

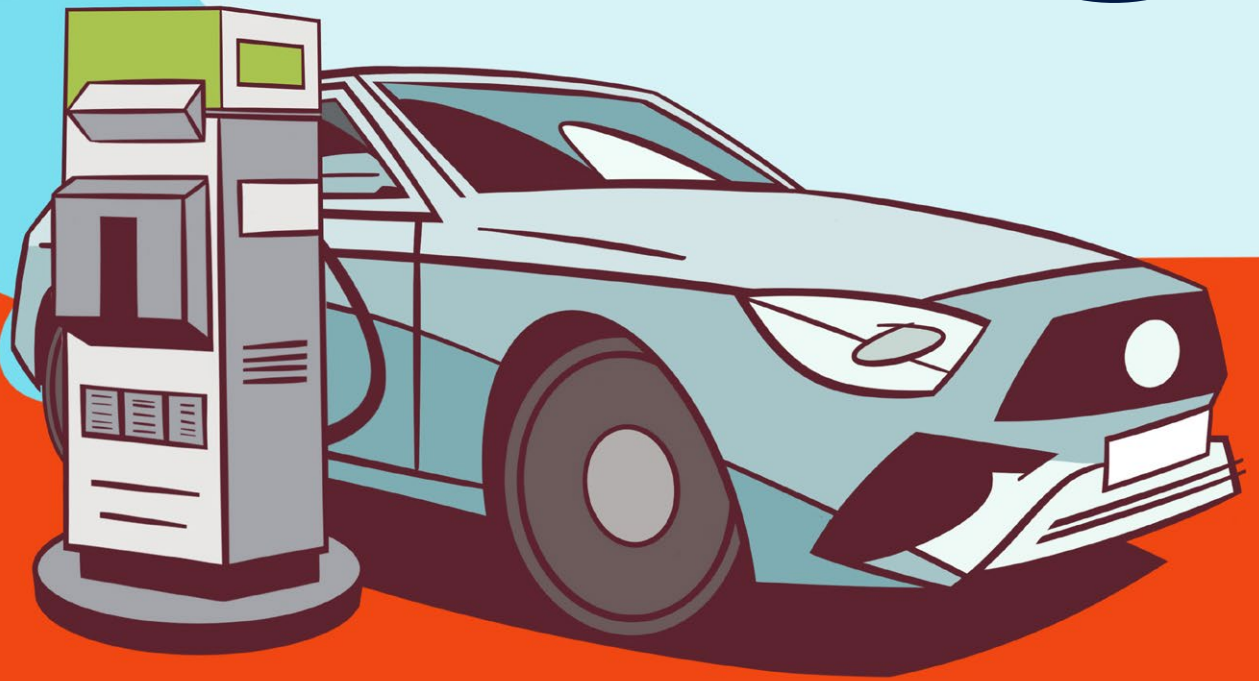
March 2024

# OnRoute

The magazine for London's taxi and private hire industries

## Teatime:

The Mad Hatter's  
tea party



## Positive charge

The rollout of electric charging hubs

Why it's so good  
to talk

From minicab to  
taxi driver

Getting everyone  
home safely

Responsible  
business

## 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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# Highlights this issue



## **p14. In the headlights**

Help for private hire drivers wanting to take the Knowledge of London



## **p19. Green zone**

Plans unveiled for new rapid electric charging hubs across the capital



## **p25 Wellbeing**

The talking therapies available on the NHS to help if you are feeling down



## **p37. The manual**

Important changes to the DBS licensing requirement and SERU assessment trial



# Welcome

Like other major cities around the world, London never stands still, and that's particularly true as far as construction is concerned. With the capital's population continuing to grow, new residential and business premises are vital. TfL's commercial property company, Places for London, is at the forefront of this construction, with plans to build 20,000 homes over the next 10 years. In our Driving seat section, you can read about its plans for the Limmo Peninsula in Newham (p10) and in the Green zone, we outline the five locations across London where it plans to build ultra-rapid charging hubs.

The cost of living crisis has been tough and for some, it has affected their mental health. In the Wellbeing section (p25) we outline why it is so vital to reach out and

talk to someone if you are experiencing difficulties. We also explain the different support services available. No one needs to suffer alone, because there is help available for everyone.

There's positive news with industry initiatives encouraging private hire drivers to learn the Knowledge of London (p14).

Elsewhere in this issue you'll find stories on TPH's passenger safety forum (p32) and information on some trial changes to the safety, equality and regulation understanding (SERU, p37) assessment for a group of private hire drivers.

If there's something you'd like us to include in a future issue, drop us a line at [onroute@tfl.gov.uk](mailto:onroute@tfl.gov.uk)

# Driving seat

Putting you at the heart of taxi and private hire



Road works news **p12**

- p8** D-Day badges
- p9** Volunteer drivers needed
- p12** Watch out for road works



## Gatwick Gridserve charging station

London Gatwick has become the first international airport to open a dedicated electric vehicle charging station, with the new [GRIDSERVE facility](#) available for everybody to use.

The new site has 30 high-power (up to 350kW) and low-power electric vehicle chargers (up to 22kW), including some Tesla superchargers, available via contactless payment, a lounge area, high-speed Wi-Fi, Costa Coffee, a Little Fresh convenience store and an interactive electric vehicle experience area. All the charging bays are powered by 100 per

cent net zero energy, with the fastest chargers capable of adding up to 100 miles of range in 10 minutes. Visitors can also speak to electric vehicle experts to discover which models may best suit their needs and test drive an electric vehicle.

Gridserve is located on the Ring Road South approach to London Gatwick's South Terminal. The building is open every day from 04:30 to 22:00, with chargers available 24 hours a day, every day.

For more news on electric vehicle charging hubs, go to the Green zone (p19).



## Buy a badge for veterans

This June, people from the UK, France, Canada and the USA will be heading to Normandy to commemorate the 80th anniversary of D-Day. [The Taxi Charity for Military Veterans](#) is hoping to make the trip with a small number of veterans from the war who still survive and are in good enough health to make the journey.

According to the Taxi Charity Chairman, Brian Heffernan, the most difficult part of the planning process has been the lack of availability and the rocketing price of hotel rooms in Normandy for the week of D-Day as so many wish to attend, and the charity needs every penny it can raise to fund the trip.

Although some funds have already been raised, the charity needs more and is applying to foundations and other charities for funding and grants, and doing bucket collections at London Underground stations. It also has special D-Day 80 badges to sell for £5 + £2 P&P. These can be obtained by visiting the donations page or emailing the charity.

If you would like to help, there are lots of other [ways you can donate](#) and fundraise, and every penny will go towards supporting its work with veterans. Just [contact the charity direct](#).





Westminster is key to London's nightlife

### Consultation

## Westminster after dark

Westminster City Council wants to create an inclusive evening and night-time plan to improve nightlife in the area and is now asking for the public's views on what the plan should include through a [dedicated webpage](#).

From the West End to Harrow Road, Westminster plays a key role in London's nightlife, supporting good jobs and a world-leading array of cultural, entertainment, and culinary attractions. The council wants everyone from local residents and businesses to night-time workers, visitors and the taxi and private hire drivers who take them all home at the end of an evening, to have their say on how they think nightlife in the Westminster area can be made safe, sustainable, inclusive, and accessible.

## Could you help the Felix Project?

The Felix Project is London's leading charity fighting hunger and food waste. Every week, its volunteer drivers deliver much-needed meals to more than 1,000 charities and community groups, supporting families and others who are struggling. This year, it has received a grant from the GLA to deliver 10 million meals across 32 boroughs. But getting the right drivers to get the food where it is needed can be difficult. If you think you could volunteer, the project has four-hour delivery shifts running both in the mornings and afternoons, Monday to Saturday. You'll need to be 21 or over, hold a full driving licence and complete the Felix Project driving assessment before you can go out in one of the charity's green-liveried vans on your own. To find out more, go to the [Felix Project website](#).



## Growing potential at Limmo Peninsula

TfL's commercial property company, Places for London, has announced it is searching for a [new joint venture development partner](#) to work with in east London.

The new partnership will bring forward a development scheme at the Limmo Peninsula in Newham on Places for London's existing estate, with the potential for other sites to be added in the future.

The Limmo Peninsula site covers five hectares of land, with 600m of river frontage, and sits within the Royal Docks

and Beckton Riverside Opportunity Area. Previously used as a work site for the Elizabeth line, the area now has the potential to deliver up to 1,500 new homes, including affordable housing, alongside a range of improvements for the existing local community as well as new residents.

The site could potentially include commercial space which would support the local economy, large areas of publicly accessible open space, and enhancements to the connectivity of the area, such as a pedestrian bridge and a new river walkway.



Major development planned on the Limmo Peninsula



There are now segregated cycle lanes on Cycleway 23

## Watch out for Cycleway 50

Work on the latest phase of Cycleway 50 in Islington and Cycleway 23 in Hackney [has now been completed](#).

On Cycleway 50, there are two new segregated cycle lanes, running westbound along Seven Sisters Road and eastbound along Isledon Road and Tollington Road. The work means that the Nag's Head gyratory is integrated into the existing cycle network, with Cycleway 50 now running between Holloway Road to Finsbury Park.

On Cycleway 23, at Lea Bridge Roundabout, there are now new segregated cycle lanes to separate people cycling from traffic, while pedestrian crossings and signals at the roundabout have been upgraded.

Cycleway 50 is an experimental scheme. Local residents will be invited to share their views on the scheme in a consultation from May this year.

## Blackwall Tunnel closure

The Blackwall Tunnel will be closed to southbound traffic across the weekend of the 13 to 15 April to help support carriageway works on the northbound Blackwall Tunnel approach. The closure will start at 00:01 on the Saturday morning and will be reopened by 05:00 on the Monday morning at the latest. Northbound traffic will not be affected as traffic will be diverted through the southbound Blackwall Tunnel.

Traffic around Rotherhithe Tunnel and along the A13 Commercial Road is expected to be heavier than normal owing to the closure, and drivers are advised to plan their routes in advance, checking before they travel.



Closures at Blackwall Tunnel

# Road works

## Charing Cross Road

Until 13 April, there will be a northbound closure of Charing Cross Road, from Duncannon Street to William IV Street for gas main works. A diversion route will run: Duncannon Street, Strand, Aldwych, Kingsway, High Holborn, Shaftesbury Avenue, Charing Cross Road.

## Praed Street

Praed Street is currently being narrowed to a single running lane for traffic, under temporary traffic signal control. The work is planned to run until May, with working hours Monday to Friday, 08:00 to 17:30.

## Eversholt Street

Eversholt Street will be closed southbound until May for utility works.

## Coventry Street

From Sunday 21 April until Tuesday 23 April, Coventry Street will be closed between Haymarket and Whitcomb Street for a crane operation. The closure will be from 09:00 to 18:00 each day.

## Upper Richmond Road, SW15

Until 20 May, there will be nightly closures (21:00 – 06:00) of Upper Richmond Road between its junctions with Putney High Street/Putney Hill and Manfred Road between 21:00 to 06:00 for carriageway works. During the closures, the taxi rank outside 151/153 Upper Richmond Road will not be accessible.

## Farringdon Street/New Bridge Street/Charterhouse Street and Tudor Street

Major gas works, continuing until July, require directional and full closures in the area as follows:

- Farringdon Street (Charterhouse Street to Ludgate Circus/Fleet Street) northbound directional closure
- New Bridge Street (Blackfriars/Watergate to Ludgate Circus/Fleet Street) southbound directional closure
- Charterhouse Street (Farringdon Street to East Poultry Avenue) westbound directional closure
- Tudor Street (New Bridge Street to Kingscote Street) full closure

## Tweedy Road, Bromley

Until 05:00 on Monday 29 April, all traffic travelling south eastwards on Tweedy Road will not be able to turn left into College Road.

Road works affecting traffic across London



## Taxi rank news

### All change at Euston taxi rank

To accommodate the changed station layout, caused by the construction of HS2, the taxi rank at Euston station is being relocated.

The original rank, located under the station, was moved in 2018 to Western Gardens outside the front of the station on Euston Road. Now, the gardens are being replanted and the rank will be moving again to an interim taxi rank in Eastern Gardens, although part of the Western Gardens rank will remain in place for accessible pick-ups and drop-offs. The interim rank will remain at Eastern Gardens for a decade before relocating again to its final site on Hampstead Road.

As a safety audit measure, in conjunction with taxi stakeholders and representative groups, a 'dry run' involving more than 40 taxis has been arranged later in March. This will test the capacity of the new rank, which will have 36 ranking spaces, six set-down spaces and two non-assisted accessible spaces for set down. There is also an overflow area of up to nine spaces and the drop-off point. New variable message signage is being installed, showing if the rank is full. The new rank is expected to open on Sunday 7 April with marshals present from 07:00 to 19:00 every day for three weeks.

### Chalk Farm Road

The whole of the taxi rank at the Stables, Chalk Farm Road, is now suspended while Camden Council's Chalk Farm Road Safe and Healthy Streets scheme is installed. While the works take place, Hawley Crescent taxi rank will be in operation at all times instead of Saturdays and Sundays. On completion of these works, the Stables taxi rank will be relocated to outside the Roundhouse.

## TPH licensing in numbers

**17,474**

Taxi drivers

**14,779**

Taxi vehicle licences

**106,517**

Private hire driver licences

**92,345**

Private hire vehicle licences

**1,728**

Private hire operators

## Exceeding the speed limit at London Bridge Station

Drivers are reminded when using London Bridge Bus Station taxi rank, or when dropping off at the station, that the speed limit is 10mph.

It's been reported that taxi and private hire drivers are regularly exceeding the limit, which is a safety concern. If this continues, it could create a security issue and result in the closure of the station for trains, buses, taxis and private hire vehicles, so please observe the speed limit.

# In the headlights



## Insider knowledge

Two new initiatives are encouraging more drivers to study the Knowledge of London ➔



Freenow has a Knowledge subsidy scheme

The taxi trade has recently seen two new initiatives aimed at attracting new drivers to the profession. After conducting a survey among private hire drivers last year, Freenow, the taxi and private hire app, found 52 per cent of them would be interested in becoming a taxi driver, with 34 per cent saying they would consider it if financial support was available to them.

On the back of these findings, it has launched a [subsidy scheme](#) to help experienced private hire drivers already using its app progress their careers by completing the Knowledge. The subsidy covers the whole of the application cost,

tuition fee, exams and licensing required to complete the Knowledge, working closely with two schools, Knowledge Point and WizAnn. Private hire drivers working for other private hire operators can also sign up for the courses by undertaking 100 trips on the Freenow app and gaining a rating of at least 4.6.

The scheme has proved very popular, with more than 900 drivers having already applied, with about 600 meeting the eligibility criteria for the subsidy. Of these, more than 200 have enrolled with the training schools. →

Talking about the scheme, Mariusz Zabrocki, General Manager at Freenow UK, said: ‘At Freenow we want to help reignite the black cab industry to ensure it can continue to thrive. We believe black cab drivers play a key role in London’s economy as well as in moving people safely and efficiently around the city, complementing existing public transport. As a business, we are committed to continue to support this iconic trade in the years to come.’

Gert Kratov, Principal at Knowledge Point School, added: ‘We are delighted to see Freenow taking this step to encourage dedicated private hire drivers to study for the Knowledge of London and join the iconic London black cabs. The industry has been highly impacted by the pandemic, but initiatives like this make a big difference and will certainly support the industry to thrive.’

**Wiz kids**

Last month, Addison Lee also announced a new partnership with the WizAnn Knowledge School to provide private hire



Many drivers applied to Freenow’s scheme



Addison Lee drivers at the WizAnn School

drivers with the [Knowledge training](#) at a discounted rate. It will be delivering the training at its West Drayton Fleet Hub, and all materials (training documents, videos, and a 24-hour support group) are being provided at a discounted rate, laddering up to no costs for drivers in the fourth year.

Throughout the four-year training, the cost to drivers will be:

- Year 1 – Driver pays £30 per month (Addison Lee will cover the remaining £10 per month)
- Year 2 – Driver pays £20 per month (Addison Lee will cover the remaining £20 per month)
- Year 3 – Driver pays £10 per month (Addison Lee will cover the remaining £30 per month)
- Year 4 – Addison Lee will cover the full cost of £40 per month with the driver paying nothing







Addison Lee's scheme is open to existing drivers and those wishing to work for the firm

The partnerships aims to give drivers the opportunity to 'earn while they learn' and is open to existing Addison Lee drivers and private hire drivers interested in pursuing a career with the firm.

Liam Griffin, CEO of Addison Lee, commented: 'Operating in the capital for over 50 years, we share our strong London heritage with the hackney carriage industry, alongside a shared passion for providing drivers with fulfilling and fruitful careers.'

'But we're not naive to the challenges, and we know that if we want to see the black taxi thrive, we must provide drivers with the right support and benefits to encourage them into the field. We hope our partnership will spur a positive

change for the industry and uphold the rich cultural significance of London's iconic black taxis.'

#### **Fit for the future**

As far as the Knowledge of London Manager, Katie Chenells, is concerned, all these new initiatives can only have a positive impact on the trade. She notes that last year, TPH had triple the number of applicants to the Knowledge (around 575) than for the whole of the pandemic period. 'We should be seeing them coming through their appearances soon,' she comments. 'Already, the waiting room at Pier Walk is a lot busier as the numbers filter through. We are also seeing much more diversity as far as the candidates are concerned.'

## Taxi Now Group Academy

In the Autumn issue of OnRoute, we featured the launch of a new Knowledge school by the Taxi Now Group, in partnership with Gett. The Knowledge Academy opened in October at Gett's offices in Angel Gate, City Road, with fifty students being offered free tuition.

Initially, anyone who was interested could go to Gett's offices to attend classes on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 17:00 to 20:00. Now the Knowledge Academy is growing from strength to strength, and has day classes between 10:00 to 17:00, Monday and Fridays, in addition to the evening classes.

Tom Scullion, the Chair of the Taxi Now Group, says: 'More than 100

students have signed up to the free courses and are flying through TfL's testing and look forward to being recognised as one of the world's finest taxi drivers.

'We've also completed filming for a Channel 4 documentary, which will be broadcast in the early summer, and are now working with a big American film company to do something for the States. Who would have thought this spark of an idea would transform into something that is changing lives!'

One of the academy's own students is now building a new website with lots of very informative and educational material, available for anyone to access.



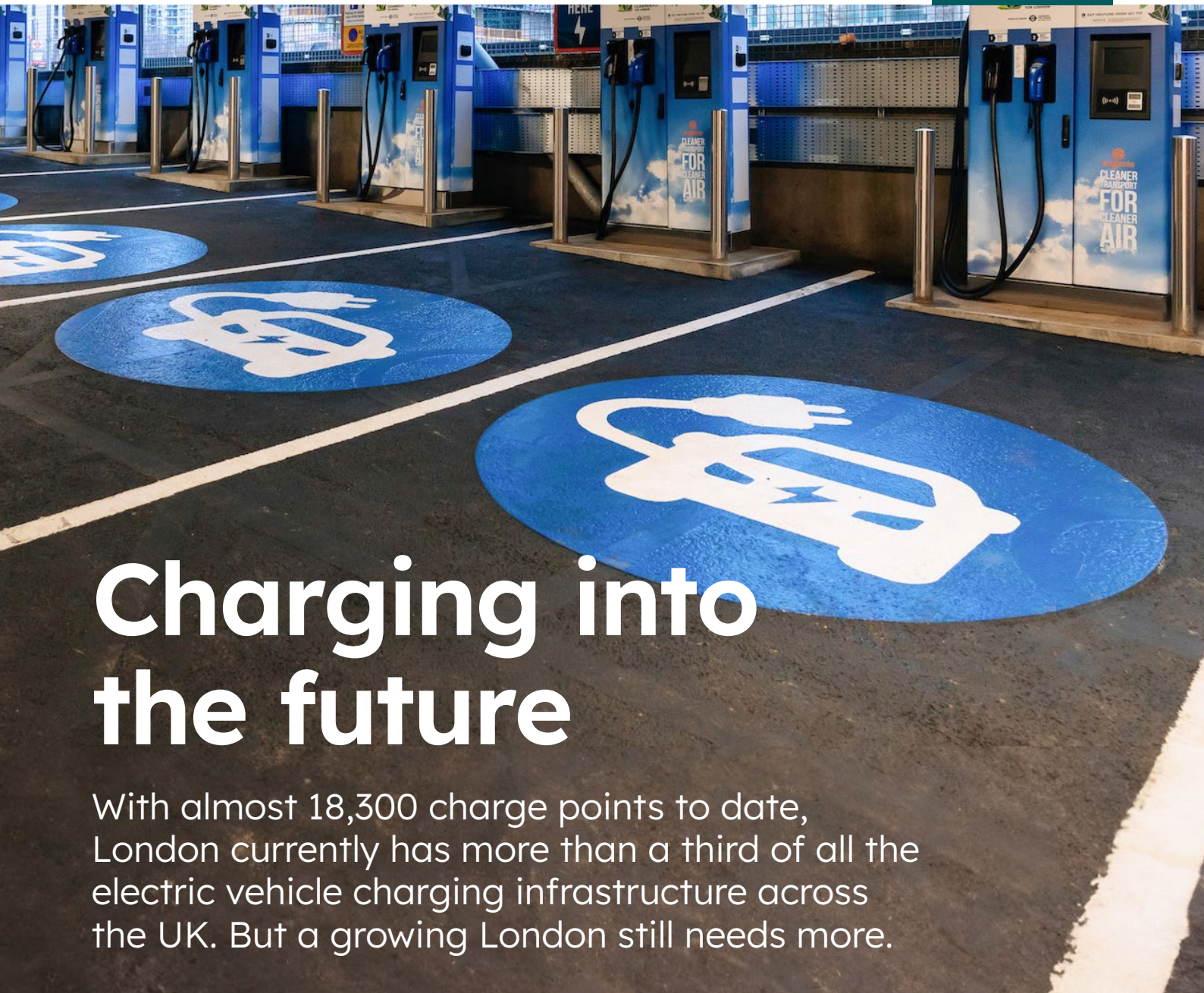
# Green zone

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



An eCity electric taxi at an ultra-rapid charger **p23**

- p20** New charging hubs planned
- p22** Extra electric funding
- p23** Electric taxi grants



# Charging into the future

With almost 18,300 charge points to date, London currently has more than a third of all the electric vehicle charging infrastructure across the UK. But a growing London still needs more.

Places for London, TfL's property company, is [looking for a single joint venture partner](#) to help it bring forward a number of new electric vehicle ultra-rapid charging hubs across its existing estate.

The partnership aims to deliver new off-street charging hubs that will be able to simultaneously charge multiple vehicles. Where possible, the sites will also include retail and welfare facilities, such as shops and toilets, to maximise the revenue

they generate. In the future, there could also be tie-ups with fleet users, including taxi and private hire fleets, to create subscription-led, consistent demand, and the ability to offer a range of charging speeds to suit broader customer requirements, including micro-mobility charging. Places for London is hoping to have selected a partner towards the end of this year with the first hub becoming operational by next year. →

## Take five

Five locations have been identified as initial seed sites, with the potential to increase the number of sites available to the joint venture over time. Each site will deliver a minimum of six publicly accessible ultra-rapid charging bays (each capable of 150kW+), including at least one bay for those with accessibility needs. The hubs will allow drivers to charge their vehicles in approximately 10 to 30 minutes.

### The five seed sites are:

- Hanger Lane, Brent Crescent

Located on the North Circular by the Hanger Laner Gyratory, plans are for a 20-bay hub

- Canning Town, Wharfside Road

Located on the A13, plans are for an eight-bay hub

- Hatton Cross station car park, Southern Perimeter Road, Hillingdon

Located near to Heathrow Airport, plans are for a four-bay hub, ideal for taxi and private hire use

- Tottenham Hale, Haringey

Located in a former station car park with space for at least six charging bays

- Hillingdon Circus, Hillingdon

Located just off the A40 with space for at least 15 charging bays

Seb Dance, London’s Deputy Mayor for Transport, said: ‘The wheels of change are turning on London’s streets - and they’re electric. Londoners are charging ahead with electric vehicles, registering new electric cars at a far greater rate than the rest of the UK.’



The proposed hubs will be able to charge vehicles in 10 to 30 minutes



An existing electric hub at Baynard House

‘The joint venture for ultra-rapid charging hubs announced today will make it even easier and more convenient for Londoners and local businesses to switch to electric vehicles. This will help build a better London for everyone - a city that is cleaner, greener, and healthier for all.’

The delivery of these new charging hubs will also support TfL’s wider work to encourage the uptake of electric vehicles across the city, including taxi and private hire vehicles, while

continuing to encourage the wider use of sustainable modes of transport. Steve McNamara, General Secretary of the Licensed Taxi Drivers’ Association said: ‘London’s taxi drivers are at the forefront of the transition to zero emission capable vehicles. Expanding access to conveniently located, rapid charging points has always been key to ensuring that adopting these clean, green vehicles is commercially viable for our members. These potential new hubs, especially those located on main arterial roads, would be another step in supporting the number of iconic black cabs going green, delivering rapid charging points on a larger scale, and helping to meet growing demand. We hope to see this model rolled out on more sites across London over the next few years.’

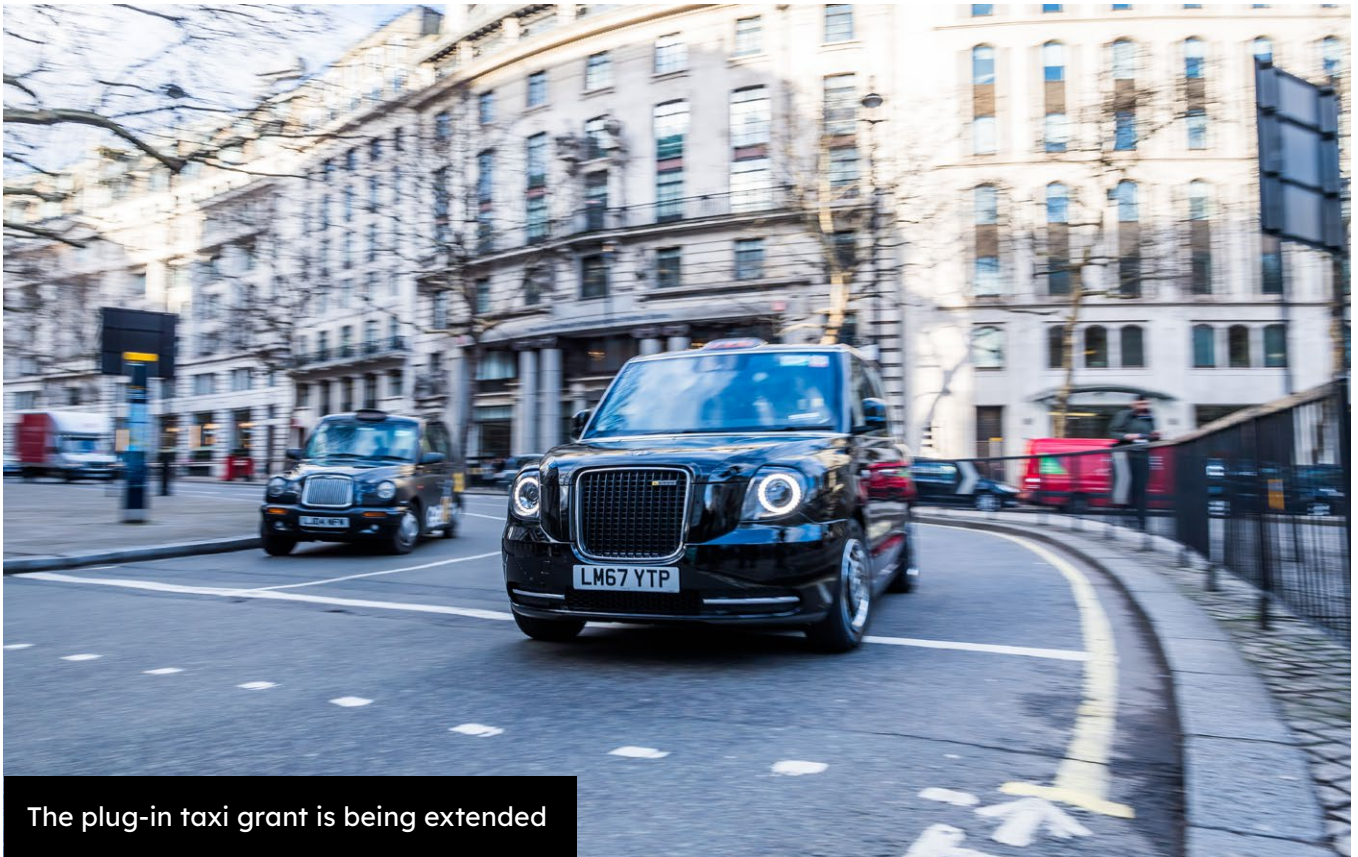
Places for London has also completed due diligence work on an additional 20 sites, and is exploring a further 40 sites that could be made available to the joint venture partnership. These will be primarily sourced from more than 100 roadside locations of at least 500m<sup>2</sup> on TfL’s road network and more than 75 station car parks.

OR

### Extra electric funding

In addition to the rollout of rapid electric vehicle charging points, the Office of Zero Emission Vehicles has recently announced London will receive almost £39m of capital funding through the Department for Transport’s (DfT’s) Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure fund. This will primarily be used to accelerate the delivery of low-powered charging infrastructure on London

borough highways, including for residents without access to off-street parking. It also builds on the 400 fast-charging points that will be delivered by London boroughs by the end of March, using £9.7m of the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure pilot funding, and additional borough delivery funded by the Government’s On-street Residential Charge Point scheme.



The plug-in taxi grant is being extended

## Electric taxi grants extended

The Government has announced it is extending the [Plug-in Taxi Grant](#) until April next year, helping more of London's taxi drivers go green. The grant, which will now be £6,000 per vehicle, not only helps taxi drivers purchase zero emission taxis, but also supports workers in the British car industry.

Since its introduction in 2017, the Plug-in Taxi Grant has provided more than £50 million to support the purchase of more than 9,000 zero emission cabs. As a result of the grant, more than 54 per cent (8,299) of London's licensed taxis are now electric, with the number of electric taxis increasing by 24 per cent in the last year alone.

Chris Allen, Managing Director at LEVC, which makes the electric taxis said: 'Today's announcement is a positive signal to the taxi trade that the government remains committed to supporting the electrification of our iconic industry and provides important support for drivers for another 12 months.'

Steve McNamara, General Secretary of the Licensed Taxi Drivers Association, said: 'Today's announcement provides the certainty and support hard-working taxi drivers and fleets need to continue investing in the future and delivering the high quality, accessible service London's iconic black cabs are known for.'



## BT cabinets turning green

Etc., BT Group's start-up and digital team, has come up with an innovative use for all those green BT cabinets dotted around our streets. The cabinets, currently used for providing copper-based broadband and phone services, are being decommissioned as the upgrade to full fibre rolls out and will be converted into electric vehicle charging units. They are fitted with a device that enables renewable energy to be shared to a charge point alongside the existing broadband service, with no need to create a new power connection. Once the cabinet is no longer in use, the broadband equipment is recycled and additional electric vehicle charge points can be added.

Technical and commercial pilots are taking place, with the first in East Lothian, Scotland. Tom Guy, CEO of Etc., said: 'Our new charging solution is a huge step in bringing electric vehicle charging kerbside and exploring how we can address key barriers customers are currently facing. Working closely with local councils in Scotland and more widely across the UK, we are at a critical stage of our journey in tackling a very real customer problem that sits at the heart of our wider purpose to connect for good.'

## More power at Morrisons

Supermarket chain Morrisons has agreed to sell 337 of its petrol forecourts to Motor Fuel Group (MFG). The £2.5bn deal will see MFG take over existing forecourts, fuel, retail outlets and other services. Another part of the deal will see more than 400 other sites currently owned by Morrisons developed for ultra-rapid electric vehicle charging hubs.

### Equipped for the electric future

According to Zapmap, the UK has hit a significant electric vehicle charging milestone, with the country now having 10,000 rapid or ultra-rapid charging devices, installed across 5,000 locations.

By the end of November last year, there was a total of 53,029 charging devices across 30,853 UK locations.



# Wellbeing

Fit to face the future



Money and relationship worries can get people down **p26**

**p28** Talking therapies available

**p30** Talking to a friend

**p30** Useful contacts



## Let's talk about depression

If you're feeling down about your life in general, there's no better therapy than to have a good chat – and there are plenty of people out there ready to start the conversation.

There are lots of things making people feel down right now. If the cost of living crisis and money worries, fears about your job or future career, personal relationship difficulties or the weather are making you feel blue, there are plenty of ways to help lighten your mood.

One of the most effective and simplest is to start talking about what is worrying you. However, many people, especially men, find it difficult to even start having that conversation as they may feel awkward or ashamed to admit they are having problems coping. George Hamlyn, health and wellbeing specialist at TfL, explains: 'Reaching out for support' →

isn't always easy, sometimes feelings of guilt, shame or even our ego can stop us taking that first important step to seeking support. It is important to understand that doing so is not a sign of weakness, but a sign of emotional intelligence.

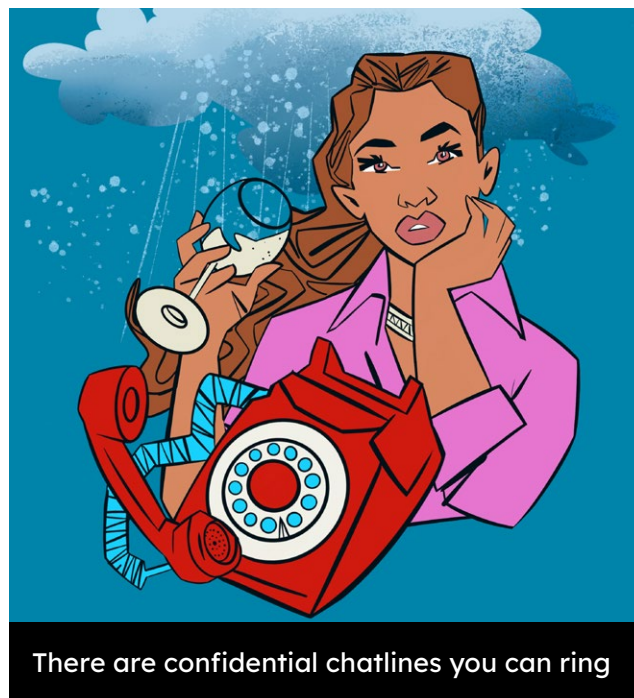
'For some people seeking professional confidential support (such as counselling) is the best thing to do, for others it can be a conversation with a colleague, friend or family member in private.'

You may not even know you are depressed as symptoms can vary. It could be a general feeling of anxiety to full-blown panic attacks, losing your temper more easily and becoming more aggressive, and in the most serious cases becoming suicidal.

If you feel too embarrassed to talk about how you are feeling over a cuppa with your family or friends, you may find it easier to talk to a stranger. Organisations such as Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM) have confidential chat helplines you can ring. CALM staff answer a call every 59 seconds from people who are struggling.

You can also make an appointment to see your doctor who can refer you for the various talking therapies available on the NHS. If you find talking to your doctor in person too daunting, you can [refer yourself directly](#) to an NHS service. If your first language is not English, talking therapies can be delivered in your chosen language through multi-lingual therapists or confidential translators.

Before you decide to start a course of talking treatment, George Hamlyn says you should consider the following:



There are confidential chatlines you can ring

Clive Johnston

### **Don't go into it blind**

Think about some of the specific things that have been troubling you and how they have been impacting you. It may help to write these down in preparation.

### **Label your emotions**

Sometimes it is easy to notice when we feel down, but it can be harder to label the specific emotion we are feeling. Question yourself to understand what specifically you are feeling: is it anger or sadness; frustration or loneliness? By drawing attention to these uncomfortable emotions, you can diminish their power.

### **Create a safe environment and choose who you confide in wisely**

Ensure when chatting to someone about your mental health you do so in a quiet, private location. Remember, not everyone is a good person to confide in, even if they mean well. Think about who will authentically listen and not try and solve your problems for you. ➔



### **It's good to talk**

If you decide you want to talk to a trained counsellor, there are different talking therapies available, most of which take place face-to-face. Your sessions with them give you the time and space to talk through what's worrying you, helping you get a new perspective and find your own answers to your problems.

### **Counselling**

Sessions with your counsellor offer you a safe and confidential space where they will listen to you and then suggest ways you can work through your mental health difficulties and find ways to cope with what you are going through. If you are offered counselling on the NHS, a course of counselling usually lasts between eight to 16 sessions.

### **Guided self-help**

This is where a therapist coaches you as you work through a self-help course in your own time, either using a workbook or an online course. Courses usually last for six to eight sessions, either in person, by phone or online.

### **Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT)**

CBT aims to help you understand your thoughts and behaviour, and how they are affecting you. By helping you to change the way you think, it can help you recognise and overcome negative thoughts and feelings.

The course of treatment usually lasts for between eight to 16 sessions, either in a group or on a one-to-one basis with the CBT therapist. ➔

**Interpersonal therapy**

If you are experiencing problems in your personal relationships, this therapy will give you a better understanding of your thoughts and feelings, as well as those of the people around you. It is recommended if you are going through emotional change because of a bereavement or the breakdown of a relationship or divorce. You'll have face-to-face or online sessions with a trained practitioner who will also set 'homework' between sessions.

You'll usually have eight to 16 sessions, which may also be combined with a course of medication.

**Behavioural activation**

This therapy is slightly different as it focuses on how what you are doing is affecting your mood rather than your

thoughts and feelings. For example, your depression may be causing you to drink too much or avoid going out and meeting people because you just can't face it. Your therapist will help you make practical changes to your behaviour, exchanging negative behaviours with positive alternatives. It can be a standalone treatment or used in conjunction with CBT.

A course of therapy usually lasts for 12 to 16 individual sessions with a trained behavioural practitioner.

**Who to talk to**

If you need someone to talk to, the [NHS dedicated talking therapies service](#) has lists of services in your area, or for general information on mental health, practical tips and advice go to [NHS Every Mind Matters website](#).



**NHS Talking Therapies can help**

Struggling with feelings of depression, excessive worry, social anxiety, post-traumatic stress or obsessions and compulsions? A trained clinician can help.

The service is effective, confidential and free.

Your GP can refer you or refer yourself at [nhs.uk/talk](https://nhs.uk/talk)



### Useful contacts

You can talk to [the Samaritans](#) about anything that is bothering you 24 hours a day every day of the year on its free helpline number 116 123.

The Campaign Against Living Miserably's ([CALM](#)) confidential chatline on 0800 585858 is open from 17:00 to midnight every day, or if you prefer not to speak on the phone you can contact its [webchat service](#).

You can call [Saneline](#) if you are experiencing mental health problems or supporting someone else on 0300 304 7000 between 16:30 and 22:30 daily.

The [National Suicide Prevention Helpline](#) UK offers a listening service on 800 689 5652 from 18:00 to midnight every day.

### Suicide awareness training

In more serious cases of depression, a person's thoughts can turn to suicide. Now a course has been developed by the [Zero Suicide Alliance](#) in collaboration with licensed drivers and local authorities to give drivers information about how to spot someone who may be experiencing mental health difficulties.

The course takes the viewer through a driver and passenger-related scenario to help drivers recognise signs of suicidal behaviour and have a conversation with someone they may be worried about.

## You've got a friend

If you think a family member, partner or even a friend may need help, George Hamlyn offers this advice.

### Spot the warning

'Are they more snappy or irritable, taking less care of their appearance or personal hygiene than normal, sleeping more and eating less or more? All of these can be normal things in isolation, but if they build up over time, it may be a sign something is wrong.'

### Be non-judgemental

'When supporting our loved ones, it can be tempting to project our personal feelings or views, but this isn't what they need. Being there as a non-judgmental

listening ear is a key component of good wellbeing support.'

### Follow up and encourage them to continue to take accountability

'When someone reaches out for help and offloads what they've been bottling up, it can be extremely cathartic. But, after this, it is common for them to 'bury their head in the sand'. You can encourage accountability by checking in with them to see how they are doing a couple of days or a week later, and find out if they have engaged with any support services. Also, do they need anything additional from you? This continued support is likely to keep them on the journey to improving their mental wellbeing.'



HM Government



“I just bottled it all up”

## NHS Talking Therapies can help

Struggling with feelings of depression, excessive worry, social anxiety, post-traumatic stress or obsessions and compulsions? A trained clinician can help.

The service is effective, confidential and free.

Your GP can refer you or refer yourself at [nhs.uk/talk](https://www.nhs.uk/talk)

Mental  
health  
matters

Help us  
help you

# Security

Safety information for both drivers and passengers



Keeping passengers safe **p33**

- p33** Passenger safety forum
- p35** If you witness sexual harassment
- p36** The Look Closer campaign





The safety of taxi and private hire drivers and customers is paramount

## Safety first

TfL held its second safety forum in December, this time focusing on passenger safety. In attendance were taxi and private hire stakeholders, including trade union representatives, individuals from private hire operators, members from the Metropolitan Police Service and wider TfL colleagues.

The forum included an interactive section where attendees donned virtual reality headsets displaying scenarios from TfL's

bystander engagement campaign, which aims to help people recognise and report incidents of sexual harassment, along with guidance on how they can safely intervene if they do witness anything.

Graham Robinson, General Manager, TPH, who was also in attendance, said: 'I was delighted to see a good cross-section of taxi and private hire stakeholders, who shared suggestions on what more can be done to enhance the safety of' →

passengers. Safety and accessibility remain at the forefront of everything we do, and while the majority of taxi and private hire journeys are safe, we cannot ignore the issues being reported by drivers and passengers, and which need to be tackled.

‘At the first forum in October, we heard powerful first-hand accounts from taxi and private drivers about instances when they had not felt safe at work and listened to the discussions and positive ideas put forward. These will now be considered by trade representatives, the Metropolitan Police Service and our safety and security team at TfL.

‘Our December forum focused on passengers, with stakeholders sharing

suggestions which could further enhance passenger safety. We are reviewing the feedback and considering the findings.’

**TfL’s role in safety**

Babatunde Owalabi Ajao, Senior Operations Manager, who spoke at the forum on the role of TfL’s Compliance, Policing, Operations and Security team, said: ‘My team plays a vital role in delivering TfL’s commitment to ensure everyone can get home safe and healthy every day. This is something we are very passionate about, and I see the passenger safety forums as an opportunity to raise awareness of the significant work we are doing with our policing colleagues and to gather the views of our stakeholders on how we can continue to improve on this work. ➔



‘We adopt operational tactics and a multiagency approach to ensure everyone gets home safe and healthy every day. We have regular engagement with the private hire operators to encourage compliance with the regulations. We conduct routine inspections to ensure they only use legitimate drivers and vehicles for all private hire bookings.

‘Out on the street, we continue to build the confidence of taxi and private hire customers through our highly visible patrols. We are positioning our operations officers at high-profile locations to prevent and detect illegal activities, while supporting vulnerable customers. We use our Safer Travel at Night campaign materials to engage with the wider public to improve awareness of the rules around taxi and private hire journeys, and reduce the use of unbooked private hire vehicles.

‘Our operations officers are out there every day, in all weathers, promoting the safety of drivers and passengers. We use intelligence-led deployment based on the information provided by the trade, passengers and other stakeholders, to ensure we successfully focus our resources at problem locations.

‘The passenger safety forums help to reaffirm our commitment to passenger safety and showcase all the work we are doing in this space.

‘It’s important for us to listen to the feedback of our stakeholders from the forums on how we can improve and work together to deliver on this common purpose. We must continue this discussion to help keep the issue of safety foremost in the minds of everybody.’ 

## Don’t just stand there

If you witness someone being harassed, there are things you can do, but only if you feel safe to do so:

### **Make a distraction**

You can help defuse an incident of harassment by asking the person being targeted a simple question, such as ‘do you know where the station/hotel/restaurant is? or ‘do you have the time?’

### **Make a note and report it**

If you see harassment happening, reporting it can help build a profile of the perpetrator and help TfL and the police stop it from happening again.

### **Make sure they are okay**

Following an incident of harassment, the offer of support can help the person targeted feel less isolated and more confident in reporting it. Ask them: ‘are you OK?’, or let them know that what happened to them isn’t OK.

If you do see something, you can report it anonymously at [Crimestoppers](#) on 0800 40 50 40, or by text on 61016. In an emergency, always call 999.

# Take a closer look

Every year, as part of its Look Closer campaign, the Children's Society asks the public to sign a pledge to protect young people from exploitation by getting to know the signs and how to report any concerns they may have.

Now, in conjunction with the Metropolitan Police Service, the campaign has been updated to help licensed taxi and private hire drivers identify and prevent exploitation and modern slavery.

Grooming is a method used by perpetrators to build a relationship with a child in order to coerce and control them. It happens online and offline. The child may then be sexually abused, forced into labour, made to launder criminal money, or coerced into transporting drugs or stealing from shops. These are all types of child exploitation and modern slavery.

You may think instances of child exploitation and modern slavery only happen very rarely, but the National

Referral Mechanism (the UK's framework for identifying victims of modern slavery) has identified nearly 25,000 children since 2009, although the actual number of those affected is likely to be far higher.

The materials explain the kind of locations where grooming takes place, what behaviours drivers should look out for in potential victims and how they can report what they see. By learning to spot the signs and how to report them, everyone can help keep children safe from this abuse.

There will be a more detailed article on the Look Closer campaign, child exploitation and modern slavery in the Summer issue of OnRoute.

## Look Closer

#LookCloser is an award winning [awareness campaign](#) led by the Children's Society in partnership with the National County Lines Coordination Centre and the British Transport Police. The campaign seeks to strengthen our responses to child exploitation by helping the public to spot the signs and effectively safeguard children and young people in local communities.



# The manual

Tips, advice and policy updates from TfL

TPH Notice 01/24 (This notice supplements [TPH Notice 01/23](#))

## Update on the Safety, Equality and Regulatory Understanding Assessment and English Language Requirement for London private hire drivers

Private hire drivers play an important role in London's transport system and it is essential for public safety and quality of service that they can understand their regulatory obligations and communicate in English at an appropriate level.

In 2016, we introduced an English Language requirement (ELR) for London private hire drivers, with transitional arrangements in place to allow them time to comply.

In July 2020, the Department for Transport (DfT) published [Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards](#) to further enhance the safety of taxi and private hire passengers. One of these was for licensing authorities to test the oral

and written English language proficiency for drivers. Another was for drivers to undertake safeguarding training to help them recognise and know what to do in the event of issues such as child abuse and county lines exploitation.

In September 2021, we changed how we assess the English language requirement in response to the DfT Statutory Standards and we introduced a Safety, Equality and Regulatory Understanding (SERU) assessment for London private hire drivers.

The SERU assessment tests a driver's understanding of safeguarding, equality and disability awareness, as well as awareness of their regulatory



obligations more generally. Questions in the assessment are based on the [Private hire vehicle driver's handbook](#).

In November 2023, the DfT published updated [Best Practice Guidance](#) for licensing authorities, which recommends that taxi and private hire drivers should be trained in disability awareness and/or have their knowledge and skills assessed.

Transitional arrangements were put in place to allow drivers time to comply with the ELR and SERU requirements.

New applicants for a London private hire driver's licence have been required to take and pass the [ELR](#) and [SERU assessments](#) in order to be licensed since 1 April 2023. The dates by which existing London private hire drivers are required to take and pass the ELR and SERU assessments (as set out in the relevant regulations) are as follows:


- Those who did not provide ELR evidence by 30 September 2021 had to take and pass the SERU and ELR assessments by 30 September 2023. We describe this as Group 1
- Those who provided evidence that they met the ELR, but TfL deemed that evidence unsatisfactory must pass the SERU and ELR assessment by 30 September 2024 (Group 2)
- Those who provided satisfactory evidence that they met the ELR must pass the SERU assessment only by 31 March 2025 (Group 3)
- Those who applied for a licence after 1 October 2021 must pass the SERU and ELR assessment by 30 September 2024 (Group 4)

This notice is relevant to the drivers in Group 1 – those drivers that had to take and pass the [SERU](#) and ELR assessments by 30 September 2023, but did not do so. The majority of drivers in Group 1 have taken and passed the ELR and SERU assessments and have received written notification that they are compliant. No further action is required by these drivers.

However, there are some drivers in this group who have not taken or passed the ELR and/or the SERU assessments. It is important that these drivers take steps to do so as soon as possible in order to become compliant.

We have gathered valuable data and feedback via the process of administering the assessments so far, and in the light of that information and experience we have already made some adjustments to the SERU assessment. For example, we continually review the question database and make amendments where questions prove to be confusing to a large number of drivers. In the light of the feedback we have gathered, we now intend to trial the way SERU assessments are carried out.

The SERU assessment is not and was never intended to be a memory test. A number of drivers have fed back to us that, in an assessment environment, it can be difficult to recall precise answers without being able to refer to the private hire driver handbook.

We therefore intend to trial making the private hire driver handbook available for drivers to refer to during the SERU assessment. This will allow drivers to focus more on critical thinking, scenario evaluation and problem solving, and less on simply recalling facts, information and technical terms. This is consistent with our 

evaluation and problem solving, and less on simply recalling facts, information and technical terms. This is consistent with our overall objective, that drivers know how to act in the light of their obligations, rather than ensuring that drivers are able to produce the right answers (using the correct technical language) in a test.

We will actively monitor the SERU assessment trial and decide whether any changes should be rolled out to all drivers who have yet to take the SERU assessment. We anticipate that it will take several months to conduct the trial and consider the impact.

All drivers should be aware of their obligations to pass the SERU and ELR assessments. TfL is keeping under active review what steps it should take, and when, in relation to those drivers who do not satisfy those requirements.

While we are trialling the open-book SERU assessments, or any other changes we might consider appropriate, we will not take licensing enforcement action against Group 1 drivers on the grounds that they have failed to pass the SERU assessment, except as explained in the next paragraph. Although we are not proposing any changes to the ELR at this stage, while we are trialling the SERU open-book assessments, for administrative purposes, we also will not take licensing enforcement action against Group 1 drivers who have so far failed to pass the ELR assessment except as explained in the next paragraph.


We will be contacting the affected Group 1 drivers in the coming weeks to make an appointment for an open-book SERU and/or ELR assessment. If you receive a letter from us, it is important to respond

promptly and make every effort to attend your assessment. Failure to respond the letter or attend the assessment may result in licensing enforcement action being taken, which may include the revocation of your licence.

In the meantime, drivers in all groups should prioritise compliance with these requirements as soon as possible.

If a driver's licence has expired or is due to expire before they have taken and passed the ELR and SERU assessments, it will not be renewed until such time as the driver meets the applicable requirements.

We recognise that English is not the first language of many London private hire drivers and we remain available to support and assist drivers and applicants. The questions in the SERU assessment are about how private hire drivers should behave in the course of their ordinary working life. We also recognise that taking and passing assessments can be intimidating. However, we hope that drivers will not be unduly concerned about the process and there are various online resources, described below, to help them in their preparation.

We have made available a number of online resources to support drivers and applicants. As well as the private hire driver handbook, we have produced an online assessment guide which covers every part of the handbook in detail, with a Knowledge Check at the end of each section. There is also a section on 'what to expect', which explains the assessment process with screenshots taken from the assessment centre so candidates know what to expect on the day. 

Our online [Safeguarding Awareness course](#) is an important tool to help all licensees and applicants understand the role that they have to play in the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults. We strongly recommend that this course is completed by all existing licensees and new applicants.

We are aware that many London private hire operators and private hire driver representative groups also offer free

training for drivers to help them prepare for the ELR and SERU assessments.

More information can be found by visiting TfL's English language requirement and SERU pages.

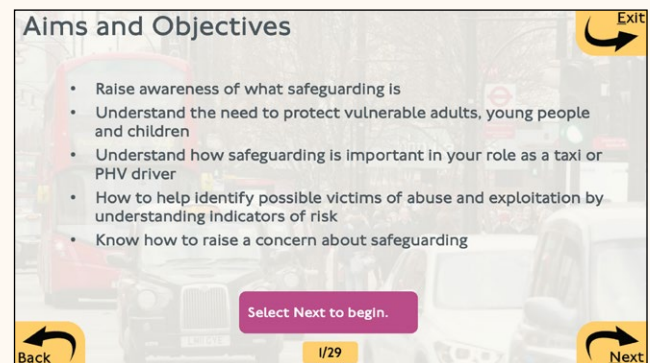
Graham Robinson  
General Manager  
Taxi and Private Hire  
Transport for London



**Safeguarding Awareness  
for Taxi and Private Hire  
Drivers in London**

Welcome to this Transport for London safeguarding course for taxi and private hire drivers designed to raise awareness of Safeguarding and the role you can play.

**START**



**Aims and Objectives**

- Raise awareness of what safeguarding is
- Understand the need to protect vulnerable adults, young people and children
- Understand how safeguarding is important in your role as a taxi or PHV driver
- How to help identify possible victims of abuse and exploitation by understanding indicators of risk
- Know how to raise a concern about safeguarding

Select Next to begin.

1/29

Back Next Exit

## TPH online tools for drivers

[PHV Driver Handbook](#)

[SERU page](#)

[SERU online assessment guide](#)

[Safeguarding online course](#)

[SERU video](#)

[ELR webpage](#)

[Speaking and listening test](#)



## TPH Notice 02/24 - DBS Update Service licensing requirement

# The DBS Update Service licensing requirement was introduced on 26 February 2024.

This Notice supplements the information in [TPH Notice 07/23](#), confirming that the DBS Update Service licensing requirement was introduced on 26 February 2024. The requirement has been introduced in response to the Department for Transport ([DfT](#)) [Statutory Standards](#), that included a requirement for all applicants for a taxi or private hire driver's licence to register with, and subscribe to, the [DBS Update Service](#).

From 26 February 2024, we will not grant a taxi or private hire driver's licence (including those seeking to renew an existing licence) unless an applicant has registered for the DBS Update Service. This will apply to all applicants who have applied for a taxi or private hire licence, including those who submitted an application prior to 26 February 2024 which is yet to be determined. Once licensed, you must maintain continuous subscription with the DBS Update Service. More information on the DBS Update Service and how to register can be [found here](#).

We have also produced two guidance documents, that explain the requirements and assist applicants and licensees to comply with the requirement:

- [DBS update service guidance](#)

- [DBS application guidance](#)

There are a number of benefits of signing up to the DBS Update Service. The DBS Update Service costs £13 per year and enables anyone who applies for an enhanced criminal record check to keep their criminal record certificate up to date and will allow TfL to carry out a status check on the certificate. Once subscribed, you will only be required to provide a new criminal record check if the DBS tells us that something has changed. So, unless something has changed, this will save you both time and money, as when you apply to renew your licence you will not have to apply and pay for a new enhanced DBS check. Once drivers have registered with the DBS Update Service, we will then routinely check with the DBS for new information every six months starting from the date their next licence is granted.

Graham Robinson  
General Manager  
Taxi and Private Hire  
Transport for London



All applicants for a taxi or private hire driver licence must now register for the DBS Update Service

## Top tips on the DBS service

Anyone applying for a taxi or private hire driver's licence, both new and renewal, is now required to provide evidence of registration with the [DBS Update Service](#). This is a mandatory requirement and licences will not be issued unless evidence of registration is provided.

### How to get your DBS

Before registering with the DBS Update Service, you must request an enhanced DBS check.

### DBS Update Service registration

There are two opportunities to register with the DBS Update Service:

- 28 days from when you apply for your [enhanced DBS check](#)
- 30 days from the date when your DBS certificate was issued

If you miss the window to apply, then you will need to apply and pay for a new enhanced DBS check.

TPH has produced a [video](#) explaining these changes, or for general information about DBS, see the [TPH Licensing information pages](#).

# Acting responsibly

## Places for London, TfL's property company, is piloting a new Responsible business skills programme

Places for London has more than 1,500 tenants based in the shops and arches it already owns across its estate. Of these, 95 per cent are small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), such as food and beverage retailers, gyms and industrial and automotive businesses such as taxi and private hire companies.

Now, two private hire firms, HR Amber Cars in Harold Wood and Masons Cars in Woodford, have joined the 40 companies on the programme pilot, which aims to give them the skills to become greener, fitter and more inclusive businesses.

Tom Atkinson, Customer Performance Manager at Places for London, explains: 'We want to support inclusive growth. We believe that every business can be a force for good. Our one-year course is based on [Heart of the City's](#) Foundations for Responsible Business programme, but with added content, bespoke for us. The private hire offices and other participants will be learning how to define their own company's approach to responsible business and gaining skills in three areas – environment, community and people.

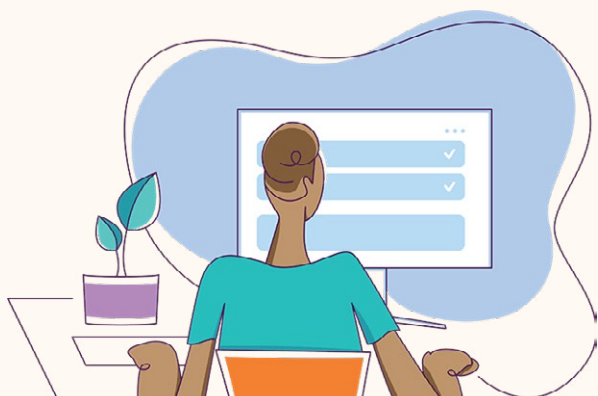
'The programme will help them to become more aware of what they can do to grow their business in a way that cuts costs and supports their staff, and to train them in skills to be a greener office.'

### About the programme

Heart of the City has already supported more than 1,000 SMEs on its online Foundations for Responsible Business programme. It is designed for companies with little or no experience in responsible business and starts with a responsible business health check to help develop their strategy and track their progress.

Companies get a dedicated account manager for one-to-one support and can attend online and in-person events throughout the year, including insight sessions with experts on particular responsible business topics. There is also access to online resources to help them develop their employee's skills.

The pilot programme is now full, but Places for London is encouraging all its customers to seek wider business support through the Mayor's [Grow London Local](#) programme, which is relevant for any small business in the taxi and private hire industries. It includes an online library for events, support programmes and expert-led content. Companies can receive personalised recommendations through its Business Success Check or can request a free consultation with a Business Support Manager.



# Thank you

## The Mad Hatter's tea party

Every year, the London Taxi Drivers' Charity for Children holds this magical event for hundreds of children, their families and carers. This January, the tea party took place at Grosvenor House, creating an unforgettable experience for more than 600 children from various London schools.

It was a day filled with joy, laughter, non-stop entertainment and lots and lots of party food. Action Amanda got the party started, getting the children up singing and dancing, followed by singer/songwriter Shivani, before The Crystals performed their cheerleading routine with high kicks and pom poms.

The success of the party is testament to the commitment of the charity members and volunteers in making a positive impact on the lives of young children across London, so a big thank you goes out to everyone involved.

The [London Taxi Drivers' Charity for Children](#) has lots of events throughout the year if you would like to get involved.

Children enjoying this year's Mad Hatter's tea party





MAYOR OF LONDON