Revenue protection

Our strategic approach – a summary

MAYOR OF LONDON

TRANSPORT FOR LONDON
EVERY JOURNEY MATTERS

Introduction

Fare evasion is a crime

Reducing fare evasion is a priority for Transport for London (TfL). We have implemented a new strategic approach that aims to reduce the level of evasion across our services to 1.5 per cent or less by 2030.

Our approach focuses on passengers who deliberately evade paying fares and whose behaviour can have an adverse impact on our frontline teams and other customers.

We will share updates on our progress through the Commissioner's report and the Safety and Security Panel of the TfL Board. We aim to build confidence with our customers and frontline teams by demonstrating the efforts we are making to prevent and detect fare evasion across our network.

This approach covers the DLR, Elizabeth line, London Buses, London Overground, London Trams and London Underground.

It reflects the need to tailor interventions to the specifics of how people avoid paying fares on each of our modes and allows us to respond to new and emerging methods of fare evasion, which threaten our network and our financial sustainability.

Fare evasion affects everyone, making transport feel less safe

The impact of fare evasion

Fare evasion seriously affects our customers, our staff and our financial sustainability

Fare evasion is a crime that has a negative impact on our customers, our people and our finances. It can make public transport feel unsafe, and can deter people from choosing to use sustainable travel options.

It has a serious impact on our frontline colleagues. Approximately half of all reported incidents of violence and aggression towards our staff are linked to fare evasion and revenue disputes.

Around 96 per cent of our customers pay their fares correctly. It is unfair on our fare-paying customers that a minority do not.

Fare evasion also affects our financial sustainability, costing us more than £130m each year. It denies us the vital revenue we need both to operate and continue to invest in our network for London.

Fare evasion reduces the revenue we need to invest in our network

'We travel across London on the bus network and during our deployments we check that everyone is safe, as well as enforcing against fare evaders.'

Wayne
London Buses

In addition to lost revenue, the cost of combating fare evasion in time, focus and financial investment places further pressure on our budget. This could be better invested in service improvements that directly benefit our paying customers and benefit London as a whole.

Types of fare evasion

Offender category	Offending methods	Response
Accidental	Accidental incorrect taps by passengers unfamiliar with the network and payment process and those using multiple payment methods for a single journey	Communications campaigns to encourage correct payment methods
Opportunistic	Passengers entering or exiting the system using open gates or unstaffed areas where the opportunity arises, without premeditation	Reduce the number of open gates on the network Enforcement – officer visibility, penalty fares, contactless payment checks
Calculated	Passengers exploiting tap payment methods to go unseen by staff, but leaving a digital trail showing zonal avoidance, retokenisation and insufficient funds	Analysis of irregular travel patterns to identify evidence of fare evasion for prosecution Enforcement of contactless payment checks for revenue inspection charges
Chronic	Deliberate avoidance of payment seen often, including forcing gates and double gating	Enforcement through penalty fares and reports for prosecution Strengthening of gatelines Repeat-offender management

Our approach

Enhanced intelligence-gathering and a range of targeted interventions will reduce fare evasion across our network

We have a long history of working in partnership with other agencies to reduce crime and antisocial behaviour and make journeys in London safer and more secure.

Our updated approach to tackling fare evasion builds on the evidence base for crime prevention. We have implemented a multi-pronged strategy, drawing in elements of design, deterrence, behaviour change and enforcement.

This approach recognises that teams across TfL, our partners, stakeholders and communities have an important role to play in preventing fare evasion and reducing its impact.

While we run an integrated transport network, the design and operation of each mode on our network is unique. To ensure we respond accordingly, we are tailoring our approach to the different challenges that present themselves on each mode.

We work with our policing partners to combat fare evasion

Preventing contactless fare evasion is a priority for our teams

Principles

Our approach to managing fare evasion is underpinned by the following principles:

Data led

We review data to better understand when, where and how fare evasion is committed and use this to prioritise our interventions against it.

We have established a regular programme of performance meetings and coordination forums that allow subject matter experts and representatives from across the organisation to review performance, data and insight.

Using data gives us early warning of emerging issues and we can quickly adapt our interventions to respond to new threats.

Our enforcement approach is London-wide, and we will seek to optimise and increase our joint working with other transport operators in London to detect and deter fare evasion.

Target driven

We set clearly defined targets to reduce fare evasion rates across each of our modes, with clarity on who is responsible for delivering on them.

Learning and improving

We have invested in our analytical capability to measure the impact of our interventions and conduct trials and experiments to reduce the levels of fare evasion on our network.

Our aim is continuous improvement. We will measure the effectiveness of our approaches through enforcement detection rates, increased compliance, and feedback from our frontline teams and adapt them according to results.

Innovation

We identify and trial new approaches to mitigate fare evasion, scaling them up where necessary.

We work closely with transport authorities in the UK and around the world to share best practice, review results from successful interventions and explore latest research within this field.

We explore new technologies that can support us in detecting and enforcing offenders on our network.

What we are doing

A range of interventions, including design, technology, ticketing, data and enforcement, will drive down fare evasion

By evaluating how we have tackled fare evasion in the past, we have established a new approach that will help us to reduce fare evasion by 2030.

Previous interventions and trials were managed by each of our transport modes individually. While this enabled us to focus on the particular challenges for each mode, there were limitations to what we could learn and in sharing best practice across different parts of our network.

Each mode deployed its own enforcement teams, which were key in deterring, detecting and enforcing measures against fare evasion. However, our ability to inform enforcement activity through data to ensure our approach was evaluated and guided through the use of intelligence was limited.

Following the coronavirus pandemic, we saw changes in behaviour among some passengers, with increases in fare evasion and incidents of violence and aggression directed towards our staff. This is similar to the experience of other metro systems around the world.

Contactless payment has become the dominant method of payment on our network, with people switching from traditional tickets following the pandemic. This is in addition to the pre-existing uplift in the use of such methods driven by advances in technology and convenience.

The data we have collated since the end of lockdown restrictions shows specific fare evasion behaviours associated with contactless payment.

Fare evasion and payment disputes are the root cause of approximately 50 per cent of incidents of violence and aggression towards our staff. To reduce the occurrence of these incidents, we need to be innovative.

In addition, the cost and revenue loss from fare evasion is detrimental to our financial sustainability. We cannot depend only on what we've always done to drive down fare evasion. We need to do more, and we must innovate.

Many of our stations have gatelines, helping to deter fare evasion

> '**We provide a visible deterrent, checking inside stations and on board services, enforcing action against fare evasion on the network.**'
>
> **Thomas**
> London Underground

Our new approach

We have set ourselves an ambitious target to reduce fare evasion to below 1.5 per cent by 2030. To achieve this, we will build upon our recent successes to drive down fare evasion.

Over the past year we have brought together our enforcement teams from each mode to improve where and when they are deployed across the network. Our teams have adopted various tactics to deter fare evasion. We have increased the level of checking on board services, inside stations and at gatelines.

Preventing contactless fare evasion and fraud has been a focus for both our enforcement teams and our specialist investigation team. Our refreshed approach has resulted in checking of more passengers using contactless payment and an increase in enforcement activity across the network.

Our specialist investigation team pursues persistent evaders. They investigate irregular travel patterns identified from several different intelligence sources including frontline staff, ticketing data and CCTV. Over the past year the team has identified more than 400 individuals who avoided over £360,000 of fares on London Underground. To build on this success, we have a trial underway to expand the team's remit to support investigations across our modes. This increased capability will allow us to investigate more individuals across our network and pursue more prolific fare evaders.

We have established forums to monitor operational enforcement activity and the effectiveness of our activities. This allows us to respond to new fare evasion trends taking place on the network.

We increased the penalty fare for using our network without a valid ticket from £80 to £100 (reduced to £50 if paid within 21 days). Following this increase, we launched a new fare evasion poster and updated our customer messaging across the network to act as a further deterrent to fare evasion. Where penalty fares remain unpaid, evaders are prosecuted for the original fare evasion offence.

Teams across TfL and our franchised modes have supported this effort with interventions, trials and experiments to determine the most cost-effective ways to reduce the level and risk of fare evasion. Trials have included new approaches to customer messaging, social media content, improvements to gateline infrastructure, on-board checking tactics, and new technology to validate bar code tickets on the network.

Modal responsibilities

Our new approach places responsibility on each of our transport modes for the level of fare evasion they incur. The different operating models and physical infrastructure of our modes mean that taking the same approach across every mode is not cost-effective. We must therefore tailor interventions to the specific circumstances of each mode.

As part of this responsibility, each mode now develops, agrees and delivers on an annual plan to drive down fare evasion. These plans are based on an understanding of the cost of interventions and the impact they have on levels of fare evasion – their return on investment.

For the rail modes (London Overground, DLR, London Trams and Elizabeth line) which are operated by contracted operators, the employment of enforcement teams is outsourced as part of the operators' contractual responsibility.

Cross-organisational responsibilities

Alongside the responsibilities that sit with each mode, our Security, Policing and Enforcement directorate is responsible for developing and delivering a plan of cross-organisational initiatives that will benefit every mode of transport in their efforts to tackle fare evasion.

This directorate provides a central guiding mind on enforcement policy, methods and direction. We also work alongside all London rail modes to share data and insight to support a collaborative approach to reducing evasion across all our modes.

Data and insight

We are investing in a central data and analysis function to enable an intelligence-led and target-driven approach, so that we can broaden our insight in planning initiatives and optimise decision-making to tackle fare evasion.

Through existing ticketless travel surveys and other data sources, our most recent estimate of fare evasion across all our public transport modes for 2023/24 was 3.9 per cent, which equates to a revenue loss of more than £130m.

Enforcement and investigation

Our revenue teams are deployed every day across the network, providing a highly visible presence by carrying out routine revenue protection activities such as ticket checking.

We have developed our in-house analytical capability to ensure that deployments are intelligence-led and that we are maximising the effectiveness of our combined enforcement resources. Our frontline teams provide insight and information about fare evaders and persistent offenders to our enforcement and investigations teams, enabling them to take action.

We deploy enforcement teams to locations with a high prevalence of people pushing through gates, which creates an intimidating atmosphere for our teams and customers. We continue to vary our tactics including checking at gatelines, onboard services and inside stations, especially at transport hubs.

We continue to develop our approach to customer messaging to raise awareness of enforcement activity across the network and on social media channels to deter fare evasion.

Intelligence-led investigations

Technology plays a key role in our efforts to tackle fare evasion and is yielding excellent results. It has already been used successfully in minimising accidental fare evasion by automatically correcting errors through our ticketing systems. It is also an increasingly important intervention in tackling calculated, persistent fare evasion.

We have invested in our capability to investigate and detect more calculated fare evaders who deliberately avoid paying the correct fare. Through our in-house detection system, the Irregular Travel Analysis Platform (ITAP), we can identify evasion through patterns in ticketing, passenger data and passengers using concession passes, such as the Freedom Pass or Zip Oyster, that do not belong to them.

We are using a range of measures, which include targeted email campaigns, operational deployments, and a prioritised register of offenders for further investigation and subsequent prosecution.

Our investigations team uses ITAP data to decide which individuals to investigate. The team prioritises those passengers with the highest cumulative value of fares evaded. This allows us to target the individuals from whom we can recoup the highest amount in unpaid fares, as well as minimising the potential amount lost to those individuals in the future.

Rates of fare evasion on our network

Percentage of all passengers travelling without a valid ticket
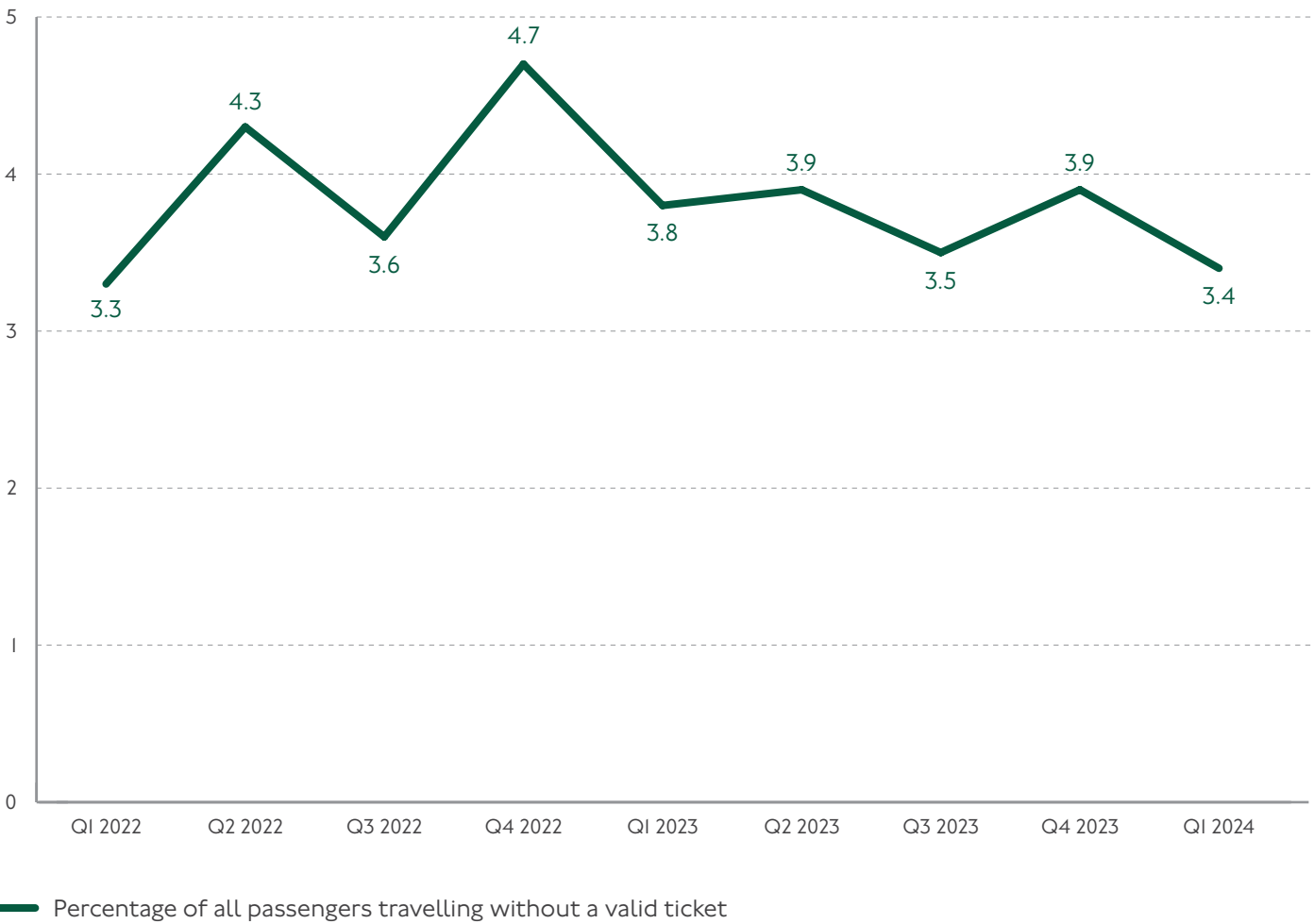
Offender management

Fare evasion is not only a financial issue that deprives London of funds to invest in improving the transport network and keep fares as low as possible. It also affects the safety of our frontline teams and customers.

Blatant fare evasion, such as pushing through barriers, has an impact on our customers' perception of safety and security. Some evaders, if challenged, become aggressive and violent towards our teams. Frontline staff log instances of fare evasion through our reporting systems, which informs the deployment of enforcement teams across the network.

We are taking steps to enhance the management of known offenders on our network. This includes identifying the most prolific offenders and those who post videos on social media promoting fare evasion on our network. We work with our investigation team and policing partners to manage this behaviour.

Infrastructure and technology

The presence of gatelines on certain areas of the network reduces the overall level of fare evasion. The wide-aisle gate is the main access point for chronic fare evaders, and we will continue to progress improvements to reduce the likelihood of fare evaders being able to push through these gates.

Cities around the world are increasingly using new technologies and video analytics in their investigations to identify offenders. To support our long-term aim of reducing fare evasion we will review our capabilities and investigate new technologies, while maintaining compliance with privacy regulations and being fair and proportionate in our approach.

Ticketing and payments

Ticketing and payment methods continue to evolve, with most customers now using electronic ticketing to travel on our network. As methods of payment evolve, so must our approach evolve to respond to new and emerging risks of evasion. To support us in responding, our Ticketing and Payments team works in collaboration with our in-house investigators to focus on new methods of fare evasion to investigate these matters, implement proactive mitigation and enforce action against fare evaders.

Learning and improving

We will monitor our progress and evaluate our trials and interventions to identify what works. We will seek to continuously review, learn from and improve how we tackle fare evasion on our network. A key success measure to future interventions is obtaining feedback from our teams and listening to suggestions and ideas to inform future trials.

'As well as dealing with fare evasion, we are here to provide customer service and help people when we are out on the trains and in stations.'

London Overground team

About us

Part of the Greater London Authority family led by Mayor of London Sadiq Khan, we are the integrated transport authority responsible for delivering the Mayor's aims for transport. We have a key role in shaping what life is like in London, helping to realise the Mayor's vision for a 'City for All Londoners' and helping to create a safer, fairer, greener, healthier and more prosperous city. The Mayor's Transport Strategy sets a target for 80 per cent of all journeys to be made by walking, cycling or using public transport by 2041. To make this a reality, we prioritise safety, sustainability, health and the quality of people's experience in everything we do.

We run most of London's public transport services, including the London Underground, London Buses, the DLR, London Overground, Elizabeth line, London Trams, London River Services, London Dial-a-Ride, Victoria Coach Station, Santander Cycles and the IFS Cloud Cable Car.

We manage the city's red route strategic roads and are responsible for the maintenance, management and operation of more than 6,000 sets of traffic lights across the capital. The London boroughs are responsible for all the remaining roads within their boundaries. The experience, reliability and accessibility of our services are fundamental to Londoners' quality of life. Safety remains our number one priority and we continue to work tirelessly to improve safety across the network for both colleagues and customers.

Our vision is to be a strong, green heartbeat for London. We are investing in green infrastructure, improving walking and cycling, reducing carbon emissions, and making the city's air cleaner. The Ultra Low Emission Zone, and fleets of increasingly environmentally friendly and zero-emission buses, are helping to tackle London's toxic air. We are also improving public transport options, particularly in outer London, to ensure that more people can choose public transport or active travel over using their vehicles.

That is why we are introducing the outer London Superloop bus network, providing express bus routes circling the entire capital, connecting outer London town centres, railway stations, hospitals and transport hubs.

We have constructed many of London's most significant infrastructure projects in recent years, using transport to unlock economic growth and improve connectivity. This includes major projects like the extension of the Northern line to Battersea Power Station and Nine Elms in south London, as well as the completion of the London Overground extension to Barking Riverside and the Bank station upgrade.

The Elizabeth line, which opened in 2022, has quickly become one of the country's most popular railways, adding 10 per cent to central London's rail capacity and supporting new jobs, homes and economic growth. We also use our own land to provide thousands of new affordable

homes and our own supply chain creates tens of thousands of jobs and apprenticeships across the country.

We are committed to being an employer that is fully representative of the community we serve, where everyone can realise their potential. Our aim is to be a fully inclusive employer, valuing and celebrating the diversity of our workforce to improve services for all Londoners.

We are constantly working to improve the city for everyone. This means using information, data and technology to make services intuitive and easy to use and doing all we can to make streets and transport services accessible and safe to all. We reinvest every penny of our income to continually improve transport networks for the people who use them every day. None of this would be possible without the support of boroughs, communities and other partners who we work with to improve our services. By working together, we are creating brighter journeys and a better city.