

MAYOR OF LONDON

Congestion Charge reimbursement scheme to support temporary changes to the Congestion Charge

July 2020

Guidance for Local Authorities, Charities and the Voluntary Sector

The Congestion Charge is a crucial tool in managing traffic in central London and is kept under constant review. We are working hard to prepare London for the recovery phase of the coronavirus crisis and the huge challenge we face around social distancing on our busy transport network. We need to make sure there is more space on our roads to accommodate the increased numbers of people who will be walking and cycling in central London given the severely constrained capacity of our public transport network. By reducing congestion and increasing walking and cycling in a safe manner with reallocation of road space to these modes we will help to reduce the chance of an increase in coronavirus cases and reduce the burden on the NHS. This requires us to do more to deter non-essential traffic from coming into the centre of London. This will also help to ensure that essential vehicles, such as the emergency and other services, can move around easily.

In recognition of the role that local authorities and the charities and voluntary sector are playing in responding to the impacts of the coronavirus, a new scheme has been set up to reimburse the Congestion Charge for specific journeys. As this temporary reimbursement scheme is in response to the ongoing pandemic, it is not possible to publish an end date for the scheme, but it will be kept under review.

The scheme rules have been designed to provide charities and local authorities with the discretion to determine who is eligible to receive a reimbursement for the Congestion Charge. To ensure the benefits of the reimbursement scheme are realised for those making essential journeys, it is intended that the rules will be applied so that reimbursement is provided to only those that have a vital need to travel by motorised vehicle rather than some other transport mode. Further eligibility criteria are set out below.

Eligibility Criteria:

This document sets out the eligibility criteria for reimbursements to the Congestion Charge, to support local authority workers, charity workers and volunteers providing certain pandemic support activities in the Congestion Charge Zone (CCZ) In order to qualify for Congestion Charge reimbursement, the following criteria must be met:

Eligible organisations:

The organisation making the claim must be a local authority within the Congestion Charge Zone¹, or be a registered charity, as defined by the Charities Act 2011. Acceptable evidence of charity status would be registration with the Charity Commission and/or with HMRC. If this is not available, we may accept verification by the relevant Volunteer Centre or Councils for Voluntary Service.

The following employees and volunteers are entitled to make a claim through their eligible organisations:

1. Local authority employees including seconded or contracted staff members
2. In the case of domiciliary care workers, those working for a company contracted by an eligible local authority to provide domiciliary care to their residents, those caring

¹ City of London council, City of Westminster Council, London boroughs of Hackney, Camden, Islington, Lambeth, Southwark or Tower Hamlets, or the Greater London Authority

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for a resident that receives whole or partial funding (direct or indirect) from an eligible local authority or those working or volunteering for a charity

3. Charity staff including seconded or contracted staff members as well as Trustees
4. Charity volunteers

Eligible journeys:

1. All claims must be for delivery or collection journeys to directly support vital coronavirus response work within the CCZ of the following eligible items:
 - a) food deliveries
 - b) medicine or medical equipment deliveries,
 - c) deliveries of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
 - d) cleaning / hygiene supplies
2. In addition to journey purposes set out in 1), the scheme also includes journeys to support the provision of nursing or care services to people who are vulnerable or at risk of contracting coronavirus. All eligible journeys must relate to the provision of the following eligible services:
 - a) domiciliary care² (provided by a domiciliary care agency or individuals contracted by, or with whole or partial funding from, a local authority directly or indirectly in the CCZ or those working or volunteering for a charity), including supported living and assisted living/extra care workers
 - b) services at accommodation for rough sleepers who are at a high or moderate risk from coronavirus, including the driving of such vulnerable people to the accommodation
 - c) transport of victims of domestic abuse to a place of safety, to legal or police appointments, or child visitations.
3. Claims may only be made for journeys which are reliant on a chargeable Congestion Charge vehicle and cannot reasonably be undertaken by any other mode. By submitting the claim, charities, volunteers and local authorities confirm that they have made every effort to find alternative means of delivering these items or services, e.g. by walking or cargo bike, in order to avoid adding to congestion and the consequent air pollution.
4. Commuting journeys (normal travel to or from a shift or place of work) are not normally included, except for journeys which fall under criteria 2 (a) and 2 (b). This is because these roles may bring workers into close, regular contact with people with coronavirus or at high risk of contracting coronavirus. They may need to travel to work by car in order to reduce the risk of infecting others.
5. Journeys which start or finish in the Congestion Charge Zone are eligible. Those which can be made without going through the zone are not eligible (these journeys should use other routes, even if these routes are slower.)

² Domiciliary care is personal care provided in peoples own homes for persons who by reason of illness, infirmity or disability are unable to provide it for themselves without assistance