

4

Look after yourself

Working shift patterns can wreak havoc on being able to follow a healthy diet and getting enough quality sleep. But both are important to how we feel. Eating fast foods on a regular basis deprives the body of essential nutrients, while lack of sleep inhibits proper brain function, both of which can increase levels of depression. Try to cut down on unhealthy snacks and set regular hours for eating your meals, including your five a day. Make sure your bedroom is dark enough and cool enough to encourage sleep and leave your phone and other devices somewhere else. A temperature range of between 15c to 18c in the bedroom is recommended by doctors. 



Cycling and jogging in the fresh air can boost your mood

Autumn health check

In much the same way you regularly check your vehicle to ensure everything is in good working order, so it pays to regularly check your health to catch any problems which might become serious

Here's what you should be checking:

Blood pressure

One in three adults in the UK has high blood pressure which, if not addressed, can lead to a variety of health problems including stroke or heart attack. And half the adults with high blood pressure don't even know they have it, so it pays to have a free blood pressure test to check if your blood pressure is too high or too low.

There are lots of places where you can get a blood pressure check for free, including your GP surgery and some pharmacies and leisure centres. Visit [blood pressure UK](#).

Activity levels

To stay fit and healthy, it's recommended you get at least 150 minutes of moderate physical activity a week. The good news is, walking briskly, even for one minute, counts as exercise and it has never been easier to monitor just how much you are walking. The Active 10 app from the NHS, which is available on the Apple app store and Google Play, tracks your steps, helps you set goals and gives tips to boost your activity. Just pop your phone in your pocket and try and fit in a walk during a break, or before you start or finish work. For more information on the app, visit [the NHS website](#). ➔

Get jabbed

Have you had both your coronavirus jabs and if you are 50, your free flu jab? If you initially refused the coronavirus vaccine and have now changed your mind, the Government is urging you to come forward and get your first jab as soon as possible. The daily number of coronavirus cases is now rising again as lockdown restrictions have eased and you can book your vaccination at [NHS appointment service](#).

Last year saw the roll-out of the biggest NHS flu vaccination programme ever, with the aim of offering protection to as many eligible people as possible. If you get flu and COVID-19 at the same time, research shows you're more likely to be seriously ill. If you've already had COVID-19, it's safe to have the flu vaccine.

If you are between 50 and 64 years old, you can have your free flu jab at your GP surgery or through a pharmacy offering the service, including Boots and Lloyds.

For more information, visit [Flu vaccine NHS](#).

Keep cholesterol in check

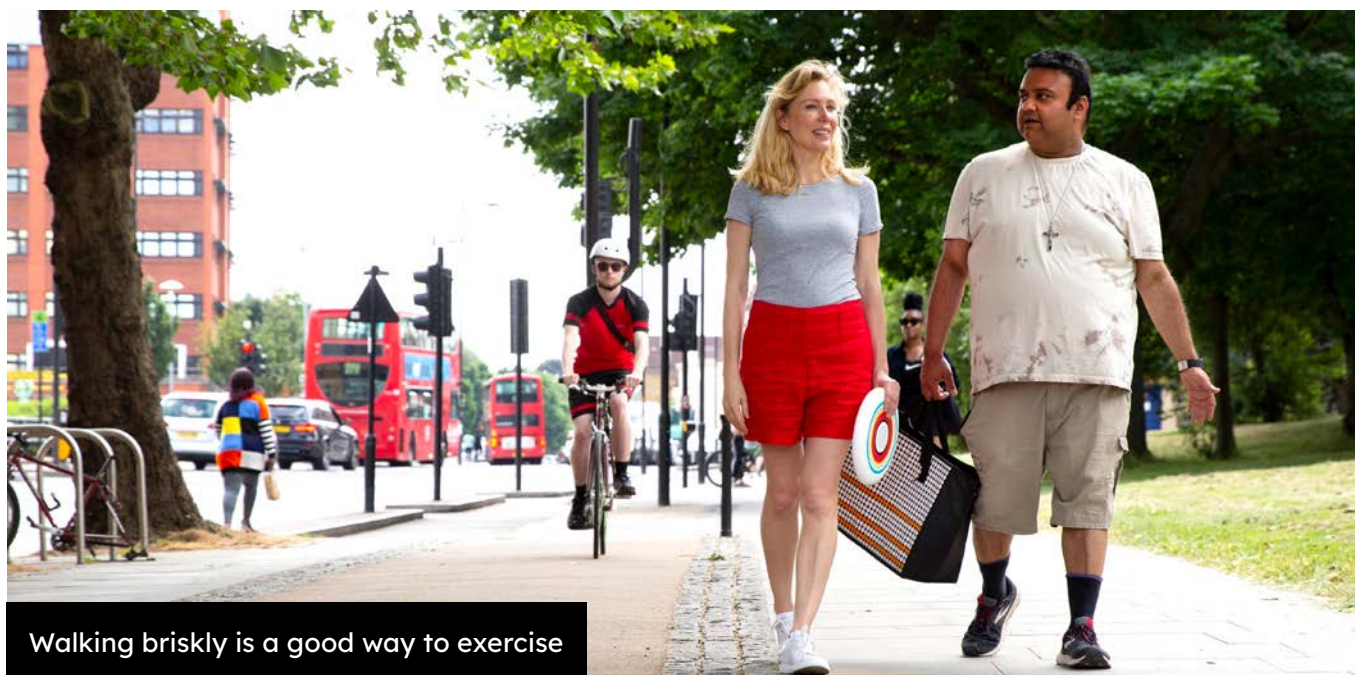
More than half of the UK's adult population has raised cholesterol levels. Cholesterol is a fatty substance made by the liver from the fat we eat.

We all need a certain amount of cholesterol, but if there is too much, it can build up in the walls of your arteries and raise your risk of heart attack and stroke.

The good news is there are plenty of ways we can all cut down on cholesterol, just by making a few simple changes to our diet. Swap foods that are high in processed fats such as bacon, sausages, biscuits, cakes, chips and cheese for more healthy options such as fruit, vegetables, fish, lean meat, nuts and seeds.

HEART UK is the UK's only cholesterol charity, and its website has plenty of tips for cutting your cholesterol with healthy diets, recipes, ways to keep active and medical information.

Check out more details at [HEART UK](#). 



Walking briskly is a good way to exercise

Earlier this year, TPH hosted an online health, wellbeing, safety and security forum packed full of information on a range of health and security-related topics.

Assets from the forum are now available online at [Health and wellbeing](#). The organisations listed below either contributed to the forum or specialise in the various areas of health covered by it.

Mental health and wellbeing support services

[SANE](#)

info@sane.org.uk

0300 304 7000

Open every day from 16:30 to 22:30

[Rethink Mental Illness](#)

advice@rethink.org

0300 5000 927

[Mind](#)

info@mind.org.uk

0300 123 3393

Open 09:00 to 18:00 Monday to Friday except Bank Holidays (calls charged at local rate)

[CALM](#)

0808 802 58 58

Open 17:00 to midnight, 365 days a year

[Stress Management Society \(SMS\)](#)

0203 142 8650

[BBC Headroom](#)

[RoSPA driver safety](#)

Information on driving fatigue and the importance of not driving when tired

[UK Active](#)

020 8158 9700

Security

Safety information for both drivers and passengers



All TfL's operations officers wear body-worn cameras [p43](#)

- [p43](#) TfL's operations officers' compliance activity
- [p45](#) Personal safety measures
- [p47](#) Safeguarding the young and the vulnerable

Feet on the street

During lockdown, TfL's operations officers continued to carry out compliance activity, ensuring both the trades and the public stayed safe

There are now around 225 operations officers who can be deployed across London, seven days and nights a week, to support roads and vehicles activities, including TPH compliance operations.

Operations Manager, Carlo Delgaudio, explains what has been going on. 'During lockdown, the operations officers continued to work. The trade was important for ensuring that key workers could still get to and from their jobs, and we continued our

activities to ensure compliance and safety standards were not affected.


'We made a number of changes to our safe systems to ensure compliance checks were carried out in a way to protect our officers and members of the trade. We also used new technology to ensure that where it was not safe to visit a private hire operator's office, we could still inspect their records remotely to ensure only compliant drivers and vehicles were being used. ➔



Operations Manager Carlo Delgaudio (on the far left) out working with his team

‘As a result of significantly fewer taxi and private hire vehicles in London during the peak of the pandemic, our officers were able to support other key activities to help London’s key workers on their journeys, including customer service activities around face covering compliance, providing support at the Nightingale Hospital and distributing PPE to members of the public and the TPH trades.’

During this period, compliance rates were fairly stable, although the officers did see a slight increase in non-compliance in relation to new requirements such as driver face coverings and private hire vehicle partitions.

Carlo says they had feedback during the periods of lockdown that drivers were pleased to see officers were still on the street and their high-visibility presence gave some reassurance. 

Keeping an eye out

Body-worn cameras are now mandatory for all operations officers when they are on duty to diffuse confrontational situations and to prevent physical and verbal abuse towards officers. ‘They have been generally well received all round,’ remarks Carlo, ‘with drivers asking general questions about the use of the cameras, such as why we are wearing them. Our officers have reassured them that the cameras are there to act as a deterrent to any aggression.’



Operations officers Lorenzo Scaltrito and Mohamed Salam assisting with taxi operations at Southfields Tube Station during Wimbledon tennis fortnight

Personal safety

Although lockdown may be easing, it still pays to keep safety measures in place. Here are a few top tips

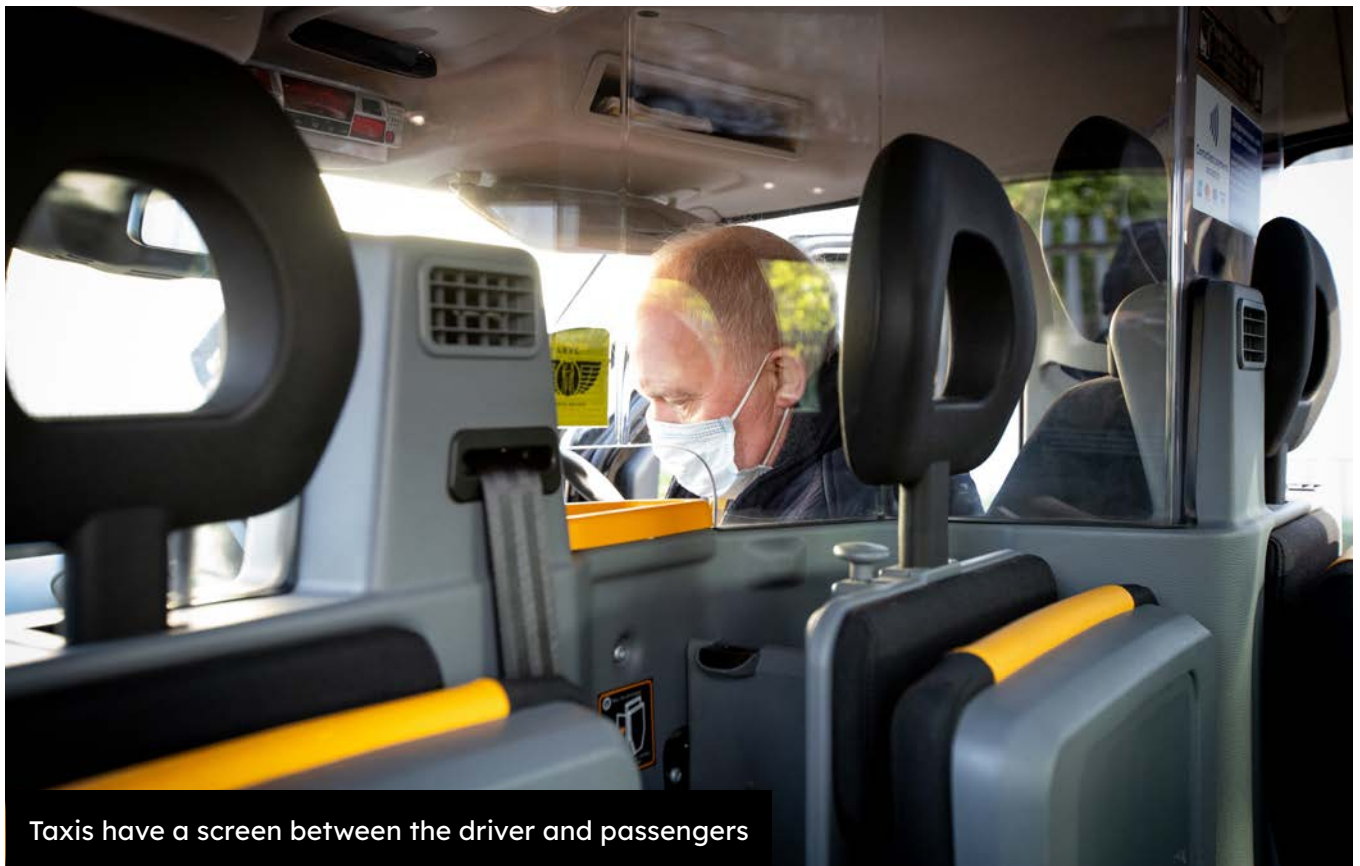
Drivers have been doing a fantastic job leading by example, wearing face coverings themselves and encouraging their passengers to do so. They have also ensured both their personal and the public's safety by cleaning their vehicles between jobs.

Partition screens

Taxis already have a screen separating their cab from the passenger compartment of the vehicle. Many private hire drivers have

opted to fit temporary partition screens in their vehicles. If you decide to install a screen, TPH has to ensure the installation and the materials used comply with government and industry regulations, and its requirements as the licensing authority.

You can find more information on approved screens and the installation process in [‘Guidelines for Driver Protection and Safety Shields in Private Hire Vehicles’](#) on the TfL website. ➔



Taxis have a screen between the driver and passengers



Installing CCTV cameras and carrying a spit kit with you can help with your personal safety



CCTV cameras

Installing CCTV cameras has been shown to lead to reduced threats and violence against drivers. Signs in the vehicle can highlight the presence of CCTV to passengers. Cameras can be bought or rented, and the cost may be offset by reduced insurance premiums.

TfL recently conducted a consultation on CCTV in taxis and private hire vehicles asking for people's views on if the cameras would have either a positive or an adverse net effect on the safety of taxi and private hire users, and their impact on potential privacy issues. The responses are now being collated.

Spit kits

Any incidence of spitting is appalling but in these times of coronavirus, which spreads through infected respiratory droplets including spit, it could actually be

life-threatening. Carrying a spit kit in your vehicle could help to identify a spitter. If a correctly used spit kit is submitted to the police for analysis, there is an 80 per cent chance of identifying a suspect.

If you are the victim of a spitting incident, use your spit kit at the first available opportunity and only swab from the skin or clothing. Do not swab from surfaces that passengers have access to. This may lead to cross contamination which could make the sample inadmissible. Spit kits can be bought online and only cost a few pounds.

Convex mirrors

Fitting a convex mirror that gives you a full view of the rear of your vehicle will help you see what a passenger directly behind you is doing.

More information on [safety measures](#) can be found on the TPH pages of the TfL website. 

SAY SOMETHING IF YOU SEE SOMETHING

WATCH FOR

- UNUSUAL BEHAVIOUR OF PEOPLE TRAVELLING TOGETHER, ESPECIALLY IF THERE ARE ADULTS WITH YOUNG PEOPLE
- YOUNG PEOPLE BEING PICKED UP AND TAKEN TO HOTELS, PARTICULARLY AT ODD TIMES OF THE DAY AND NIGHT
- ADULTS PUTTING A YOUNG PERSON, WHO MAY BE UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF DRUGS OR ALCOHOL, INTO YOUR CAR

THIS IS ABUSE. DON'T MASK THE PROBLEM.

Report it.
 Call 101, quote Operation Makesafe.
www.met.police.uk

METROPOLITAN POLICE London safeguarding children board TRANSPORT FOR LONDON

The Metropolitan Police Force's poster for its Operation Makesafe campaign

Safeguarding

Say something if you see something

In the DfT's Statutory Standards for Taxi and Private Hire Licensing, there is a focus on protecting children and vulnerable adults, also known as safeguarding.

Safeguarding means protecting children and adults at risk from harm and abuse. This includes city gangs exploiting children in what is known as 'county lines' drug networks, and modern slavery, including vulnerable people being sold into the sex trade. As a licensed taxi or private hire driver or operator, you can help towards the safeguarding of a child or vulnerable adult if you have concerns about their safety. ➔



Watch out for young people travelling late at night



Glenn Smith is the Acting Inspector in the Metropolitan Police's Taxi and Private Hire Policing Team. He says:

'If drivers see young people using their taxi or private hire vehicle very late at night or in the early hours, that isn't normal behaviour. It all comes back to that sixth sense, a person's 'dynamic risk assessment'. We all use it in these situations, where you are assessing the risk on the spot. If something doesn't feel right and you are not comfortable with it, in any walk of life, then you change that environment. The emphasis is on the driver to make that decision. If it doesn't feel right, they should pass that information on. Tell someone what you have seen and then you have done your bit. Drivers have a wealth of knowledge, it's massive, and we need to tap into that to help anyone who is vulnerable.'

1 Top tips for safeguarding

There is no reference in legislation regarding the age at which you can carry children unaccompanied. However, it is good practice for drivers and operators to ensure they know the name of the adult who will be meeting the child at the end of the journey.

Private hire operators should establish procedures to ensure all their staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities. It is important that staff and drivers know what to do should they have a concern at any point.

2 Signs that a child, young person or vulnerable person is at risk include:

- Being picked up and taken to hotels, especially at unusual times of the day or night
- Travelling to meet someone they do not know, perhaps who they have met online
- An adult putting a young person into your vehicle who may be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- The behaviour of people travelling together, particularly if there is a mix of adults and young people
- A young person or vulnerable adult who looks concerned or frightened in the company of an adult or adults
- A child, young person or vulnerable adult who presents as poorly dressed, unclean or malnourished
- A child, young person or vulnerable adult who appears to be controlled or under undue control of by someone else or having decisions made for them by another adult

3

What to do if you see something is not right

Operators should be alert to possible signs of abuse, such as suspicious booking patterns. They should also keep a record of any incident/situations they are alerted to by drivers. The record should include a description of what happened, the name and address, a physical description of the passenger and the date and time so they can give these details to the police. **OR**

If you think you may have spotted an exploited youngster or vulnerable adult, you should report any incidents to the police by calling 101 or 999 in an emergency. Other reporting options include:

Crimestoppers

(an anonymous service)
0800 555 111

NSPCC

0808 800 5000

Modern Slavery Helpline

08000 121 700

You do not need to give your details and can report anonymously, but the more information you can give the better.



Taxi and private hire drivers and operators can help with safeguarding the vulnerable

Watch out for safeguarding

TPH is offering a new, interactive online safeguarding training course that it expects all existing licensees and applicants to undertake.

Also, on October 1, TPH introduced a new Safety, Equality and Regulatory Understanding (SERU) requirement,

which applies to both existing private hire drivers and to new applicants. To satisfy this requirement, all private hire driver applicants and existing drivers who apply for a licence will be required to pass the SERU assessment. For more about the requirement and what you will need to do before taking your assessment, go to page 51.

The Manual

Tips, advice and policy updates from TfL

Taxi age limit

The age limit for taxis is being reduced on 1 November, when the maximum age limit for Euro 3, 4 and 5 diesel vehicles will be 13 years.

Taxi vehicle ages will continue to be calculated from the date of the vehicle's first registration. TPH has produced a [calculator](#) which tells drivers the last date that a licence can be issued for their vehicle. You can find the calculator at [Emissions standards for taxis](#).

TPH has written to all the drivers who will be impacted by the age limit reduction, telling them if they want to come in for a vehicle inspection before that deadline, they should book a slot as early as possible, as the vehicle inspection sites are facing a peak of inspections scheduled to take place this October.

The most efficient way to book a vehicle licensing inspection is via the online booking portal – which allows you to book an appointment 24-hours a day, seven days a week.



Taxis ranking up outside St Pancras station

Taxi age limits*

Euro 3, 4 and 5 diesel taxis
13 years old

Newly converted LPG taxis
15 years old

Euro 6 diesel taxis
15 years old

ZEC taxis
15 years old

* Dates effective from 1 November 2021

Consultation on the Congestion charge

Your chance to have your say on proposed changes to the charge

Since it was first introduced in 2003, changes have been made to the Congestion Charge to ensure it remains effective, including changes to the charge level, days/times of operation, and discounts and exemptions. Last year, in response to the transport challenges presented by the pandemic, TfL made temporary changes to the charge, including operating daily until 22:00.

A consultation is now open on new proposals, which are part of the commitment by the Mayor of London and TfL to reduce traffic and congestion in central London. They also recognise the changes in travel patterns as London moves to the next phase of pandemic recovery. These proposed new changes would replace the temporary changes (if they are still in place at the time of implementation).

Subject to the outcomes of the consultation and if the proposed changes are confirmed by the Mayor, they would come into immediate effect the day after a decision is made. The exception would be the introduction of new charging days and hours, which involve changes to signage and technology systems. The changes to days and hours are proposed to come into effect from 28 February 2022.

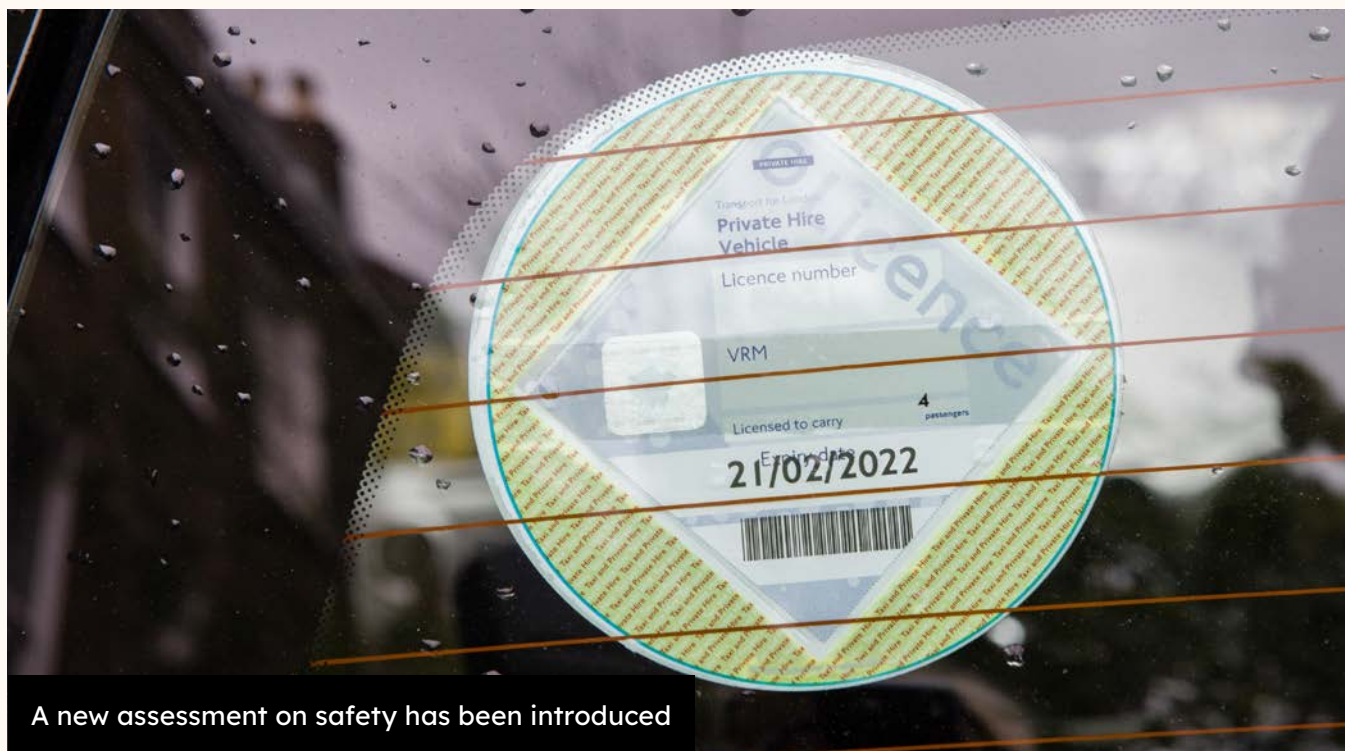
The consultation closes on Wednesday 6 October and you can have your say by completing the [online survey](#) or by writing to ccyourview@tfl.gov.uk or FREEPOST TFL HAVE YOUR SAY (no stamp needed).



Proposed changes

- A daily charge of £15
- Reducing the hours of operation from 07:00 to 22:00, to between 07:00 to 18:00 Monday to Friday, and between 12:00 to 18:00 at weekends and on bank holidays
- There would be no charge between Christmas and New Year
- A discount of 90 per cent for residents living in the Congestion Charge zone
- A pay-next-day charge of £17.50, and the deadline for making a delayed payment is three days after the day of travel
- No discount for payments made by Auto Pay or Fleet Auto Pay
- Retain reimbursement arrangements, which would apply in exceptional circumstances

New licensing requirements for private hire drivers



A new assessment on safety has been introduced

It is essential for private hire drivers to have an appropriate understanding of safety, equality and regulatory requirements that apply to them. This helps ensure public safety and also enhances customer service for your passengers

On October 1, TPH introduced a new Safety, Equality and Regulatory Understanding (SERU) requirement, which applies to both existing private hire drivers and to new applicants.

There is [online guidance](#) for the assessment, including example questions which help to demonstrate the format on a new dedicated webpage. All questions in the SERU assessment are based on the content of the newly published [Private Hire Driver Handbook](#), which is also available online.

Applicants should read the handbook and the online assessment guide before attending a TfL driver assessment centre to take the SERU assessment. The handbook is a working guide for private hire drivers and will regularly be updated. All private hire licensees are expected to review the handbook regularly and remain familiar with its contents. Applicants are also expected to take the online [Safeguarding Awareness](#) course before taking the SERU assessment.

SERU assessments will take place at a TfL driver assessment centre and will be delivered by TfL staff. They will be computer-based and further information on what to expect on the day will be provided to applicants once their assessment booking has been confirmed.

Each applicant will be given time to prepare for the assessment and will be eligible for one re-sit, if required. There are no exemptions from the SERU requirement, however reasonable adjustments will be made where appropriate. The SERU assessment costs £36. A re-sit will cost £16.

Transitional arrangements until 31 March 2023

TPH recognises the need for applicants and existing drivers to have time to prepare for any assessment, so transitional arrangements for the implementation of the new SERU assessment have been made to give applicants adequate time to prepare.

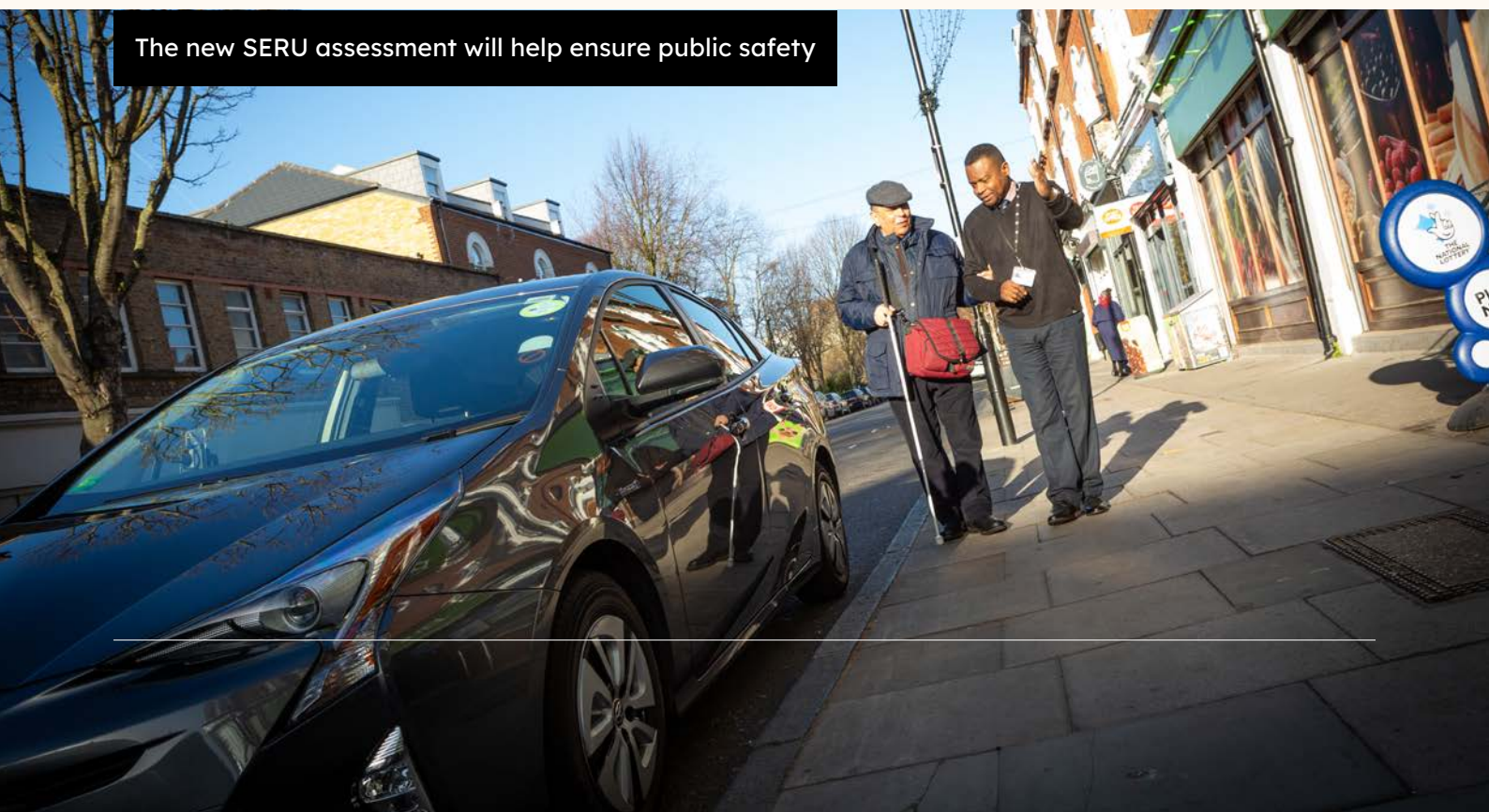
For all new and renewal applications for a private hire driver's licence made from

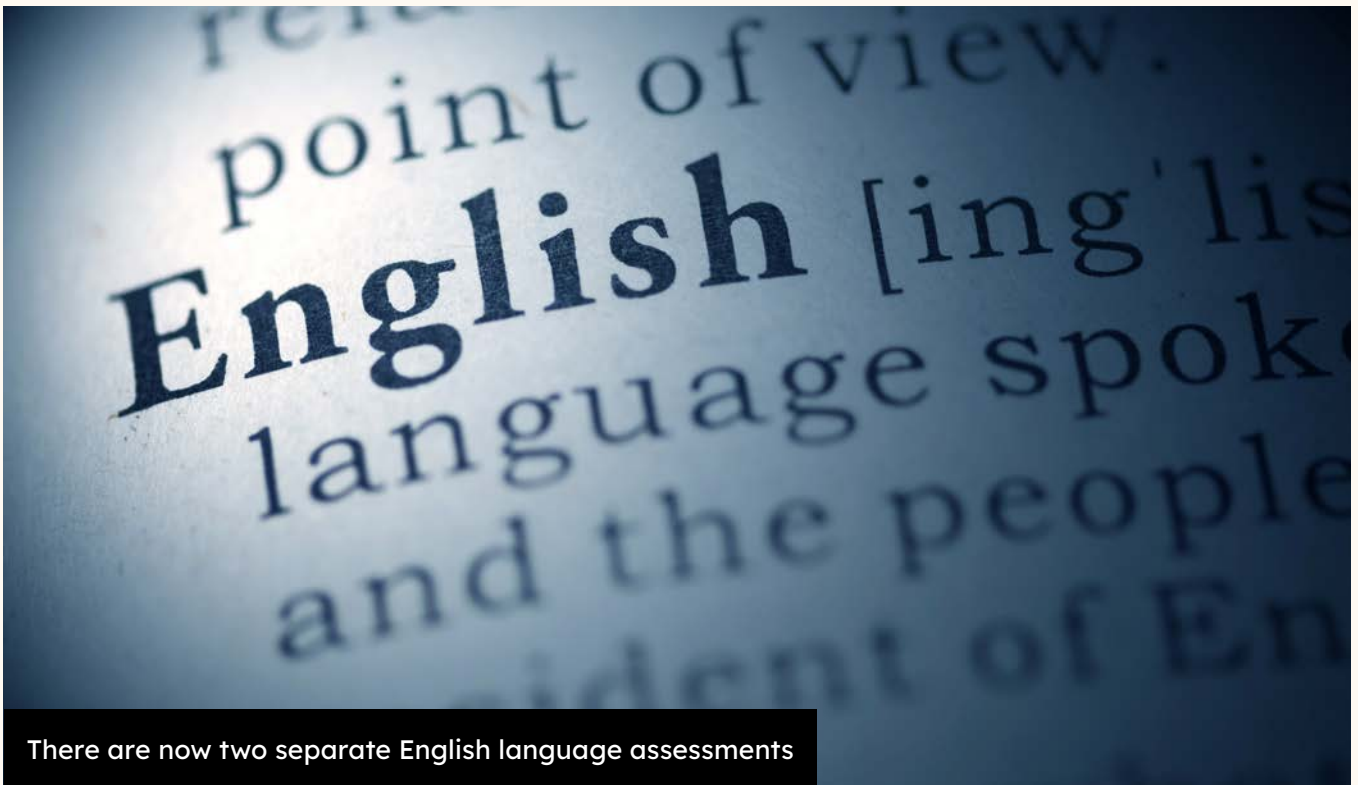
1 October 2021 and before 31 March 2023, applicants may be licensed in advance of taking and passing the SERU assessment. TfL will be contacting applicants directly to provide a date and time for their booked assessment. Once a booking has been confirmed, applicants are expected to make every effort to attend as failure to attend an assessment without a valid justification may lead to the driver's licence being revoked.

From 1 April 2023, the transitional arrangements will no longer be in place. From this date, all new and renewal applicants for a private hire driver licence will be required to pass the SERU assessment in advance of being licensed, unless they have already passed the SERU assessment.

TPH reserves the right in the future to require applicants to take the SERU assessment for a second time, in the event of a significant change in the regulatory landscape. Further information on the SERU requirement, including the Private Hire Driver Handbook assessment guidance material can be found on the [website](#).

The new SERU assessment will help ensure public safety





Changes to the assessment of the English Language Requirement

On 1 October, TPH changed the way it assesses whether an existing private hire licensee or a new private hire driver applicant satisfies the English Language Requirement (ELR).

It is no longer possible to satisfy the ELR by providing documentary evidence of a qualification or by providing a certificate from one of TfL's appointed Secure English Language Test providers.

Instead, there are now two separate assessments: the outcome of the SERU assessment (see page 51) will be used to determine an applicant's ability to read and write in English to the appropriate

standard and a new speaking and listening assessment has been introduced.

Both assessments will need to be passed for an applicant to demonstrate they can communicate in English at an appropriate level, which remains the equivalent to level B1 on the Common European Framework of Reference for reading, writing, speaking and listening.

All existing private hire drivers and all driver applicants whose applications were received on or before 30 September who did not provide satisfactory evidence, will now be required to demonstrate compliance by passing the assessments.

Speaking and listening assessment

This assessment will consist of a 15 to 20-minute conversation that will take place at TfL's offices by a secure video or telephone link to our service provider, PeopleCert, a global leader in the assessment and certification of professional skills.

The speaking and listening test will cost £36. Re-sits will cost £16.

Assessment of reading and writing skills

TfL will use the SERU assessment to assess whether existing private hire drivers and applicants are able to read and write in English to the appropriate standard.

Any private hire driver who provided documentary evidence to satisfy the ELR by 30 September 2021, which is not accepted by TfL will be contacted and will be required to take and pass both the SERU assessment and speaking and listening assessment by 31 March 2023.

Any private hire driver who did not provide documentary evidence by 30 September 2021 will be contacted and will be required to take and pass both the SERU assessment and speaking and listening assessment by no later than 30 September 2022.

TPH will be writing to all existing private hire driver licensees and applicants to provide the details of the assessments they are now required to take.

Further information on changes to private hire driver licensing requirements is provided in [TPH Notice 14/21](#) and on the [website](#).



Drivers will be assessed on their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills





The NR3 database contains details of licence applications that have been refused or a licence has been revoked

All you need to know about NR3

Last year, the DfT published its Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Standards. One of the standards relates to the use of the National Register of Taxi Licence Revocations and Refusals (also known as the NR3 database), which allows councils and licensing authorities to record details of when a taxi or private hire driver application has been refused or if a licence has been revoked.

TfL will now provide details of all taxi and private hire driver licence revocation and refusal decisions taken from 1 January 2018 to the NR3. Any subsequent licensing decisions to refuse an application or revoke a licence will be added to the NR3 database on a weekly basis.

TfL already requires taxi and private hire driver applicants to disclose if they have had an application for a licence refused, or a licence revoked or suspended by any other licensing authority. To ensure the information provided is accurate, TfL will check it against the NR3 database and if this shows an application has been refused or a licence revoked, it will contact the relevant licensing authority to establish the circumstances. The relevance of the reason for refusing/revoking a licence will be considered to see if it calls into question whether the applicant is fit and proper to hold a licence.

You can find out more about the [NR3 database at GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).



HM REVENUE & CUSTOMS

From next year, licence renewals will be conditional on tax checks

Tax affairs

Although Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) is clear the majority of taxi and private hire licensees already pay the tax that is legally due, it wants to ensure compliant businesses who meet their tax obligations aren't disadvantaged by those who don't, known as the 'hidden economy'.

The most recent tax gap estimates the UK lost around £2.6 billion of tax revenues to the hidden economy in 2018 to 2019. Because of this, it will be making licence renewals conditional on tax checks.

From April 2022, when people renew their taxi and private hire driver licences, they must also complete a simple tax check.

This will be a straightforward online process, taking a few minutes, typically once every three years. This will simply confirm that applicants are registered for tax if they need to be.

The process will be slightly different depending on whether someone is renewing their licence or applying for the first time.

Existing licensees

You will need a tax check reference number, which you can get by submitting your details on the online service. TPH will use this to confirm with HMRC that you have completed a tax check. TPH will then reach a decision on the licence in the usual way.

New licensees

First-time applicants will not have to complete the check. Instead, TPH will ensure you have access to HMRC guidance, showing you what you need to do in order to be properly registered for tax in the future.

As decisions on applications for these licences are conditional on the tax check (and TPH's own requirements) this is known as 'tax conditionality'.

HMRC will ensure the process for carrying out the new tax check works for everyone who needs to use it, and customers will have access to extra support and guidance where necessary. This includes any applicant who is unable to use the online service.

Find out more information at [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

Know your routes

The Suburban Knowledge has a refresh and makeover



Katie Chennells, Knowledge of London Manager, explains the changes to the Suburban Knowledge



Having had to close during the strict lockdown, the Knowledge team is once again fully open for service and has managed to clear the backlog of cancelled appearances. However, as Katie Chennells, Knowledge of London Manager explains, some changes have now been made to the Suburban Knowledge. ‘Basically the final (Suburban) stage of the Knowledge has been reviewed and made more efficient,’ she explains. ‘There used to be 22 routes, all with multiple end points – say for example, East Finchley to High Barnet had four potential end points. We have now scaled these routes back, so although we have increased the number to 27 main arterial routes, each now has only one end point. Candidates still need detailed knowledge within the six-mile radius of central London, but this change makes the process more efficient with a lot less duplication.’

‘Basically the final (Suburban) stage of the Knowledge has been reviewed and made more efficient’

Katie also indicates there will be more changes to come for the Knowledge of London. ‘I look forward and embrace change and the Knowledge evolving. Most of the Knowledge schools now rely on technology to teach candidates and I’m hoping in the future we can also utilise more technology. But appearances have always got to be face-to-face because there isn’t a technology out there that can match the reliability of that.’

Thank you.

OnRoute salutes all the amazing taxi and private hire drivers who have gone that extra mile to offer assistance to those who have needed it the most during the coronavirus pandemic.

Thank you to everyone who delivered vital PPE, medical supplies and hot meals, gave free rides to key workers or patients on their way to hospital appointments, shared their time and above all, their much-needed reassurance. It has not gone unappreciated.



Harry Rawlins
World War II veteran

‘The Taxi Charity has been amazing during the pandemic. Their small acts of kindness make such a difference when you live on your own. I can never thank the charity enough for the difference they have made to my life.’



MAYOR OF LONDON