

MAYOR OF LONDON

Siân Berry AM

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Our ref: MGLA121223-1979

Date: 4 March 2024

Dear Siân,

Thank you for presenting a petition to the London Assembly (Plenary) meeting on Thursday 7 December 2023 on the affordability of public transport in London. Please accept my sincere apologies for the delay in responding to you.

With the ongoing cost-of-living crisis impacting Londoners heavily, I remain determined to do all I can to help, including ensuring that London's public transport system is as affordable as possible. I have addressed each of the five asks below.

Ask 1 – Freeze fares at current levels

During my first four years as mayor, I froze all pay as you go fares on Transport for London (TfL) services and only increased them when required to do so by the Government. On 19 January, I announced that I would be freezing TfL fares in 2024 to support Londoners struggling with the cost-of-living crisis and London's recovery from the pandemic. This means that fares in 2024 will be 14 per cent lower than if they had risen in line with National Rail fares and 21 per cent lower than if they had risen in line with RPI since 2016.

Ask 2 – Extend free bus travel to under-22s

In 2016, I introduced the Hopper fare to allow Londoners to make unlimited bus and tram journeys within an hour for the price of one. The Hopper fare saves money for millions of passengers using buses and trams every year.

In addition to free bus and tram travel for those under 18, discounted travel is also available for eligible students aged 18 and over, those on work placements, first-year apprentices in London, and eligible veterans and jobseekers.

On 21 February 2024, I was delighted to announce that my new care leavers travel concession has opened for applications, meaning care leavers aged between 18 and 25 who live in London can apply for half-price bus and tram travel.

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Ask 3 – Make free travel available 24 hours a day for Freedom Pass holders

In December 2021, I outlined fare proposals that I was having to explore to generate income as required by the funding conditions agreed by TfL with the Government. This included permanently restricting the use of the 60+ London Oyster photocard (60+) and the Older Persons' Freedom Pass concession between 04:30 and 09:00 on weekdays.

Having carefully considered an equality impact assessment and stakeholder feedback, I confirmed in January 2023 that the temporary travel time restrictions on 60+ Oyster photocards and the Older Person's Freedom Passes would have to become permanent. While holders of the 60+ Oyster photocard and Older Persons' Freedom Pass pay for travel between 04:30 and 09:00 on weekdays (excluding bank holidays), they still receive unlimited free travel on TfL's services at all other times. This remains more generous than the concessions available for older people in much of the country.

As part of the mitigations for this decision, my Deputy Mayor for Transport wrote to London hospitals, asking them to prioritise patients over 60 to receive hospital appointments after 09:00 where appropriate.

Ask 4 – Offer free travel to all emergency services staff


TfL does not currently have plans to expand concessions to emergency services staff. As you will appreciate, TfL receives a great many requests for such concessions from many groups, including those who, like emergency service staff, do vital public service work for London. Unfortunately, we cannot approve all these requests, as TfL must balance its operational costs with keeping fares affordable for everyone.

Ask 5 – Provide free bus travel for people seeking asylum

TfL provides a wide range of free and discounted concessions that are open to all who are eligible, regardless of asylum or immigration status. They currently do not have a dedicated asylum seeker concession, but many asylum seekers would be eligible for other concessions, for example, due to their age or employment status. Along with other operators, TfL provides free travel for Ukrainian refugees from their point of arrival in the UK to their end destination.

I can assure you that I will continue to explore new ways to keep travel affordable so that cost does not become a barrier to inclusion.

Yours sincerely,



Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London