

OnRoute

October 2022

The magazine for London's taxi and private hire trades



Women at the wheel

recruiting more female drivers



Be winter
weather ready

My other car's
a Tesla

Eyes of the law
at Heathrow

Electric
pavements

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.

Contents

4 Highlights this issue

5 Welcome

6 Driving seat
News, views and much more

14 Top talk

20 Green zone
21 Breathe for private hire
24 Taxi delicensing scheme
25 Pavement chargers in Barnet

27 Wellbeing

28 Getting a good night's sleep
31 COVID and flu jab reminder
32 Mental health support services

33 Security

34 More operations officers undergo
TPH training
36 Heading down to Heathrow

40 The manual

57 Thank you

Highlights this issue



p14. Top talk

Five female drivers talk about working in the taxi and private hire industries



p20. Green zone

Fancy driving a Tesla for work? You can with Breathe Cars



p27. Wellbeing

Tips and tricks to help you sleep more soundly



p40. The manual

Important update on Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Disabled Persons) Act 2022



Welcome

London is renowned as a multi-cultural city, but when it comes to gender-parity, women are significantly under-represented in the taxi and private hire industries. From p14, we hear from five female drivers. Their stories are diverse, but they all love what they do and act as great role models for both industries.

There are many reasons why we sometimes find it difficult to sleep, but rather than staying wide awake, take a look at p28 where we discuss positive steps you can take to make sure you get a good night's sleep. Research shows that sleep deprivation and fatigue are a factor in 16 per cent of all road accidents in the UK, so it really does pay to sleep soundly.

Elsewhere, in The manual (p40), you'll find important information on changes to regulation for taxi and private hire, and some great tips on how to make sure your vehicle is winter weather-proof.

We've also got news on the continued push to be a carbon-free city and compliance operations being carried out at Heathrow Airport.

The nation recently came together to mourn the loss of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, and we explore the unique tribute paid by cabbies on p56.

If there's something you'd like us to include in a future issue, please drop us a line at onroute@tfl.gov.uk

Driving seat

Putting you at the heart of taxi and private hire



Cycling for charity **p12**

- p8** Heathrow drop-off charges
- p9** Tooley Street changes
- p12** Charity round-up



Updates to the Disability Act

Taxi and private hire drivers and private hire operators should familiarise themselves with their new and amended duties under the Taxi and Private Hire Vehicles (Disabled Persons) Act 2022. The changes help to further ensure disabled passengers can use taxi and private hire services without being discriminated against and that they receive appropriate assistance wherever they travel, without there being an extra charge.

You can read the full TPH Notice in The manual.

All mapped out

The Knowledge of London Stage 1 and Stage 2 exams, known as ‘map tests’, have recently moved online. Although candidates continue to take these assessments at the TPH offices at Baker Street, they now complete them on a computer rather than with pen and paper.

Katie Chennells, Knowledge of London Manager, explains: ‘The exam itself is still multiple choice, consisting of 50 per cent Blue Book runs and 50 per cent points of interest. The pass mark remains at 60 per cent. Feedback from candidates is that they prefer it being online, which is really nice to hear, so thanks to examiners John Shaw and Paul Whitehead for all their hard work setting it up.’

Heathrow terminal drop-off charge

Taxi drivers who believe they are owed a refund on the drop-off charge, either because it was an inter-terminal job or a charge received while transferring from the taxi park to Terminal 3, and drivers who have received a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) for the same reasons, should visit the [airport website](#) to appeal the PCN. Alternatively, email refunds.heathrowdropoff@apcoa.com

You will need to provide the following information:

- Your badge number
- The charge receipt number (taken from your autopay account)
- VRN number on the charge notice
- The date and the time of the contravention



International acclaim for taxi driver Matthew

Matthew Westfall has won the International Association of Transport Regulators' Driver of the Year award

Taxi driver Matthew, raised more than £11,000 to get six black cabs, one car and one van across to Poland to deliver humanitarian aid to refugee camps set up near the Ukrainian border.

Matthew, who has been a taxi driver for 11 years, decided to launch a GoFundMe page for the cause when he saw an online video of a Ukrainian father saying goodbye to his family as he left them to enlist in the military.

He was presented with his award by Helen Chapman, TfL's Director of Licensing and Regulation, at its offices in Stratford on 21 September. You can read more about Matthew and his efforts in our next issue of OnRoute.

Thank you

After 11 years of putting Knowledge of London students through their Blue Book runs, Examiner John Shaw is retiring.

Knowledge of London Manager, Katie Chennells, said: ‘John has been an integral part of the examining team and he will be greatly missed by everyone in the Knowledge department. I’m sure all the students who knew him as Mr Shaw at their appearances will join me and all the team in wishing John the best of luck in the next chapter of his life.’



The cycle lane at Tooley Street

Tooley Street cycle lane

Temporary segregated cycle lanes linking London Bridge and Tower Bridge are to be made permanent following a public consultation.

The new cycle lanes, along with a raft of other changes on Tooley Street and Duke Street Hill, were introduced early last year to see if walking and cycling could be encouraged without causing delays to traffic.

The changes also saw the introduction of a left-turn ban into Queen Elizabeth Road for vehicles, excluding buses and taxis, and the removal of on-street parking near the Unicorn Theatre to make room for a section of cycle lane.

The changes will now be made permanent, having resulted in a 25 per cent increase in the number of people cycling along the route, without leading to significant delays for buses or other traffic.

Vehicle numbers along Tooley Street were also found to have fallen by a third, while levels of cycling averaged about 5,000 cyclists per weekday during the spring.

TPH licensing in numbers

18,830

Taxi drivers

14,994

Taxi vehicle licences

96,106

Private hire driver licences

83,087

Private hire vehicle licences

1,643

Private hire operators



O2 Arena taxi rank

Taxi rank news

O2 Arena, North Greenwich station

There have been complaints that taxis are being left unattended on the taxi rank at the O2 Arena, North Greenwich station, often for several hours at a time. Please ensure that rank regulations are followed at all times and that the rank is not used for parking. Taxi drivers are also reminded that they should not drive through the buses only section of the station.

Liverpool Street station disability drop off

The Liverpool Street station roof project is scheduled to start soon and will run until the end of 2024. For safety reasons, taxis and vehicle access will be denied or heavily restricted while the works are taking place as the central roadway on Primrose Street will become a worksite. Taxis should use Liverpool Street to drop off passengers instead.

New ranks for a new line

In the three months after it opened in May, a massive 11 million journeys were made on the Elizabeth line. That's a lot of people, many of whom will want to travel on from the station. The taxi ranks listed right are now available for use along the line.

List of Elizabeth line taxi rank locations

New ranks

Abbey Wood

(two new ranks)

Farringdon

Forest Gate

Gidea Park

Goodmayes

Ilford

Manor Park

Maryland

Seven Kings

Existing ranks

Canary Wharf

Ealing Broadway

Harold Wood

Heathrow Terminals 2 & 3

Heathrow Terminal 4

Liverpool Street

Paddington

Romford

Stratford

Tottenham Court Road

Charity round-up



Pedal and pedestrian power for charity

Taxi Charity volunteers Chris Willmott and Seb Philp have successfully completed an impressive two-day challenge to raise £10,000 for the charity by cycling 115km across the Netherlands on World War II-era gearless bikes and then walking 40km to commemorate Operation Market Garden, carried out by the allies in 1944.

Chris Willmott, former member of the Parachute Regiment, said: 'I have been volunteering for the Taxi Charity since 2016, and when I recently heard that

some funding they had been promised was not going to be awarded, I spoke with Seb and we decided we would try to raise the money instead. We hope this first challenge will raise £10,000 and that we can do more over the next year to raise a total of £45,000 to help The Taxi Charity fund future commemoration trips to the Netherlands and Normandy.'

Contact the [Taxi Charity](#) to find out what it offers veterans or to donate.



Charity day trip to Worthing

Apart from during the pandemic, the Taxi Charity has been taking veterans to Worthing for the day every year since 1948. Here they can relax, spend time with their friends and enjoy a meal and entertainment. This year, 60 taxis made the trip.

The Taxi Charity volunteers, the veterans and invited guests enjoyed a fish and chip lunch and an inspirational talk by Darren Swift, who was injured by an IRA bomb in 1991 while serving with the Army's Dog Unit in Belfast.

Ian Parsons, Chairman, Taxi Charity for Military Veterans said: 'We've enjoyed memorable trips to the Netherlands and Normandy recently, but there's no place like home and Worthing has been the Taxi Charity's home for almost 75 years. Veterans and cabbies have always enjoyed our annual visit to this lovely seaside town and after missing two trips during the pandemic, this was an emotional return.'

'It was so good to be back in Worthing again with this amazing charity. The volunteer cab drivers look after us all so well and it was great to spend the day with so many friends that I have made through the Taxi charity'

Veteran, Ernie Davis



The Magical Taxi Tour convoy

picture credit LEVC

Off to see Mickey!

After being cancelled last year owing to the pandemic, the [Magical Taxi Tour](#) of 94 taxis, taking 160 children with life-limiting illnesses to Disneyland Paris, finally departed for France on 16 September.

This amazing convoy, which can be more than three miles long, sees taxi drivers give up their time and vehicles to transport the children on this three-day trip of a lifetime, along with City of London Police escorts, Gendarmerie Nationale, London Ambulance NHS Trust vehicles and AA breakdown trucks.

Going on safari

In June, the London Taxi Drivers' Charity for Children took more than 70 special needs pupils from the Northway School in Mill Hill, in more than 50 taxis, to Woburn Safari Park.

The drivers, along with the children and their escorts, were given the freedom of the park as guests of the Duke of Bedford.

Top talk



Women behind the wheel
Taxi and private hire would like to see more female drivers



Taxi driver Dale Forwood in her cab

Shirley Preston was the first female driver to pass the Knowledge way back in 1967, so it is almost unbelievable that 55 years later, only two percent of taxi and private hire drivers in London are women. Now some drivers are determined to inspire and encourage a new generation of females to get behind the wheel.

Dale Forwood, taxi driver

Taxi driver Dale, 56, is so enthusiastic about getting more drivers, especially women, into the trade, she wants to open a Knowledge school and has already set up a few WhatsApp groups for women taxi drivers.

She comes from a family of London cabbies but was the first female to pass the Knowledge back in 2012, just in time for the Olympics. She says: 'My dad was so proud of me. I started doing

the Knowledge when I had four children aged six, eight, 10 and 12. It took me three years and I did it during their school hours. I started it because I knew I could fit it in around childcare. My dad brought up five children being a taxi driver and we had a really good standard of living, so I could see you could earn decent money from doing it.'

Now Dale wants to help other women follow in her footsteps by doing radio interviews and talking about her experiences on her YouTube channel. 'As taxi drivers we should all encourage more people to do the Knowledge and I'm quite happy to promote it as it is a real opportunity for people to exercise their brains and earn good money.

'Passengers love the fact I'm a female driver, they are delighted and often say "you're the first female taxi driver' →

we've ever seen in London!" I also work nights and it doesn't bother me at all. I feel really safe because of the glass partition between me and the passengers. The police are really supportive, as are all the other taxi drivers, and we are a proper community.'

Dale feels now is a particularly good time to promote the trade as the pandemic caused London's taxi fleet to shrink. This means the remaining taxi drivers are incredibly busy. 'I just wish there were more taxis and female drivers out there, I'm just going to keep on going forever!'

Taxi driver Lisa Seymour



picture credit LEVC

Lisa Seymour, taxi driver

Lisa, 43, was encouraged to do the Knowledge by her dad, who was also a taxi driver. She finally got round to doing it when she was 36 and it took her three years and 10 months. Being a single mum of two, she found it difficult to commit to the study involved and getting out learning the runs, but she finally got her badge in December 2018 and now works full-time. She says: 'Every week is different, but I work when I want to work. So, during school holidays I've been doing a lot of nights and then during school-term time, I'll work between 09:00 and 15:00. Occasionally I'll do a night shift or a weekend.'

She is also experiencing more work than ever before, especially in the West End with people going out to bars, restaurants and the theatre, and dropping off around the hotels. She would like to get more female drivers out there by mentoring Knowledge students. She recently met up with Knowledge of London Manager, Katie Chennells, to explore ways they could promote being a taxi driver to women and are planning a workshop, inviting women to come and listen to existing female cabbies about what they do.

'I love what I do and am proud to be a taxi driver and my daughters, aged 23 and nine, are both so proud to tell everyone their mum is a taxi driver. It's a job that suits any sort of person because you can work around your personal commitments. I love the freedom knowing I can go to work or not depending on how I feel. You are your own boss, and the money is good, but you need perseverance, grit; it's not for the faint-hearted and you need to believe in yourself.'



Bee Sab, private hire driver/chauffeur

Back in 2006, 59-year-old Bee started dating a chauffeur who ran a small chauffeur service company and began helping him. Although she was working as an equalities trainer for a charity, she decided to get her private hire driver's licence. The company specialised in working with American navy and military personnel posted to England, and Bee soon found she was falling in love with the job.

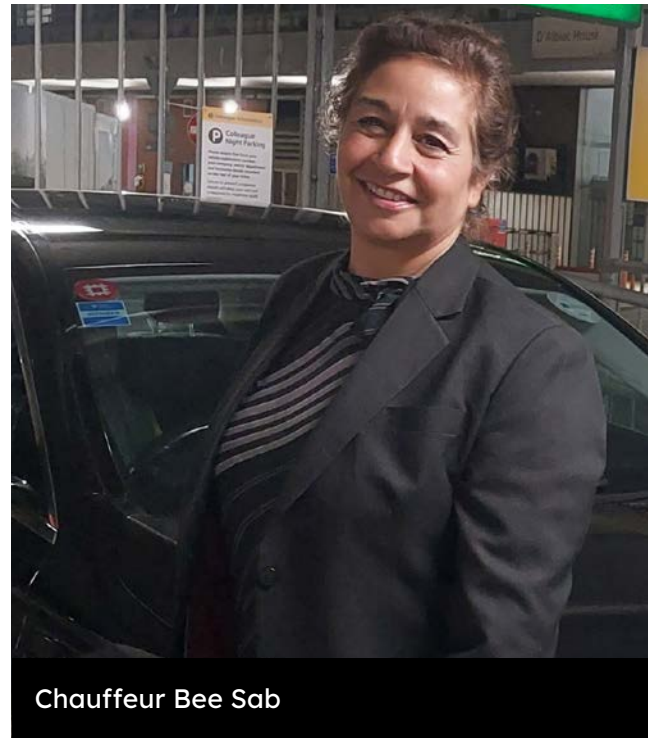
'For me, it never felt like a job but like a day out,' she explains. 'From there, a new career opened up for me as a chauffeur. I was made redundant from the charity in 2015 and although I was a little bit hesitant, decided to give chauffeuring a go full-time.'

She bought a Mercedes E Class and started to freelance, working for a number of private hire companies. She says it was a challenge as she was a single parent. 'I was the only female driver working for the company back then and I always used to say that having a female on their team would be beneficial to them, especially as a lot of the American military personnel had their families with them and their children were in private school. They felt very comfortable having a female driver who was also a mother driving their children unaccompanied.'

Bee is still freelance, working for a number of operators, and has built up

'In the modern era, we should have more women in the industry'

Chauffeur Bee Sab



Chauffeur Bee Sab

a list of customers who now request her personally, and says being smartly dressed, with a professional but friendly attitude, is vital to making a success of being a chauffeur.

Although she has come across misogyny from both other drivers and some customers, she says she deals with it with patience and has always been very conscious of keeping herself safe. 'I've developed my own safeguarding techniques as many companies don't have safeguarding training in place.'

'I think when private hire companies advertise for drivers, people immediately assume they mean male drivers. If they advertised for more male and female drivers, I'm sure more women would come forward.'

Bee is now writing a book, *The Extra Mile*, about her experiences as a female chauffeur and why she loves the job. ➔

Cristina-Georgiana Ioanitescu, Executive chauffeur

Cristina, 33, drives a Mercedes Vito and is highly sought after with clients asking for her personally and searching for her across the multiple operators she works for. She recently drove for the American embassy security detail and has a regular contract with a female senior diplomat in London.

She has had her private hire licence since 2016, after an associate told her how much he was earning a week, which was roughly what she was earning in a month. She now works with many of the embassies in London.



Chauffeur Cristina-Georgiana Ioanitescu

‘I work freelance for about 10 companies,’ she says. ‘Every day is different and in order to be successful and to get repeat bookings you have to have the right attitude – if people show me respect, then I give them that back and if people are having a bad day and don’t want to talk then that’s fine, but I will try to make their day better and people really appreciate it if you are human and nice.’

‘I love driving and if I didn’t have a husband and two children at home, I think I would live in my car! This job gives me the chance to work my own hours and I don’t have a boss. So, when the kids are in school you can do 09:00 to 15:00, which means you are still working six hours a day and getting paid well for it rather than sitting at home.’

‘I feel operators should be more safety conscious for their drivers and for me, safety is the most important thing. If people, particularly women, don’t feel safe then they won’t do this job.’

‘Now I want to set up my own company with male and female drivers, so people have a choice, especially female customers, many of whom feel safer with female drivers. For that to happen, I need more women drivers to come into the industry! That doesn’t make me sexist, but I just want there to be more choice and opportunity.’

Silvana Prado, Addison Lee driver

After she had her daughter, Silvana, 55, knew it would be hard to work full-time, so chose chauffeuring as a very flexible option. She says: ‘I got my licence in 2007 and immediately got a job with Addison Lee. Now I usually work Monday to Friday and Saturday mornings.’




‘I love driving and with Addison Lee we get more account jobs than cash customers and the company keeps records on the passengers, so you feel safe. I’ve always had a good experience driving for them. It’s well paid and you get to go to places you wouldn’t normally go to. Also, I’m driving one of the new electric Volkswagen ID4s and all my passengers ask about it and really enjoy travelling in it.’

‘London’s definitely getting busier again, with people starting to go back into work and some feel safer in a private hire car.’

To other women who may be considering this as a career, Silvana believes the flexibility is the most important factor, followed by meeting lots of people and having nice conversations while earning good money.

She says: ‘You have to enjoy driving, sometimes you have to be patient and show empathy because you do get grumpy passengers! I try to be polite and try to calm them down, showing them I know what I am doing and know my way around London. You have to like meeting people because that’s what you do every day.’

She says the other private hire drivers are very supportive when she meets them at the airport and around the city when waiting to pick up or drop off, but comments that it would be so nice to have more women doing this job. She adds: ‘I know many companies are looking for new drivers, and as a driver myself, I’d recommend this profession.’

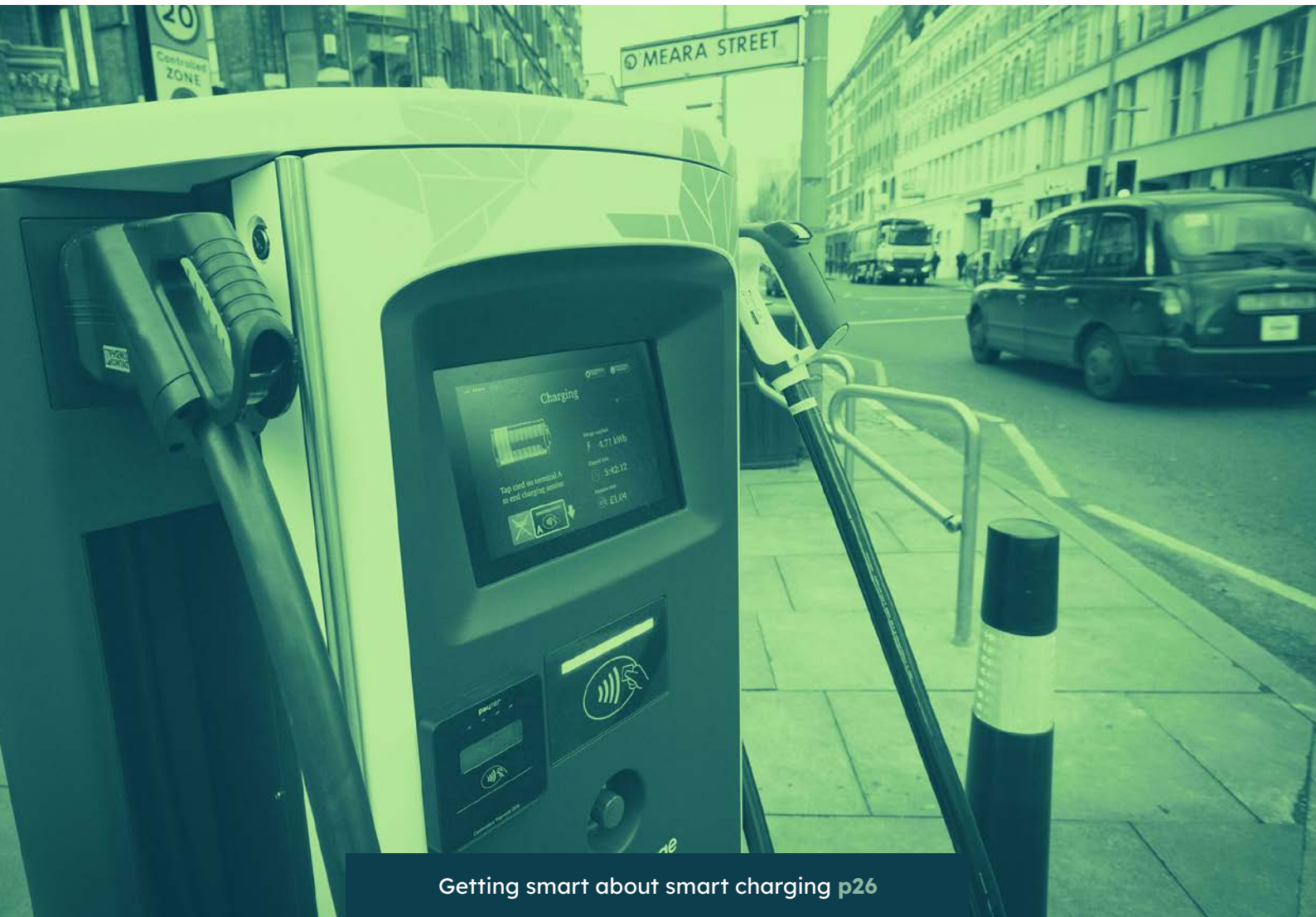
If you have any ideas of how to encourage more women to become taxi and private hire drivers, we’d love to hear from you at OnRoute@tfl.gov.uk 



Addison Lee driver Silvana Prado

Green zone

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



Getting smart about smart charging p26

- p21** Introducing Breathe Cars
- p23** Wireless charging trial
- p25** Pavement chargers in Barnet



Let's just breathe

Many private hire drivers have not yet switched to an electric vehicle because of the high cost. Now a new kid on the block is offering an affordable solution to the problem

[Breathe Cars](#) was created by a team of electric vehicle and private hire experts who came together to help private hire drivers and to clean up London's air.

It offers flexible electric vehicle subscriptions with benefits and support for drivers including offering electric charging units and adaptor cables, insurance, service, maintenance and tyre replacements. It provides fully electric Tesla vehicles because not only are they safer, but they are also better vehicles for the driver and passengers with their smooth, quiet ride.

Better by electric

Breathe has received funding from the Mayor of London's Energy Efficiency Fund and already has 130 new Tesla Model 3s on the road, and is hoping to have another 150 delivered by the end of this year. Further plans are under way to see this number increase by another 500 electric vehicles from a variety of manufacturers in the next six months.

Jeff Davis, Director of Breathe Cars, says: 'Drivers can choose between an ownership model where, after four years, the driver owns the vehicle, or a rental model, where the driver subscribes for →

use on a weekly basis. The pricing structure is simple and protects the driver, who is not locked into a lengthy contract and can stop driving and paying by giving just one month's notice to cancel and return the vehicle.

'Our mission is to provide large scale electric vehicles as a service offering and we are excited to be starting with sustainable, flexible and affordable vehicle subscription options for London's private hire market. We are seeing huge demand and the Government funding allows us to expand our operations and help more drivers step into their first

'When I'm driving the Tesla, I feel free and I love the feeling and smoothness on the motorway. It's just amazing' Ilana Hundadze, Breathe subscriber

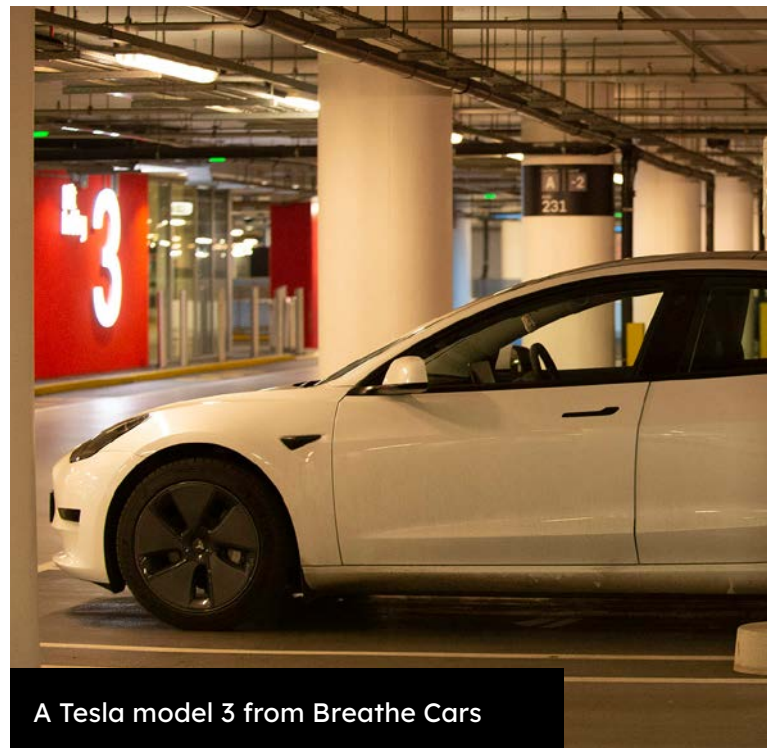
electric vehicle. There is an aspirational element to driving a Tesla and our drivers love it. It's a much more pleasurable driving experience for them, and as their car is like their office, that's really important. We've also had brilliant feedback from them saying when customers get into a Tesla they have much more respect for the vehicle than other cars.

'It's critical that we move fast to replace as many polluting vehicles from London's streets as possible. Breathe will only ever provide zero emissions vehicles. Not only are they good for everyone's lungs, but they are also good for drivers who have the opportunity to take more money

home each week owing to the savings electric vehicles provide.'

The project will contribute to the Mayor's commitment to zero emission transport in the capital. Forecasts predict that the Breathe fleet will save 338 tonnes of ^{CO2} being released into the atmosphere per annum. The Mayor's Energy Efficiency Fund will be able to monitor real-time data on vehicle telematics and the overall carbon savings of the fleet based on the total mileage.

Jeff says the company is thinking big about a cleaner, greener future: 'We definitely want to see ourselves as dominant players in the market and that's all about the technology. We've been trying to bring a breath of fresh air into the industry. Our aspiration is to have in excess of 20,000 vehicles across the country, not just in London.'



A Tesla model 3 from Breathe Cars



A greener Uber

Uber is now giving customers the choice to hire Uber Green pure electric vehicles throughout Greater London. This service costs the same as hiring the UberX service, but drivers get 15 per cent more when customers pick this option.

It follows on from Uber's launch of its Clean Air Plan in London two years ago. More than £135m has been raised to support drivers with the cost of switching to a fully electric vehicle, and there are now more than 6,000 electric vehicle drivers on the [app](#).

Going wireless

The UK's first [wireless charging](#) electric taxi demonstration is currently taking place in Nottingham. Wireless charging in a vehicle requires a coil or charging pad to be located under the road or parking space. When an electric vehicle is stationary or moving over the charging plate, the vehicle's battery is automatically charged.

In the trial, nine electric taxis have been retrofitted with wireless charging systems, and five wireless charging pads installed on the road at the Trent Street taxi rank, in order to demonstrate the application and impacts of wireless charging technology for electric vehicles, and to assess the commercial and technical viability of deploying wireless charging for electric taxis.

The trial, which runs for three months, aims to show how the concept of taxi rank-based charging can work and how the billing system can operate. It will identify the optimum number and location of charging pads and wireless-charged taxis, implications for the electricity grid and environmental impacts, as well as operational and commercial benefits to the driver and operator.

It's hoped the trial will prove the technical and commercial case for taxi wireless charging in medium and large cities.

Wireless charging in action





Taxi delicensing scheme update

This scheme was first introduced in 2017 and has been successful in removing older and more polluting vehicles from the taxi fleet. The total allocated funding of £42m was used to cover the Delicensing scheme (including its administration) as well as the LPG Conversion scheme and the Q-Parks Card scheme.

Earlier this year, TPH wrote to applicants who had applied for one of the remaining £6,000 payments to see if they were still interested, subject to their vehicle being eligible. TPH is now in the process of making these final payments and then both the Delicensing scheme and the LPG Conversion scheme will close.



A 'flat-and-flush' electric charger which leaves the pavement free of clutter when not in use

Barnet set to buzz with more than 500 electric chargers

Barnet Council has awarded a contract to [Trojan Energy](#) to install more than 500 on-street, residential electric charging spaces across the borough. This £4.65m project, £3.5m of which was secured from the Government's On-Street Residential Chargepoint Scheme, will see new 'flat-and-flush' charging points located in 34 streets, enabling residents without driveways to charge their electric vehicles easily and locally.

The flat-and-flush design leaves the pavement entirely clear of clutter and fully accessible to other pavement users when not in use. Customers use a lance, which they keep in their possession, to connect their vehicle to the charging point at the roadside. These points are linked via underground cables to cabinets, located up to 100m away, which send power to 15 charging units at any one time. The charge points will become operational in phases from this November through to March next year.



Beating the charging cost

If you own an electric vehicle and are worried about the rising costs of charging it, there are a few things you should think about. Although charging an electric vehicle is still cheaper than filling it with petrol or diesel, many energy providers are increasing their electric vehicle tariffs, with the energy price cap predicted to rise by another 65 per cent in October. Some companies, including British Gas, E.On Next and Scottish Energy are no longer offering electric vehicle tariffs, so you need to shop around. Two-rate tariffs are generally the cheapest and the most common. They offer two different electricity rates depending on the time of day, with much lower rates for electricity used at night, so you can charge your car more cheaply overnight.

There are a number of comparison sites, such as [Cheap energy club](#), [Uswitch](#) or [Love my EV](#), with tariff finders that can help you find the best deal for you, although you can't switch supplier on these sites, you have to go to the companies direct. Also, you will need to have a smart meter installed at home so your supplier can track your energy use both night and day.

'There are now more electric charging points in the UK than petrol stations. As of the end of July, there were 33,281 charging points in 20,336 charging locations compared with 8,380 petrol stations'

Electric chargers located in London

10,700

Public electric chargers

765

Rapid electric charge points

86

Dedicated taxi rapid electric charge points

Wellbeing

Fit to face the future



Sleep solutions with fewer daylight hours

- p28** Top tips for a sound sleep
- p31** Getting your COVID booster
- p32** Health support services

Sleep solutions

Getting a good night's sleep is good for your health and can make you a safer driver

As the days get darker and we head into winter, with fewer daylight hours to enjoy, you may find your sleep patterns getting disrupted. This is because our bodies work on an internal 24-hour clock, which regulates sleep, appetite, blood pressure and mood. Lower light levels can affect this rhythm, which in turn can affect how much you sleep and the quality of the sleep you do get, effectively leading to 'sleep debt'.

Working night shifts and the clocks going back in October can further disrupt sleep patterns and over time this can lead to more serious health conditions including obesity, depression and heart disease. Driver fatigue is reported to be a factor in 16 per cent of UK road accidents a year, as sleepiness reduces your reaction time.

The good news is there are plenty of ways you can increase the amount and quality of the sleep you do get. →

Top tips for a sound sleep

Keep it cool

Our core temperature naturally goes down in the evening, so keeping your bedroom cool may signal to your body it is time to sleep. The best bedroom temperature for getting to sleep is 18.3 degrees Celsius.

Put the phone away

Best to keep mobiles, laptops and iPads out of the bedroom, so power down electronics at least 30 minutes before going to bed. If you really can't, be sure to use your device's Night Mode, which blocks out blue spectrums of light.

Experiment with time

We sleep in 90-minute cycles. You should be getting five to six of these per night. This works out between seven and a half and nine hours a night. Experiment by going to bed earlier or later.

Learn to relax

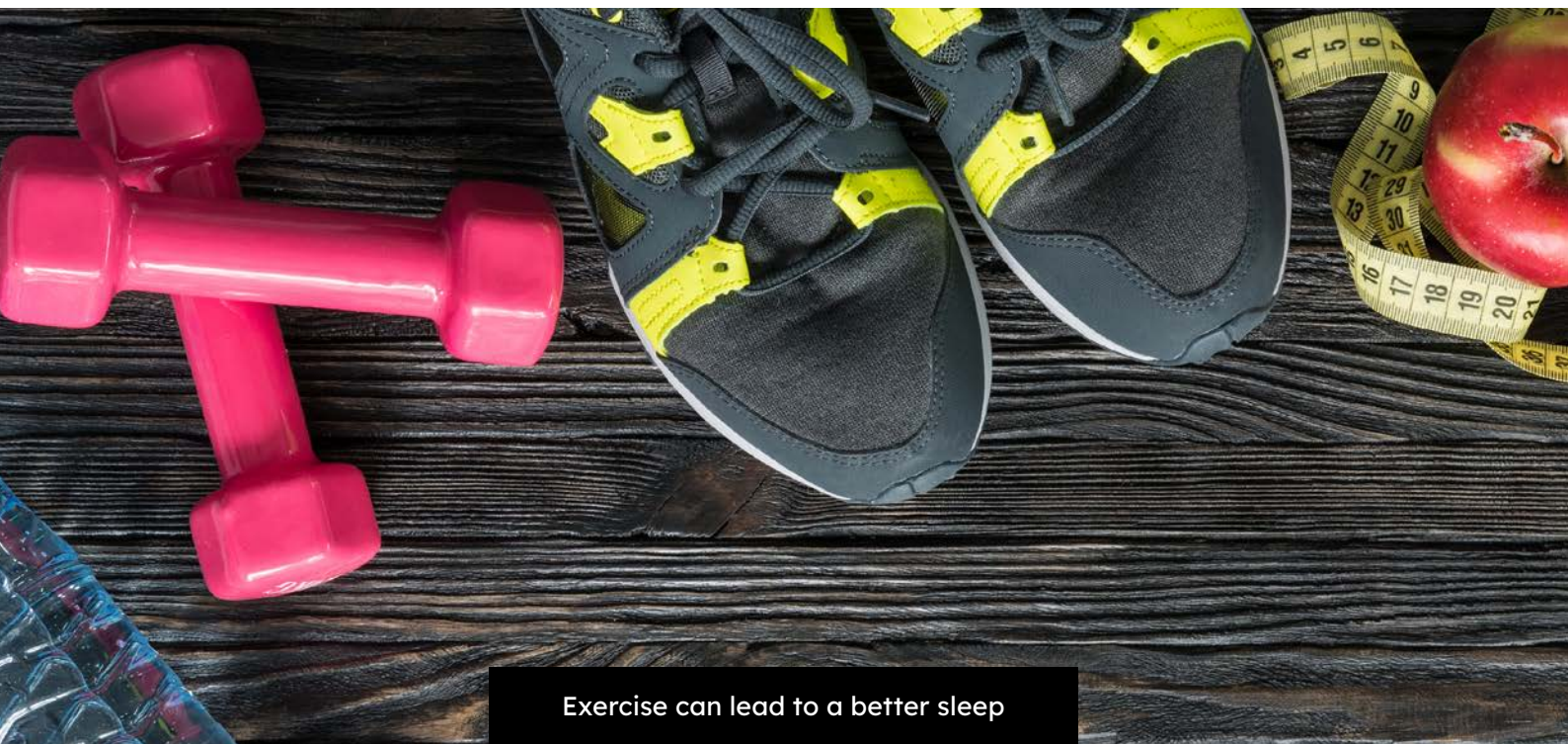
If you don't drop off straight away, make some time so your mind and body can relax into sleep. You could read a book, do some deep breathing, have a good stretch or a warm bath. You could also listen to some relaxing music or download and use a meditation app.

No snack attacks

Leave two or three hours between your last meal and bedtime and don't pile into the carbs – plates of pizza and pasta are more likely to keep you awake than fish, turkey, eggs, nuts and whole grains. These all contain B vitamins which regulate melatonin, the hormone that regulates your sleep. The sleep cycle starts with a dip in melatonin, so notice when you start to get tired in the evening.

Eat well to sleep well





Exercise can lead to a better sleep

Jot down thoughts

If you can't stop worrying before bedtime, have a notebook by your bed to jot down the things that are keeping you up at night. Then shut the book up, symbolically shutting away your bad thoughts and worries.

Lay off the pop

Restrict the amount of caffeinated or fizzy drinks you are having during the day. They may boost your energy but can seriously disrupt your sleep patterns.

Get some exercise

Even moderate exercise on a regular basis such as swimming or walking, can help relieve tension, leading to a better night's sleep. Walking or doing any exercise in the open air is even better as it has been shown to improve your mood and relieve stress.

Avoid alcohol

Alcohol might help you nod off in the first place, but even just a couple of drinks can affect the quality of your sleep. If you are going to have a drink, try to avoid it too close to bedtime. Give your body time to process the alcohol. On average it takes around an hour to process one unit (a pint of four per cent beer is two units).

Practice mindfulness

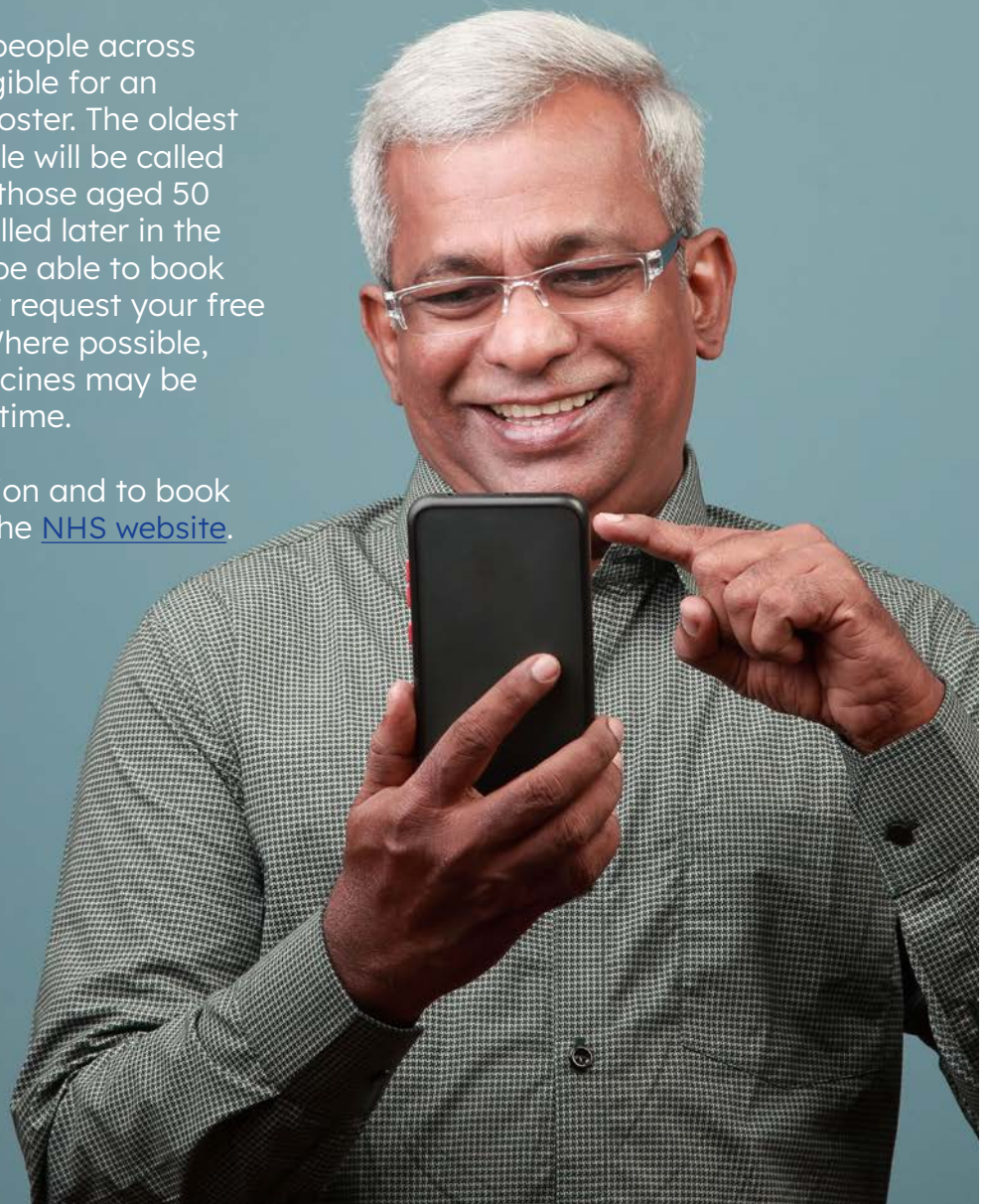
The headspace app teaches you how to meditate, which has been shown to help people stress less, focus more and sleep better. Sleep meditations create the inner conditions needed to settle the mind, and that restfulness is what makes it easier to wind down and drift off.

Get your jabs

The threat of getting COVID and the flu is greatest in winter, putting additional pressure on an already over-stretched NHS. That's why you should make sure you get your COVID booster and flu jabs (if you are eligible).

Around 26 million people across England will be eligible for an autumn COVID booster. The oldest and most vulnerable will be called forward first, with those aged 50 and older being called later in the year. You will also be able to book an appointment or request your free NHS flu vaccine. Where possible, COVID and flu vaccines may be given at the same time.

For more information and to book your flu job , visit the [NHS website](#).



TPH has a host of health, wellbeing, safety and security information on its website.

This can be viewed on the [Health and wellbeing](#) pages.

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



Getting more training **p34**

- p34** Cross-training for operations officers
- p36** Heathrow Airport operations
- p39** Driver safety leaflet

Fully trained

Giving TfL operations officers more training to ensure customers get safe, reliable service

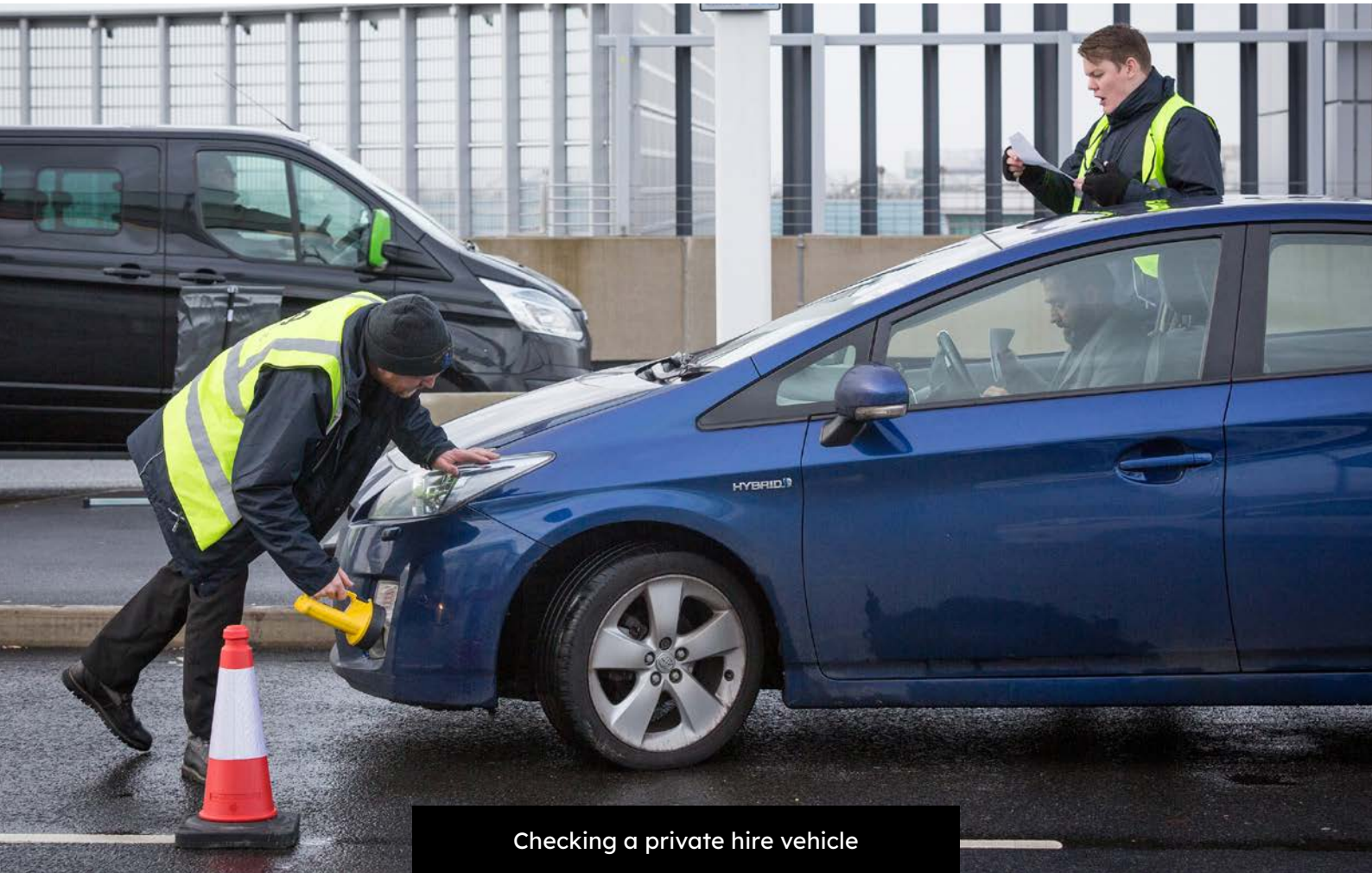
As part of TfL's Compliance, Policing, Operations and Security operations plan 2020, existing TfL operations officers from across the directorate have been upskilling with training in TPH's regulations and how to engage, educate and undertake compliance inspections. This is to continue to promote the safety of drivers and customers, and ensure the taxi and private hire industries are supported to comply with TPH regulations.

The cross-training focuses on building a team that is flexible and adaptable to continue to support the industries and ensure customers experience a safe and reliable journey on the transport network.

Already, more than 20 operations officers have had between two and four weeks of cross-training, both in the classroom and on-street. The training will be rolled out to more operations officers as part of the Roads and Vehicles team. →



A TPH operation at Heathrow Airport



Checking a private hire vehicle

Mick Kempster (pictured right) has been an operations officer in the Roads and Vehicles unit for six and a half years. He started his cross-training in July. He says: ‘We were shown how to do licence and vehicle checks, and how to incorporate this into our day-to-day working. We also learned how to use the licensing app and how to report any illegal activity. The training was really good, we used to do taxi checks years ago, so this was a nice refresher with new elements.’



Mick was surprised by how in-depth the illegal activity statement writing was as well as how to exhibit evidence, and says what he learned has already proved useful. He explains: ‘At the first stop site operation I took part in after the training, we caught an unlicensed driver, and I supported the passengers to continue their journey and provided a supporting statement and photos for the lead vehicles officer. It was a great collaborative effort.’

Mick would now like to continue his training by going on to do an NVQ in full vehicle inspection.



Airport security

Heathrow is Europe’s largest airport and a lucrative spot for the taxi and private hire industries. Every day, law-abiding drivers ply their trade here, but so too, do drivers who flout the rules. That’s why there are regular compliance operations around the airport, as TfL’s senior operations manager, Babatunde Owolabe Ajao, explains: ‘As things return to pre-pandemic levels, we want to ensure that London’s residents and visitors feel safe and confident in using taxi and private hire services, as well as other varieties of TfL

services available to them. As such, we have increased the presence of our operations officers at Heathrow Airport, carrying out highly visible and plain clothes operations targeted at illegal activities, and drivers’ and passengers’ safety.’

Along with the routine compliance operations at Heathrow, there have also been 23 stop sites, two joint operations with the police, 26 operations focusing on touting and illegal activity, and one joint operation working with Hillingdon Borough.

Heathrow Airport compliance activity

Number of deployments	Number of officers deployed			
502	1,475			

Number of compliance checks	Number of compliant checks	Number of non-compliant checks	Detection rate	Cases of illegal activity detected
10,938	8,734	2,204	20.15%	31

Taxi drivers				
Number of drivers checked	Number of compliant drivers	Number of non-compliant drivers	Detection rate	Cases of illegal activity detected
192	186	6	3.13%	0

Taxis				
Number of vehicles checked	Number of compliant vehicles	Number of non-compliant vehicles	Detection rate	Cases of illegal activity detected
348	159	189	54.31%	0

Private hire drivers

Number of drivers checked	Number of compliant drivers	Number of non-compliant drivers	Detection rate	Cases of illegal activity detected
4,822	4,343	479	9.93%	30

Private hire vehicles

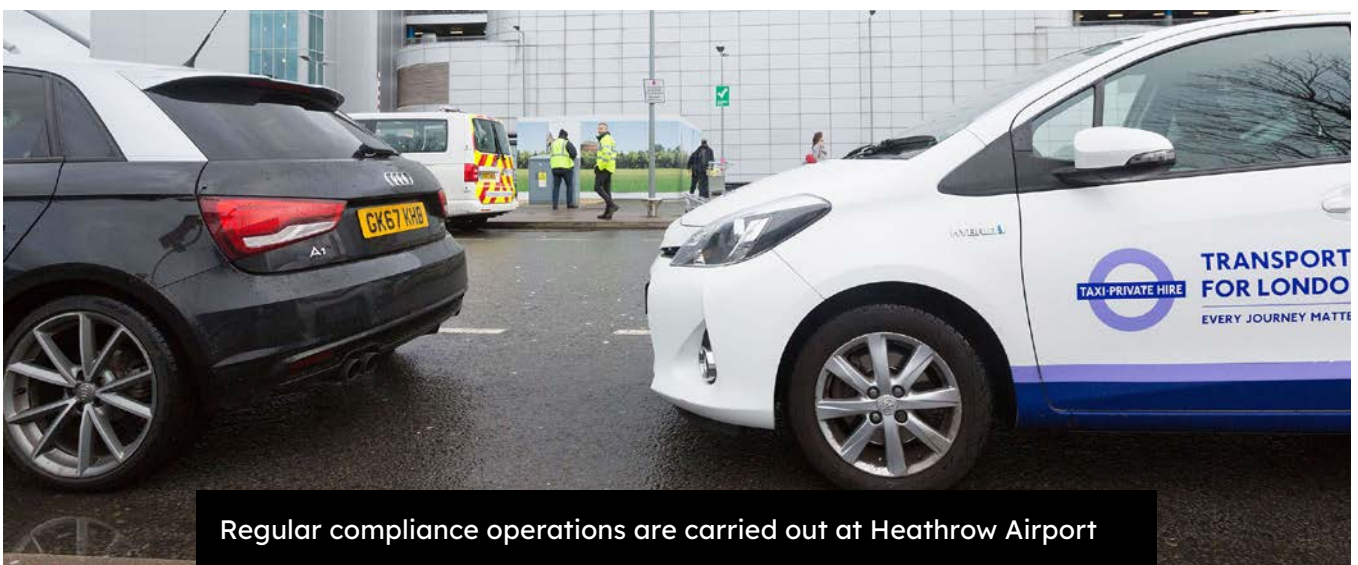
Number of vehicles checked	Number of compliant vehicles	Number of non-compliant vehicles	Detection rate	Cases of illegal activity detected
5,576	4,046	1,530	27.44%	1

Private hire driver illegal activity

Driver working for unlicensed operator	18
Touting	7
Unlicensed driver	4
Uninsured driver	1

Private hire vehicle illegal activity detected

Unlicensed vehicle	1
--------------------	---



Regular compliance operations are carried out at Heathrow Airport

Leaving on a jet plane

Operation Departure is one of the many deployments going on at Heathrow Airport. Here, Lesley Haggerty, an operations officer from the Roads and Vehicles team, explains what's behind it.

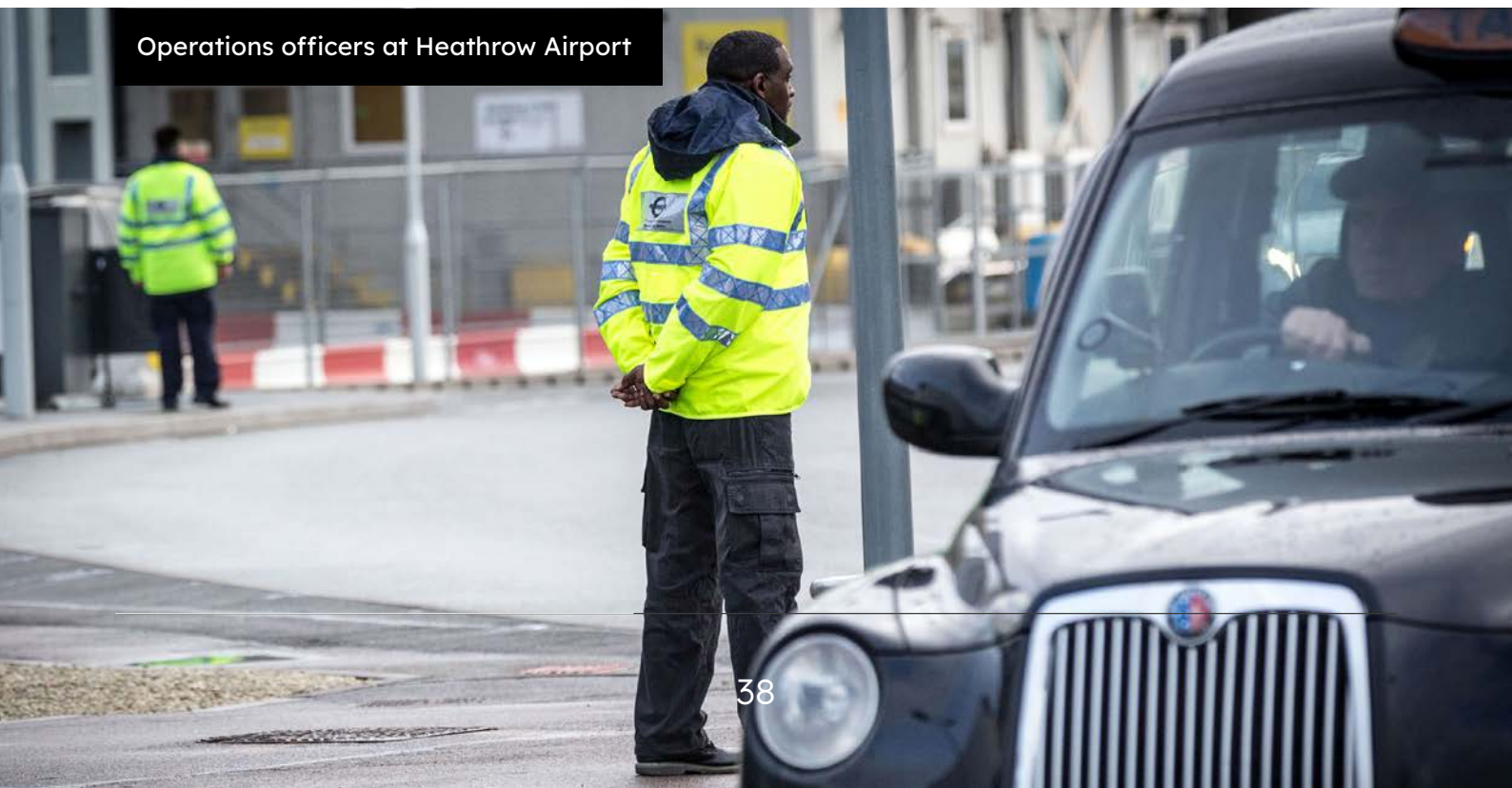
'This is a plain clothes operation in collaboration with police officers from the TPH policing team. We deter, detect, and deal with any illegal activity, including touting by licensed or unlicensed individuals throughout the Heathrow airport terminals and surrounding areas. The operations have been running for more than a year and they have proved to be very productive.

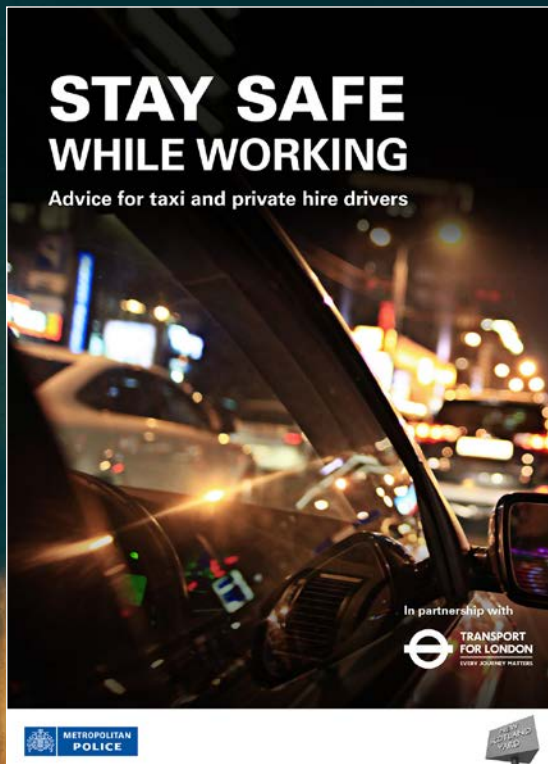
'The team usually carries out these operations at different days and times of the week, based on any intelligence received. It is all about carrying out observation, blending in with the public, and great collaboration with colleagues and partners. The operation is led by us,

but our policing colleagues are there to provide support when needed, such as vehicle seizures or making arrests. The number of suspected offences we come across is quite surprising, whether it is blatant touting, booking through social media, or offering a journey without a booking from an operator.

'Although most members of the public are unaware of who we are and how the trades are regulated in London, our professional approach and interventions are well received by the customers. We engage and educate them to ensure they know how to get legitimate TPH services and understand the danger associated with unbooked journeys. They welcome the support we provide to them, and where possible, they provide witness statements to strengthen our cases while we arrange alternative transport for them to ensure they get home safely.'

Operations officers at Heathrow Airport





Keep safe

Just a reminder that the Stay safe while working leaflet, produced by the The Metropolitan Police Service, in partnership with TfL, for taxi and private hire drivers is still available. It contains information on how drivers can keep their money and possessions safe while also ensuring their own safety, and how to report any criminal activity they may see while driving. The safety leaflet can be downloaded from the health and wellbeing section on the [TfL website](#).

Keep your money and possessions safe

- Limit the amount of cash you carry and avoid leaving it around the central console; it is an easy target for a thief.
- Keep your mobile phone safe and out of reach from passengers. Make sure you note the IMEI number, find this by typing ***#06#**.
- If you are threatened with a knife or other weapon, call **999** immediately. Do not risk your personal safety.

Stay safe while driving

- If you are asked to stop suddenly or deviate into quieter areas, try to do so in a location with good lighting and plenty of people.
- Beware of distraction techniques involving requests to adjust seats or to access the boot, this might be intended to get you to leave your vehicle.
- If you do have to leave your vehicle, switch the ignition off and take the keys with you.

Useful resources

- Lone working devices are a good way to make emergency contact with a monitoring station should you be threatened or have property taken. For more information visit [securedbydesign.com](#)
- Consider fitting a TfL-approved CCTV system to your taxi or private hire vehicle. Further details can be found via [TfL.gov.uk/tph-cctv](#)
- A vehicle tracking device can help to locate your vehicle if stolen. For details visit [thatcham.org](#)
- For further advice search 'protecting yourself from crime' on [met.police.uk](#)

Reporting

- Drivers are encouraged to report all suspected crimes to police.
- In an emergency call **999** immediately. If you can't call **999** at the time then you should report it as soon as possible by calling **101** or online at [met.police.uk](#)
- Private hire operators are required to record details for every booking, police can use this information to investigate crimes.

The manual

Tips, advice and policy updates from TfL

Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Disabled Persons) Act 2022



This Notice contains important information for licensees regarding the Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Disabled Persons) Act 2022 (the 2022 Act) which came into force on 28 June 2022. The 2022 Act has amended the Equality Act 2010 (the Equality Act) to introduce new, and amend existing, duties for local

licensing authorities, taxi and private hire vehicle (PHV) drivers and PHV operators. The changes will help to further ensure disabled passengers can use taxi and PHV services without being discriminated against and that they receive appropriate assistance, wherever they travel, without being charged extra. ➔

New requirements for taxi and PHV drivers and PHV operators

Prior to the changes, the Equality Act required drivers of designated wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAVs) to accept the carriage of wheelchair users, provide them with reasonable mobility assistance and refrain from charging them more than other passengers. However, the Equality Act excluded wheelchair users who could fold their wheelchair and travel in a non-WAV from the protections and provision of mobility assistance. It also excluded all other disabled passengers who do not use a wheelchair, from such protections when travelling in any taxi or PHV. The changes made by the 2022 Act mean that all taxi and PHV drivers and PHV operators are subject to duties under the Equality Act, regardless of whether or not the vehicle is designated as being wheelchair accessible.

Taxi and PHV drivers All taxi and PHV drivers are required to:

- Accept the carriage of any disabled person and provide them with reasonable mobility assistance, and carry their mobility aids, all without charging any more than for a non-disabled passenger
- Provide any disabled passenger who requests it with assistance to identify and find the vehicle they have booked, at no extra charge

Further information on drivers' duties, including what 'mobility assistance' involves, can be found on our [website](#).



PHV operators

It is also now an offence for a PHV operator to refuse to accept a private hire booking because the passenger has a disability or to prevent a driver from being subject to duties to carry or assist a disabled person. Updated statutory and non-statutory guidance has also been published. Failure to comply with these new requirements is punishable upon summary conviction by fine of up to £1,000 and any driver or operator convicted of an Equality Act offence will have their fitness to be licensed reviewed.

Exemptions

Prior to 28 June 2022, drivers of designated WAVs were able to apply for an exemption certificate on medical grounds or where their physical condition made it impossible or unreasonably difficult to assist a disabled passenger and therefore meet the duties at section 165 of the Equality Act.

From 28 June 2022:

- All taxi and PHV drivers may apply for an exemption certificate and notice on medical grounds or where their physical condition prevents them from performing the mobility assistance duties at sections 164A and 165 of the Equality Act (as added/amended by the 2022 Act)
- Both existing and new exemption notices, when displayed correctly, will only exempt a driver from the mobility assistance duties at sections 164A and 165. Drivers with exemptions are not exempt from any of the other duties at

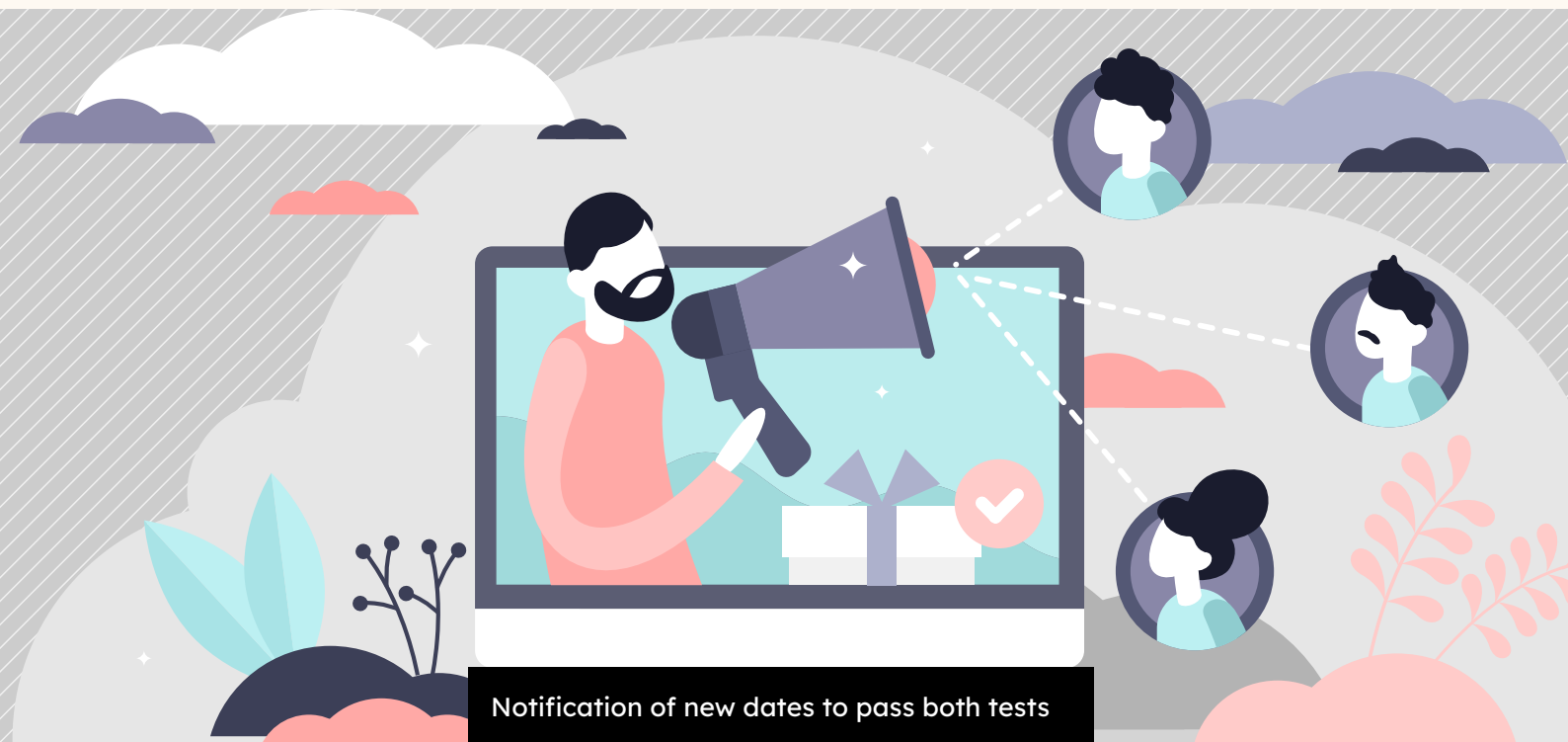
sections 164A, 165, or 165A, such as not making an additional charge for carrying a disabled passenger or to carry any mobility aids

We will be writing to existing holders of exemption notices about how the changes will affect them. Drivers who consider themselves medically or physically unfit to perform the mobility assistance duties and who do not already hold an exemption should contact us at tphlicensing@tfl.gov.uk to request an exemption application form.

Lists of wheelchair accessible vehicles

The Equality Act (as amended) now requires all local licensing authorities to maintain and publish a list of licensed taxis and PHVs they designate as being wheelchair accessible. This will identify the vehicles whose drivers are subject to the duties at section 165 and required to carry passengers while in their wheelchairs, provide mobility assistance and refrain from charging extra for this. Any taxi or PHV capable, as a minimum, of accommodating a disabled person in a DfT reference wheelchair in the passenger compartment will be designated by TfL as a wheelchair accessible vehicle for the purposes of section 165 of the Equality Act. A list of designated WAV PHVs is already available on our website. 4 All taxis licensed by TfL are designated as wheelchair accessible. In accordance with the requirements of the 2022 Act, a list of all licensed taxis will be published on our [website](#). The lists provide the make, model and vehicle registration mark of the vehicle.

TPH notice 14/22



Notification of new dates to pass both tests

Changes to the English language requirement and SERU


New transitional arrangements are being introduced which provide more time for drivers to comply with the English Language Requirement (ELR) and Safety, Equality and Regulatory Understanding (SERU) requirement.

This Notice explains the new arrangements for compliance which supersede those in TPH Notice 14/21.

Background

All London PHV drivers must demonstrate an appropriate level of English language proficiency (known as the ELR). The

appropriate level is equivalent to B1 on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for reading, writing, speaking and listening.

The ELR was introduced in London in 2016 and transitional arrangements were put in place to allow drivers time to comply. The Department for Transport published Statutory Standards, to further enhance the safety of passengers using taxi and private hire services, in July 2020. One of these Standards was for licensing authorities to test the English language proficiency of taxi and private hire drivers. 

On 1 October 2021, we changed how we assess London PHV drivers' English language skills and introduced a requirement for drivers to show an understanding of safety, equality and regulatory matters (the SERU assessment). Drivers must satisfy the ELR by taking and passing a new speaking and listening test and the SERU assessment is used to assess their reading and writing skills. The standard needed to meet the ELR remains at Level B1 on the CEFR.

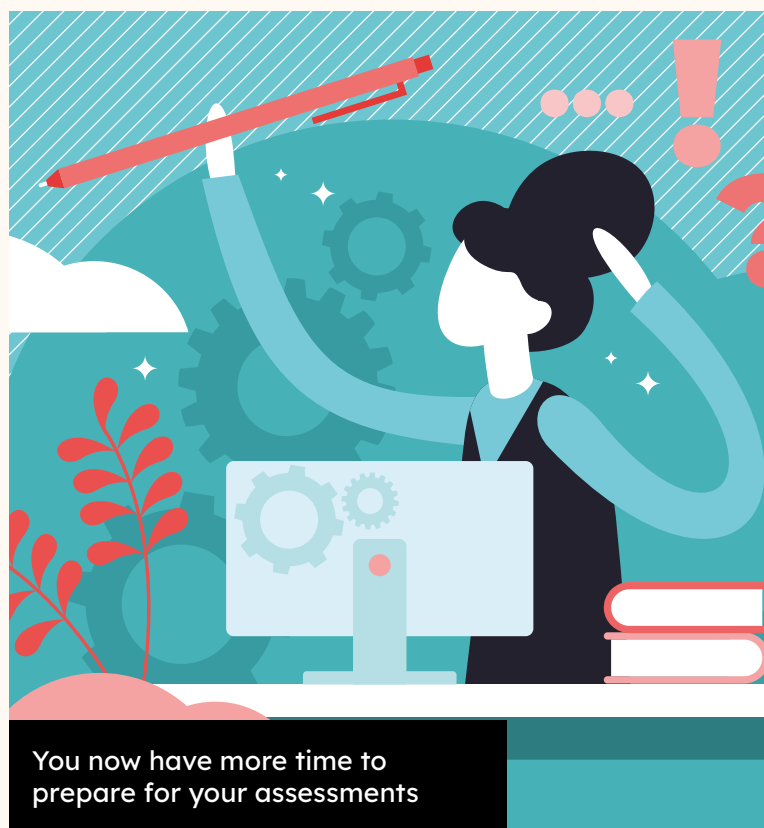
All new applicants for a London PHV driver's licence and existing licensees who have not met the ELR, are required to take and pass both the speaking and listening test and the SERU assessment. Existing licensees who provided satisfactory evidence that they meet the ELR before 1 October 2021 only have to pass the SERU assessment.

Transitional arrangements were put in place to provide drivers with sufficient time to take the assessments. However, in the light of experience in administering the requirements and as the industry is still recovering from the impact of the pandemic, we have decided to extend the transitional arrangements. This will allow more time for drivers to prepare for, undertake and pass the ELR and SERU requirement.

New transitional arrangements

The new dates by which individual drivers will need to comply with the ELR and SERU requirement will depend on which of the four categories they are in:

1. PHV drivers who did not provide ELR evidence by 30 September 2021



You now have more time to prepare for your assessments

Any PHV driver who did not provide any evidence that they met the ELR by

30 September 2021 now has until 30 September 2023 (an additional 12 months) to take and pass the English language speaking and listening test and the SERU assessment.

2. PHV drivers who provided ELR evidence by 30 September 2021

Any PHV driver who provided evidence that they met the ELR by 30 September 2021 will have their evidence reviewed by TfL. The majority of evidence has been reviewed and TfL is contacting each driver to confirm whether or not their evidence is satisfactory.



- If their evidence is satisfactory, drivers will be required to undertake the SERU assessment by 31 March 2025 (an additional 24 months) but they will not be required to take and pass the English language speaking and listening test
- If the evidence is unsatisfactory, drivers will have until 30 September 2024 (an additional 18 months) to take and pass the English language speaking and listening test and the SERU assessment

3. Applicants for a PHV driver's licence who applied on or after 1 October 2021

Anyone who applied for a new PHV driver's licence on or after 1 October 2021 and was licensed without having taken and passed the English language speaking and listening test and SERU assessment now has until 30 September 2024 (an additional 18 months) to take and pass both assessments.

Please note: this deadline applies to drivers who submitted an application for a new PHV driver's licence between 1 October 2021 and 31 March 2023 inclusively (see below for requirements on or after 1 April 2023).

4. Applicants for a PHV driver's licence who apply on or after 1 April 2023

Anyone who applies for a new PHV driver's licence on or after 1 April 2023 will be required to take and pass both the English language speaking and listening test and SERU assessment before they can be licensed.

Next steps

We will be writing to applicants and drivers to provide a date and time for their speaking and listening test and SERU assessment.

Once you hear from us with a booking, please make every effort to attend. If you are unable to attend on the date and time specified, please get in touch with us to reschedule your appointment.

We will also be producing a video showing drivers and applicants what to expect from their assessments and to help them prepare.

The SERU assessment is based on information found in the PHV Driver Handbook. Drivers and applicants should read and familiarise themselves with the Handbook before undertaking the assessment.

We also have an online assessment guide which includes example questions within the subject areas covered by the [Handbook](#) which we encourage applicants to use.

If you have any concerns about which of the above category you are in and what you need to do, please contact us by emailing tph.enquiries@tfl.gov.uk.

More information on these requirements can be found on our [website](#).



Do not misuse cycle lanes on Red Routes

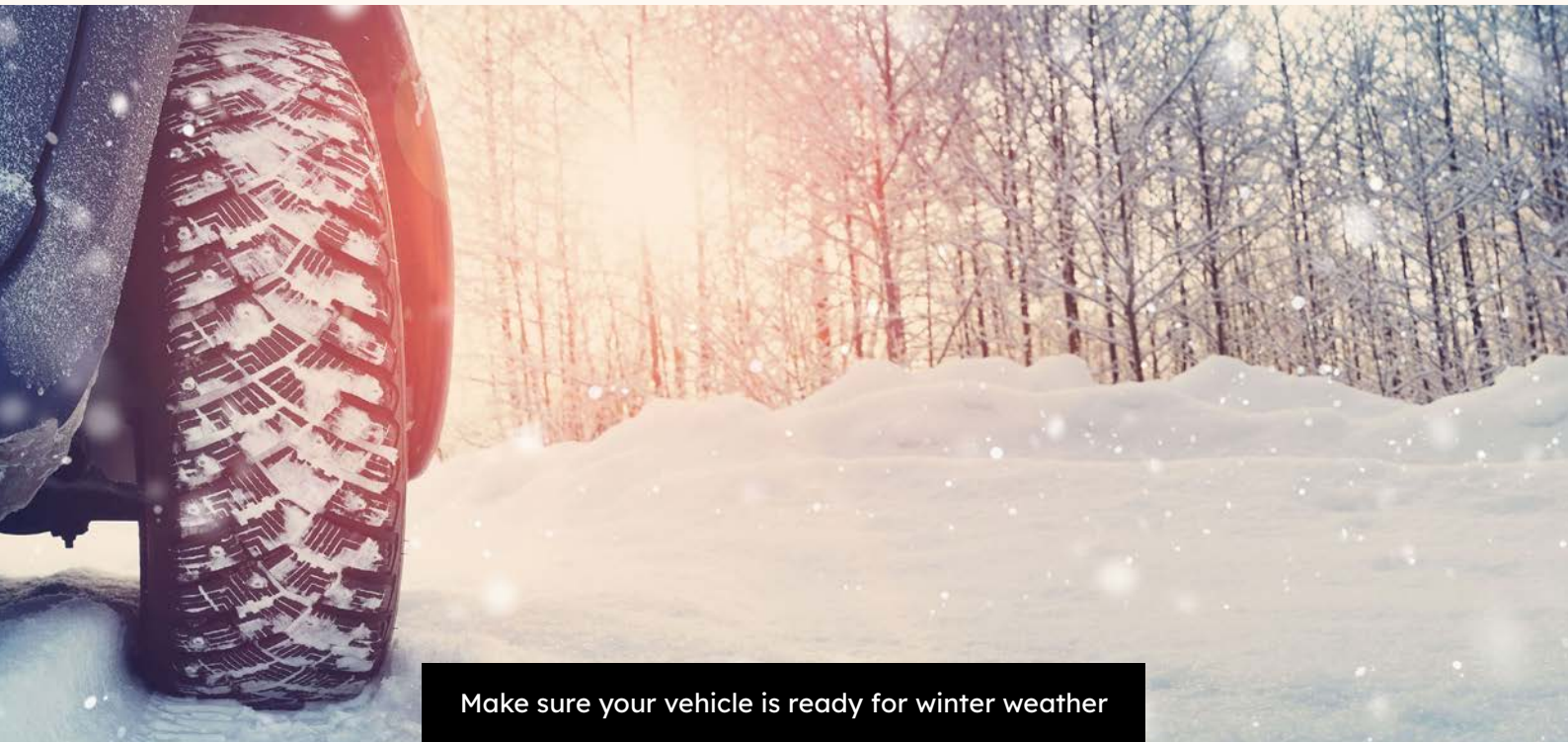
Keep out of cycle lanes

In line with changes to the Highway Code, and to improve safety for cyclists, [TfL](#) is now enforcing the misuse of cycle lanes on [Red Routes](#).

Cycle lanes are separated from general traffic by a solid white line and may be a different colour from the rest of the road. Only pedal cycles, rental electric scooters and black taxis can use cycle lanes. All other road users, including private hire vehicles, are not permitted to use cycle lanes at any time.

Taxis are permitted to use the cycle lanes to pick-up and drop-off customers and private hire vehicles are permitted to cross the white line of a cycle lane if turning left or accessing private property. However, you may be issued with a PCN if you drive over the white line of a cycle lane when not permitted or stop or park in a cycle lane when not permitted.

The fine for Red Route traffic offences is £160, if paid within 28 days. However, if the fine is paid within 14 days, the cost is reduced to £80.



Make sure your vehicle is ready for winter weather

Getting ready for adverse weather

With winter weather conditions just around the corner, it's time to check your vehicle is properly maintained and ready to cope with rain, cold, snow and fog

You should check the following daily:

- Tyres (pressure, tread depth, sidewall condition). Your tyres are essential to both steering and braking so they need to be in good condition. Make sure there are no cuts, tears or bulges and the tyre pressure is correct. The legal minimum tyre tread depth is 1.6mm in a continuous band across the central three-quarters of the tread width. Tyre wear bar indicators are positioned around the circumference of the tyre and if the tread pattern has worn down to the level of the indicators the tyre must be replaced.

In really adverse conditions you could also look at changing from summer to winter tyres as they have a higher silica content which gives you better grip in the cold and wet.

- Oil level and coolant level
- Washer fluid
- Lights
- Horn, seat belt condition and door mechanisms

... and don't forget to check the battery

Batteries perform less well in winter months while having to cope with the increased use of lights, heater and blower, so make sure yours is fully charged. Electric vehicles will use more charge during the winter months. Freezing temperatures also limit an electric car's regenerative braking function, which recovers energy that would otherwise be lost during decelerating or stopping and sends it back to the battery.

If you drive a TXe taxi, try to charge your battery during, or at the end of, a shift when the battery is at operating temperature to speed up charge times. When starting from cold it's possible to operate in 'Save' mode for a few minutes. This runs the petrol range-extender to maintain the charge in the battery but has the useful side effect of generating heat as a by-product of the internal combustion process, which can be used by the systems on-board to warm up the battery and cab.

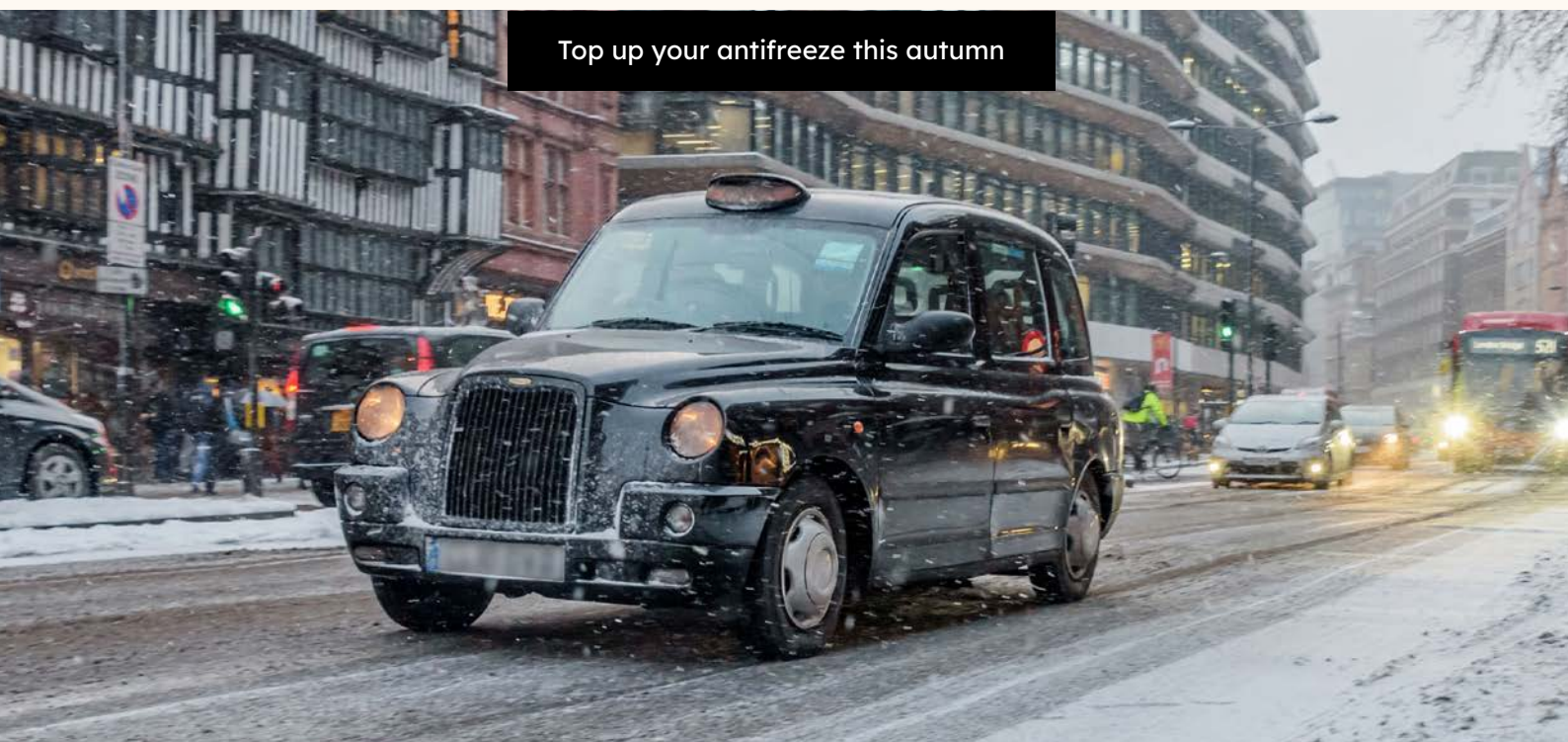
Drivers of the fully electric Nissan Dynamo should precondition their taxi while it's still charging by using the Pre-Heat function. If you warm your electric taxi while it's still plugged in, maintaining a comfortable temperature takes a lot less energy. You can also use the heated seats and steering wheel functions to keep you nice and toasty as these will reduce the need to use the heaters, thus saving battery charge.

Use antifreeze

Engine coolant becomes more diluted over the year as you top up with water. The ideal mix is 50/50 water and antifreeze, so do top up your antifreeze if cold weather is forecast.

Check your brake fluid

Low brake fluid levels could be an indication the brake pads are worn or there is a leak in the system, so check



Top up your antifreeze this autumn

the level but don't top it up. If it is low, it should be checked and topped up by a suitably qualified person.

Clean your lights, windscreen and windscreen wipers

Give your windscreen a thorough clean inside and out, and top up your screen washer fluid with antifreeze. Check all your lights are working.

Check your fuel

Make sure you've got at least a quarter of a tank of fuel in case of unexpected delays and check the oil.

Weather conditions can deteriorate rapidly so allow extra time for your journey and reduce your speed; it's better to get there slightly later than not at all.

In icy conditions the RAC says you should try and move off in second gear and change up to a higher gear as soon as possible once the car is moving. However, acceleration should be done gently, smoothly and using low revs as this helps to avoid wheel spin and will give you more control over the vehicle.

If you skid on snow or ice, take your feet off the pedals and steer the vehicle to safety. Only use your brakes when it is not possible to steer your way out of trouble. Remember, it is going to take much longer to brake over the same distance in icy conditions.

Your fog lights are there for exactly that – using in foggy conditions but remember to turn them off when conditions improve. If there is flood water on the road, avoid driving through the deepest water.



A clear view of the road ahead

Adverse winter weather conditions can make it difficult to see clearly. There are the darker mornings, glare from the low setting winter sun and reduced visibility in rain and fog. All of these factors can make driving conditions more hazardous at this time of year. If you've noticed changes with your eyesight, you need to get it checked out. Common problems include finding it harder to judge distances, struggling to read road signs or difficulties while driving at night (including 'halos' or fuzziness around bright lights, which is one of the most common symptoms of cataracts). All drivers should have their vision tested at least every two years, but if you notice any change in your eyesight, go and see your optician straightaway – don't wait until your next check-up or when your driving licence is due for renewal.

Driver licensing – hot tips, guidance and key things to bear in mind



All taxi and private hire drivers in London are licensed by TfL

Taxi and private hire driver licences are usually issued for a period of three years. At the end of this period, drivers will be sent a renewal pack (four months before expiry) and they will need to complete it, ideally online, if they want to remain licensed and continue working.

Although TfL tries to process renewals as quickly as possible, there are numerous factors that could lead to an extended processing time for a driver's application.

The biggest cause of application delays is incomplete applications – when TfL needs

to write back to the driver or applicant to request information that was not originally provided. Sometimes, even with a complete application, further information may be needed.

Much of the time, these incomplete application requests can be avoided if all of the required information is provided in the initial application.

Below are some of the most common reasons for application issues and ways in which they can be avoided.

Driver photographs

Sometimes a driver does not provide a photograph at all, or the photograph is not of the required quality to be printed on the licence.

There is photo guidance on the TPH website that is great for helping drivers to understand what is acceptable. The key things to remember are to make sure the image is:

- Of good quality
- Is taken against a light-coloured, plain background, and features the head and top of your shoulders



Your DVLA share code

Often the code drivers submit with their renewal has not been copied properly and does not work.

Sometimes drivers mistakenly carry out the check themselves after generating the code, and this makes the code invalid.

Drivers also contact TfL asking why a code has been requested when they have already provided one and this can lead to further delays as additional correspondence then needs to be reviewed and responded to. It will be quicker to generate a new code and send it through. The code is case sensitive, lasts 21 days and can only be used once.



Missed or incorrectly answered questions

Another major cause of incomplete applications is missed or incorrectly answered questions. These might be on the application form itself or on the medical declaration.

The online process doesn't allow you to proceed to the next stage without answering each question, but sometimes people can enter the wrong information.

Drivers should check their applications thoroughly before submitting them to make sure they have answered every question and that the information they have provided is accurate.

Drivers are also advised to thoroughly check their medical declaration to make sure the GP has answered every question, the contact information section is fully completed, and it has been signed, stamped and dated. The GP who completes the form should have access to your full medical history.

Make sure you apply on time

Renewal packs are sent out four months prior to expiry and drivers should apply as soon as they receive the pack. This will give the best chance of ensuring continual licensing, should there be any issues where further information will need to be supplied.

When an application is returned to TfL straight away, if there are any issues, there is still time to send a letter to the licensee, review the response and information provided, and then make a licensing decision.

Once you have the renewal pack you should apply for your DBS and send the application to TfL as soon as you have your DBS E-Number.

Don't wait to receive your completed DBS certificate before sending in your renewal as this can cause delays.

Drivers who are active members of the DBS update service can apply straight away, but should provide a copy of their original disclosure (front and back) along with their renewal application.



Making sure all of your details match

It's important to make sure your details match across all of your documentation. This means ensuring your name on your DVLA licence is exactly the same as it appears on the documentation confirming your leave status.

It's also important to make sure that everything is in your current address, as it wouldn't be acceptable if your DBS is in your new address, but your DVLA licence still has your old address on it.



DBS certificate information

It's very important that you declare all previous names and all variations of your name (that appear on official documentation) on your DBS certificate. If it is found that previous names, shortened versions or variations have not been declared, then the disclosure may not be acceptable, leading to delays in the processing of your renewal.

An example of this could be if your name is Terrance on your passport, but has appeared as Terry on your DVLA licence. You would also need to declare Terry on your DBS check documentation.

Please be careful when entering your personal details and check that it all matches before submitting the DBS application, as TfL will not be able to accept a disclosure containing errors.

Please submit your DBS application in good time too, at least four months prior to the expiry of your licence.



Online guidance

If you already have a licence and are trying to renew, please don't apply as a new driver. Drivers renewing online should answer 'Yes' to the question under the heading 'for existing licence holders'.

You will then be asked to provide the customer online reference number which is in your renewal pack. Make sure all digits are correct and select 'Driver Licence' as the additional identifier. Enter the licence number (also in the renewal pack) in the box below. Don't mistake this for your DVLA licence number or your badge number.

Uploading your documents

One of the main reasons that applications are left incomplete is because drivers try to upload several pages of the same document as individual files but end up missing out pages.

For documents that have more than one page, such as a medical declaration form, scan all the pages in as one PDF and save them as one document before uploading them.



Contact details and how you prefer to be contacted

Drivers should pay careful attention to the contact details they provide with their renewal and their preferred method of contact choice, which is email or post.

Some drivers have not received TfL's requests for information because they have failed to update their contact details or have provided TfL with incorrect contact details.

If you choose post as your preferred method of contact, TfL will also email you. This isn't the case if you select email, where you'll only get an email and no letter, so you should make sure you closely monitor the email address you provide with your application.

You can update your contact details at any time by emailing tphlicensing@tfl.gov.uk (ensuring name and licence number are included in the subject bar). TfL will use these contact details to provide you with important licensing and regulatory information.



Correct email addresses

TfL has used email addresses in the past that are no longer operational and is aware drivers sometimes save these old addresses and use them again.

All official TPH email addresses have an automated response, so if you have sent something and don't receive an automated response, then it's worth checking the address that you've used is the current one and you have copied the address correctly.

When emailing TfL, please include your full name and licence/reference number in the subject bar.

OR



Taxi tribute

Cabbies pay their respects in a touching tribute to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

After hearing of the Queen's passing, London cab drivers immediately paid a quiet and fitting tribute by driving to the Mall and parking with their for hire signs lit up. It was a fitting tribute by London's iconic black cabs to the nation's most iconic figure of all, Queen Elizabeth II.

Thank you.

I would like to express my most sincere thanks to the taxi driver who very kindly told me to put my money away when I tried to pay my cab fare home from Her Majesty's lying-in-state on the evening of Wednesday 14 September.

The journey was from Vauxhall Embankment to Battersea, and I think he must have looked kindly upon me owing to the fact I was wearing my military uniform. I served as staff in Her late Majesty's household for four years until last week, as well as being a member of Her Royal Navy, so was understandably upset.

I didn't think to take the driver's name or registration. I didn't say a great deal at the time, purely because I was so bowled over by the gesture. However, I can think of no other way of expressing my gratitude for his kindness, so if there is any way that you can include this comment in any upcoming communications, it may reach him.

I shall remember his actions for the rest of my life as an example of the very best of British and shall endeavour to pay it forward at the next available opportunity. God bless London cabbies!

With my thanks and best wishes,

Midshipman Emily Clifton Royal Navy



MAYOR OF LONDON