

## **Transport for London**

**Monday 11 May 2020**

### **TfL Press Release - TfL announces plan to help London travel safely and sustainably as Government sets out roadmap to gradually ease coronavirus restrictions**

- Londoners must continue working from home wherever possible to enable safe journeys for those who cannot do so
- Those who need to travel asked to reimagine their journeys where possible: use existing or newly introduced walking and cycling options and 'shop local' to relieve pressure on public transport. Public transport should be avoided wherever possible
- Employers urged to help their staff avoid travelling at the busiest times of day
- Face coverings should be used, rigorous cleaning regimes, hand sanitizer points and operational changes at stations to help keep everyone safe
- National requirement to maintain 2 metre distance between passengers wherever possible means public transport will operate very differently to before the pandemic
- Challenge is far greater than the 2012 Olympic Games, with the need to reduce pre-COVID demand on buses and Tube by over 85 per cent

Following the Government's announcement of an outline roadmap for the next period, Transport for London (TfL) today set out its initial plan to support this and help Londoners who need to travel do so safely and sustainably. This will be supplemented over the coming days following advice on travel to be issued by Government.

The plan will require significant changes to the way in which people travel in London.

TfL has been able to operate up to 60 per cent of Tube services and more than 80 per cent of bus services during the crisis to support essential journeys. This is while managing the impact of the virus on the transport workforce with staff ill, shielding or self-isolating.

In keeping with plans on the national rail network, TfL is working to safely and gradually build up service levels to where they were before the pandemic and will return the number of buses and trains running to as close to 100 per cent as soon as possible. TfL is working closely with staff and the trade unions with the intention of, by 18 May, increasing service levels to around 85 per cent on the bus network, at least 70 per cent on the Tube and London Overground (in line with national rail services), 80 per cent on the DLR and a full service on TfL Rail.

London Underground is aiming to restore the Circle Line and to re-open some of the 37 stations that have been closed for several weeks. However, some stations will stay closed for now so that staff can be deployed to help manage any congestion at busier stations. Some stations with lift-only access may need to remain closed as social distancing is not possible.

However, as is the case with national rail services, this does not mean a return to the transport network that existed before the crisis.

The national requirement to maintain 2m social distancing wherever possible means that TfL will only be able to carry around 13-15 per cent of the normal number of passengers on the Tube and bus networks even when 100 per cent of services are operating once again over time.

Transport providers, borough councils, schools, businesses and Londoners all have a vital role to play over the coming weeks, working with Government to meet a travel demand challenge that far outstrips the challenge experienced during the 2012 Olympic games.

During that period it was necessary to reduce normal travel demand by 20 per cent to keep travel safe. Now, demand will have to be reduced by more than 85 per cent compared to normal to enable social distancing to be maintained wherever possible.

Even with only 5 per cent of journeys currently being made on the Tube, there are certain times and locations where social distancing is already very difficult. The challenge in managing social distancing will become greater as, over time, more people who cannot work from home return to using the network.

The Government is expected to issue detailed guidance shortly that should be followed by businesses, Londoners and others as they consider whether they need to travel and, if so, how. It is already clear that this will include the message that where people can work from home they should continue to do so and that public transport should be avoided wherever possible.

Everyone is being asked to stay home as much as possible, work from home if possible, maintain social distancing of 2 metres where possible and ensure hands are washed regularly. Everyone is asked to consider if their journey is necessary before travelling, and to think about the times, routes and ways they travel so that everyone has more space to stay safe. This will ensure the transport network can keep running safely for those who have no alternative means of making their journey.

Reflecting these national messages, TfL has today set out the following advice for Londoners:

- If you can work from home, please continue to do so. Please avoid public transport wherever possible. Social distancing on public transport will not be possible unless we radically reduce the overall number of people travelling to work;
- Do not expect to return to the transport network you were used to before. The number of people TfL can safely transport on buses and trains is severely constrained to enable social distancing;
- If you need to travel, please reimagine how you do so. Walk and cycle if you can. New walking and cycling space is being created through the London Streetspace programme to further support this;
- Please shop locally and use local leisure facilities to help keep demand on roads, buses and tubes down;
- If using public transport, or taxi and private hire services, please travel outside of peak times and use a facial covering, carry a hand sanitizer and wash your hands before and after you travel. The latest Government advice is that, although face coverings are unlikely to prevent you from getting the virus, they could help prevent you from giving it to others. Face coverings are particularly important where 2m social distancing is hard to maintain;

- Advice on maintaining social distancing will be given across the transport network and further measures to prevent crowding through new queuing systems will be in operation. This includes new social-distancing posters on display at bus stops, stations and in shelters, and two-metre floor markings on platforms at stations. Please respect each other's space and try to maintain social distancing wherever possible;
- Our hardworking staff are there to help: please act on their instructions and respect them at all times;
- If you have to drive, please avoid peak times and obey speed limits and traffic laws at all times.

To support the higher levels of walking and cycling that will be needed and support social distancing on streets, the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, and TfL have begun the 'London Streetspace' programme.

Working with London's boroughs, this will rapidly transform London's streets to accommodate a possible ten-fold increase in cycling and five-fold increase in walking as lockdown restrictions are eased. Streetspace includes the rapid construction of a strategic cycling network, using temporary materials, including new routes aimed at reducing crowding on underground and train lines and on busy bus corridors. Work to widen footways in town centres across London and to reduce traffic on residential streets is also underway.

TfL is introducing a range of further measures. Hand sanitizer points will start to be introduced across the transport network over the coming weeks, with points to be installed at every Tube and TfL rail station. They will also be installed in all bus stations and the Victoria Coach Station, and at TfL River Piers, the Woolwich Ferry, Emirates Air Line and at all London Overground and DLR stations where it's safe and secure to do so. The rigorous cleaning regime for buses, trains and stations will continue.

All taxi and private hire companies and drivers are being asked by TfL to put protective measures in place including ensuring face coverings are worn by drivers.

As the Mayor has set out, Londoners are being asked to play their part in the national effort against the virus and will be asked to wear facial coverings whenever travelling on public transport or by taxi or private hire vehicle. This could help reduce the rate of infection. TfL front line staff, cleaners, and London's bus drivers will also be offered face masks, starting from today, should they wish to use them.

TfL introduced an enhanced cleaning regime on its network earlier this year. This includes additional hospital-grade cleaning substances that kill viruses and bacteria on contact, new anti-viral disinfectant that protects for up to 30 days, key interchanges being cleaned more frequently including during the day and all regular 'touch point' areas on buses, such as poles and doors being wiped down with a strong disinfectant every day.

The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, said: "Coronavirus has had a profound impact on public transport in London and will continue to do so long into the future. All public transport providers face huge challenges around social distancing - with the number of passengers TfL can safely accommodate on Tubes and buses reduced by over 85 per cent.

"We will all have to continue playing our part in reducing demand on services by working from home if we possibly can. Please avoid public transport wherever possible. I urge all Londoners to rethink the way they travel. Please avoid peak times, wear a non-medical covering over your nose and mouth and carry a hand sanitizer. By rapidly rolling out more space for walking and cycling through our London Streetspace plan we are enabling many more journeys to be made through these sustainable means which is crucial to our city's recovery.

"I am pleased that all TfL frontline staff will be offered basic face masks from today. Along with the introduction of hand sanitizer points in the coming weeks, these additional measures will further protect our heroic staff and passengers at this critical period."

Mike Brown MVO, London's Transport Commissioner, said: "We need the help of all Londoners in this next period. Like everyone else, we want to see London and the country back moving and working again, safely and sustainably as soon as possible. However, we will not be returning to the transport network that existed before the virus. As the government has set out, the advice is that people should – for now – continue to work from home where they can and avoid public transport wherever possible.

"Our intention is to progressively build up service levels to as close to pre-pandemic levels as possible, but it is clear life simply won't be swiftly returning to what it was before. The travel demand challenge facing us outstrips that faced during the 2012 games due to the national requirement to maintain 2 metres distance between passengers wherever possible. That may not always be possible of course given the design of London's transport network.

"So every person, business, school, college and other institution in London has a vital role to play in this next period to keep everyone safe. We are also asking London to reimagine the way in which they travel, walking and cycling where possible and using the new dedicated facilities for this being created across London.

“Please use facial coverings for any travel on public transport or if using taxi and private hire services. We are providing them to our staff as well and will be installing hand sanitizer across the transport network. The Mayor’s Streetspace programme will also support greater walking and cycling whilst enabling social distancing on streets.”

Thanks to the cooperation of everyone across London, Tube travel has been reduced by 95 per cent and bus travel by 85 per cent – meaning low levels of travel on the Tube not seen in over 100 years.

However, with 80 per cent of TfL’s income coming from fares and commercial revenue, this has had a devastating impact on the organisation’s finances.

TfL remains in discussion with Government about support to ensure the transport network can play its full part in restarting London and the UK’s economy.

Detailed information about travelling and staying safe will be regularly updated on the TfL website at [tfl.gov.uk](https://tfl.gov.uk) reflecting Government guidance.

#### Contact Information

TfL Press Office

Transport for London

0343 222 4141

[pressoffice@tfl.gov.uk](mailto:pressoffice@tfl.gov.uk)