



Taxi and Private Hire Action Plan 2016

MAYOR OF LONDON



**TRANSPORT
FOR LONDON**
EVERY JOURNEY MATTERS

About Transport for London

Part of the Greater London Authority family of organisations led by Mayor of London Sadiq Khan, we are the integrated transport authority responsible for delivering the Mayor's strategy and commitments on transport.

As a core element in the Mayor's overall plan for London, our purpose is to keep London moving, working and growing, and to make life in our city better. We reinvest all of our income to run and improve London's transport services and to make it more modern and affordable for everyone.

Our operational responsibilities include London Underground, London Buses, Docklands Light Railway, London Overground, TfL Rail, London Trams, London River Services, London Dial-a-Ride, Victoria Coach Station, Santander Cycles and the Emirates Air Line.

On the roads, we regulate taxis and the private hire trade, run the Congestion Charging scheme, manage the city's 580km red route network, operate all of the Capital's 6,300 traffic signals and work to ensure a safe environment for all road users.

We are delivering one of the world's largest programmes of transport capital investment, which is building the Elizabeth line, modernising Tube services and stations, transforming the road network and making it safer, especially

for more vulnerable road users, such as pedestrians and cyclists.

We work hard to make journeys easier through effective use of technology and data. We provide modern ways to pay through Oyster and contactless payment cards and provide information in a wide range of formats to help people move around London.

Real-time travel information is provided directly by us and through third party organisations, which use the data we make openly and freely available to power apps and other services.

We listen to, and act upon, feedback and complaints to constantly improve our services and work with communities, representative groups, businesses and many other stakeholders to shape transport provision in London.

Improving and expanding transport in London is central to driving economic growth, jobs and housing throughout the United Kingdom. Working with the Mayor, we are using our surplus land to provide thousands of new, affordable homes. Our own supply chain creates tens of thousands of jobs and apprenticeships across the country.

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Message from the Mayor

As the world's greatest city, London deserves the best taxi and private hire services available. I am determined to create a vibrant taxi and private hire market, with space for all providers to flourish, while driving up standards to improve safety and the quality of service offered to all Londoners and the city's visitors.

London's taxi drivers are highly trained and are required to meet the strictest safety standards. They drive wheelchair-accessible vehicles, and possess the incredible geographical recall and sense of direction that only those with The Knowledge have. With the world's most qualified cabbies at the wheel, it's easy to understand why the iconic black cab is recognised across the globe and is a source of pride for Londoners.

The private hire trade also has an important role to play in the city's transport mix. Traditional minicab services exist all over London and remain prevalent in suburban areas, alongside suburban taxis, serving local communities. Meanwhile, chauffeur and executive services use high-end vehicles to serve London's thriving business and leisure industries.

In my manifesto, I set a clear objective to:

- Ensure the markets for licensed taxi drivers and private hire drivers are fair – with special privileges built in, as they always have been, for those who



- become a licensed London taxi driver
- Ensure driver safety standards are rigorously enforced across both industries
- Retain the exclusive right of licensed taxi drivers to use bus lanes and ply for hire

Making this happen means reinforcing the

two-tier system between taxis and private hire services and taking account of the phenomenal change seen in the industry in recent years – in particular the role of new technology in enabling journeys.

The taxi trade is an icon of our city and should be supported. While the

legitimate private hire trade is an asset to London, we must not be complacent in ensuring it is safe for passengers. The need for greater enforcement and compliance, as well as stricter entry requirements, is clear for all to see. I also want those drivers who work in the private hire industry to be reassured that it offers a secure working environment with a pathway to appropriate vocational and educational training. Ensuring the highest of standards in the private hire trade benefits everyone with a stake in the industry.

This plan is an important step, and sets out how Transport for London (TfL) will deliver my commitments to both passengers and to the trades themselves. However, it is also a first step, and as the industry changes and develops, this plan will be kept under review to ensure this rapidly changing industry, and the customers it serves, are fully supported now and in the future.

Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London

The journey so far

Taxis have a long and proud history in the Capital, dating back to the horse-drawn hackney carriages that were first seen on London's streets in the 1600s. In the mid-nineteenth century, taxi licensing was introduced, helping build a vital service that often operates when and where other forms of public transport are unavailable.

London's taxis provide a reliable and trusted service to Londoners, tourists and business people from home and abroad, offering customers safety, convenience, and a second-to-none knowledge of the Capital's streets. Companies such as Hailo and Gett have been at the forefront of an app revolution, as smartphones have transformed how many of us organise the way we travel. Crucially, all taxis are fully accessible for wheelchair users.

Today, the taxi industry is preparing to play a vital role in the future of a greener, cleaner Capital city, and will have a key part in tackling London's toxic air. From 1 January 2018, no additional diesel taxis will be licensed in London. Instead, all those presented for licensing for the first time in London will need to be Zero Emission Capable¹. A number of taxi manufacturers are working on the next generation of vehicles offering significant environmental benefits and an improved travelling experience for customers.

Private hire vehicles (PHVs) first appeared on London's streets in the 1960s, and developed to meet the growing demand for pre-booked and suburban journeys in the Capital. The trade, which ranges from traditional minicabs to more specialist chauffeur and executive services, was unregulated until the late 1990s.

Licensing

In 1998, the Private Hire Vehicles (London) Act was passed, while in 2000 TfL was created and took over responsibility for the Public Carriage Office from the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS). Licensing was introduced for operators in 2001, for drivers in 2003 and for vehicles in 2004. The private hire industry has also embraced new technology, with companies such as Addison Lee and Uber offering app-based facilities. This has proved popular with customers, while the number of private hire licensees has almost doubled in recent years – there are now over 110,000 private hire drivers and more than 80,000 PHVs in London, and we are currently legally obliged to issue licences to anyone who meets the licensing criteria.

This unprecedented rise has led to concerns around congestion, air quality and compliance. There is also a human cost – as the amount of drivers increases, so does the number of stories about minicab drivers struggling to make

enough money to support themselves and their families.

While it is of course the customer's choice which service to use, it is vital that regulations and policy keep pace with technology development, as well as with passengers' expectations about their safety and a high quality customer service.

Fair competition

The aim is to allow fair competition across the taxi and private hire industry, protecting our iconic and thriving taxi trade and ensuring the continuation of a diverse and safe private hire service.

While change and innovation can mean benefits for customers, a fast-growing and dynamic industry can also lead to concerns around passenger safety, as well as wider issues linked to air quality, current legislation and engagement with TfL.

As the regulator for taxi and private hire services, we are reviewing our organisational and governance structure to ensure that we meet – and continue to meet – the changing needs of passengers and those who work in the taxi and private hire trades.

This plan contains 27 measures under the following five themes:

- 1 Enhancing public safety**
- 2 New initiatives for the taxi trade**
- 3 Delivering the greenest taxi fleet in the world**
- 4 Lobbying for additional powers**
- 5 Improving engagement with TfL**

1. ≤50g/km CO₂ with a minimum 30 mile zero emission range

Enhancing public safety

Effective and strong regulation is the bedrock of passenger safety. To meet the safety challenges a dynamic taxi and private hire industry brings, we will bring in a number of new measures including:

- I. Implementing and ensuring compliance with the approved recommendations from the Private Hire Regulations Review such as:
 - Robust 'hire and reward' insurance requirements that will mean a policy has to be in place for the duration of the vehicle licence, including when the vehicle is presented to us for inspection
 - A formal English language requirement for all drivers – of a similar standard to that achieved in the early years of secondary school
 - An agreed fare or accurate fare estimate for customers in advance of their journey
 - The provision of driver and vehicle details to customers (including a photo of the driver) before the start of each journey, where customers are able to receive this information
 - Private hire operators ensuring that customers can speak to someone at the operating centre in the event of a problem with their journey (subject to the outcome of current legal proceedings)

These new private hire regulations came into force on 27 June 2016 following the Private Hire Regulations Review. For more complex regulations, existing licensees are expected to comply by 1 October 2016.

2. Quadrupling the number of on-street compliance officers with 250 more dedicated officers on the streets of London by summer 2017
3. Reviewing operator compliance costs to ensure the licence fee structure for private hire operators reflects the costs of compliance activity, by spring 2017
4. Investigating, by summer 2017 the feasibility of introducing a minimum three-year enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check for drivers to guarantee that a full and comprehensive period of criminal history is available for consideration as part of the licensing process
5. Exploring the potential for private hire operators to have their own hire and reward fleet insurance, covering all their registered drivers and vehicles, by spring 2017. This will build on the stricter hire and reward insurance requirements, introduced in summer 2016
6. Working with the Department for Transport to produce national guidance



More dedicated compliance officers on the streets

- on ride sharing, by spring 2017, to ensure driver and passenger safety
 - charged with cab-related sexual offences, by winter 2016
 - 7. Improving, by summer 2017, the standards of driving across the industry by requiring that private hire drivers pass an advanced driving test before they can be licensed or relicensed. TfL is already progressing measures to improve safety standards by introducing an enhanced topographical test for private hire drivers before they can be licensed or re-licensed
 - 10. Ensuring transparency around the reporting of personal injury collisions involving taxis and PHVs. The MPS will start recording the breakdown of this data from late 2016, enabling us to start reporting separately on taxi and private hire collision data from spring 2017 onwards
 - 8. Requiring details of our customer complaints procedure to be clearly displayed in PHVs, as they currently are in taxis, ensuring customers can comment about a journey from winter 2016. This builds on the work already done to promote the fact that customers can comment on private hire – as well as taxi – journeys to TfL, via phone, online and twitter
 - II. Exploring additional training opportunities for taxi and private hire drivers, such as first aid training to enhance driver skills and driver behaviour awareness training linked to the Safer Travel at Night campaign
 - 9. Ensuring transparency around enforcement and compliance activity, and clearer, regular reporting, including cases where drivers are
 - 12. Conducting, further to the commitment made at TfL Board on 17 March, a full review of in-venue private hire operators by spring 2017
- We are also exploring options for addressing the congestion caused by the rise in the number of PHVs, particularly in central London, and looking at what measures could be taken to address this.

New initiatives for the taxi trade

The Mayor is committed to ensuring a fair market for the Capital's taxi and private hire trades, with special privileges for those who become a licensed London taxi driver. Working with us, the Mayor has developed the following initiatives to help support the taxi trade:

13. The continued use of bus lanes – a right which we have previously defended successfully in court – to support quick and convenient journeys by black cab, as well as enabling access to additional bus lanes that taxis have previously not been allowed to enter. This includes:
 - a. Allowing taxis to access an additional 20 bus lanes on the TfL Road Network for the first time by the end of 2016. See appendix I
 - b. Writing to the London boroughs asking them to consider access for taxis to over 40 further bus lanes located on roads they control
14. Developing options for the use of technology to provide customers with information to help connect them with taxis more quickly and easily, including adding taxi information to our Journey Planner. Implementations of measures by summer 2017
15. Mandatory card and contactless payment options in taxis from 31 October to make it even easier for customers to pay, while giving drivers the time they need to prepare, and working with card payment providers to get the best deal for drivers

16. Delivering the Ranks Action Plan and increasing the number of taxi ranks in London by 20 per cent by 2020 (from 500 to 600), as well as improving accessibility at ranks, and improving and promoting ranks at, for instance, Night Tube stations
17. Raising the profile of The Knowledge by establishing accreditation as a formal qualification, potentially enabling applicants to apply for study loans
18. Giving taxi drivers better access to our facilities, such as toilets within our estate, from January 2017
19. Reviewing the annual taxi fares process to ensure drivers and customers get the best deal from April 2017



Card and contactless payments will be mandatory in taxis

Delivering the greenest taxi fleet in the world

Pollution in London is a public health priority, with the equivalent of over 9,400 Londoners dying early every year. Historically, the trade has had a limited choice of heavy diesel vehicles to use. This has led to the fleet becoming a significant contributor to poor air quality, particularly in central London. We will help phase out diesel taxis and establish the Capital's fleet as the greenest in the world by:

20. Requiring that, from 1 January 2018, no more new diesel taxis are licensed in London and all newly registered taxis are Zero Emission Capable
21. Reducing the cost premium of new vehicles by providing a £3,000 grant towards the first 9,000 ZEC taxis licensed in London and lobbying Government to guarantee the plug-in car grant for these vehicles, enabling up to £7,500 in total
22. Delivering a rapid charging network from 2017 to enable drivers to maximise fuel savings and operate mostly in zero emission mode, with locations dedicated to the trade
23. Introducing a scrappage scheme for the oldest taxis from 2017. Up to £5,000 will be available to drivers who choose no longer to licence their vehicle in London, with the exact amount depending on the age of the vehicle



London's fleet will be the greenest

24. Recognising that the newest taxis today will be the last remaining diesel vehicles in the fleet and exploring options to convert to a cleaner fuel, such as Liquid Petroleum Gas
25. Rewarding drivers who pioneer green technology by offering exclusive access to certain facilities, for example, 'zero emission' ranks, and working with boroughs to explore areas where taxis and other vehicles must operate in zero emission mode

Lobbying for additional powers

There are a number of measures that we would like to introduce to enhance public safety still further and to support law-abiding drivers. However, these would require changes to legislation.

26. We will lobby the Government for:

- Control over cross-border hiring for both taxi and PHVs licensed outside of London. Issues of cross-border hiring are increasingly commonplace and it cannot be right that Parliament intended private hire licensees to license themselves with one authority with, for example, the sole intention of working 100 per cent of the time in another authority. Introducing a requirement to ensure a journey either starts or ends in the area for which the driver and vehicle are licensed will still allow flexibility to undertake return journeys. A similar requirement exists in New York City
- Approval from the Secretary of State for us to issue Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs), for example to drivers found not wearing a badge, which would act as an instant deterrent for more minor offences. Were the Secretary of State to agree to use his powers to allow us to issue FPNs for a broad range of offences, it would be another method of compliance to ensure passenger safety in the taxi and private hire trades

- The introduction of legislation to control and regulate pedicabs in London allowing us to ensure the safety of passengers and other road users. Currently, we do not have the authority to regulate, or license, pedicabs in London. The Government has announced that it will bring forward legislation that would bring pedicabs within our regulatory framework and be subject to our licensing regime

Being able to control, regulate and ban unsafe pedicabs would also benefit the London economy by helping to keep the city moving – the congestion caused by pedicabs is significant, especially in parts of the West End. In the meantime, we will continue to work with Members of Parliament and the London Borough of Westminster to run operations to tackle dangerous and antisocial behaviour from pedicab drivers

- A statutory definition of plying for hire and pre-booked services – as the law stands, plying for hire is difficult to prove and requires significant enforcement resources. While we will continue to enforce to the full extent of our ability, along with the Mayor we are firmly of the view that a statutory definition of plying for hire and pre-booked services will remove ambiguity and clearly define the difference between taxi and private hire services, maintaining the two-tier system
- Greater enforcement powers – changes in primary legislation to address common enforcement issues in London, for example, the power to seize vehicles that are found undertaking a passenger journey without hire and reward insurance cover, automatic disqualification from driving on conviction of anyone found guilty of a touting or unlawful plying for hire offence, and extend the power the police already have to take DNA samples for touting offences to include drivers caught unlawfully plying for hire



The Government has announced that it will bring forward legislation that would bring pedicabs within our regulatory framework

Improving engagement with TfL

To ensure passengers have confidence in the safety and future convenience of the Capital's taxi trade, it is important that the trade has a productive and positive relationship with us. Having a relationship built on transparency and openness ensures all parties are clear on the role each plays in meeting the needs of passengers, with us as the regulator and licensing authority, and the trade as the front-line service provider.

27. TfL's Taxi Trade Engagement Policy is being updated to ensure it is more inclusive. It is proposed that our engagement with the trade will take place through regular scheduled meetings including:

- Quarterly one-to-one meetings with the Licensed Taxi Drivers Association (LTDA); London Cab Drivers Club (LCDC); Unite; National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers (RMT) – Taxi Branch; and United Cabbies Group (UCG) to discuss strategic issues
- A bi-monthly, independently chaired performance seminar with representatives from the major taxi trade bodies (LTDA, LCDC, Unite, RMT and UCG) and other interested parties on an ad-hoc basis. This will cover operational performance and a single topical policy item
- Ad-hoc meetings with smaller organisations and stakeholders

- Sessions with local organisations and other interested parties, for example, the suburban taxi forums, vehicle manufacturers, app developers, the Cab Ranks Committee, card payment providers and taxi radio circuits

These proposals will be discussed with the taxi trade during autumn 2016 before the taxi trade engagement arrangements are finalised.

Quarterly meetings with representatives of the private hire trade including the LPHCA, Private Hire Board and Chauffeur & Executive Committee, as well as one-to-one meetings with the larger operators and the GMB Union, which represents the interests of private hire drivers, are already well established and will continue.



Meetings with the trade have already been established

Next steps

Implementation of the measures contained in this Action Plan is under way (as of September 2016) and regular updates will be provided at meetings with the taxi and private hire trades on a regular basis.



We will continue to update the trade through regular scheduled meetings

Appendix I

Additional bus lanes on the TfL Road Network to which taxis will be allowed access for the first time:

Road	Indicative location
1 London Bridge northbound (part-time following completion of Tower Bridge works)	Glaziers Hall to Fishmongers Hall
2 Wandsworth gyratory	Ram Street
3 Catford one-way system	Catford Road
4 Tooley Street westbound	Shad Thames to Potters Fields
5 A2	In the vicinity of the Black Prince interchange eastbound
6 A2	In the vicinity of the Black Prince interchange westbound
7 Bishopsgate	Junction of Cornhill/Bishopsgate
8 Shoreditch High Street	Norton Folgate to Shoreditch High Street
9 Kidbrooke Park Road	North of Weigall Road northbound
10 Kidbrooke Park Road	North of Weigall Road southbound
11 Kidbrooke Park Road	On the approach to the Kidbrooke interchange
12 Bath Road	Nettleton Road to Bath Road
13 Malden Way	In the vicinity of South Lane
14 Tolworth Rise North	In the vicinity of Highfield Road
15 Westminster Bridge Road	Westminster Bridge Road to Victoria Embankment
16 Westminster Bridge Road	In the vicinity of Gassiot House
17 Kennington Road	In the vicinity of Stannary Street
18 Streatham High Road	Between Gleneldon Road and Stanthorpe Road
19 Grove Road	In the vicinity of High Street
20 Newington Butts	In the vicinity of Dante Road

In addition, we will be writing to the London boroughs to ask them to consider access for taxis to over 40 further bus lanes located on roads they control.

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