

OnRoute

TfL's magazine for taxi and private hire

From A to Z

Streamlining topographical assessments by going online

Just giving

Charity round-up special



Dream machines

Real reviews of the electric taxi

Park and plug-in

Inside lamp post electric chargers

Know-how

Switching from private hire to taxi driver

Rank and file

Respect the rules about ranking

A guide to assistance dogs for private hire drivers

Passengers with assistance dogs use private hire services to make their way around the Capital. These are some of the dogs you might come across. Please remember not all assistance dogs have a jacket to identify them. If in doubt, you should allow the assistance dog to travel with their owner. Assistance dogs are your passengers too.

Guide Dogs

'We wear **white** harnesses with **yellow** fluorescent stripes.'

Guide dogs are for young people and adults who are blind or partially sighted.



Hearing Dogs for Deaf People

'We wear **burgundy** jackets.'

Hearing dogs are for adults and children with hearing impairments.



Dog AID (Assistance in Disability)

'We wear **red** jackets.'

Dog AID dogs are for physically disabled adults.



Canine Partners

'We wear **purple** jackets.'

Canine Partners' assistance dogs are for physically disabled adults.



Dogs for Good

'We wear **green** jackets.'

Dogs for Good assistance dogs are for people with physical disabilities, or children with autism.



Support Dogs

'We wear **blue** jackets.'

Assistance dogs for physically disabled adults, seizure alert dogs for people with epilepsy, and autism assistance dogs for children with autism.



Medical Detection Dogs

'We wear **red** jackets.'

Medical detection dogs are for adults and children with complex health conditions.



Did you know it is against the law to refuse or charge a passenger more because they have an assistance dog? Private hire drivers and operators doing so could risk being prosecuted or losing their licence.

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Welcome.

As the Capital gears up for the party season, TPH is having a busy time with new online content, innovations and operations. Making sure the trade is safe for drivers and passengers alike is always a top priority and already in place is this year's Safer Transport at Night campaign (p11) ensuring Londoners and visitors know how to get home safely after dark.

On p28 we cover the Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing report from the Department for Transport's (DfT) Task and Finish Group. This calls for new legislation to improve what the trade offers in London.

There are lots of new and updated taxi and private hire pages on the TfL website (tfl.gov.uk/tph), one of which describes the new topographical assessment for private hire drivers. We cover what the assessment entails on p12. We also catch up with two former private hire drivers who are discovering the amazing world of the Knowledge (p20).

They say Christmas is a time for giving and we have news on more wonderful charity events in this issue (p8).

OnRoute would like to extend season's greetings to you all and whatever else you find yourself doing over the festive season, have fun and most importantly, drive safely.

If there's something you'd like us to cover in future issues of OnRoute, just drop us a line at OnRoute@tfl.gov.uk

D Pilgrim
Editor

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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.

In our next issue...

- Myth busting
- Are you ULEZ-ready?
- Safety in private hire vehicles

News



All change at Nine Elms

The next steps for improving the area around Nine Elms have been confirmed by TfL

More than £1bn of new transport and social infrastructure is being funded by local developers, transforming Nine Elms into a vibrant new central London district.

The proposals will see the 2.5km stretch of Nine Elms Lane and Battersea Park Road completely redesigned to make more accessible and people-friendly streets, including Cycle Superhighway 8, wider pavements and 23 new or improved pedestrian crossings.

Due to the length of the route the scheme has been divided into seven sections, with sections one to three along the western side of Battersea Park Road and sections four to seven along the eastern end of Battersea Park Road and Nine Elms Lane.

Construction is likely to take place between 2020 and 2021. TfL and Wandsworth Council will coordinate with other work in the area to seek cost efficiencies and minimise disruption.

To view the full consultation report, go to tfl.gov.uk/nine-elms-lane

Data security

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) came into force on 25 May this year. To reflect the changes to the law, TfL has published an updated version of its privacy and data protection guide for private hire operators. To download a copy, go to bit.ly/private-hire-operator-privacy-data-protection

Roads update

Until Saturday 15 December, there will be a series of closures underneath the elevated section of the A4 for works being carried out by Highways England:

- Single lane closures will be in place from 05:00 until 22:00 Monday to Friday
- Full closures will be in place from 22:00 until 05:00 each night
- Over the weekends, there will be full closures from 22:00 on Friday until 05:00 on Monday, when diversions will be in place

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For more information, go to bit.ly/A4-closures

Shoreditch

Hackney Council has implemented a new scheme in Shoreditch creating two pedestrian and cycle-only zones. Ultra low emission vehicles have been exempted from the scheme. However, following a legal challenge, no enforcement action will be taken against taxis and private hire vehicles entering the zone from Ravey Street then Willow Street, pending the outcome of legal proceedings.

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For updates, go to www.hackney.gov.uk/ulev-streets



If you need to notify us of a change of details for your current licence, please email tpH.enquiries@tfl.gov.uk

Taxi rank news

From 23 November until 6 January 2019, Winter Wonderland in Hyde Park will be open every day from 10:00 – 22:00, except Christmas Day.

The closest taxi rank is located to the north of the site on the northbound carriageway of Park Lane. The nearest entrance/exit is Brook Gate.

Tottenham Hale Station forecourt will be closed while station upgrade works take place. A marshalled temporary taxi rank will be available in Ashley Road from:

- Saturday 17 November – Sunday 18 November
- Saturday 1 December – Sunday 2 December

On Saturday 29 December, taxi marshals will be in attendance at Tobacco Dock from 21.00 to 00.00.

New look Stoke Newington

TfL and Hackney Council want your views on proposals to transform the Stoke Newington gyratory to make the area more people-friendly.

The existing gyratory system would be removed and replaced with a new northbound cycle track on the A10 with bus stop bypasses, and a new bus and cycle lane enabling people to cycle southbound on Stoke Newington High Street.

Other changes include:

- Three new pedestrian crossings, all with pedestrian countdown
- A new 20mph speed limit and raised junction and crossings
- A raised carriageway with coloured surface between Brooke Road and Stoke Newington Church Street
- New modal filters at the junctions of Tyssen, Hollar and Batley Roads, and the High Street

Hackney Council's initial consultation seeking views on removing the gyratory was supported by 70 per cent of respondents.

The consultation will close Friday 30 November.



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For more details and to have your say, go to consultations.tfl.gov.uk/roads/stoke-newington-gyratory

Countdown to ULEZ

On 8 April 2019, the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) will be introduced to London to help clean up our toxic air and reduce harmful NOx road transport emissions. Private hire vehicles will need to meet ULEZ standards, or pay a daily charge for entering the zone. There will be a temporary exception for designated wheelchair-accessible PHVs. Taxis are exempt from the charge.

●●●

To find out how these changes will affect you, go to tfl.gov.uk/ulez

Electric green and pleasant land

In September, a £106m package for projects developing green battery, vehicle and refuelling technology was unveiled by the Prime Minister at the country's first ever Zero Emission Vehicle Summit

Speaking at the event in Birmingham, Theresa May said she wants the UK to become the world leader in low emission technology as part of a drive to keep the country green.

A further £500m of private sector investment from companies including Aston Martin and the Lloyds Banking Group was announced, and support from the EV Network, working with Leclanché to develop 200 fast charging stations across the UK.



TPH licensing in numbers

23,441

Taxi drivers

20,486

Taxi vehicle licences

108,627

Private hire driver licences

87,375

Private hire vehicle licences

2,277

Private hire operators



Woolwich river crossing

The Woolwich Ferry will be closed until late December while refurbishment takes place. Vehicles should use alternative crossings. These have a number of height, weight and width restrictions so you should check before you travel at tfl.gov.uk/trafficnews or by following @TfLTrafficNews

Charity news

Party time

On Sunday 7 October, the Taxi Charity for Military Veterans threw a 70th anniversary party at The Royal Hospital, Chelsea to thank London cab drivers for all their hard work.

More than 250 guests including drivers and veterans enjoyed entertainment from singer Beverley Stone, the London Swing Patrol dance group and Joe Lewis.

Vice President, Dick Goodwin said: 'The event was a lovely way to both thank the wonderful drivers who support us and to celebrate the 70th anniversary of this amazing charity.'



For more information, go to www.taxicharity.org



RIP Harry Joel MBE

It was with great sadness that the Taxi Charity for Military Veterans announced the passing of Harry Joel MBE, on 28 October.

Harry served with the Royal Navy before becoming a cabbie and then worked tirelessly for the benefit of veterans. He was made Honorary Life President of the Taxi Charity in 2006 and will be greatly missed.



School's out!

The London Taxi Drivers' Fund for Underprivileged Children has now been rebranded as the London Taxi Drivers' Charity for Children (LTCFC). On 7 September it celebrated its generous grant of £18,902 to Coram's Fields nursery for the refurbishment of its playground.

The grant has paid for the resurfacing of the outdoor play area with fun, interactive designs painted on the surface and for the purchase of new, mobile educational play equipment, which supports the development of children attending the nursery.

Michael Son, LTCFC President, explained: 'Last year we had an appeal for recreational equipment for the nursery and as it was our 90th anniversary, we thought "why don't we fund the whole thing?" and that's what we have done. We wanted to make it a memorial to Bill Tyzak, the former Life President of the charity and my mentor, and so have also unveiled a plaque to his memory at the site.'



For more information, go to www.ltcfc.org.uk

Lest we forget



Poppy cabs were out in force again this Remembrance Sunday, ferrying veterans to and from the Cenotaph service. Drivers gave up their time (and cabs) for free to make more than 1,000 taxi journeys in just two hours from hub locations including the main London rail stations, the Victory Services Club and the Union Jack Club. Knowledge students and family members were also on hand to help marshal the event.

Return journeys started from Westminster Bridge where there were around 150 taxis lined up to take the veterans back to their various locations. In recent years, more than 5,000 veterans have used the Poppy Cab service on the day.



You can follow Poppy Cabs on Twitter @PoppyCabs



are you A WORLD WAR TWO VETERAN?

WE are a London-based charity run entirely by volunteers in the licensed London taxi trade and we are looking for WWII veterans to join us for trips and outings in the UK, and to France and Holland.

- Outings are for veterans and a carer
- Travel is by licensed London taxi
- Pick-up from own home (if within M25) or from main locations in central London
- All trips and outings are free (travel to central London is at own cost)

FOR FURTHER DETAILS CONTACT

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www.taxicharity.org · Twitter @TaxiCharity



TAXI CHARITY for MILITARY VETERANS
Charity Reg. N° 264678

Taxi tour

This year's Magical Taxi Tour, taking children with life-limiting illnesses to Disneyland Paris, set off from Canary Wharf on September 28. The convoy of roughly 100 taxis with support vehicles and police outriders made its way across the Channel and down through France in glorious, bright weather.

This was a memorable tour as Disney gave special permission for three taxis to parade down Main Street shortly before the Disney floats and characters drove by. In attendance were six people who have volunteered for every one of the trips that have taken place since the tour began in 1994 – five taxi drivers (John Hill, Fred Levy, Shaun Harris, Ian Parsons and Ken Flemwell) and Gillian Wilson, the coordinator at Chase Farm Hospital.



To get involved, go to www.magicaltaxitour.com



Charity news



A cab called Pops

'Lightbulb' moments can happen at any time and for taxi driver turned writer Fiona Kennedy, hers came as she sat in a traffic jam in Park Lane

'In my mind's eye I suddenly saw this flying taxi and the idea of a magic taxi was born,' she explains. 'A little while later, I was helping on a school trip going to the British Museum when we passed Battersea Power Station in the coach. I got the children to start counting all the cranes working on the site and took a video on my phone. That's when I had my 'wow' moment. It was just amazing and I thought "I'm going to write a story about a magic taxi that is going to go to Battersea".'

Mother of three Fiona had never written stories before but had always had lots of ideas she jotted down in a notebook. Once she had the initial outline for her story, with the taxi going on an adventure at Battersea Power Station, she started filling it out with characters. Her nine-year-old son inspired the character of Joe and her best friend's daughter Poppy gave her the inspiration for the cab's name and the book's title: 'Pops the Magic Taxi'.

Being a cabbie, Fiona got talking to some of her passengers about her

idea and they offered her advice and suggestions. During London Book Fair she picked up someone in the trade who told her she could find everything she needed online, including an editor who thought the story would work best as an illustrated children's book.

Fiona decided to self-publish and Pops the Magic Taxi has been available on Amazon since July. The real-life Poppy suffers from the rare genetic disorder Rett Syndrome and part of the proceeds from sales of the book will go to the charity Rett UK.

For the future, Fiona says this is just the first in a series of adventures Pops the magic taxi will have and she has already written the second instalment. 'If you believe in something and really believe it is going to work, you won't lose anything by trying,' she says. 'I'd say to anyone who wants to write a book, invest in a proper manuscript report prepared by a professional, because family and friends won't be as honest with you as a professional will!'



Grab a copy of Pops

We have three signed copies of the book to give away; all you have to do is tell us when Battersea Power Station opened:

- A.1920
- B.1933
- C.1945

Email your answer with your name and postal address to OnRoute@tfl.gov.uk using Pops the Magic Taxi in the subject line. Closing date for entries is November 30 2018. For terms and conditions, go to tfl.gov.uk/terms

The book is available from Amazon at www.amazon.co.uk with the Kindle edition priced at £2.25. For more information on the book, go to www.popsthemagictaxi.com

Getting home safely

The Safer Travel at Night (STaN) campaign aims to keep both Londoners and visitors safe after dark

From September onwards, London hosts a series of big night-time events. From Oktoberfest through Halloween to Bonfire Night and then Christmas parties, everyone is keen to experience the Capital's famous night life. Many of those out and about after dark are young students or tourists who may never have visited the city before and may not be aware of our two-tier taxi and private hire system.

The first part of the STaN campaign ran between 24 September to 7 October to deliver targeted police enforcement to identify, disrupt and deter any illegal taxi or private hire activity, and engage with customers on how best to travel safely at night.

This was a longer period than usual and included operator visits, foot patrols, joint working between TPH compliance officers and police on stop sites and in patrol cars, and handing out leaflets to customers before and after visiting night venues. Compliance teams were also out on the street on intelligence-led enforcement operations.

Siwan Hayward, TfL's head of Transport Policing, says: 'We want Londoners and visitors to be safe and feel safe when they travel in the Capital. Operation STaN is an important part of the action we take to improve the safety of travelling after dark and has a particular focus on women's safety in taxis and private hire vehicles. Our compliance officers have been working with police colleagues to raise awareness of the dangers of using unbooked minicabs and taking action against drivers who are breaking the law. This is an important time of year for our STaN activity with many new students in London who are often unaware that unbooked minicabs are illegal and unsafe.'

The campaign will ramp up again in the coming weeks, making sure the message reaches as many members of the public as possible. Customers are being urged to report any inappropriate behaviour including touching, remarks about their appearance or anything that makes them feel uncomfortable.



Above: The STaN leaflet
Below: TPH compliance officers working with the police



As a driver you can report any unwanted sexual behaviour or inappropriate behaviour you see from other drivers by calling the customer complaint line on 0343 222 4000, emailing TPHintel@tfl.gov.uk, or filling in the online complaints form.

If you feel a customer may be in immediate danger, call 999. All complaints and reports to TfL or the police will be fully investigated and appropriate action will be taken.

STaN operations:
24 September - 7 October 2018

797
total deployments

Including:

122
high visibility patrols by the Roads and Transport Policing Command

36
stop sites - 11 (TPH compliance officers), 25 (joint working with police)

2
working with other licensing authorities

101
night foot patrols

18,675
drivers and vehicles checked

36 per cent
of checks were non-compliant (3,489)

49
operator engagements

12,580
customer engagements

17,784
STaN leaflets distributed

32
Traffic offence reports (TORS) issued

Strictly topographical

The private hire topographical assessment has gone online saving time, increasing security and streamlining the marking process

“The questions are still based on the A-Z maps, but now pen and paper have been swapped for a click on a mouse to complete the test”

Gerard Doherty, Topographical Skills Manager

Until now, topographical assessments have been done on paper at one of the eight assessment centres. Candidates have had two hours to demonstrate their map-reading skills by filling in a 16-page test booklet, based on A-Z maps. An assessor then had to physically review each booklet.

Gerard Doherty, Topographical Skills Manager explains how cumbersome the paper process was: ‘From a candidate’s perspective, two hours of writing and having to plan their route could be quite taxing. From the assessors’ point of view, the completed papers had to be couriered back to the office where they were marked by hand by one assessor and then that marking was quality assured by a second person. So, we’ve known for some time we had to change the whole process.’

The Tech and Data team at TfL started looking for an online solution 18 months ago. A company called Questionmark developed a programme adapted from existing software used by London Underground. The resulting assessment is now live at most of the test centres.

‘Candidates still come into the test centres and still have two hours to answer questions based on the A-Z maps, but now pen and paper have been swapped for a click on a mouse to complete the test. The standard and materials haven’t changed, just the format in which it is delivered,’ says Gerard.

‘We have compiled 450 questions and the software randomly picks 31 for each candidate to answer. Some are drop down questions (such as, give the page number and coordinates of a

certain destination) and candidates are also given routes they need to plot by using the mouse to draw a line on the A-Z digital map. We don’t expect a private hire driver to have the same level of specialist topographical knowledge a taxi driver has, but we do expect them to be familiar with and able to use A-Z maps, and they must base their answers on the book in front of them and nothing else. We like to believe that if candidates prepare properly, look at the guidance page on the TfL website and watch the video that’s there, then they will do OK.’

Assessing the answers is not totally automated; the assessors still go through the plotted routes to see how closely they align with the most direct and correct route. Candidates lose points if their route is too wide of the ideal or if they make any illegal moves (such as going the wrong way down a one-way street). The amount of points they lose is all prescribed so it is an objective exercise. This means the whole marking process is now quicker.

‘The great beauty of its being online is we can easily analyse the results and see which questions everyone is failing and which they are passing,’ comments Gerard. ‘We’ll keep reviewing it to see how it is going. A-Z maps are updated every 18 months, so when they get changed we will adapt our questions as well.’

So far, candidates have given the new format the thumbs up and as Gerard explains, the software gives TPH a platform it can adapt to test candidates on other subjects such as customer service, lane markings or road signage, accessibility and safe guarding.

The new topographical assessment in numbers

Questions to answer:
31 (subject to review)

Time to complete:
2 hours

Times candidates can take the test:
2

Assessment centres:
8

Smallest centre:
5 candidates

Largest centre:
40 candidates

Assessors:
24



You can find information on the topographical assessment and a helpful video on the TfL website. Go to www.tfl.gov.uk/topographical

Switched on to the future



Paul Chrisostomou, HP Taxis

Taxi drivers road test the new electric eCity

Since 1 January, all newly licensed taxis in London have had to be Zero Emission Capable (ZEC), which will help phase out diesel taxis by 2032. But what does this mean for fleet owners and drivers? OnRoute meets three pioneers who are already on the electric circuit...

Fleet owner Paul Chrisostomou has been running HP Taxis in E14 for three years. He has embraced the move to electric with 12 of LEVC's eCity taxis already on the road, seven more on order and plans to take on another 20 next year.

'My fleet is 99 per cent electric – we have a couple of diesels left – but by the end of next year, I'd like to have a larger fleet of electrics.'

'I can't see any negatives so far. From a fleet-management perspective, the new taxis are more cost-effective because the old ones were so high maintenance. On a diesel TX4, the brake pads

needed changing every 8–10,000 miles – the first electric taxi we leased out has done 20,000 miles so far and there's barely any wear on the pads. That's where your costs mount up – brake pads and tyres are your biggest expenses.'

'It is a big initial outlay, yes, but in the long run we are more interested in fleet management than fleet ownership.'

'What you see around town now is a lot of old diesels coming up to 15-years-old. Fleets have had to keep them this long to make their money back for the remaining 10 years after the initial five years of finance. But fleet owners are going to have to go over to electric eventually. I took a deep breath and went for it. My view was we know it's coming, so we may as well do it now.'

'The driver pays a bit more in rental – about £60 a week – but saves money on fuel so the whole jigsaw fits. It's a very scalable business.'



Gavin Malcom, taxi driver

Gavin Malcom has been a cabbie for eight years and took collection of his new electric taxi in September.

Why would you recommend it?

I'm definitely saving money. I would put £30 diesel in the old taxi and get about 80/90 miles. I can charge the new one for around £5 and get 60 miles from it. The braking system seems good, although I think the real test will be in the winter, with the snow and ice. I'd give it 10 out of 10 for performance and the noise is virtually non-existent when it's in electric mode.

Customer feedback?

People are mesmerised by the new cab and I'm actually getting more tips. They really like the panoramic roof, especially tourists, because so much of what you want to see in London is high up.

Where and when do you charge it?

I can't charge it at home as I live in a flat and there aren't a lot of charging places where I am in East London. I think that could be better. My nearest charging point is about three miles away. If I charge for around 45-50 minutes, I can get 60 miles driving from that.

There is still a bit of confusion over points, too. I've charged at the Holiday Inn at Old Street before, but was told by someone I wasn't allowed to and had to move. And on my Polar app, the charging points don't always show up.

Any negatives?

The mirrors – they've been designed not to clip other vehicles, which happened a lot in the old cabs. But for me, the angles and positioning are not as perfect as they could be. I'm getting used to them, but it is something I've noticed.

The microphone is designed to help passengers who are hard of hearing, but it feels like you're shouting. Customers have pointed that out to me, so I tend to turn mine off. The new cabs are so quiet, you can usually hear without it anyway.

“ People are mesmerised by the new cab and I'm actually getting more tips ”

Gavin Malcom

**Did you know...**

There are now 761 eCity ZEC taxis working in London

Everton Thomas gained his cabbie's badge in July 2017 and took delivery of his new electric cab in March of this year.

Why would you recommend it?

It's all about comfort. When I first got my TX4, I was surprised how drivers could sit in it for up to 10 hours a day. Now, I enjoy my day more and work a little longer. The power steering is good and the braking has a retarder system, similar to what you get on buses, which I used to drive. There's also a preconditioning mode so when it's plugged into my wall at home, I can set the cab to warm up before I start my shift, without using any of the charge that I want for actual driving.

Customer feedback?

People comment on how quiet it is. It's so smooth; they sometimes think you've cut out! When you stop at lights, you can actually hear the diesel engines from the other cabs you are next to.

Where and when do you charge it?

I charge at home when I finish my shift. I don't often charge in town, only if I stop for lunch or I'm meeting someone. Cost-wise it's better than it was before. I can get half a shift out of one five-hour charge. The other half I run on petrol and save my electric charge for when I am in town because when I go over 30mph, the taxi uses a lot more unnecessary electric power, so I might as well run it on petrol then.

Any negatives?

The battery performance drops a bit because of the weather. When I first got the cab, we had that late snow in March and when the heater is on, you lose some electric charge. In summer, you get around 63 miles per electric charge, in the winter it's more like about 45 to 50. I also think the angle of the For Hire light could be better. It's not as dominant as the old one. Sometimes, when you have a job on during the day, passengers on the street think you are still available and try to flag you down.



For more details on the LEVC eCity, go to www.theelectrictaxi.co.uk

“ The new cab is a British icon brought up to date but totally identifiable from a distance ”

Everton Thomas



Over 100 new electric vehicle rapid charge points will help you make a cleaner getaway

Some exclusively for taxis and others for rapid charging cars and vans

Working with partners, this is part of the commitment by the Mayor, Sadiq Khan, and TfL to help Londoners breathe cleaner air.

Search TfL Improvements

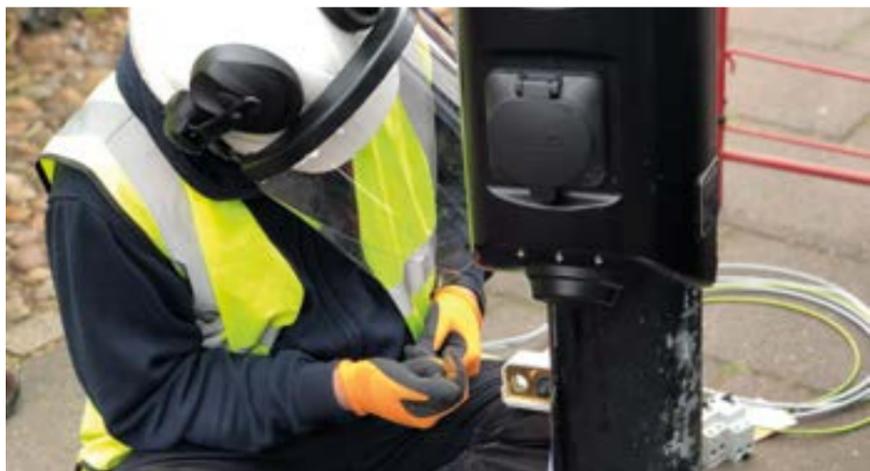


MAYOR OF LONDON





Technological solutions are making the switch to electric vehicles easier



Here's the dilemma: you'd like to buy an electric vehicle and you'd like to charge it overnight, but you don't have off-street parking. Until recently the only answer has been to charge at one of the public chargers in parking bays around London, but now there's a more convenient solution closer to home – simply plug your vehicle into a lamp post on your street.

Char.gy is one of four lamp post charging companies on the TfL EV Charging Infrastructure Procurement Framework (along with Swarco, Joju and Siemens [in partnership with Ubitricity]). Together they are planning to deliver up to 1,000 lamp post chargers across London.

» Did you know...

78 per cent of households in London do not have off-street parking.

Inspiration and innovation

Richard Stobart, CEO of Char.gy, started to think about solving the charging problem three years ago when he and a friend developed a prototype charger that could be attached to existing street furniture so no new cabling needs to be laid. Also, because the electric vehicles using the chargers park in existing standard residential bays, traffic orders requesting dedicated bays are not needed. Putting the charger into the lamp post is a simple process and takes about 90 minutes.

'People are requesting streets (via the char.gy website) where they want to have a charger and the local councils are getting those requests,' explains Richard. 'As soon as some councils start installing them, others will follow suit. We have already installed one charger in Southwark and are about to install another 49 there. Lambeth is doing trials and Richmond (which already has 28 lamp post chargers courtesy of Ubitricity) and Wandsworth are very keen.'

The lamp post chargers are ideal for charging overnight. They deliver around 5.3kW, which equates to 21 miles per hour of charging. A charge of between five and seven hours should deliver more than enough mileage for a taxi or private hire driver to do a day's work. All the vehicle owner needs is a standard Type 2 cable to attach to the charger and mobile phone access.

How much will it cost?

Charging an electric vehicle is significantly cheaper than putting petrol or diesel into a conventional car. Char.gy has a number of different payment options for members including unlimited charging at 15p per kW, and the pricing for pay-as-you-go works out as equivalent to 60mpg.

Future technology

Lamp posts are not the end of Richard's ambition; he is now working on a bollard solution where councils have moved lamp posts from the kerbside to the house side of a pavement. They will look like an ordinary bollard with an angled, circular top. The bollard sits in a retention socket and if it gets damaged it is simply unplugged from the socket and a new one is plugged in.

'I'm very excited about it all,' he says. 'If you think about how you use your laptop, you don't go somewhere to charge it, you charge it at home and that's how cars will be in the future, even if you don't have off-street parking. Not having these chargers is stopping people from switching to electric but it is definitely coming; electric cars are the future and people will want to charge them outside their houses at small, unobtrusive chargers. More car manufacturers are producing electric cars and a whole raft of them are being launched next year, and I think that could well be a tipping point for electric vehicles.'

For now though, Richard is enjoying a 70-mile range from charging his own electric Renault Zoe at a lamp post in his street. 'It was quite a jump from talking about it in theory to swapping from my big diesel car,' he says, 'but I am absolutely loving it!'

Images: Installation of the chargers takes just 90 minutes

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Some boroughs are running their own lamp post charging schemes. Kensington and Chelsea has 62 lamp post chargers installed by Ubitricity next to pay and display bays throughout the borough. These are accessed via charging cables with built-in electricity meters.

New all-electric models coming to market

- Audi E-Tron Quattro (SUV) – predicted range of 310 miles (Also Audi electric coupe 2019)
- Jaguar electric I-Pace SUV 4-wheel drive – two-hour full charge from a standard charging point
- Mercedes EQA – predicted range 250 miles (Also Mercedes EQC 2019)
- Tesla Model 3 (2019)
- Volvo first all-electric V40 SUV (2019)



● ● ● If you would like to request a Char.gy charging point in your street, go to www.char.gy

You can also register your interest in having other chargers in your street at www.powermystreet.co.uk

For more information on electric vehicles and charging, go to tfl.gov.uk/rapidcharging

The right stuff



Banchiamlak Tafere

The Knowledge is tough, but OnRoute meets two drivers who are loving the switch from private hire to being London cabbies



Ben Heffes

Banchiamlak Tafere

If being a single mum to four boys, one of whom has health issues, weren't enough, 50-year-old Banchiamlak Tafere is now tackling the awesome Knowledge. She came to London from Ethiopia in 1997 and has held a private hire licence for five years. Taxi drivers she knew from the Ethiopian community encouraged her to do the Knowledge.

'A friend was doing the Knowledge and I helped them call over the runs and thought it was so hard. My friend said "you're already a driver so why don't you do it?" I said "no way", but I changed my mind because I like driving and I just want to work, and like to be self-employed because of the flexibility. I bought the maps and then I started and I loved it, and am now doing it every day and can't wait to learn the points and runs and call them over.

When you live in a country, even though you are not from there, learning by actually going out and seeing for yourself is much better than learning at school. I don't use a moped, I do the runs in my car and I like going out at night because the roads are so much quieter, then I sleep in the mornings.

When I started doing the Knowledge I thought I knew London, but I really didn't! It's like I was

blind and now I've opened my eyes and I just love learning.

I'm not saying that I don't need money, but for me, it's much more important to achieve something. Before in my life, I had to do things other people told me to do, but I'm not a little girl anymore, I am a grown woman. I had a brain but I didn't use it much and I never thought I could do the Knowledge in a million years.

The number one thing you need to do the Knowledge is commitment and you have to be able to visualise the runs. One of the things I've found difficult is the points (of interest). I find them very hard to remember because a lot of them have very similar names although I know where they are physically.

I have two or three friends who are doing the Knowledge as well, so they are my call over partners and we sit and drink coffee round a really big map in my house. That's really helping me a lot.

When I was a private hire driver I used GPS all the time but I don't now - I think the route through. I can't wait to become a licensed taxi driver.'

“ The more I do it the more I love it and the more I love it the more I know ”

Banchiamlak Tafere,
Knowledge student

Ben Heffes

After nearly 20 years in IT, 45-year-old Ben decided he'd had enough of an office job. While studying the Knowledge, he also worked as a private hire driver for Addison Lee. He gained his badge in March 2017.

'I have friends and family who are taxi drivers and they suggested driving for private hire to experience the whole cab game before doing the Knowledge, just to get me into it.

I'm originally from London and had done various driving jobs when I was younger. I thought I had a reasonable knowledge of London until I actually started the Knowledge! It took me four years - I started in 2012 just after the Olympics - and now I've been driving nearly two years. I knew through my friends and family it was going to be hard but I'm up for a challenge; if something is worth doing then it's worth doing well.

I went out on a moped and really put the hours in, doing weekends and evenings, it was quite hectic. I went to the Knowledge Point school quite a lot and that was very helpful - just calling over with other Knowledge boys.

I've made some good friends since I've been out working, genuinely nice people. Ironically, London is actually quite a small place and you often find yourself driving past people you

know and you often bump into the same cabbies on ranks or at the airport. I'm now part of a WhatsApp group which is useful for telling you about traffic details such as where is congested or where more taxis are needed.

What I love about it is the independence; I come and go as I please, I do what I like and I'm not making money for other people anymore. I'm also not doing hours of overtime for no pay.

Where I go depends on the time of year it is. I'll often start at the airport really early in order to get a fare into town and get running around the centre. If I've had a long night or I'm tired, then I'll go on a rank at Claridges, Waterloo, the Strand or Mayfair. I'm on MyTaxi and get quite a bit of work from that.

The work is still there but you have got to have the right temperament. You have to have a lot of patience and you've got to stick with it. You have to apply yourself and you have to be persistent.

If you want to succeed at the Knowledge you have got to do the hard miles and the points regularly. You have to do it properly. I've known people who have tried to do it via Google, but you have to get out on the road and do it by the Blue Book - there is a method to it.'

“ Doing the Knowledge is a rite of passage ”

Ben Heffes, taxi driver

●●● You can learn more about studying the Knowledge at tfl.gov.uk/knowledge

In the hot seat

OnRoute catches up with Acting General Manager of TPH, Graham Robinson

Q Tell us a bit about yourself.

A I'm originally from Stoke-on-Trent and have a background in complaints and appeals. I started with TfL in 2003, working in Coventry in the congestion charging team, but eventually moved to London in 2010 when I was promoted and started with TPH as head of driver licensing. Then, as part of a restructure, the role was expanded to cover the entire licensing department.

As General Manager I'm looking at all aspects of regulation and licensing at TPH including ranks, policy, and strategy. It's a really busy role and there are lots of things to get involved in. It's helped me to recognise the dedication of the individual teams within TPH and all the work they do.

Q What's keeping you busy at the moment?

A I am working on the re-let of our licensing IT system and looking at how we can improve all our services online. This will make it easier for our customers to self-serve.

We are also reviewing the current approach to the English language assessment, aiming to bring in the changes in April next year.

I'm also really pleased that we are now able to offer the topographical assessment online (see p12).

Q What's coming up?

A We are working on a number of consultations and are keen to get the considered views of the taxi and private hire trades to the proposals we are putting forward.

We will shortly be announcing the outcome of our consultation on private hire vehicle safety, which included proposals for an advanced driving test for private hire drivers and improved signage to help customers recognise private hire vehicles. There will be more on this before the end of the year.

We also plan to launch a second consultation on private hire vehicle safety, based on the policy paper we published in February which examines the future of the industry.

Q What about the future of the taxi and private hire trade?

A Like the Mayor I am very committed to ensuring we retain the two-tier system between taxi and private hire and would like to see taxi numbers start to increase. It's important to London to have both modes there so they complement each other.

We are collaborating with Ofqual to see if we can get the Knowledge accredited and are exploring the possibility of study loans to support people as they work through the Knowledge.

There's also the drive towards increasing the number of ZEC taxis in London in order to get a reduction of 45 per cent in NOx emissions by 2020. The next generation of taxis will definitely help the taxi trade, as will the increase in electric charging provision. I think that by this time next year, the uptake of electric vehicles in London will be really exciting. Private hire drivers have a lot more choice when it comes to hybrid and pure electric vehicles and I think operators are realising they should move that way sooner rather than later. I think there's a need for operators to understand their role in this, too.

Q So, is it better up north or down south?

A I really enjoy being in London as there is so much to see and do, although I think it's important to recognise the differences between different parts of the country. You can then see the attractions of living in London with so much to do and it being so busy, and the benefits of a quieter part of the country that is less busy and just a different way of living. My family is really happy down here and I can't see me going back up north for a while, other than for the odd football game.

I've got no plans to leave TPH and look forward to other opportunities in the future.

“ Like the Mayor, I am very committed to retaining the two-tier system between taxi and private hire and would like to see taxi numbers start to increase ”

Graham Robinson



Rank and file

OnRoute keeps you on the straight and narrow about ranking rules and regulations

“Private hire vehicles caught using taxi ranks get a warning for a first offence. Repeat offenders face licensing action”

Know your ranks

There are three types of taxi ranks in London with their own distinct rules. However, common to them all is that private hire vehicles are not allowed to use them.

Working ranks

The drivers of the first two taxis on the rank or on any separate portion of the rank must be with their taxis at all times and must be available for hiring immediately. Drivers should never leave their taxis unattended on a working rank as this means drivers who want to pick up customers can't get on to it and customers can't hire a taxi on the rank.

Compliance officer, Karl Williams explains: 'I'd just like all drivers to understand the importance of a working rank - it's an opportunity for taxi drivers to make money. If ranks are being misused it can have a negative effect on anyone who does want to use the ranks - taxi drivers and customers.'

'We need to raise awareness with drivers about this as we see this behaviour all over London (see separate box below) and it's not just taxis. Private hire vehicles and private cars also pull up and park on taxi ranks. If we see this happening we approach them and ask them nicely to move because it's a rank for working taxi drivers.'

Rest ranks

Taxi drivers are permitted to leave their cabs on a designated rest rank for a maximum of 60 minutes (see list overleaf).

Refreshment ranks

Taxi drivers can leave their cabs on a refreshment rank for a maximum of 45 minutes. All drivers using refreshment ranks must use the facilities of the cabmen's shelter when it is open.

Taking action

TPH processes reports of ranking infringements submitted by its compliance officers and also from the City of London and Metropolitan police. In the first instance, a warning letter is sent to the driver. Any further warnings may lead to licensing action being taken against the driver.

If you see drivers infringing taxi rank rules you can report the incident direct to TPH at tfl.gov.uk/tph-comments or on the Twitter feed, @TFLTPH

Taxi and private hire rank contraventions

1 April - 13 October 2018

Licence Description	Category	Total
Private hire	Illegally parked on rank	113
Taxi	Not with taxi on rank	488
	Total	601

Left: Taxis ranking outside Harrods
Right: A refreshment rank



A case in point

Compliance officers were patrolling around the Stratford area during a West Ham football match. In Roundhouse Lane they saw a long line of customers waiting for a taxi while several unattended taxis were parked on the working rank. Rather than report the drivers, the compliance officers tried to call them to get them to come back so they wouldn't miss out on an opportunity to work. Sadly, when they did get through to one of the drivers on the phone he said: 'Sorry mate, I can't really hear you. I'm at a football match!'

Fit for the future

In September, The DfT published the Task and Finish Group on Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing report, focusing on making national legislation fit for purpose in our taxi and private hire industries

The group featured members representing both taxi and private hire, and was asked to highlight the areas where legislation needs to be revised to provide a safe, clear and up-to-date structure that can effectively regulate the two-tier trade as it is now. This will preserve the character of the trade in a competitive market, while ensuring public safety and fair working conditions for all.

» The A team

Group members included:

- Helen Chapman, representing TPH
- Steve McNamara, of the Licensed Taxi Drivers' Association
- Mick Rix, for the GMB union
- Donna Short, of the National Private Hire and Taxi Association
- Steve Wright MBE, for the Licensed Private Hire Car Association



Areas covered

Cross-border hiring and capping licence numbers

The group urged Government to legislate that all taxi and private hire vehicle journeys should start and/or end within the area for which the driver, vehicle and operator are licensed. This would effectively stop cross-border hiring and ties in with the proposal that Government allows local licensing authorities to set a cap on the number of taxi and private hire vehicles they license. This can help authorities solve challenges around congestion, air quality and parking, and ensure appropriate provision of taxi and private hire services for passengers while maintaining drivers' working conditions.

Plying for hire/pre-booked

Statutory definitions of 'plying for hire' and 'pre-booked' should be introduced in order to maintain the two-tier system. The definitions should include reviewing the use of technology and vehicle 'clustering' as well as ensuring taxis retain the sole right to be hailed on streets or at ranks.

Safety issues

Government should legislate for national minimum standards for taxi and private hire licensing for drivers, vehicles and operators. The standards that relate to the personal safety of passengers must be set at a high enough level across every authority in England. Companies that act as intermediaries between passengers and taxi drivers must meet the same licensing requirements and obligations as private hire vehicle operators. This would provide additional safety for passengers through greater traceability.

A national database of all licensed taxi and private hire drivers, vehicles and operators should be set up as soon as possible to support stronger enforcement across the trades. Alongside this, Government must issue guidance clearly specifying the convictions that it considers should be grounds for refusal or revocation of driver licences and the period for which these exclusions should apply.

There should be an urgent review of the evidence and case for restricting the number of hours that taxi and private hire drivers can drive, on the same safety grounds that restrict hours for bus and lorry drivers.

Accessibility

To deter future cases, licensing authorities should use their existing enforcement powers to take strong action where disability access refusals are reported. They should also ensure their systems and processes make it as easy as possible to report disability access refusals.

All licensing authorities should use their existing powers to require that the taxi and PHV drivers they license undergo disability quality and awareness training. This should be mandated in national minimum standards.

Pedicabs

Legislation should be introduced by Government to enable TfL to regulate the operation of pedicabs in London.



A welcome response

TfL has been calling for reform for some time and is urging the Government to move quickly to implement these proposals. Helen Chapman, speaking for TPH said: 'We agree wholeheartedly with many of the recommendations put forward by the report which, if adopted, will deliver fundamental improvements in public safety and improvements in delivering a world class two-tier taxi and private hire service.'

'Proposals within the report, in particular a solution to address the common practice referred to as cross-border hiring, national minimum standards, national enforcement capabilities and statutory definitions to define the two-tier system, will produce a model of licensing and regulation that helps to enhance passenger safety, and is not only fit for today but is also future-proofed and flexible to meet the changing demands of passengers.'

'We welcome the Chair's recommendation to allow local licensing authorities to set a cap on the number of taxi and private hire vehicles. The growing number of private hire vehicles in the Capital is causing significant challenges in tackling congestion, air quality and appropriate parking controls.'

● ● ●
You can access the whole Task and Finish Group on Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing report at: bit.ly/task-and-finish-group

Calendar

November



16 November
Supervet Live
Wembley Arena

17 November
Beautycon 2018
Olympia

England vs Japan
rugby
Twickenham

Saracens vs Sale
Sharks rugby
Allianz Park



18 November
England vs
Croatia, UEFA
Nations League
Wembley

20 November
Within Temptation
Brixton Academy

21 November
Ideal Home Show
at Christmas 2018
Olympia (until 25
November)

Christmas at Kew
Kew Gardens
(until 30
December)

22 November
Winter
Wonderland
Hyde Park (until
24 December)

23 November
Nitro Circus
O2 Arena

24 November
England vs
Australia rugby
Twickenham

25 November
Supervet Live
O2 Arena

Hampstead
Christmas
Festival
North London

EE Wembley Cup
Wembley
Stadium

30 November
Pete Tong
Presents Ibiza
Classics
O2 Arena
(and 1 December)

Harlequins vs
Exeter Chiefs
The Stoop



December



1 December
Locked in a Room
ExCeL Arena

Barbarians vs
Australia rugby
Twickenham

Saracens vs
Wasps rugby
Allianz Park

Frankie Valli and
the Four Seasons
O2 Arena

5 December
The Perfect Circle
Wembley Arena

6 December
Popcaan
Wembley Arena

Varsity Match
Twickenham

7 December
James and The
Charlatans
Wembley Arena

8 December
Nightwish
Wembley Arena

9 December
London Santa
Dash
Clapham
Common

12 December
Andre Rieu 2018
Wembley
Arena (and
19 December)

14 December
Black Stone
Cherry
Wembley Arena

15 December
Jeff Wayne's The
War of the Worlds
O2 Arena

17 December
Harlequins vs
Exeter rugby
The Stoop
(Harlequins RFU)

18 December
Def Leppard
Wembley Arena

26 December
Winter
Wonderland
Hyde Park (until
6 January)

27 December
Walking with
Dinosaurs
Wembley
Arena (until
30 December)

29 December
Saracens vs
Worcester rugby
Allianz Park

31 December
Harlequins vs
Bath United rugby
The Stoop
(Harlequins RFU)



January



1 January
New Year's Day
Parade
Central London

12 January
Enter Shikari
O2 Academy

13 January
Craft 19
Olympia

Top Drawer &
Home Spring
2019
Olympia

15 January
London
Motorcycle Show
ExCeL

16 January
Ben Howard
O2 Academy
(until 18 January)



