

Q and A for local authority reimbursement arrangement

Eligible journeys

1. Which journeys are eligible for reimbursement?

All claims must be for journeys relating to one of two journey purposes (see below for more detail)

- 1) Delivery, or collection, of eligible items to directly support the response to the Covid-19 pandemic
- 2) Provision of eligible services to support vulnerable people

Only journeys taking place from the 22 June 2020 will be reimbursed. To be eligible, all journeys must take place within, or start or end within, the Congestion Charge Zone (CCZ).

Only journeys being made by the following people will be reimbursed:

- a) An individual employed by, providing services on behalf of, or seconded to a local authority in the CCZ¹ (see appendix for a CCZ map for each borough or visit: <https://tfl.gov.uk/modes/driving/congestion-charge/congestion-charge-zone?intcmp=2055> for a more detailed map)
- b) A domiciliary care worker or an individual contracted by, or funded wholly or partly by, a local authority (directly or indirectly) in the CCZ to provide domiciliary care

- 1) The delivery, or collection, of eligible items

All journeys must relate to the collection, or delivery, of the following items to directly support the response to the coronavirus pandemic within the Congestion Charging Zone (CCZ).

These items are:

- a) Food
- b) Medicine or medical equipment,
- c) Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- d) Cleaning / hygiene supplies

Only journeys specifically related to the delivery or collection of these items are eligible for reimbursement. Journeys made by workers or volunteers to reach a place of work (i.e. their commute) are not included.

- 2) Provision of eligible services to support vulnerable people

All eligible journeys must relate to the provision of:

- a) Domiciliary care by a domiciliary care agency or individual contracted by, or with whole or partial funding (direct or indirect) from, a local authority in the CCZ. This includes supported living and assisted living/extra care workers

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

- 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) Movement of victims of domestic abuse to a place of safety, to legal or police appointments, and child visitation

For a) and b) journeys related to both the provision of the service and travel to the place of work (i.e. commuting trips) are eligible for reimbursement. For c) only journeys related to the provision of the service are eligible for reimbursement.

2. Why aren't journeys through the CCZ covered?

Journeys that do not take place within, or start or end in, the CCZ are not eligible as these journeys could use alternative routes that do not enter the CCZ, even if they are slower. This is to reduce congestion and air pollution in the CCZ.

3. Why aren't all commuting journeys covered?

Commuting journeys are only eligible for reimbursement for domiciliary care workers and those working at accommodation for rough sleepers particularly vulnerable to coronavirus. This is because these roles bring employees into close, regular contact with people who are more at risk from coronavirus. They may need to travel to work by car to reduce their risk of contracting coronavirus and infecting others.

The reimbursement process

4. How does the reimbursement work?

This depends on a couple of factors. For people who paid the Congestion Charge in advance, the local authority will reimburse them the charge and claim back the cost from TfL. For people who paid the charge via Auto Pay, the local authority will submit their details to TfL who will then credit the Auto Pay account. In these cases, the speed of the reimbursement depends on when the local authority submits the claim to TfL. In both cases, local authorities can submit claims up to two times a month.

We strongly advise claimants to set up Auto Pay accounts as it is the quickest and easiest way of both paying the charge and being reimbursed. It also ensures that individuals will not be penalised for inadvertently forgetting to pay the charge.

Local authorities should allow 5 days from the date of a journey being made before making a claim through their reimbursement account. This is to allow our systems to process and reconcile journeys and charge payments.

5. Who makes the claim to TfL for reimbursement?

For staff who paid the charge via Auto Pay, following verification the local authority will submit their details to TfL who will then credit the Auto Pay account.

If an individual did not use Auto Pay then following verification and reimbursement from TfL, the local authority will reimburse the individual.

6. Do individuals need to have an Auto Pay account?

We strongly advise claimants to set up Auto Pay accounts as it is the quickest and easiest way of both paying the charge and being reimbursed. It means that TfL can refund individuals directly avoiding the need for local authorities to reimburse them. It also ensures that individuals paying the charge will not be penalised for inadvertently forgetting to pay the charge.

7. Does the local authority need to have an Auto Pay account?

A local authority does not need to have an Auto Pay account in order to set up a reimbursement account with TfL as payments are made via BACS to the local authority's business account. Each eligible individual local authority staff member, or domiciliary care worker, who would like to be reimbursed direct by TfL needs to have their own Auto Pay account.

If local authorities want to submit reimbursement claims for their own vehicles then they are encouraged to pay the charge for these vehicles via Auto Pay. However, it should be noted that it is not possible to reimburse Fleet Auto Pay account holders (those with six or more vehicles on their Auto Pay account). If this applies to your local authority then please get in touch with us via LocalAuthorityRefunds@tfl.gov.uk

8. How often can local authorities submit claims?

Local authorities can submit claims up to two times a month.

9. Can backdated claims be made?

The new reimbursement arrangement for local authorities took effect from Monday 22 June 2020, and it is possible to backdate claims to this date.

10. An eligible individual received a Penalty Charge Notice. Can they be reimbursed for this charge?

Unfortunately, we will not be reimbursing any Penalty Charge Notices. To avoid the risk of incurring a Penalty Charge, individuals should set up an Auto Pay account as this will ensure they will not be penalised for inadvertently forgetting to pay the charge. Additionally, we will not reimburse any charges paid after midnight on the day of travel.

General enquiries

11. Won't this reimbursement scheme undermine the congestion reduction benefits of the Congestion Charge?

The reimbursement scheme is only open to people performing a select number of roles that are essential to responding to the Covid-19 pandemic. As such, the impact on congestion is minimised.

In addition, claims can only be made for journeys that take place within or start or end within the CCZ. Those which can be made without going through the CCZ are not eligible. These journeys should use other routes, even if these routes are slower. Claims should also only be made for journeys which are reliant on a chargeable Congestion Charge vehicle and

cannot reasonably be undertaken by any other transport mode. In submitting a claim, local authorities confirm that the individual has made every effort to find an alternative means of delivering the goods or services they are providing, in order to avoid adding to congestion and consequent air pollution in the zone.

12. Is a refund on the ULEZ charge available?

There are no reimbursements for the ULEZ charge. The reason for this is because the ULEZ charge is in place to ensure cleaner air in London for all, and there is emerging evidence of links between air pollution and vulnerability to the worst effects of Covid-19. There are scrappage schemes available to help eligible people, businesses and charities to replace older, dirtier vehicles. Visit <http://tfl.gov.uk/car-motorcycle-scrappage> for more information.

Eligible individuals

13. Are all domiciliary care workers covered?

Domiciliary care workers working for a domiciliary care agency contracted by an eligible local authority, and individuals (including those working for a care agency) that provide domiciliary care for a resident that receives care funding from an eligible local authority, are eligible.

In terms of the reimbursement scheme, 'domiciliary care' means personal care provided in their own homes for persons who by reason of illness, infirmity or disability are unable to provide it for themselves without assistance.

Assisted living, extra care and supported living workers are considered to be included within the definition of domiciliary care.

Although all of the above are included in the eligibility criteria, it will be the responsibility of the local authority to verify that the domiciliary care worker claiming reimbursement has been conducting work on behalf of the local authority when making their journey.

14. Why aren't all domiciliary care workers eligible for reimbursement?

There will be some domiciliary carers who care for those who fully self-fund their care. These carers do not fall within the eligibility criteria for this scheme.

Local authority funded domiciliary care is only available to those with the greatest care needs and a low level of personal savings. As such, these residents are least able to contribute towards the cost of the Congestion Charge incurred by their care workers, so their journeys will be eligible for reimbursement.

15. Why aren't all local authority key workers included?

To mitigate the impact of the new, temporary changes to the Congestion Charge, we are introducing a new reimbursement scheme specifically for domiciliary care workers contracted or funded by a local authority and local authority staff, charity staff and volunteers who are undertaking journeys to directly support vital coronavirus response work within the Congestion Charge Zone. This includes delivery of food, medicine, cleaning or hygiene supplies (including personal protective equipment) to vulnerable individuals.

This reimbursement scheme recognises the vital role that people performing these roles are playing in supporting vulnerable people who are particularly impacted by the coronavirus. Whilst we recognise the important role that all local authority key workers play in London life, the reimbursement scheme is not aimed at reimbursing routine activity. This is to ensure that the temporary changes to the Congestion Charge are effective in managing traffic levels in the zone. TfL analysis indicates that as the Government further eases lockdown restrictions, car traffic levels in central London could double without the temporary changes to the Congestion Charge. With public transport capacity constrained to 13 – 15 per cent of normal levels, additional space is needed for increased levels of walking and cycling and there simply isn't room to accommodate this level of traffic.