

Charity Congestion Charge reimbursement FAQs

The document includes several questions related to the Charity Congestion Charge reimbursement scheme. There are two main sections, the first for organisations, the second for individuals

Organisations:

1. What is the Charity Congestion Charge reimbursement scheme?

TfL and the Mayor of London have made a commitment to support charities who have an essential need to drive in the Congestion Charge Zone to directly respond to the coronavirus pandemic to deliver eligible items or services. This scheme will allow charities who are operating within the Congestion Charge Zone to claim a refund on Congestion Charge payments they have incurred when undertaking vital coronavirus response work from 22 June 2020 until the end of the temporary changes to the Congestion Charge scheme. To find out more about these temporary arrangements, please visit: [this webpage](#)

Eligibility:

2. Who is eligible to make a claim?

Registered charities assisting with direct coronavirus response work (such as delivering food supplies, medical equipment or other essential goods and services to people who are vulnerable or shielding under Government guidance) are eligible for the Charity Congestion Charge reimbursement scheme. If your charity, or volunteers within your charitable organisation, are incurring the Congestion Charge in order to undertake coronavirus response work, a refund can be requested from TfL. All refund requests must be submitted by the charity rather than the individuals requesting a refund. All charities must first have registered for the scheme and have been approved as a GLA Charity Coronavirus Support Operator in order to submit claims. For more details on whether your charity may be eligible for this scheme please see our eligibility document.

3. Are Mutual Aid Groups eligible for this scheme?

Many Mutual Aid tasks will be completed locally on foot or by bike. If you do need to claim a reimbursement for the Congestion Charge, please contact your local volunteer centre who will be able to assist with your claim as a trusted representative for you and the work your group has undertaken.

4. We work across London - can we claim for all routes through the Congestion Charge Zone?

You can claim for any journey where the origin or destination of the trip was within the Congestion Charge Zone. All other journeys would not be valid to claim, and alternative routes should be taken. This scheme is for essential journeys directly related to assisting vulnerable Londoners during the coronavirus crisis that cannot be made by other modes of transport or by avoiding travelling in the Congestion Charge Zone.

5. I am working at a care setting specifically for those who are shielding so I must drive to work. Can I claim a congestion charge reimbursement?

If the care setting is an establishment for rough sleepers, set up specifically to house vulnerable people in response to Coronavirus, then your journeys will be eligible. If not, we will consider various individual and exceptional circumstances where essential journeys have been made, and they

cannot be made by any other mode of transport. If you believe this to be the case, please contact charitycongestionrefunds@london.gov.uk

Reimbursement Process:

6. I work for a charity; can I get reimbursements for all the volunteers working with my charity?

If you are a GLA approved Charity Coronavirus Support Operator then you can claim reimbursements for all volunteers making eligible journeys according to the criteria of this scheme. You should gather all the claims from volunteers who have incurred Congestion Charge costs and submit them all together. TfL will then reimburse the individual directly through a credit to their Auto Pay account.

7. How do charities make a refund claim?

Firstly, you must ensure you have signed up as one of the GLA's registered Charity Coronavirus Support Operators, and that you have been approved. Next, you should set up a Congestion Charge Auto Pay account (if you are using charity owned vehicles for your work) and ensure all your volunteers that use their own vehicle for their role have set up their own accounts. In order to make a claim you can download a claim form [here](#). The form must be formatted correctly and returned via email as a csv Excel file. Charities will be expected to abide by the terms & conditions for this scheme. We ask that you submit claims a maximum of once every two weeks and submit all the relevant journeys within your organisation for the time period in one claim. In addition, please allow five days to have passed after the date of travel before making a claim for that journey. This is to allow TfL's systems to have enough time to associate journeys with valid purchased charges. Claims must be less than 6 months old (and not before 22 June 2020). Please note claims will only be processed for charities registered with the GLA as a known Charity Coronavirus Support Operator.

8. What information do I need to provide for a refund?

In order to receive a refund from the Charity Congestion Charge reimbursement scheme your organisation will need to be registered with the GLA as a known Charity Coronavirus Support Operator within the [Congestion Charge Zone](#). Once registered you can submit a reimbursement request form a maximum of once every two weeks on behalf of your organisation and all volunteers within your organisation. This should detail the name of the claimant, Auto Pay account number, the date that volunteering took place and your registered charity number if applicable. Approved claims will be credited to the relevant Auto Pay accounts on the claim form. Click [here](#) to download a claim form. Additionally, you will need to provide evidence of volunteer shifts, or delivery plan for the claimed date.

9. Can we make a backdated claim?

This scheme takes effect from Monday 22 June 2020. No claims will be accepted prior to this date. However, you may send in a request after the 22 June and backdate any claims up to that point.

10. When will we be reimbursed?

We aim to process all expenses as quickly as possible. Refunds should appear in the relevant Auto Pay accounts within 15 - 20 working days of submitting your claim. They will appear as a credit in the account for future journeys.

11. If a volunteer resides inside the Congestion Charge Zone, can they still claim a reimbursement?

Yes, even if you are eligible for the 90 per cent residents' discount, you can still claim a reimbursement for eligible journeys through the scheme. You will only be able to claim for the amount paid (i.e. the 10 per cent of the charge remaining) and you should make this clear to your organisation's reimbursement administrator. Claims for additional amounts may result in your payment being delayed.

Other charges and costs

12. Our organisation received a Penalty Charge Notice. Can I be reimbursed for this charge?

Unfortunately, we will not be reimbursing any Penalty Charge Notices. To avoid this, please set up an Auto Pay account as this will ensure individuals will not be penalised for inadvertently forgetting to pay the charge.

13. Can other expenses incurred like petrol or parking be reimbursed?

This scheme is purely to provide direct reimbursements from TfL of the Congestion Charge incurred.

14. 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 worse effects of coronavirus. 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.

15. Can Congestion Charges incurred on journeys to volunteer shifts be refunded?

No, only journeys that are made for operational purposes are eligible. Journeys made in the Congestion Charge for the purposes of travelling to and from a work or volunteering shift are not eligible to be reimbursed unless travelling to or from a care setting or homelessness accommodation setting.

Timelines:

16. Why has no information been sent out to charities officially yet?

We are working hard to ensure as many charitable organisations as possible are eligible and have spent time consulting with organisations to cover many different Coronavirus related activity. Please bear with us as we finalise this information and then communicate it out to charitable organisations.

17. How long will this scheme be in place?

There is no set end date for this scheme, although it is being kept under review whilst the temporary changes are in place. We are also taking advice from government regarding restrictions and social actions during the current coronavirus crisis.

Auto Pay:

18. We are already set up on Auto Pay, is that okay?

Yes, if you already have an Auto Pay account, you can start claiming for journeys as soon as you've been approved as a Charity Coronavirus Support Operator. We will need your Auto Pay account number, as well as specific details about the reimbursement such as the vehicle registration and date of the journey.

19. How long does it take to set up an Auto Pay account?

It takes between 5 – 10 days to set up an Auto Pay account, so we recommend setting one up as soon as possible. Unfortunately, we can only start to reimburse your journeys after your account has been set up. In the meantime, we recommend using volunteers or accounts that are already set up on Auto Pay.

20. I have only just set up an Auto Pay account, can any of my journeys prior to this be reimbursed?

The easiest way to claim reimbursements is through an Auto Pay account and, therefore, without an account set up it is extremely difficult to make a reimbursement claim in any other way. We would encourage all volunteers and charities to set up an Auto Pay account as soon as possible.

21. One of our volunteers does not want to set up an Auto Pay account, can we still claim a reimbursement through our charity?

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 paying the charge will not be penalised for inadvertently forgetting to pay the charge. If this is not possible, please get in touch with us by emailing charitycongestionrefunds@london.gov.uk

22. My charity doesn't carry out any of the eligible activity. Can we be reimbursed?

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 (directly or indirectly) 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 these charities perform in supporting vulnerable people who are particularly impacted by the coronavirus. Whilst we recognise the important role that all charities 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 these 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.

23. I have some questions regarding this reimbursement scheme. How should I contact you?

We have a dedicated email inbox, charitycongestionrefunds@london.gov.uk. Please note it may take us 3 – 5 working days to respond to your query.

Individuals

24. As a volunteer, how do I get a refund?

This scheme is only available to organisations registered for this scheme. As a volunteer you will need to contact the personnel at the charity you are volunteering with to see if your organisation is eligible and to find out their internal processes for collating and processing these claims.

25. Can I make my claim directly with TfL?

All claims must come via an organisation registered for this scheme. If you wish to claim back Congestion Charge expenses you have incurred whilst volunteering please contact the charity for whom you were volunteering.

26. I have some questions regarding this reimbursement scheme. How should I contact you?

We have a dedicated email inbox, charitycongestionrefunds@london.gov.uk. Please note it may take us 3 – 5 working days to respond to your query.