

OnRoute

Brought to you by Transport for London



Above and beyond for charity

Identity parade:

wear your badge/
photo ID with pride

Uptown top ranking:

out with the
night taxi marshals

All a-Twitter:

FAQs from the
TPH Twitter feed

DBS update:

cutting the DBS
check backlog

London's taxis are seen as the gold standard across the world. They are a vital part of our transport system and play an essential role in keeping London working and growing, carrying around 70 million passengers every year.

This Black Cab's heritage dates back to the 1600s. In fact, the term "hackney carriage" – which comes from hacquenée, the French term for a general-purpose horse - is still used today to describe taxis in London.

For more information about the Black Cab and other top 100 Design Icons please visit tfl.gov.uk/transportedbydesign



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How do I?

Need to book a vehicle inspection or report touting? We show you how



Contact us at OnRoute@tfl.gov.uk

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230 Blackfriars Road, London SE1 8PJ

For general enquiries email: tph.enquiries@tfl.gov.uk

Visit the TfL website: tfl.gov.uk/tph

0343 222 4444 (lines open from 08:00 to 18:00, Monday to Friday)

for operator and driver licensing enquiries and the Knowledge enquiries.

0343 222 5555 for vehicle licensing appointments and enquiries

TPH news on Twitter: @TfLTPH

For constant updates on diversions, congestion and accidents: @TfLTrafficNews (roads)

TfL produces a weekly email with information on current and forthcoming road closures and diversions. If you would like to receive this, please contact tph.enquiries@tfl.gov.uk

The views expressed in OnRoute are not necessarily those of TfL.

Welcome.

As spring hits the city we are celebrating the wonderful contribution taxi and private hire make to life in London.

Friday and Saturday nights in the Capital are usually busy times for the trades. With so many people out and about enjoying themselves the taxi marshals on our late night ranks do a great job getting everyone home safely. Find out what a typical night is like for them on p16.

Not only do drivers provide an essential service for the Capital, but many are also doing great things for good causes – from putting smiles on sick children's faces, to feeding the homeless. On p11 we celebrate some of the charity heroes who have gone above and beyond to help communities.

Wearing your badge or photo ID reassures the public that you are legitimate and shows them the pride you have in your trade. Find out more on p8.

There are now many ways for you to contact TPH with any queries you may have and the @TfLTPH Twitter feed continues to be one of the most popular with more than 8,000 followers. As the same subjects keep cropping up, we address the top six frequently asked tweets on p24.

Elsewhere in this issue you can read about how TfL is helping the Home Office and police in tackling their backlog of DBS checks (p18) and read how Anand Nandha, TPH's new head of compliance, plans to deploy his expanded team of officers (p20).

We'd really like to hear from you too, so do get in contact at OnRoute@tfl.gov.uk

D Pilgrim
Editor

In our next issue...

- Taxi slang – what's it all about?
- Why medicals are so important
- Pride in London – here comes the parade

News

A purge on pollution

Drivers are being urged to switch off their engines when queuing at Tower Bridge to help reduce air pollution at one of London's most popular tourist attractions.

Signs will flash when the bridge is raised advising motorists to turn their engine off for 'cleaner air' and to 'save money and fuel'.

Tower Bridge is raised around 900 times a year, with tens of thousands of vehicles using the crossing each day.

The signs are part of a Southwark and Tower Hamlets councils' scheme.



Motorcycles – watch out!

TfL is strengthening its work to reduce the number of accidents involving motorcycle and scooter riders in the Capital after a slight rise in the number of injuries in 2015.

Provisional data shows there were 514 serious injuries to motorcyclist and scooter riders in London in the 12 months ending September 2015, compared with 507 the previous year.

Together with the Metropolitan Police Service Roads and Transport Policing Command, TfL is stepping up its activity, which includes employing more officers at key motorcycle hotspot junctions where collisions are most likely to occur.

In two recent phases of 'Operation Winchester' officers stopped 5,389 riders, issued 742 Traffic Offence Reports and 1,335 verbal warnings, seized 96 motorcycles and made 10 arrests. The Command will be clamping down on illegal and antisocial road user behaviour such as speeding, careless riding and red light running.

It will also provide leaflets on BikeSafe-London during rider skills days.



Make way for the London Marathon

Ahead of this year's Virgin Money London Marathon on 24 April, TfL will be providing information to all road users about any closures

One of the most famous sporting events in the world, the Marathon requires full road closures starting early in the morning between Greenwich Park and St James's Park. Central and City closures are expected to include all approaches to Upper Thames Street, Tower Hill and Victoria Embankment, while Tower, Southwark and Westminster bridges will also be closed.

Some roads near the closures tend to be busier as a result of drivers seeking alternative routes. A phased reopening of roads will take place from around midday with all roads expected to be fully reopened by 19:00.

●●● Details on the London Marathon road closures can be accessed at londonmarathon.data.tfl.gov.uk

Customer comments

TPH has introduced a new customer comments hotline so anyone who has

experienced problems can contact it direct. Call **0343 222 4000** between

08:00 and 18:00, Monday to Friday excluding Bank Holidays.

TPH licensing in numbers

24,913
Taxi drivers

21,836
Taxi vehicle licences

100,231
Private hire driver licences

77,481
Private hire vehicle licensees

2,825
Private hire operators



Latest trend



As we went to press, two hot topics were trending on @TfLTPH.

The first was about a compliance operation at Heathrow that @TfLTPH attended.

The second was the permanent closure of the westbound slip road on to Victoria Embankment from Blackfriars junction from 29 February.

The @TfLTPH Twitter feed now has 8,284 followers.

Cabs on top

Some rather stylish taxis are set to hit the streets over the next few weeks as part of an 18-month campaign celebrating design across London's transport network

Last year, the Transported By Design campaign ran a competition to find the Capital's top transport design icon from a list of 100, and the world famous black cab was crowned the winner.

Now 10 cabs have been wrapped in the Transported by Design logo and the legend 'good design makes life in London better', with further promotional branding inside.

Other design icons which will be celebrated this year include the much-loved original Routemaster bus, the Harry Beck Tube map and TfL's famous logo, known as the Roundel.

●●● For more information on Transported by Design, please visit tfl.gov.uk/transportedbydesign

All change for private hire

The TfL Board has now approved amendments to the private hire regulations following a year-long consultation.

The measures include a formal English language requirement for all drivers, more robust requirements for 'hire and reward' insurance bringing it into line with taxis, and operators keeping improved records and

providing driver and vehicle information to TfL.

The Board has not made a decision on in-venue operators. Further work on this proposal will be carried out and its findings presented to a future TfL Board.

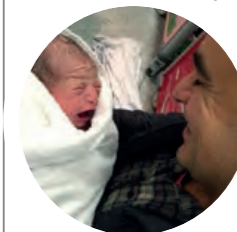
●●● To read the requirements in full go to tfl.gov.uk/tph

Baby on board

Robert Fenlon, 44, got a story to top them all when a baby boy was safely delivered in his taxi in February.

Robert, a driver for five years, accepted a Hailo job from Ozgur Odemis in Clapham to take his heavily-pregnant wife Basak to St Thomas' hospital. Robert explains: 'I was trying to take a route to St Thomas' with the least amount of speed bumps possible! When we realised we probably weren't going to make it in time the husband rang the doctor and I could hear him saying we couldn't pull over because he could already see the baby's head.'

Baby Atlas was delivered in the back of the cab while it was parked outside the hospital. His parents were so grateful they asked Robert if he would take them home from the hospital the next day.



He says: 'When I got home on the night of the birth I couldn't sleep, I felt a bit dazed by what had happened and it is something I will never forget.'

Over-ranking woes

Ranking illegally and over-ranking in two busy areas of London have been attracting a number of complaints.

Outside the Hilton Hotel, Paddington on Praed Street, taxis have been ranking illegally. Drivers in the area should use the designated taxi rank at Paddington Station.

At Upper Tachbrook Street, Victoria, taxis have been over-ranking. Drivers ranking at Victoria Station should only use the designated taxi rank spaces. Enforcement at both locations is under way and drivers repeatedly queuing outside of a designated taxi rank could risk licensing action.

News



Shard cuts congestion

New measures are being introduced around London Bridge that will ease congestion and improve road safety.

Vehicle holding areas have been created around the Shard to allow freight and construction vehicles to park and wait until they have clear access to their buildings or sites.

The new areas on Great Dover Street and St Thomas Street will remove unnecessary congestion and improve safety for all road users.

Other temporary improvements to address congestion and safety in the area include:

- Relocating the taxi rank at Fielden House to the opposite side of the road, which predominantly serves as a feeder to the rank opposite the Shard on St Thomas Street
- Relocating the pedestrian crossing to the east side of the site on St Thomas Street
- Introducing additional red lines to prevent stopping and suspending the loading bay outside the Shard to discourage vehicles stopping



Clean, green, driving machines

The Ultra Low Roadshow took place in February giving private hire drivers and operators the chance to check out the next generation of hybrid and electric vehicles

The roadshow at St Martin-in-the-Fields, Trafalgar Square included the new Toyota Prius and the Brotherhood Envy, the UK's first fully electric, wheelchair accessible vehicle.

Also on hand was Source London, providing the Capital with the largest, electric charging network in the world (850-plus already installed), and the Cross River Partnership's Clean Air Better Business promotion offering free drive-style training to encourage more eco-friendly driving.

Card readers in taxis

A number of changes came into force on 2 April following last year's consultation on the acceptance of card and contactless payments in taxis. These include:

- The existing card payment surcharge of up to 10 per cent or £1, whichever is greater, has been removed. Taxi drivers can no longer charge passengers a surcharge when accepting credit or debit card payments

- Any existing signage that advises passengers there is a card payment surcharge must be removed
- An additional 20p has been added to the flagfall of all taxi journeys making the new flagfall for 2016/17 £2.60. This is to help taxi drivers recoup the costs of accepting card payments

● ● ●
For more details, go to tfl.gov.uk/tph

Round-up on the roads

Upper Holloway Bridge

The A1 Holloway Road Bridge at Upper Holloway station is being strengthened and an additional new bridge built to carry utilities that are currently buried in the carriageway of the existing bridge.

TfL has closed two lanes of traffic on the bridge, one in each direction, and installed a barrier while works take place.

The project has been divided into three stages and is due to be completed by the end of 2017.

Stockwell

TfL is making Stockwell safer for cyclists by building a new cycle route and reconstructing the junction at Stockwell Memorial Garden.

The improvements, which include removing the gyratory, are designed to make walking and cycling around the area safer and more convenient.

Work has started and is expected to finish by summer 2016.

● ● ●
Find out more at tfl.gov.uk

Upwardly mobile

Demand for the Mobile Inspection Unit is growing, with large taxi and private hire fleets enjoying the convenience of having their vehicles checked on their own premises



One man and his modified van are zipping across London to meet the growing demand for inspections of black cabs and private hire vehicle fleets.

Known as the Mobile Inspection Unit, the van means customers don't have to go through the time-consuming process of driving their vehicles to the inspection centre – it is far quicker and easier for an inspector to come to them.

Twenty fleets already use the Mobile Unit, a couple of which require weekly visits, and it's not uncommon for the van to be booked up every day of the week. Last year more than 2,000 vehicles were examined and there's the possibility of a second van being deployed. 'The demand is there because this is hugely convenient for our customers,' said Andrew Norman, the client account manager for NSL, contracted by TfL to inspect taxis and private hire vehicles.

'When we launched the Mobile Inspection Unit in May 2014, the thinking was that it would enhance the service that's available and that's certainly proved to be the case. In the beginning, it was just the London Taxi Company using the Unit, but since then the number of customers has been growing, and the feedback has been

» **Vehicle inspection pass rate**
(10 Jan – 6 Feb 2016)

First time taxi pass rate
82%
pass rate across the 6 inspection centres (against the 80% target)

First time PHV pass rate
81%
pass rate across the 6 inspection centres (against the 80% target)

Mobile Inspection Unit pass rate
90+%

extremely positive.'

When the van pays a visit, the checks are just as rigorous as they would be at the inspection centre. 'We can do everything with the Mobile Inspection Unit that we do at our own site. It's exactly the same inspection on a customer's premises. The only difference is the convenience,' says Andrew. 'It can be a huge logistical issue for a client to bring a large number of vehicles to our site – they need to make the bookings to have all those vehicles checked on the same day, and they also need to organise for a large number of drivers to take them there.'

'The Mobile Inspection Unit gives a client the option of their vehicles being inspected at their own site, and for those inspections to happen at the same time.'

The pass rate at the Inspection Centre is around 80 per cent. That number is significantly higher when checks are carried out by the Mobile

Inspection Unit – according to Andrew, the rate is more than 90 per cent. He explains: 'The majority of inspections we do with the Mobile Unit are for new vehicles so common failures at our own site, such as problems with the paperwork or the cleanliness, don't tend to be an issue.'

'As the inspection is on the customer's premises, any mechanical fault can usually be fixed on the same day. Some of the customers have their own mechanics so if there's a fault with the vehicle that can be corrected straight away to the satisfaction of the inspector,' says Andrew.

“If there's a mechanical issue it can usually be fixed at the customer's site the same day”

Andrew Norman, client account manager for NSL



ID parade

It's the most common infringement in the book – and the simplest to correct. Drivers not wearing their badges or photo IDs could be anyone

Khalil Sarr, a compliance manager for TPH, explains: 'This is a serious issue for us – the number of drivers not wearing their badges or photo IDs is huge.'

'For the safety of our customers, it's important when they are getting into a taxi or a private hire vehicle that they know that the driver is legitimate and licensed, and the only way they can find that out is by looking at the badge or photo ID.'

From the launch of Operation Neon last May until the beginning of March this year, Khalil and his squad of compliance officers have caught more than 4,000 drivers who weren't wearing their badges or photo IDs. Most had them in their vehicle – hanging around the rear-view mirror, or in the glove-compartment – but around 10 per cent of that figure didn't have it in their possession, and were told they weren't able to work until they rectified the situation by collecting their badge or ID.

First-time offenders in possession of a badge/photo ID but not wearing it are sent a warning letter. A further breach would invoke a second warning, while a third strike could lead to a driver's suspension or even to losing their licence.

'Operation Neon has been about raising awareness,' Khalil says. 'We've learned that some drivers don't know how important it is to wear the badge or photo ID, but the message is getting out there – you have to wear it at all times, and it has to be visible.'



There is more to this than ensuring that passengers feel safe and secure – Khalil would like all drivers to wear their badges or IDs with pride. 'Black cabs are iconic – they're known throughout the world, and the public knows that it takes years to pass The Knowledge, so being a London taxi driver is a prestigious position. It's also vital PHV drivers recognise the importance of wearing their photo ID so customers can check the driver information matches their booking.'

The operation has also alerted passengers to the need to always check a driver's identification. 'Officers tend to work in pairs so if a driver is stopped, one will talk to the driver while the other explains to the passenger what we're doing. A number of passengers, once we have explained what we are doing, have found themselves thinking, "Hang on a minute, the next time I get in a taxi or minicab, I'm going to make sure that the driver is wearing his identification." A lot of people still don't realise the potential danger they are putting themselves in. But hopefully Operation Neon is making them think.'

Picture caption: (inset) Khalil Sarr; (clockwise from left) David Bond; Saheed Malomo Abayomi; Ian Beetlestone; Joseph Kandolo; Shahin Chowdhury

Robert Fenlon, taxi driver
“Without a doubt I am so proud of my badge. I've always had goals in front of me and successfully completing the Knowledge was one of them. I wanted to do it properly and thoroughly enjoyed doing it even though it was hard, so of course I'm proud of my achievement”

Shahin Chowdhury, private hire driver, Carlton Cars, Welling
“I've been a driver for 10 years and I am very proud of my photo ID and I always wear it. It shows that I am a legal driver. With your photo ID people can recognise you are licensed and they can be safe and comfortable in my car”

Ian Beetlestone, taxi driver
“I do love the badge, I think it's a beautiful little thing and I hope I never lose it and have to get a new number. I suppose I think of the number as being very much a part of my identity now. I also think of it as a kind of living artefact of London history too and I like that”

Excuses, excuses

The most imaginative excuse compliance officers hear from drivers for not wearing a badge/ID? An allergy to the lanyard. 'We get the odd driver saying they are allergic to the material we use for the lanyard,' Khalil explains. 'But if that's the case, there's a policy in place and they can get an exemption letter. And even then, we would ask them to display the badge or photo ID so it's visible. They don't have to wear the lanyard but they could pin it against their shirt, for example.'

●●●
If you need an exemption form call: 0343 222 4444

» **Operation Neon numbers** (from May 2015 until 26 March 2016)

4,435 drivers caught not wearing a badge/photo ID, but who had it in their possession

395 drivers were stood down for the day after they were caught without their badge/photo ID



Total recall

Vehicle defects and safety recalls – what you need to know



Almost a million vehicles are called back to dealers for a safety check and/or rectifications every year.

A vehicle is recalled when a safety defect is identified owing to a design or construction fault, which is likely to pose a significant risk to the driver, occupants or others.

When such a defect is identified, the manufacturer is given access to the details of all registered owners affected by the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA). They are responsible for the UK Automotive Safety Recall Scheme and work closely with vehicle manufacturers and the DVLA.

Arrangements are then made for all affected vehicles to be taken to a main dealer where inspections and/or repairs are generally carried out for free.

The official recall scheme applies to a wide range of vehicle types from passenger cars, commercial vehicles and buses/coaches to trailers, agricultural vehicles, motorhomes and caravans. It also covers two and three wheelers.

If you buy a vehicle from a dealer they should check for any outstanding recalls as part of their pre-sales

preparation to make sure the vehicle is roadworthy. When buying privately, it is possible that a past recall may have been ignored by the previous owner so it's worth carrying out your own check. The DVSA publishes details of all safety recalls on its website – search by make, model and year. Most recall notices include the VIN/chassis number of the affected vehicle.

Rectifications to vehicles after a recall are normally carried out by appointment with a dealership or during scheduled servicing and do not require further attention.

Keep safe and sound

To help keep yourself and your passengers safe, it's important to get your vehicle inspected and fixed following a recall notification. Insurance claims can be affected and driving a vehicle in a dangerous condition could result in a fine of up to £2,500, penalty points added to your driving licence and/or a driving ban.



Find out more at www.gov.uk/dvsa



TfL action in relation to recalls

TfL will always follow the advice of the DVLA and manufacturer in vehicle recalls. In some cases, it could be a

serious enough defect that the appropriate action is to suspend a vehicle licence. This

has happened twice with taxis (vehicle fires and steering issues). Other issues with vehicles such as the

Toyota Prius and the Volkswagen Passat have been permitted by the DVLA to continue being licensed.

Safety recalls – the facts

What is a safety recall?

Action taken by a manufacturer when a safety critical vehicle defect is identified.

What happens in a safety recall?

Once a safety recall is registered, the manufacturer must make every effort to notify consumers whose vehicles are affected. This is normally by letter to the registered owner.

What do you need to do?

Follow the instructions given by the manufacturer and arrange for the vehicle to be fixed as soon as possible so you don't put yourself or your passengers at risk.

If you are no longer the registered owner, you should not ignore the letter and you should notify the DVSA.

How to report a vehicle safety defect

If you think your vehicle may have a serious safety-related defect,

then you need to report it. Use the Vehicle Safety Branch's safety defect reporting form to draw it to the attention of the DVSA, which will then investigate the issue with the manufacturer and tell you what action is being taken.

What counts as a serious safety defect?

A serious safety defect is something:

- About the way the vehicle is designed or made that's likely to cause injury or death
- That happens suddenly and without warning

What doesn't count as a serious safety defect?

- Things that can be found during routine maintenance and servicing
- You're warned about them by warning lights, noticeable changes in handling and unusual noises



Go to forms.vosa.gov.uk/Vedr/create

Charity heroes: above and beyond



Divyesh Rupareli on Mount Kilimanjaro

It's not all work and no play. Some of London's taxi and private hire drivers climb mountains, help flood victims, plant trees and feed the homeless, all in the name of charity

We're off to see Mickey!

Phil Davis, 59, is a former Master of the Worshipful Company of Hackney Cab Drivers (WCHCD) and has been a driver for over 26 years. Since 1994 he has led the organising committee of the Children's Magical Taxi Tour. Every year, the event sees between 90 and 100 black cab drivers take hundreds of children with life-limiting illnesses, their families and support workers, to Disneyland, Paris.

Phil's tireless work fundraising, organising sponsorship, planning and coordinating the logistics of the trip is almost a full-time job in itself. Phil says: 'My aim is to put smiles on the faces of these children. Some drivers lead quite insular lives, sitting alone in their cabs each day, but doing charity work is a great way to get out and give something back to the community. It's also nice to be part of a team that creates a positive image of the cab trade.'

To date, the Magical Taxi Tour has touched the lives of more than 5,000 children and in recognition of all his hard work, Phil was recently awarded the second City Livery Company Root and Branch Award, 2015, for individuals who have made a noteworthy contribution to charity and the livery.

●●●
TPH staff work hard to fundraise for this every year. If you'd like to donate, please go to www.justgiving.com/magicaltaxitour-2016/

Climb every mountain

Phil isn't the only charity hero working for the WCHCD. In January 2013, Divyesh Rupareli, 53, a liveryman of the same company, spent eight days trekking up Mount Kilimanjaro to raise almost £5,000 for numerous charities, including Help for Heroes, Great Ormond Street Hospital and the Magical Taxi Tour.

He braved tropical conditions in the rainforest regions of the foothills, pounding rain, and snow and ice at the summit to complete the gruelling 6,000-metre trek up Africa's highest mountain.

Since then, Divyesh has volunteered on three Magical Taxi Tours and has also begun training to climb Mount Everest in 2018, to raise more funds for the annual children's charity trip.

'My dad died of a heart attack aged 45 and I used to be overweight and quite unfit, but climbing Mount Kilimanjaro transformed my life,' says Divyesh. 'It was physically exhausting, but doing it sparked a love of the outdoors and charity work.'

I now live a much healthier and happier life. What's not to love about keeping fit, volunteering and raising money for charity at the same time? All drivers should do it.'

Honouring the brave

Taxi driver Graham Pike has always loved anything to do with the military and was in the cadets as a youngster and the Territorial Army for three years. So when he was doing his Knowledge of London 17 years ago and spotted an ad for the London Taxi Benevolent Association For War Disabled, commonly known as the Taxi Charity, getting involved was a no-brainer.

The charity helps veterans by providing entertainment, outings and specialised equipment. Graham started out by driving the veterans, some in wheelchairs, to the many functions the charity organises. He has taken part in the annual trip to the seaside at Worthing and overseas to Holland and the Menin Gate in Ypres, Belgium. He also regularly helps out at major stations such as Canary Wharf when veterans, resplendent in their war medals, collect for the charity.

He is now a committee member for the Taxi Charity and says: 'I just love being with these guys who fought for us and now I can do something for them. When you talk to them and hear what they have been through, they're just lovely. These guys are heroes to me and I want to do my bit to pay them back.'

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If you'd like to drive for the Taxi Charity, or just find out more, go to www.taxicharity.org/

Mission possible

It is not just taxi drivers who are involved in good deeds, private hire drivers are in on the action too. Rajeev Chadha, 39, a private hire driver with more than 10 years' experience, has worked for The Chauffeur Group for the past three years.

When he isn't driving clients to corporate events, he is busily involved in all sorts of charity work as a member of the Sant Nirankari Mission. The Mission encourages its members to participate in community life for the good of humanity. To this end, Raj has planted trees all over the UK to help improve the environment. He regularly takes part in street cleaning projects and campaigns to encourage people to donate blood to the NHS.

As if that weren't enough, last winter he also travelled to Cumbria to help the residents there affected



1



5



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3

“Charity work is a great way to give something back to the community”

Phil Davis



2

“What's not to love about keeping fit, volunteering and raising money for charity at the same time? All drivers should do it”

Divyesh Rupareli



4



by flooding. He and other members of the Mission were involved in boarding up houses, delivering food aid and cleaning and redecorating flood-damaged properties. He says: 'There are quite a few private hire drivers who do charity work for Sant Nirankari Mission. There really is nothing like helping people. It gives you a feeling that can't be bought.'

Raj and the other members of The Sant Nirankari Mission were recently presented with the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, the highest accolade for voluntary work in the UK.

●●●
For more information about the Sant Nirankari Mission, please go to www.nirankari.com/london/

Charity begins at home

Billy O'loughlin, 58, is another private hire driver who donates his time to charity. Billy has worked as a driver for more than 30 years and currently drives for Addison Lee. For a couple of evenings each winter, Billy provides food and cooks for 35 homeless people and volunteers at the Hackney Winter Night Shelter. 'I've been doing it since doomsday,' says Billy, who also volunteers his time to drive for the Girl Guides. 'When I first started, I had to cook for 15 to 20 people, but over the years the numbers have increased. I don't want recognition for doing it. I do it because I enjoy it and it's good to make a difference.'

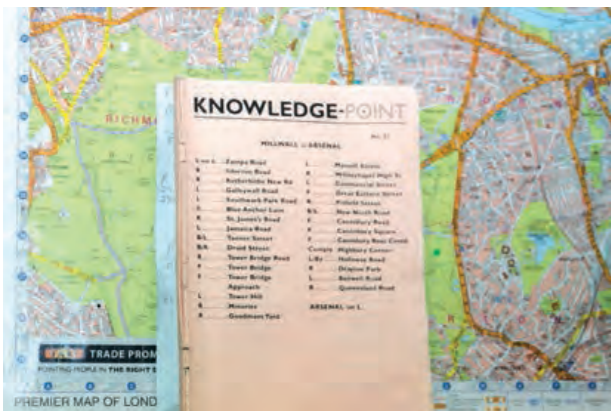
●●●
To find out about volunteering at the Hackney Winter Night Shelter, please contact www.hwms.org.uk/

Clockwise starting top left: 1 Graham Pike with veterans; 2 Divyesh Rupareli with his climbing team; 3 Children at Disneyland Paris; 4 Phil Davies of the Magical Taxi Tour; 5 Volunteers with the Sant Nirankari Mission.

Your charity stories

Everyone here at OnRoute would like to thank all of the drivers out there helping to transform people's lives by donating your time, expertise and money. You are our charity heroes!

●●●
 If you, or someone you know, has done something fabulous for charity, then we want to know about it. Contact OnRoute@tfl.gov.uk



In The Know



Knowledge Point has now successfully steered more than 9,000 back cab drivers through the Knowledge and still trains around 40 students at each level



Last year was the 30th anniversary of the Knowledge Point School in north London. It was also nearly its last...



In the summer of 2015, the school's founder, Malcolm Linskey, was given six months' notice that his school's premises were being developed into luxury flats. 'Central London rents are so high, I thought it would be nigh on impossible to move anywhere else, so I was all prepared to retire,' he explains.

Then, 10 days before Christmas, the school was relieved – although its rescuer was not so much a knight on a white charger, as a black cab with a yellow light on.

'The London Taxi Company told us "you're too valuable to the trade to disappear" and offered us space in its Brewery Road premises. We've been here since 18 January and the drivers are beginning to drift back now that the word is out. In fact, our Advanced Class at the beginning of February was full with 38 people.'

Malcolm, 70, became a cabbie at 23 ('a lifetime ago') in the days when

»» The Knowledge by numbers

48 months
the average duration of the Knowledge, including time spent learning the routes and the examination process

25 months
average time for a driver training at Knowledge Point School

3269
the total number of candidates currently studying The Knowledge of London

2164
at Stage 3

632
at Stage 4

473
at Stage 5

*Figures from TfL as at 22 February 2016

schools such as his didn't exist. 'Some cab garages used to put out a couple of greasy tables in a corner where drivers could gather, but it was a poor system,' he says. After a few years on the road, Malcolm became involved with a trade paper called Steering Wheel, but cash flow proved an issue, so in 1981 he had the idea of publishing training materials. 'They proved popular right away, which was when people started asking me "where's your school then?" So we opened up classes behind our shop in an empty space at the Dame Alice Owen's School at the Angel.'

Knowledge Point has now successfully steered more than 9,000 back cab drivers through the Knowledge and still trains around 40 students at each level.

He admits that private hire apps coming on to the market have put some drivers off coming into the industry. 'But we've had blips in the past and I think the situation will stabilise,' he

says confidently, citing the need to encourage more young drivers to take up the Knowledge challenge.

'We went through a phase about four years ago when a lot of youngsters were coming to us, mostly because they had family in the trade and wanted to do their Knowledge before they went to university. But the average age for joining us is still 39. It tends to be artisan workers, like roofers, plumbers or carpenters, or ex-police and fire officers who retire early.'

Whatever the future brings, Malcolm is determined to play his part in maintaining high standards for taxi drivers. 'We all know the Knowledge is hard – it has a drop-out rate of 70 per cent – but that shouldn't put people off. In fact, it should be considered degree level.'

●●●
To find out more about Knowledge Point workshops, call 020 7700 3999

Cabbie's view

Ronnie Jerrom, 55, started doing his training in 1995 with the Blue Book Runs – around 400 journeys on a moped. He then attended the Knowledge College, in a former biscuit factory in Bermondsey.

“The Knowledge is a brilliant system, but it's the hardest thing I've ever done. We don't just have to know the road names, the courts, the embassies, the landmarks, the clubs. A passenger can ask for a Spanish restaurant in the Brompton Road and you say "I think I know it, but don't you mean the Old Brompton Road?" and between us we can work it out. That's the sort of service you can offer when you've spent three years doing the Knowledge”



Rank and file

Late night taxi ranks help keep the public safe and taxi marshals make sure they run smoothly

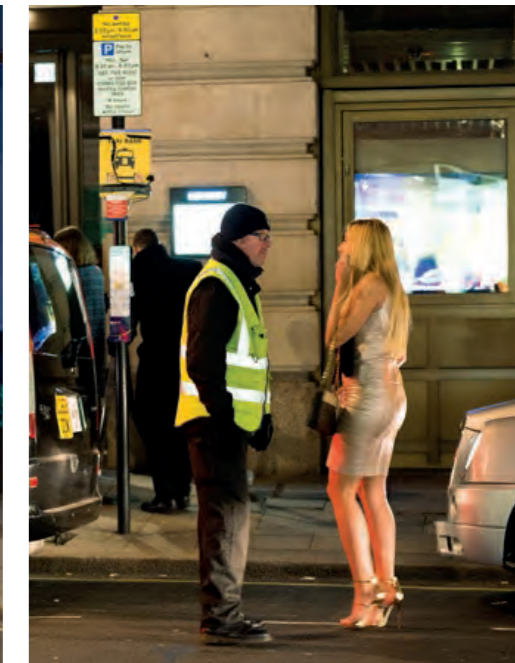
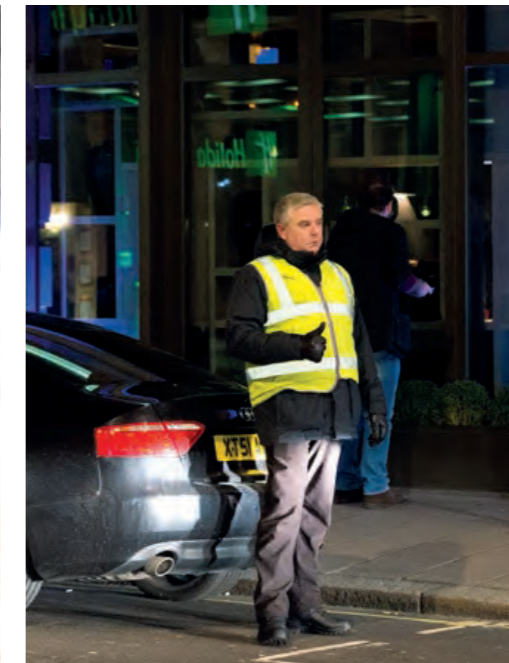
Above left: the late night taxi rank outside Novikov; Middle: Russell Varney keeping order; Right: a marshal helps a customer

In the run up to the 2012 London Olympics the spotlight was firmly on the Capital's transport services and for cabbie Russell Varney – a driver for 23 years – it opened his eyes to a new job opportunity. He explains: 'As a driver I work Paddington quite a lot and the rank there was marshalled during the

Olympics. I got talking with the guys to find out what they actually did and asked if they were recruiting.' Luckily they were and so Russell started marshalling at Paddington and the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park during the Games. 'That was very, very busy at peak times,' he recalls. 'The atmosphere was great; people were

in a very good mood and we moved a hell of a lot of people in taxis.' Four years on and Russell now marshals at Novikov restaurant and bar in Berkeley Street. Both Novikov and the Forge at Cornhill were added to the late night marshalling roster last November as a result of intelligence from Operation Neon. At Novikov there was initially a big issue with cars parking up on the rank but Russell says the arrangements are now working very well. 'It's quite glamorous and high profile round there with lots of taxi users but also lots of people turning up in expensive sports cars such as Ferraris and Bentleys. 'The rank is actually parking bays before 18:30 and that was causing a lot of confusion with people leaving their cars there. We were brought in to encourage them to park elsewhere and to build up a good following of

taxi drivers who would use the rank so people coming out of Novikov could step straight into a cab. Now we coordinate with the club and its valet parking system and the people using the club and the rank know what we are there for. We're there to help them.' The marshals always work in pairs, wearing hi vis jackets and employing a polite, friendly yet firm manner with drivers and the public. 'We are concerned with any issue of over-ranking or just plain congestion at the club with people picking up and dropping off,' Russell explains. 'We will advise private hire vehicles that they can't stop there and I've never encountered anything really bad, maybe a few words now and then. 'The customers are a pretty well behaved bunch because they tend to go to the club later and it's expensive; that's slightly different from the clubs in the city which tend to open much



earlier, which means the clientele has been drinking for longer. I've always had a good response from the customers.'

Moving with the times

The marshals now use Twitter (@london-taxi-marshall - which has about 6,000 followers) and other social media to let drivers know where ranks are being marshalled and if they are moving quickly. This has proved particularly effective at The O2 where they can get 200 to 300 people coming on to the rank when a show finishes.

The same is also true at clubs when the customers start coming out. For instance, on Friday 5 February, Novikov told Russell it had 1,000 customers booked and so was expecting a very busy night. 'We knew we would have a constant stream of work, so informed the drivers that taxis would be moving on and off the rank pretty quickly. We're helping the drivers by letting them know there is work and that helps us as well because with more taxis coming on to the rank we don't get a build up of passengers waiting.

'I like marshalling because it's just a different side of the trade from driving. You try to keep the queue in some sort of order and you get to talk to lots of different people and give them advice. Some will ask where to go or how much I think it is going to cost them to get home. I look out for vulnerable customers and stand with them making sure other people don't push in.

'To be a marshal you have to have a bit of a thick skin, be patient and listen to what people are saying, and keep calm. At the end of the day that's what we are there for – to get people home safely and help drivers get the work.'

“ We are the middle men trying to help passengers and drivers and we do sometimes get caught in the middle ”

Late night marshalled ranks

Location	Days	Hours
Beckenham, High Street (outside M&S)	Fridays and Saturdays	22:30 – 02:30
Bromley town centre, Market Square	Saturdays	22:30 – 02:30
Charing Cross Road	Saturdays	22:30 – 02:30
City of London – Liverpool Street Station	Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays	22:00 – 02:00
Kingston town centre, Clarence Street	Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays	22:30 – 02:30
Old Street, Shoreditch	Saturdays	23:00 – 03:00
Regent Street (Swallow Street /Heddon Street)	Fridays	22:30 – 02:30
Cornhill (The Forge)	Thursdays and Fridays	22:30 – 02:30
Berkeley Street (Novikov)	Fridays and Saturdays	22:00 – 03:00
Dalston (Birthdays)	Saturdays	23:00 – 03:00

“ We get lots of famous pop stars and faces from the TV at Novikov – the other week we had racing driver Jenson Button. ”

Getting back on the road

Collaborative working is helping to reduce the backlog of DBS checks

The positive message from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) is 'slowly but surely, we're getting there' as they tackle the backlog for criminal records checks.

The enhanced DBS checks – which are necessary for employment in many sectors – have faced significant delays in the last 12 months owing to a strain on police resources.

The backlog has left some taxi and private hire drivers and other professionals unable to work. This has been caused by a build up of more than 20 vacancies in the MPS' 100-strong team and an office relocation.

In order to apply for a licence with TfL, drivers need to present a DVLA driving licence and be in receipt of a completed enhanced DBS check. With no access to criminal records data itself, TfL relies on these checks to determine the suitability of an applicant to be licensed. As with the DVLA, the DBS system is run by a completely separate government department.

Getting there

While the delays have not been caused by TfL, the Mayor and TfL recognised the impact it was having on taxi and private hire drivers when renewing their licences. After discussion with the MPS, a series of measures were put in place to address the issue and are having a positive impact:

- From September 2015, TfL has had seven staff members seconded temporarily to the MPS team to help speed up the application process for existing taxi and private hire drivers. Having this team working directly with the MPS has allowed TfL to ensure the high priority cases, those where existing drivers are out of work, are processed first
- At the MPS, more than 60 extra staff have been recruited and trained and additional evening shifts introduced
- The DBS has also provided staff to support training and helped the MPS to plan its extra shifts and weekend working

To help drivers further, in November TfL began to issue temporary measures. These

provide authorisation to drivers who meet strict requirements to continue to work while their DBS disclosure is outstanding. Authorisation is issued to the driver on a rolling fortnightly basis until their DBS disclosure is issued.

Currently, 55 taxi and private hire drivers are working with a temporary measure and a total of 347 temporary measures have been issued. The team continues to review all applications close to expiry to ensure the only outstanding information is the DBS disclosure.

Graham Robinson, TPH's head of licensing, says the team is now focusing on applications where the driver's licence is due to expire in two months. 'We are doing everything we possibly can to ensure the enhanced DBS checks are processed as quickly as possible,' he says.

DBS director for operations (disclosure) Ian Johnston, said: 'We continue to be open and transparent with our network of registered bodies and the public about the delays within MPS, and continue to provide updates on the situation via our website.'

'Although this is clearly a matter for the MPS to resolve, we are working closely at a senior level to help them deliver on their recovery plan and achieve their target turnaround times as quickly as possible.'

What is a DBS check?

DBS checks are run by the Home Office. An enhanced DBS check searches the driver's details against criminal records and other sources such as the Police National Computer, to reveal convictions, cautions, reprimands or warnings.

Previously referred to as an enhanced CRB check, it is needed by taxi and private hire drivers and applicants before they apply for their new or renewal licence.

Drivers can apply for the check online at www.onlinedisclosures.co.uk/



Long-term solution

With the measures that have been put in place, it is clear to see improvements have been made. However, some drivers are concerned they will incur the same problem when they come to renew in three years time. Because of this, TfL is encouraging licensed drivers to sign up to the DBS online subscription service, which allows you to keep your DBS certificates up to date.

It avoids the need for drivers to make a separate application for an enhanced disclosure when they apply to renew their licence, and means employers can check a certificate online, with the driver's consent. This would only be required where changes have been made to the disclosure.

The DBS update service costs £13 a year, which is slightly cheaper than applying for a new disclosure every three years.

While not a service provided by TfL, Graham Robinson confirmed that he sees it as the long-term solution for drivers avoiding problems with their application in the future.

'By signing up to the DBS Update Service we will be able to check whether any changes have been made since the last disclosure was issued. If no changes are made we will be able to process the driver's taxi or private hire renewal application more quickly – saving a lot of time and effort for the driver, as well as removing any concern that they won't get a licensing decision on time.'

For more information, or to sign up, go to the DBS website: www.gov.uk/dbs-update-service

“We understand the impact for customers and this issue is a main priority for DBS. We're working very closely with the MPS to help them improve performance and support their recovery”

Ian Johnston, DBS director for operations (disclosure)



Double time

After more than a decade at TfL, new head of the TPH compliance unit Anand Nandha brings a wealth of experience to the job. And it's a role with growing responsibility...

Thanks to stints in bus enforcement, revenue protection and TPH licensing, Anand – who took up his new post in late February – knows his way around TfL. He's joining compliance at a very busy time as his team expands to deal with the increasing number of private hire vehicles on London's roads. He is in the process of doubling the number of compliance officers 'out there on the streets' – and is taking a different approach to how they use the intelligence they get from sources across the Capital.

'The demands have increased – the number of drivers has gone up significantly and we're responding to that,' he explains. 'We're going through the recruitment process now. Some of those new staff have already started and more will be phased in over the next few weeks.'

'Our compliance officers go through a vetting process and then four weeks of training. We should soon double the numbers with 82 officers across London, or at least be very close to that figure.'

With more officers the team will be providing round the clock coverage for routine compliance checking. All the new officers, along with the existing team, will go through the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme, giving them a range of additional powers, including the power to stop vehicles.

If those new officers are to be at their most effective, they are going to need high-grade intelligence. Anand explains that TfL receives a lot of information from the trade and customers and it is important to filter and analyse this so the team can concentrate on real risks to public safety.

'We need to be in a position where we can look through that information, identify priorities, deploy resources to important locations and

take a problem-solving approach involving other agencies where needed. We also need to deal with the everyday issues. So we're developing how we gather and use it. We want to bring in intelligence to be more effective.'

Although he has only been in position for a matter of weeks, Anand is well aware of how taxi and private hire drivers think the compliance unit should be operating. 'There's a high expectation from the trade – they want us to have as many officers as we can on the streets, making as many checks as we can, to crack down on illegal activity,' he says.

“ We are in the process of doubling the number of compliance officers ”

'I want to be in a position where we can maximise the effectiveness and productivity of our officers but also carry on developing the good work already done in prevention by educating the public and licence holders. I want to make sure we're making the most of our resources. My team is part of more than 400 enforcement and on-street operational officers and I see compliance and enforcement as a shared responsibility with all our partners and stakeholders. I want to be able to provide a good service for the trade but also to address some of the important issues that impact on public safety. I am keen on equipping our officers with the right tools and knowledge so customers are safe and the legitimate, law-abiding trades can continue to thrive.'

Anand Nandha at TfL

- January 2014 – February 2016**
 Head of bus enforcement, leading the team that tackled fare evasion on the bus network
- June 2012 – January 2014**
 Initially, head of licensing at TPH, overseeing licensing for all London taxi and private hire vehicles, drivers and operators
 Anand took on extra responsibilities from April 2013 as head of business services and development at TPH
- November 2005 – June 2012**
 Operations manager for the revenue protection department, responsible for 285 revenue inspectors across the London bus network

- » Compliance results**
 Since the launch of Operation Neon in May last year, there have been **93 operations**. These have resulted in:
 - 7,531** private hire drivers being advised to move on, and keep roads clear for taxis and booked private hire vehicles
 - 395** being reported for not having their ID and stopped from working for the rest of the evening
 - 4,435** being reported for not wearing their ID
 - 64** being reported for plying for hire offences
 - 960** being reported for parking on taxi ranks
 - 1,964** parking tickets being issued

Check live traffic conditions before you travel

Cindy,
Transport for London
Traffic Control Centre



While we're improving London's roads as part of our Road Modernisation Plan there will be disruption. Check your route before you travel to avoid any unnecessary delays. Sign up for weekly email alerts, follow us on twitter @tfltrafficnews or view real time road updates at tfl.gov.uk/trafficnews

April showers bring May flowers



As we bid winter farewell, Ian Beetlestone feels the spring in his step from the light, sunnier days



Tiny daffodils in my tiny garden. Birdsong in Barnsbury (where my tiny garden is). Pub hanging baskets in bloom. That beautiful promise brought by the lengthening of the evenings and the warming of the rays of the sun. Spring is surely the season of optimism.

As a cabbie who usually works an afternoon-to-just-after-midnight shift, it is lovely to get that bit more daylight to drive around in, the longer dusk, and to know that when the night does come you're not so far off being finished.

And of course, it means that officially the Kipper is over. Those long, dark, cold, slow months of January and February behind us, the Easter weekend gone, the slow build up through the year finally getting under way. Yes it's true the Kipper seems longer every year, but nonetheless, things do pick up, and the Game isn't quite dead yet, is it?

There's still a promise to spring. Come to think of it, spring is really when London itself wakes up for the year. It's funny to think of a great, sprawling metropolis of concrete, stone and steel being as in tune with the seasons as a dainty daffodil or a gambolling little lamb.

There seems to be some debate on how the

weather affects the cab trade. Many – most outsiders, certainly – tend to assume that we like it when it rains, but I think the sun is better. When it rains people stay indoors; I want them out on the street in the first place if I want them to jump in my cab. The sun brings them out in droves and it puts them in a good mood, which means they're more likely to treat themselves and spontaneously stick their arms out.

But if, on the other hand, you're of the school that believes rain is the cabbie's friend (really,

“Spring is really when London itself wakes up for the year”

a study should be done to settle this once and for all), in spring you get your April showers. It's the perfect compromise for this debate – that lovely, warm, teasing sun

brings them out on to the street, and then those helpfully complicit little showers come along and put them in our cabs. It's a theory, at least.

Spring is the time London finally wakes up from its winter slumber, rubs its bleary eyes and starts moving again. And when London is moving, hopefully, so are its taxis.



You say
When do you pick up more fares – rain or shine?
Email us at Onroute@tfl.gov.uk

Top five spring spots



Hackney City Farm

Where better to ring in the spring but surrounded by newborn lambs?



Kew Gardens

Kew is a pretty extraordinary place any time of the year but a visit in spring makes perfect sense, with plant life firing up all over the place.



The White Cross

Spring is the first opportunity in the year to spend some quality time in a pub beer garden. That of the White Cross at Richmond is right by the Thames and becomes marooned at high tide, so you have no option but to stay a while.



Chelsea Physic Garden

A tiny, less famous alternative to Kew, specialising in edible and medicinal plants tucked away behind a wall off Royal Hospital Road. A real hidden oasis of tranquillity.



Hyde Park

Really, where else to hang out in spring but London's playground for generation upon generation? Boating, horse-riding, cycling, ice-cream and acres and acres of green grass.

Tweet me right

The TPH Twitter feed gets more than 600 tweets a day, many of them asking the same questions. So here are the most common Twitter queries and the responses



Black minicab just drove down Green Lanes the wrong way over a pedestrian crossing to turn right.

📷 📍 GIF 🔄 Tweet

Answer

If you see any illegal or anti-social driving you can report it at [The Roadsafelondon](https://www.thesafelondon.com/) Internet page [secure.met.police.uk/roadsafelondon/](https://www.secure.met.police.uk/roadsafelondon/). You will need to provide the following information:

- The date, time and location of the incident
- The registration number, colour and make of the vehicle involved
- Any driver details (if you know them)
- The nature of the incident you witnessed
- Your contact details

Remember that if you take photos or film from a handheld device, such as a phone or a camera, you must be safely parked or out of your vehicle first.

Why do I never see any of your compliance officers out in the street?

📷 📍 GIF 🔄 Tweet

Answer

Our compliance officers are deployed across London to areas known for illegal taxi and private hire activity. We identify these 'hotspots' by gathering intelligence from many sources (including Twitter) and then run a mixture of high-visibility and plain clothes operations, so there will be times when we are on the street but you won't know we are there.

We are currently recruiting additional compliance officers in order to step up our activity, so you will see more of us on London's roads in the very near future.

You can read more about the changes to the compliance team and how deployment areas are determined in our interview with Anand Nandha, the new head of compliance, on [page 20](#).

What does TfL do with consultations once they're completed?

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Answer

We always consider feedback during the decision-making process. We review and analyse the responses to all our consultations to see whether any changes should be made and how best to respond to the issues commonly raised. We then produce a report summarising the results and setting out our planned response.

Over the years, many schemes have been substantially changed as a result of consultation. We made major changes to the original East-West Cycle Superhighway proposals to reduce the impact on traffic and responses to last spring's consultation on the Private Hire Regulations led to more detailed proposals and a consultation last autumn. Recent consultations on the Suburban Taxi Action Plan and taxi tariffs have also led to revisions or additions to original proposals.

Final plans also take into account relevant financial, legal, safety and equality issues. Some decisions, such as highway changes, also depend on decisions made by London boroughs.

What happens to all our compliance complaints?

📷 📍 GIF 🔄 Tweet

Answer

Your reports of illegal activity are vital for us to deploy our resources effectively. There are two main ways to report illegal taxi and private hire-related activity to TfL: using the web form ([tfl.gov.uk/tph-report](https://www.tfl.gov.uk/tph-report)) or on the [@TfLTPH](https://twitter.com/TfLTPH) Twitter feed.

Either way, the minimum information we require is the nature of the offence, date, time, location and vehicle registration number. You can also attach a picture or film if you're using the Twitter feed.

These are the types of reports that are useful for us to receive:

- Touting or unlawful plying for hire
- Unlicensed vehicles accepting bookings
- Accessibility complaints including refusal to pick up assistance dogs/wheelchairs
- Damaged, missing or fake identifiers (taxi or private hire)
- Illegal advertising/signage on or in a vehicle
- Misuse of ranks
- Misuse of the words taxi or cab in private hire advertising (Section 31 offence)
- Poor vehicle condition (including as a result of a road traffic incident)
- Drivers smoking or vaping in a licensed vehicle

Reports are used by TfL's enforcement and on-street operations to determine the activities of compliance officers. We will investigate the reports received and deploy officers to places where problems have been observed. If the report is against a licence holder, a note will be made on their record and will be taken into consideration when their licence is up for review. In some cases, if the report is sufficiently detailed and conclusive, we may be able to take action purely on the basis of information submitted and issue a sanction.

Road traffic offences and serious allegations such as assault (including sexual or racially motivated assault) should always be referred to the police in the first instance. They will notify us if a licensed driver is involved so that we can take appropriate action.

Is it legal for a PHV rear window to be so darkly tinted that you can't read disc?

📷 📍 GIF 🔄 Tweet

Answer

There are no rules for tinting the rear windscreen or rear passenger windows of a PHV. However, there are for tinted front windscreens and front side windows.

You can check the tint levels for PHVs at www.gov.uk/tinted-vehicle-window-rules

Vehicles must let at least 75 per cent of light through the front windscreen and at least 70 per cent of light through the front side windows.

Vintage vehicles (first used before 1 April 1985) must let at least 70 per cent of light through both the front windscreen and the front side windows.

Driving a vehicle with the windscreen or front side windows excessively tinted may invalidate your insurance because it is likely to be deemed illegal.

TfL recognises it is not always possible to see signage through tints and is viewing signage options which, if implemented, would take this into account.

Too much tint on a windscreen or front side windows will be picked up during a vehicle inspection resulting in:

- A 'prohibition notice' stopping the driver from using their vehicle until they have the extra tint removed
- A penalty notice or court summons

E-cigs? Never saw the memo about e-cigs in taxis

📷 📍 GIF 🔄 Tweet

Answer

Smoking and e-cigarettes are not allowed in taxis and private hire vehicles at any time. Licensed vehicles must display no smoking signs.

The Health Act 2006 allows TfL to prohibit smoking on all forms of public transport.

A TPH notice reminding licensed drivers about smoking rules, and prohibiting e-cigs and vaping in taxi and private hire vehicles, was issued in December last year. It said: 'Through discussions with taxi and private hire trade representatives we have been made aware of concerns that private hire drivers are smoking in licensed vehicles.'

'It is against the law to smoke in virtually all enclosed public places, workplaces and public and work vehicles. This means that smoking is not allowed by anyone in a private hire vehicle (or taxi) at any time. This includes the driver, even if the vehicle is not being used for hire and reward at that time. Licensed private hire and taxi vehicles are also required to display no smoking signage.'

'Drivers or passengers found to be smoking in a licensed private hire or taxi vehicle may be subject to a fixed penalty notice of £50, or a maximum fine of £200 if prosecuted and convicted by a court.'

E-cigarettes

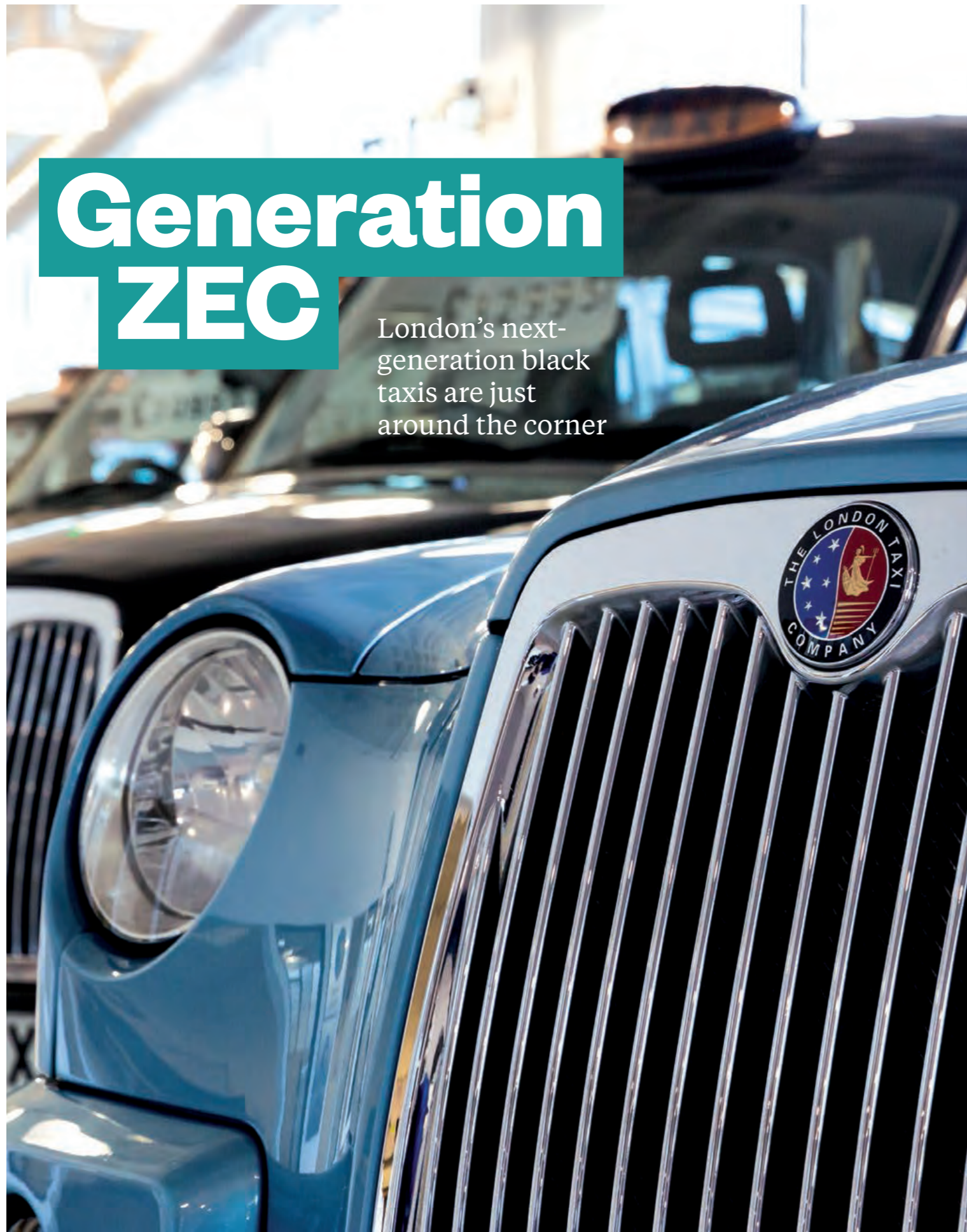
'We have also been asked to clarify the position regarding electronic cigarettes. The TfL no-smoking policy includes e-cigarettes and vapes which have been prohibited on all rail, Underground and bus services. This has also been extended to include taxi and private hire services.'

The TfL no-smoking policy includes e-cigarettes and vapes which have been prohibited on all rail, Underground and bus services. This has also been extended to include taxi and private hire services

Remember that if you take photos or film from a handheld device, such as a phone or a camera, you must be safely parked or out of your vehicle first

Generation ZEC

London's next-generation black taxis are just around the corner



Left: At the London Taxi Company premises in Brewery Road, London

They've rehoused the newts, the diggers have moved in and the builders are hard at work. The new £300m production plant for London Taxi Company's next generation of black cabs is on its way.

The first of the company's zero emission capable (ZEC) taxis – currently named the TX5 – are expected to emerge towards the end of next year and will be one of the most environmentally friendly cabs on the Capital's streets.

Appropriately too they will be built in an environmentally friendly factory. The facilities now under construction, on a greenfield site on the outskirts of Coventry, will boast some of the latest 'green' technology.

Waste heat from manufacturing will be used to warm the air and provide hot water. Rainwater will be collected for use in the toilets, and electricity will be generated by 850 square metres of solar panels.

And it goes without saying that a factory producing electric and low emission vehicles will have its own electric vehicle charging points – 20 of them.

As for the 493 newts who were there first and might have claimed squatters' rights, they were gently removed and re-sited in friendlier environs away from the trucks and diggers, allowing work to begin after a slight delay last August.

Oddly perhaps, given the company's name and long association with London's black cabs, Coventry has been its manufacturing home for almost 70 years. When the new facilities are completed and production of the new model begins next year, the old factory across town in Holyhead Road, home of the iconic TX4, will close.

Peter Johansen, CEO of The London Taxi Company, said: 'At £300m this is the single largest investment ever seen in the licensed taxi trade. It will not only enable us to build the new TX5, but to do so in a new state-of-the-art factory that will secure British jobs for the future and create a great many more. This investment includes £50m to establish a research and development centre of excellence for advanced hybrid-electric powertrains and lightweight body structures. The facility will help us to deliver ongoing improvements to our products into the future.'

» **LTC by numbers**
20,000 estimated number of LTC cabs on the streets of London every day

2,000 approximate number of cabs built each year by LTC

36,000 expected annual output of cabs (for the world market, not just London) from LTC's new manufacturing facility

1,500 approximate number of jobs expected to be created by the new factory, including up to 500 in the local supply chain

London taxis through the ages



1948

Austin FX3
Produced between 1948 – 1959



1959

Austin FX4
Produced between 1959 – 1989



1989

FX4 Fairway
Produced between 1989 – 1997



1997

TX1
Produced between 1997 – 2002



2002

TXII
Produced between 2002 – 2007



2007

TX4
Produced from 2007 to the present



2017

TX5
Produced from end of 2017 onwards

Spacing on timeline above is not to scale.

TXI image: Bkewordtravel/Shutterstock.com



Cab of the future

In design terms the TX5 bears something of the look – ‘captures the spirit’, in the company’s words – of its predecessor. But while it retains some recognisable styling features, all of its 2,000 components have been designed from the ground up, the company says.

The TX5 can take six passengers. It has a lightweight aluminium body, composite panelling and a panoramic glass roof. Passenger doors are rear-hinged for easier access and there is space for a forward-facing wheelchair as well as more driver leg-room. It is also equipped with WiFi capability and provides charging points for drivers and passengers.

The new TX5 has two power sources, enabling drivers to switch from petrol to battery when in central London. The news would surely approve.

The new LTC production plant at Ansty Park, Coventry

Sent to Coventry

Based in the car-making heart of the West Midlands for nearly 70 years, the London Taxi Company has a long history of producing purpose-built cabs designed to meet London’s exacting Conditions of Fitness standards.

LTC was taken over by Chinese auto manufacturer Geely for £11.4m in February 2013 and is now a wholly owned subsidiary, with a dealership in London and centres in Coventry, Manchester and Edinburgh.

Its new plant (31,000 square metre premises at Ansty Park)

will also accommodate LTC’s research and development centre – currently based at Geely’s design centre in Barcelona – and additional technical facilities. There will also be 6,000 square metres of office space.

Alongside the new TX5 the plant will also work on nine potential product variants, including light commercial vehicles, the company says. Following its UK introduction at the end of 2017, the TX5 is expected to be launched across international markets in 2018.

We’ll show you how

Don’t panic if you need to book a vehicle inspection or report an identifier as lost or missing. Here’s OnRoute’s list of contacts and advice covering everything you need to know to do your job effectively and legally

Top tips for ranks

You can report taxi ranks with missing, damaged or incorrect signage by contacting TPH:

Email tphranksinterchange@tfl.gov.uk

Also, if you’ve got an idea for a new taxi rank, send TPH a photo of the location with all relevant information including what the rank would serve (such as a nightclub or hotel) and if it is on a red route, a borough road or private property. We will consider if it is a feasible location for a rank and if so, we will liaise with the relevant authorities to push for a rank on your behalf.

Email tphranksinterchange@tfl.gov.uk

It’s a stick up

Do you need a new information sticker for the passenger compartment of your taxi? Contact TPH at:

Email tph.enquiries@tfl.gov.uk

At your service

If you’d like to speak to one of TPH’s counter staff face-to-face at the counter service at **230 Blackfriars Road**, you can book an appointment by calling:

Call **0343 222 4444**

Under inspection

Need to book a vehicle inspection or have any questions about what paperwork to take with you?

Call **0343 222 5555**

Line of enquiry

You need to have your badge or photo ID, taxi driver identifiers and licence with you at all times in order to work. If any of these are lost, stolen or damaged, you must inform TPH immediately.

Taxi drivers

If you are a licensed taxi driver and have lost your brass badge you can call TPH to request a replacement.

Stolen badges should be reported to the police and you will be given a crime reference number. Because it is made of brass, the replacement badge fee is £15. TPH will update your licences with your new badge number and your replacement badge and licences will be sent to you by recorded delivery.

Call **0343 222 4444**

Private hire drivers

You can call us if you have lost your private hire driver photo ID or licence. TPH will arrange for a replacement to be issued to you as soon as possible.

Call **0343 222 4444**

Knowledge bank

For any enquiries about the Knowledge of London, including how to change a Knowledge appointment or to apply to study for an All London licence or a new suburban sector, please contact:

Email tphknowledge@tfl.gov.uk

Call **0343 222 4444**

Passenger comments

Know a passenger who wants to comment on a taxi or private hire experience? Use the hotline.

Call **0343 222 4000** (between 08:00 and 18:00 Monday to Friday)

Go to tfl.gov.uk/tph-comments

Licence checker

The TfL website has its own dedicated licence checker page where you can check private hire driver, vehicle and operator licences.

Go to tfl.gov.uk/licencechecker

Crime busting

If you spot anything illegal going on, such as touting, then please use the form that can be found at:

Go to tfl.gov.uk/tph-report

Please provide as much information as possible about the incident or issue. It’s important to note the licence plate number, date, time and location of the offence. A picture of the vehicle would also be helpful, but please only take them if you are safely parked or outside of your vehicle. Alternatively, you can contact the compliance team:

Tweet @TfLTPH

If you are reporting a specific crime or require a real-time response, you should contact the Metropolitan Police Service direct:

Call **0300 123 1212** (24 hour)

In an emergency, call **999**

Letters

Email us at OnRoute@tfl.gov.uk. We will print a selection of emails every issue – and there's a £20 Amazon voucher on offer for the best.

Star letter

Card readers in cabs

Who is paying to have these machines fitted into black cabs? The driver, I suppose!

James Roach via email

On 3 February the TfL Board agreed that all taxi drivers must accept credit and debit card payments, including contactless, with effect from 3 October 2016. It is the driver's responsibility to ensure their passengers will be able to pay by card and that their taxi has a TfL approved card payment device fixed in the passenger compartment. TPH understands there will be additional costs for those drivers who do not currently accept card payments, which is why we have increased the taxi meter flagfall for all taxi journeys by 20p.

We are working closely with a range of card payment system providers to ensure their systems meet the new requirements in good time for the transition. If you are currently accepting card payments, you need to ensure the system you use will continue to comply with the new requirements.

Currently, taxi drivers who accept card payments must offer a printed receipt on

demand, in accordance with our Electronic Payment Guidance. We are reviewing this policy and considering whether this requirement remains necessary.

In the coming weeks, when you book your taxi for an annual inspection you may be asked some additional questions about what, if any, card payment systems you already use. This information is being gathered so we can establish what additional support is required closer to the date the mandate comes into effect.

We recognise that for some drivers this represents a big change; we will work with you over the coming months to make the transition as smooth as possible.

We will provide updates on our website tfl.gov.uk/tph and in our weekly email to licensees. You can also contact us by email at tph.enquiries@tfl.gov.uk or call us on **0343 222 4444**.

Helen Chapman, general manager, TPH

Top marks

I am a Licensed Taxi Driver (Green Badge) and just wanted to commend you on an excellent publication. I have just read the latest issue of OnRoute magazine and as always, found it to be a very interesting and informative read.

David Marron via email

Plain English

Will the new English and geography tests apply to all private hire drivers or just the new ones? Will all private hire drivers have an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check under the new legislation?

D. J. Lawler

Re the English language and topographical test: we are working on an implementation plan and the tests will apply to all new private hire driver applicants. Consideration will also be given to the appropriate level of testing for existing licensees.

Just like taxi drivers, private hire drivers already have an enhanced DBS check. There are no plans to change this.

Helen Chapman, general manager, TPH

From our Twitter feed

We say...

✔ Please ensure you declare all names, including middle names, when applying for your disclosure certificate and check all your details are correct

✔ If you are renewing your licence online, please ensure that you complete a renewal application, not a new one, as many are making this error

✔ Don't forget vehicles over 12 months old require a six monthly MOT

✔ UK law says that there are no religious grounds which would allow a driver

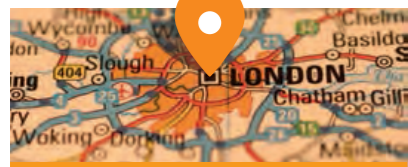
to refuse or overcharge a passenger with an assistance dog

✔ Save time, money and avoid delays when renewing your licence by signing up to the DBS Update Service

You say...

✔ And another arrest from #CabsUnit this time in @MPSWestminster licensed PHV Driver arrested for Touting @TfLTPH

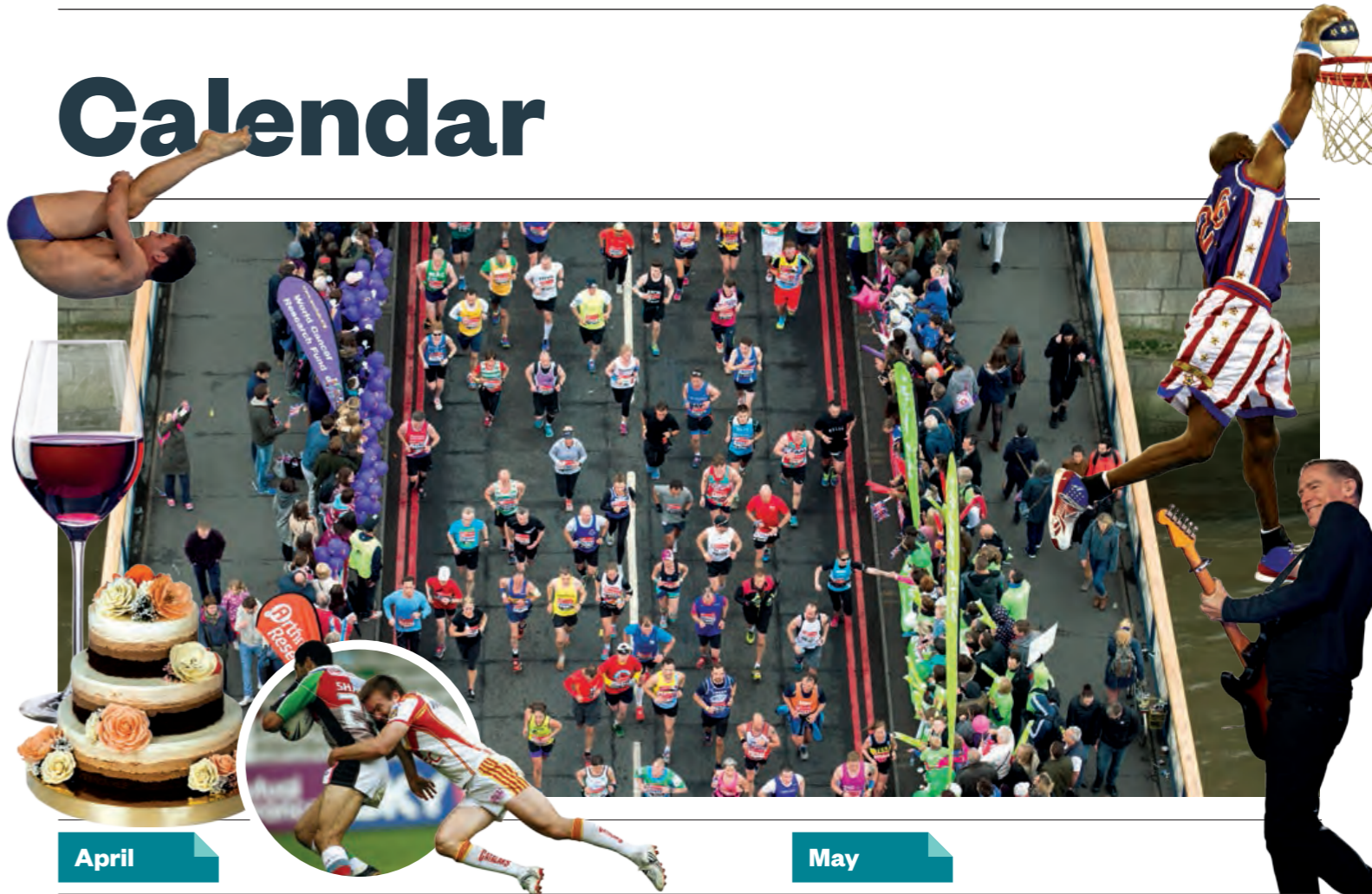
Road&TransportMPS @MPSRTPC



Where am I?

- 1 Where would I find the Chinese Embassy in London?
- 2 Where would I find the French Embassy in London?
- 3 Where would I find the Russian Embassy in London?
- 4 Where would I find the Jamaican High Commission in London?
- 5 Where would I find the Japanese Embassy in London?

Calendar



April

8 April

Leon Bridges concert, Brixton Academy

Years & Years concert, Wembley Arena

Festival of Life, ExCeL Arena

9 April

Vaisakhi, Sikh New Year, City Hall

11 April

Muse concert, O2 Arena (until 15 April)

12 April

The London Book Fair 2016, Olympia (until 14 April)

14 April

Disney on Ice, Wembley Arena (until 17 April)

The Cake Show, Alexandra Palace (until 17 April)

15 April

Jack Garratt concert, Brixton Academy

16 April

European Rugby Cup Semi Finals, Twickenham (and 17 April)

Saracens vs Harlequins Rugby match, Wembley Stadium

20 April

Hollywood Undead concert, Brixton Academy

23 April

Emirates FA Cup, semi final, Wembley Stadium

The Legend of Zelda symphony of the goddess, Wembley Arena

24 April

Emirates FA Cup, semi final, Wembley Stadium

Harlem Globetrotters Basketball game, O2 Arena

Virgin Money London Marathon, Central London

27 April

Kew Lates, Kew Garden (until 28 April)

28 April

Hillsong Colour Conference, Wembley Arena (until 30 April)

Mind, Body Spirit Festival 2016, Olympia (until 1 May)

29 April

UB40, O2 Arena

30 April

Dixie Chicks concert, O2 Arena (and 1 May)

Army vs Navy Rugby match, Twickenham

Saracens vs Newcastle Rugby match, Allianz Park

May

2 May

The London Wine Fair 2016, Olympia (until 6 May)

London Gospel Festival, Kennington Park

3 May

Elevate 2016, Olympia (until 5 May)

7 May

BBL, O2 Arena (and 8 May)

Harlem Globetrotters Basketball game, Wembley Arena

Bryan Adams concert, O2 Arena

James concert, Brixton Academy

Harlequins vs Exeter Chiefs Rugby match, The Stoop

RFU Cup Finals, Twickenham

9 May

European Swimming, Diving and Synchronised Swimming Championships, Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park (until 21 May)

11 May

Busted concert, Wembley Arena

13 May

Sarah Millican, Hammersmith Apollo (and 14 May)

14 May

SSE Women's FA Cup, final, Wembley Stadium

The Sessions at Abbey Road concert, Wembley Arena (and 15 May)

Moonwalk 2016, Clapham Common (and 15 May)

The Anti Aging Show 2016, Olympia (and 15 May)

Mass participation event on South Lawn, Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, Stratford (until 17 May)

21 May

Emirate's FA Cup, final, Wembley Stadium

A guide to assistance dogs for private hire drivers

Passengers with assistance dogs use private hire services to make their way around the Capital. In the UK there are more than 7,000 active working dogs. 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.'

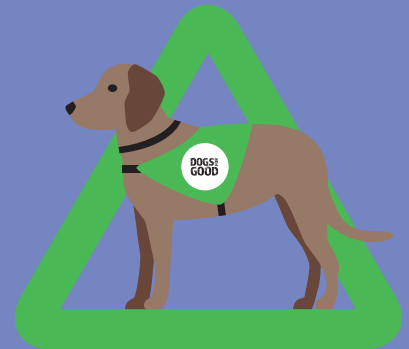
Canine Partners' assistance dogs are for physically disabled adults.



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? Taxi drivers or private hire drivers and operators doing so could risk losing their licence or facing a fine.