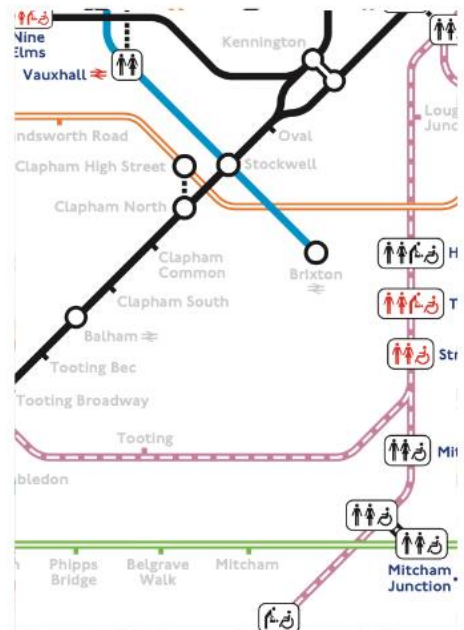


# THE LONDON LOO LEAGUE TABLE



A report by Caroline Russell AM  
Green Party Member of the London Assembly  
August 2023



City Hall Green  
Caroline Russell AM

## Too many Londoners live their daily lives with a 'loo leash' that limits their travel.

Nine out of ten of us consider toilet availability before leaving home.<sup>1</sup> Public transport should be making our capital city accessible to all, including children, older and disabled people, as well as tourists – but unfortunately there are huge loo deserts on the tube network.

I have campaigned for better toilet provision in London since I was elected in 2016, and twice the City Hall Greens proposed amendments to the Mayor's budget for a significant investment in more loos for the TfL network. Given that improving access increases usage, we can expect Transport for London (TfL) to benefit from additional fare revenue. Yet twice our proposals for 70 new TfL toilets were rejected by the Mayor.

Instead, the Mayor asked TfL to undertake a feasibility study. This is well behind schedule already, and I've said to him before, you can't have a wee in a feasibility study.

Network rail has already spent the past five years renovating toilets and making them free.<sup>2</sup> This has meant that major stations in London like Paddington and Waterloo are now small oases of good loo provision in London, showing what is possible.

This report analyses TfL data to show the scale of the problem and where new toilets are most badly needed.

**"You can't have a wee in a feasibility study."**



Key findings in this report:

- **Less than a quarter of stations in zones 1-3 have toilets.**
- **The Northern line is the worst on the Underground;** only 27 per cent of stations have a toilet.
- **The oldest tube, the Metropolitan line, is one of the best.** 83 per cent of stations have a toilet, but only a third of these are accessible.
- Islington, Tower Hamlets and Kensington & Chelsea are the **Boroughs with the worst provision.** Over 90 per cent of TfL stations in each have no toilets.
- Despite a £700m, six-year upgrade of **Bank station** completed this year, it still has no toilets.
- The **Elizabeth line** – the busiest train line in the UK, completed at a cost of £20 billion – has three stations without toilets. These include brand new stations at Canary Wharf and Bond Street.

I hope this report makes clear the urgent case for action.

**Caroline Russell AM**  
**August 2023**

**Methodology:** The analysis in this report is based on open data published by Transport for London. Where data has been analysed by line, the facilities at a given station count for all of the lines that call there.

Where data has been analysed by zone, I have not included stations at which only tram and Thameslink services call because they outnumber TfL stations in some zones and make the picture on the stations TfL controls less clear. Where data has been analysed by zone, the lower numbered zone has been used for boundary zone and joint zone stations.

Where data has been analysed by borough, the borough that has the greater part of the station is used, and stations at which only tram and Thameslink services call have been ignored.

All data was obtained from TfL open data using the station facilities data after analysis to link it to boroughs, zones and lines.<sup>3</sup>



## BACKGROUND: THE URGENT NEED FOR TOILETS IN LONDON

Public toilets are a facility we all rely on, and many Londoners experience an urgent need for. Three quarters of the public say there are not enough public toilets in the UK, particularly at bus stations and train stations.<sup>4</sup> There are many Londoners who plan their journeys around toilets, particularly older and disabled people, and those travelling with children.

The Royal Society for Public Health talks about a 'loo leash', with fears about access to a toilet leading to one in five not going out as often as they would like, much more for those with a medical condition.<sup>5</sup>

We need more and better public toilets all over London, but given that the Mayor has control of buildings all over London that form the stations of the tube and overground network, they are a good place to start a loo revolution.

TfL documentation on Healthy Streets states that toilets are, along with drinking water, "essential for creating streets that are inclusive to pedestrians from all walks of life".<sup>6</sup>

Transport for London (TfL) has made great strides in accessibility in some areas. We all benefit from clear mapping and a simple payment system. However, toilets are a key accessibility need where progress is lacking.

Most people expect that railway stations have public toilets and plan their travel around that. Network Rail has been working hard at providing new free toilets in recent years. However, at TfL stations the provision is sporadic and unmodernised.

In 2019 I first proposed an amendment to the Mayor's Budget that would have started a new toilet programme in London for TfL stations. An investment as low as just £18 million could have been transformational, providing investment that could have led to new toilets in every part of London, and ensuring that accessible toilets were provided.<sup>7</sup>

In late 2021 the London Assembly Health Committee published a report – The Toilet Paper: Improving London's loos. This included recommendations that all public bodies could take to improve toilet provision in London – including TfL.<sup>8</sup>

There has been some progress on toilets away from the transport network. The Good Growth Fund has provided investment for 302 toilets, which is a partial response by the Mayor to the call for new publicly available toilets, in London since 2018.<sup>9</sup> Following my lobbying, TfL now provides its Tube toilet map in print, for free, to anyone who requests it.<sup>10</sup>

I have kept updating my amendment each year and in January of 2023 proposed a budget amendment that would have invested £20 million in TfL toilets, but it was blocked.<sup>11</sup>

The Mayor has now commissioned TfL to conduct a feasibility study, but this review whose terms of reference are still not confirmed half a year later risks further delaying much needed action to deliver toilets in London. I hope that the statistics in this report help make the case for urgent action.



# LONDON LOO LEAGUE TABLE

## TUBE LINES

Finding a toilet should not be a competition, but ranking the lines of the TfL services makes it clear how starkly toilet provision varies, and provides an interesting history lesson along the way.



What is clear is that the provision of toilets varies hugely between the lines of the Underground. Over half of all tube lines, including the relatively modern Victoria line have toilets at less than half of their stations.

The Elizabeth line, completed in 2022, has the best toilet provision of any line in London. However, it still has three stations without toilets. These include brand new stations at Canary Wharf and Bond Street (described by TfL as “the jewel in the crown of the West End’s transport provision”).<sup>12</sup>

Worse still, the Elizabeth line has stations that have toilets but not accessible toilets. Given that the choice was made not to provide toilets on the trains – and the fact the train line is now the busiest in the UK – every station should have been given a toilet.

The Metropolitan line, the oldest tube line, has the second-best provision of toilets – perhaps the Victorians were onto something? However, the Victorians hadn’t heard of accessibility, so it’s also one of the least accessible tube lines for loos. This Victorian infrastructure benefits from being planned as a railway rather than a metro system.

### Toilet provision by line

Rank	Lines	Stations		
1	Elizabeth Line	41	95%	93%
2	Metropolitan	35	83%	29%
3	Jubilee	27	63%	52%
4	Central	49	59%	16%
5	Piccadilly	53	55%	19%
6	Waterloo & City	2	50%	50%
7	Victoria	16	44%	25%
8	District	60	42%	25%
9	Bakerloo	25	32%	24%
10	Circle	35	29%	23%
11	Overground	112	28%	26%
12	Hammersmith & City	29	28%	24%
13	Northern Line	52	27%	21%
14	Thameslink	64	14%	13%
15	DLR	45	11%	11%
16	Tram	39	10%	8%

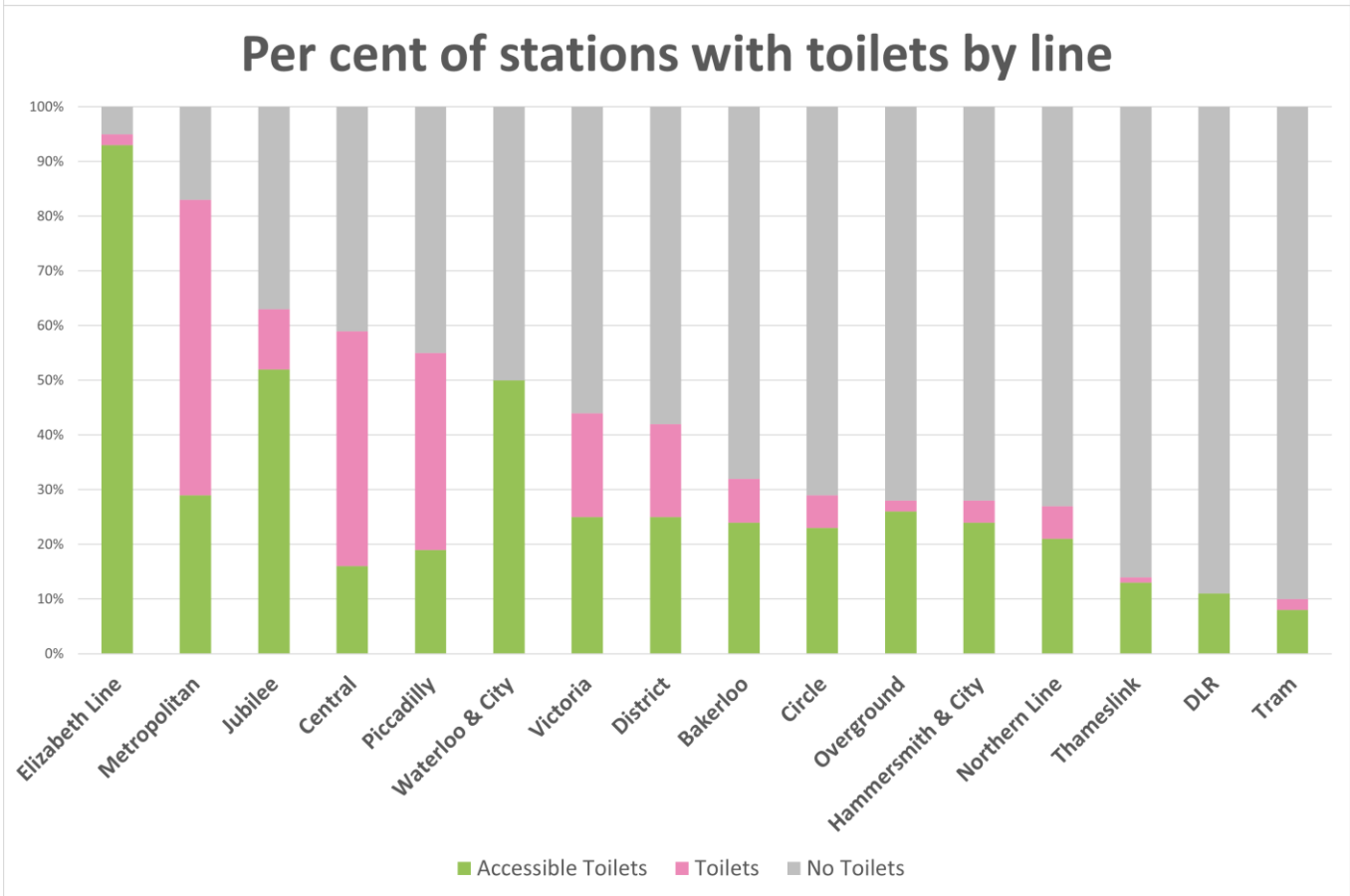
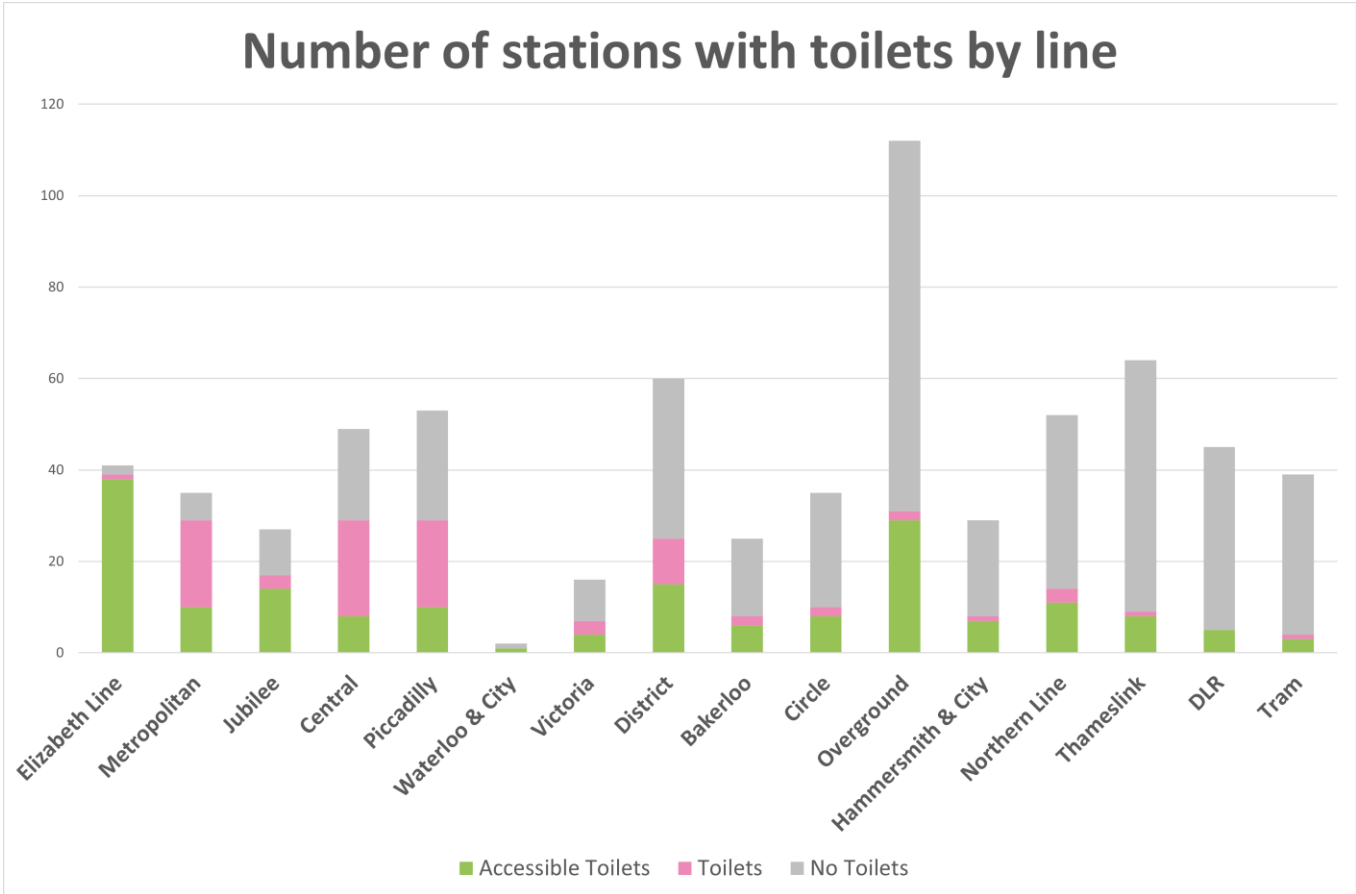
 = per cent of stations with any toilets

 = per cent of stations with accessible toilets

Despite having toilets designed in from the outset, almost a fifth of Metropolitan line stations are still without a toilet.<sup>13</sup> The situation is far worse for people who have accessibility needs: only three in ten Metropolitan line stations have an accessible toilet.

For most lines the proportion of stations with toilets is below 50 per cent, and in total just over one in four stations in London has an accessible toilet.









# LONDON LOO LEAGUE TABLE

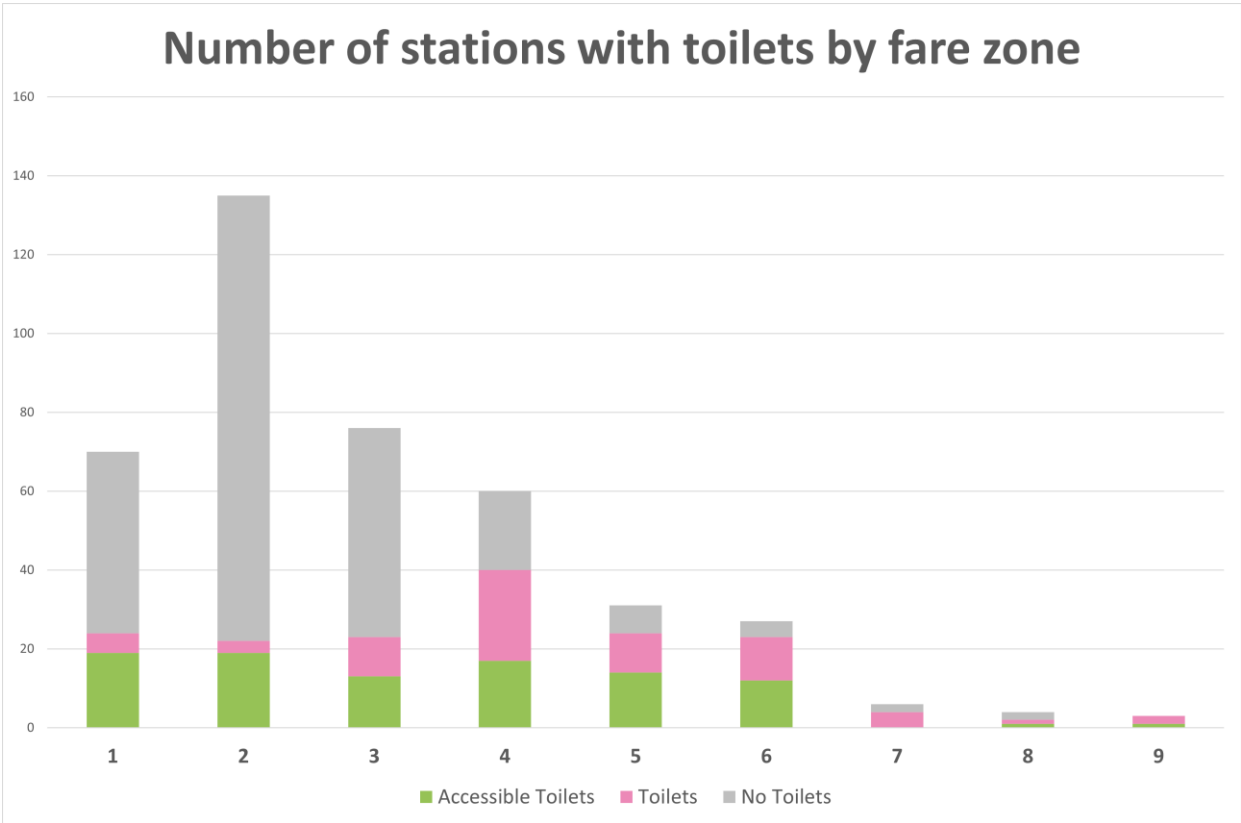
## FARE ZONES

Outer Londoners actually have a better chance of finding a toilet on the Underground – in zone 6 nearly nine in ten stations have a toilet, but in zone 2 – just outside the centre of London – only 16 per cent of stations have a loo – nearly a polar opposite. Every zone in London also has more stations without an accessible loo than one available.

Toilet provision by fare zone

Zone	Stations		
1	70	34%	27%
2	135	16%	14%
3	76	30%	17%
4	60	67%	28%
5	31	77%	45%
6	27	85%	44%
7	6	67%	0%
8	4	50%	25%
9	3	100%	33%

 = per cent of stations with any toilets  
 = per cent of stations with accessible toilets





# LONDON LOO LEAGUE TABLE

## BOROUGH

Some inner London boroughs do particularly badly for toilet provision on the TfL network – Islington, Kensington and Chelsea and Tower Hamlets all have toilets at less than one in ten stations.



One borough – Barking and Dagenham has toilets at every station on the TfL map, but only half of them also have accessible toilets. Again, this provision relates to the historic nature of the line which was originally built as a railway, with full facilities.

There is a need for new accessible toilets throughout London’s transport network, even boroughs that are well served by the TfL network have plenty of stations with no accessible toilet. Every borough on the TfL toilet map has at least one station with no accessible toilet. Four boroughs (Camden, Newham, Westminster and Tower Hamlets) have 20 or more stations with no accessible toilet.


Three boroughs in London have no TfL stations on the TfL toilet map – Bexley, Kingston and Sutton. This underlines the fact that whilst improving toilets on the TfL network will benefit most Londoners, the Mayor should also make wider plans to provide toilets with Network Rail and beyond.


There is inconsistency in the data on toilet provision in Greenwich. There are accessible toilets shown on the TfL toilet tube map for North Greenwich station and on the TfL station web page, however there are no toilets in TfL open data or on the TfL Go app. This is the only discrepancy I have found, but it does indicate that the data itself needs some review.

### Toilet provision by borough

Borough	Stations				
Barking	6	100%	6	50%	3
Barnet	13	46%	6	23%	3
Bexley	0				
Brent	24	50%	12	33%	8
Bromley	3	67%	2	67%	2
Camden	26	23%	6	23%	6
City of London	11	27%	3	27%	3
Croydon	2	50%	1	50%	1
Ealing	20	70%	14	30%	6
Enfield	10	40%	4	20%	2
Greenwich	8	13%	1	0%	0
Hackney	15	27%	4	27%	4
Hammersmith	15	27%	4	13%	2
Haringey	10	20%	2	10%	1
Harrow	12	67%	8	33%	4
Havering	8	88%	7	63%	5
Hillingdon	17	94%	16	59%	10
Hounslow	8	63%	5	13%	1
Islington	14	7%	1	7%	1
Kensington	12	8%	1	8%	1
Kingston	0				
Lambeth	11	27%	3	18%	2
Lewisham	8	25%	2	25%	2
Merton	5	20%	1	20%	1
Newham	29	21%	6	21%	6
Redbridge	15	80%	12	33%	5
Richmond	2	100%	2	50%	1
Southwark	12	17%	2	17%	2
Sutton	0				
Tower Hamlets	28	7%	2	7%	2
Waltham Forest	11	27%	3	9%	1
Wandsworth	8	25%	2	25%	2
Westminster	29	31%	9	17%	5

Borough names abbreviated for space reasons

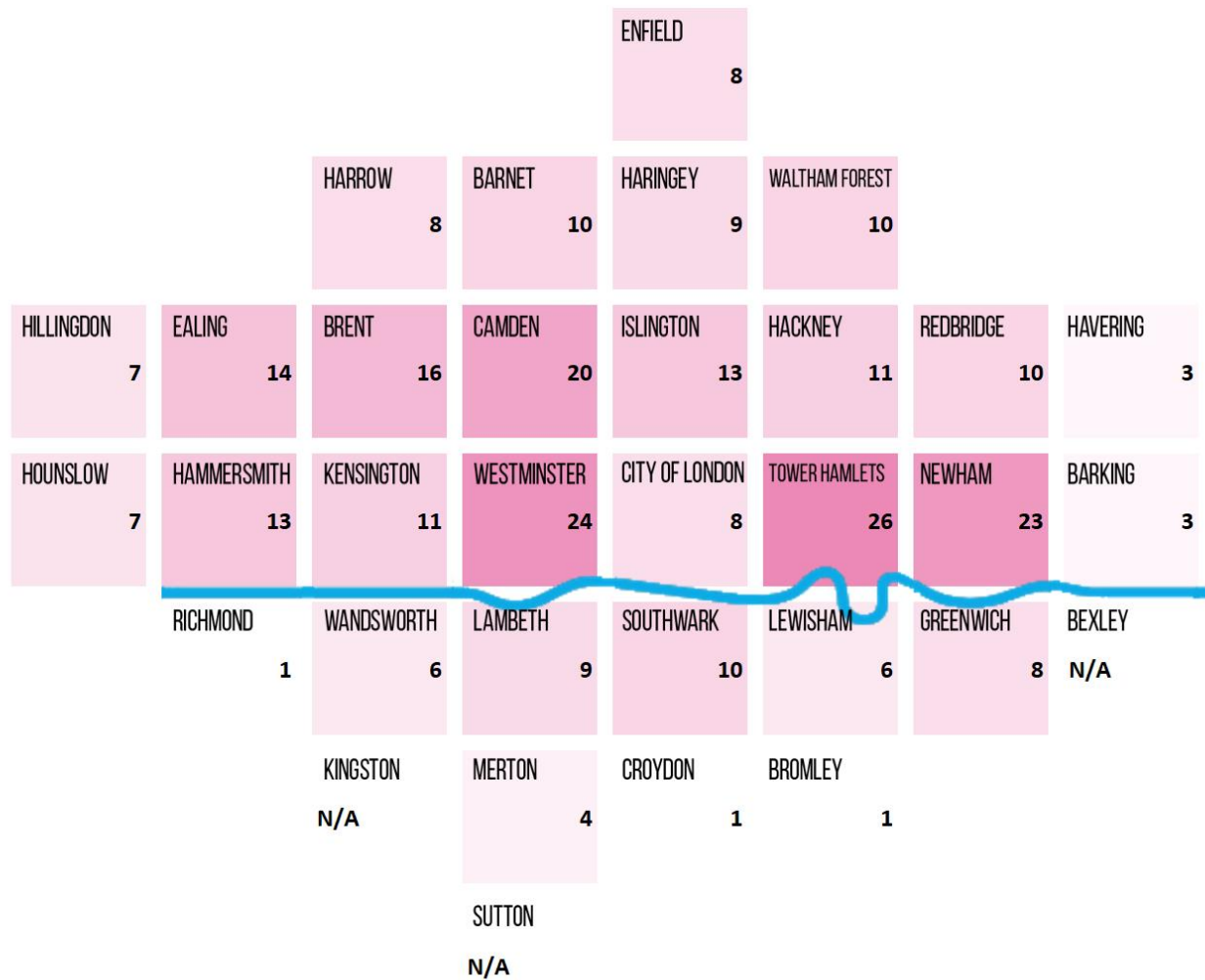
 per cent and number with toilets

 per cent and number with accessible toilets



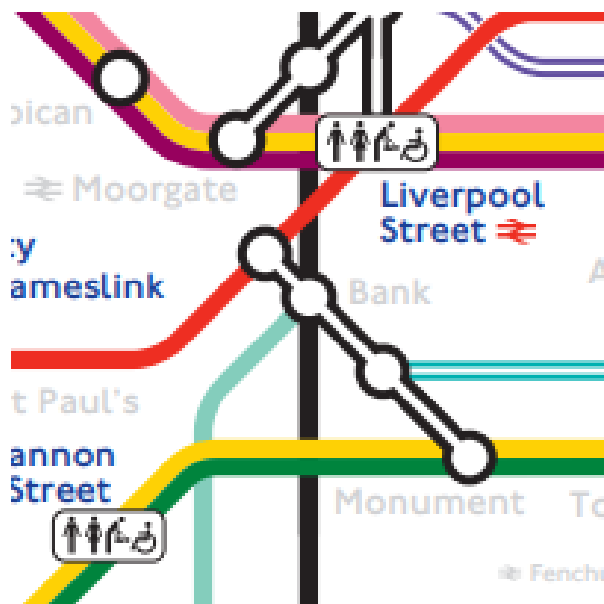


## Number of stations with no accessible toilet provision by borough



Note: Bexley, Kingston and Sutton are marked N/A as they have no TfL stations on the toilet map

## TOILETS AT NEW STATIONS? DON'T BANK ON IT



Even in the centre of London it is all too often impossible to find a convenient public toilet in, or near to a major station. TfL has failed to make use of the existing upgrade programme on the tube to provide new toilet facilities – even in gaps of provision or at busy stations.

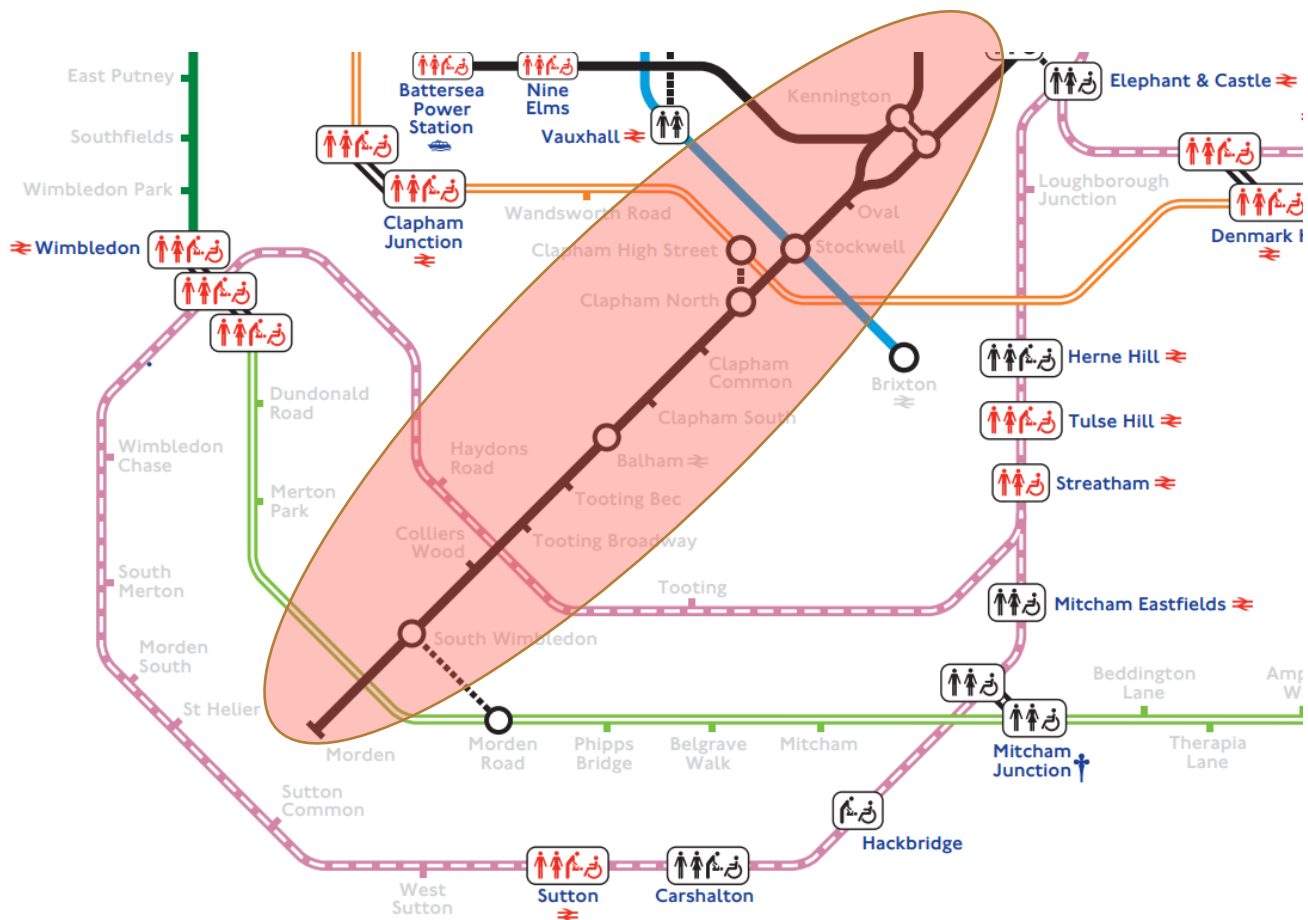
Bank station has seen a £700m upgrade over six years – this is just one example of a series of major station upgrades in the past decade completed under the current Mayor. The upgrade has provided a replacement, wider Northern line platform, new connections within

the station to other lines and two new entrances. Sadly, despite all of this work there is still no toilet at Bank station.

The City of London's own map of toilets also shows a 'desert' surrounding Bank station.<sup>14</sup>

The exceptionally long lifespan of transport infrastructure – lasting upwards of hundreds of years – makes the failure to deliver basic accessibility provisions in these investments all the more stark.

## MIND THE GAP – THE LONGEST GAP BETWEEN LOOS



People tell me that they plan journeys based on how easily and how often they can access a toilet. Sections of the tube with long gaps between stations with toilets present a huge challenge to many Londoners.

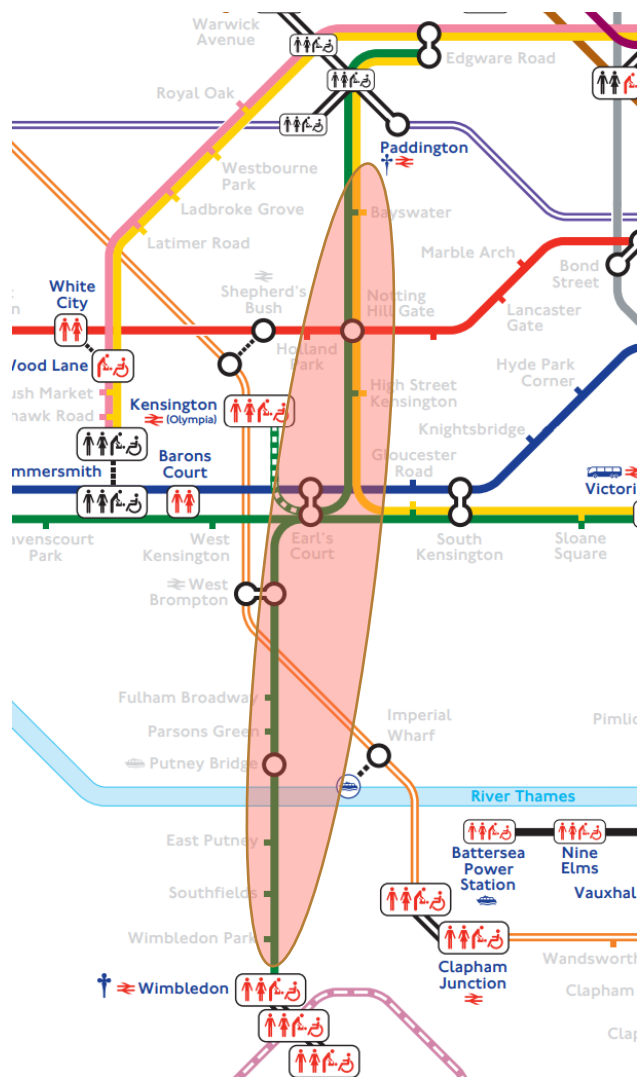
**The southern end of the Northern Line** is a terrible loo desert. There are no toilets from Morden to Kennington. The new Northern Line extension to Battersea has toilets at every

station, but no opportunity was taken to add toilets to Kennington as part of the project.

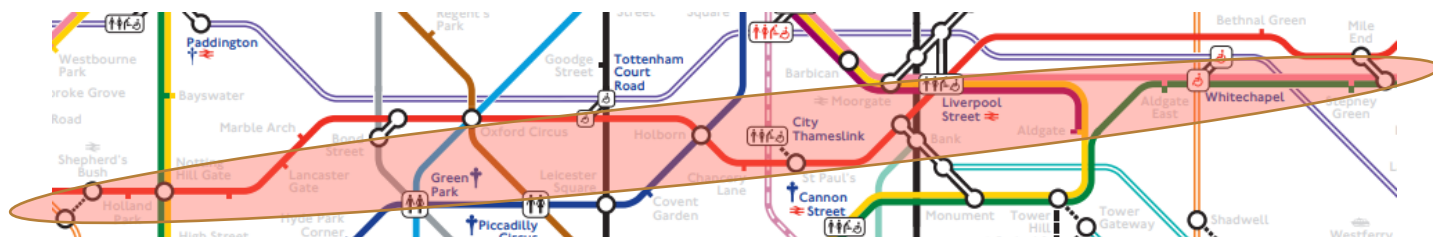
Even at the end of a 23-minute journey to Morden, travellers are not rewarded with access to a toilet, which is a major failing as Morden is also a key interchange for bus services for onward travel.

## DEUCE! IT'S NOT RACQUET SCIENCE

**Wimbledon Park to Bayswater** on the District line is another loo-less trek, with ten stops taking 22 minutes.



## TOILETS SHOULD BE CENTRAL TO OUR CITY



Shepherd's Bush to Mile End on the Central line is a 15-stop, 27-minute loo desert for the tube, though there are Network Rail toilets for those who venture all the way up to Liverpool Street rail station, and a single accessible toilet outside the gate line at Tottenham Court Road.

## LEARNING FROM NETWORK RAIL

Network Rail has not just made changes at major terminals since making their toilets free, but also at major interchanges.

Clapham Junction is by some measures the busiest station in the country due to the number of people who pass through, but the toilet provision was not modernised until recently.

The existing arrangements did not provide enough toilets and there was no space to include enough accessible toilets.

As part of a £35 million upgrade programme Network Rail is currently rebuilding an entrance and reconfiguring the layout of gateline, toilets and commercial space – this will enable an increase in toilet provision. TfL should be considering which stations it controls could have the same treatment.<sup>15 16</sup>



## RECOMMENDATIONS

Toilets are a vital part of a modern, accessible transport system. They should be free to use, fully accessible, well-maintained, located within stations, and open as long as stations themselves are.

The Mayor needs to get Transport for London to focus on upgrading stations with toilets adding accessible toilets where they are missing, investing in new toilets where there are none, and providing better information on where toilets are.

## INVESTMENT

- **TfL should complete their feasibility study urgently.** This should set out a deliverable programme of investment to increase provision across the network, bearing in mind:
  - The location of toilets, compared to where the main flows of people in stations are.
  - The journey time between toilets – taking account of service patterns and journey times between stations.
  - The gap between provision of toilets and accessible toilets.
- **The Mayor should provide TfL with the funding for a significant investment in new toilets.** The £20 million investment I have called for would make a good start for a regular annual investment - even just £20 million would provide for new toilets on every tube line and within a few years there could be decent toilet provision at least a few stops from every station on the network.
- **The Mayor and TfL should ensure that all new stations and significant refurbishments include toilet provision.** TfL's Customer Experience Standard for Stations should be amended to make this a requirement, not just a consideration.

## INFORMATION

- **TfL should better promote existing toilet provision.** Londoners should know they can:
  - Access over one hundred fully accessible toilets on the network, for free.
  - Request to use toilets beyond the gateline without tapping in or out.
  - Download the Tube toilets map or order a print version for free.
- **The Mayor should invest in better London-wide toilet information.** Existing digital resources on publicly accessible toilets could be improved and promoted, such as the Great British Toilets Map, Toilets4London and TfL Go.
- **TfL should report annually on progress on toilet provision.** TfL regularly reports on the services it provides but shares no statistics on toilet provision. Toilet availability is crucial for many Londoners to access the transport network therefore new metrics should be developed to track progress on improving toilet provision, including accessible toilets.

With all of these actions, the Mayor can finally remove toilet deserts from the tube, stop Londoners having to cross their legs and hope, and make London into a modern accessible city with excellent toilet provision.



## WHAT DO YOU THINK?

I would like to hear more from Londoners in outer boroughs about how the Mayor and the GLA can help reduce their exposure to air pollution.

Please get in touch with me if you have any comments or suggestions.

**Caroline Russell AM**, Green Party Member of the London Assembly

E-mail: Caroline.Russell@london.gov.uk

Address: London Assembly, City Hall, Kamal Chunchie Way, E16 1ZE

**Alex Ingram**, Researcher

Tel: 07810 156 888

Email: Alex.Ingram@london.gov.uk

This report sets out my views as an individual Assembly Member and not the agreed view of the entire Assembly.

## References

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<sup>1</sup> Public toilets in London – the views of older Londoners, Age UK London, Sep 2022

[https://www.ageuk.org.uk/wp-assets/globalassets/london/campaigns/out-and-about/ageuk\\_london\\_loos\\_final.pdf](https://www.ageuk.org.uk/wp-assets/globalassets/london/campaigns/out-and-about/ageuk_london_loos_final.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Network Rail sets date for axing all train station toilet charges, BBC News, Dec 2018

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-46589824>

<sup>3</sup> Our open data, Transport for London, accessed June 2023 <https://tfl.gov.uk/info-for/open-data-users/our-open-data>

<sup>4</sup> Taking the P\*\*\*: the decline of the great British public toilet. Royal Society for Public Health, May 2019

<https://www.rsph.org.uk/our-work/policy/healthy-places/taking-the-p.html>

<sup>5</sup> Taking the P\*\*\*: the decline of the great British public toilet. Royal Society for Public Health, May 2019

<https://www.rsph.org.uk/our-work/policy/healthy-places/taking-the-p.html>

<sup>6</sup> Why aren't public toilets & drinking water fountains Healthy Streets Indicators? Transport for London, p.103

<http://content.tfl.gov.uk/healthy-streets-explained.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> City Hall Greens amendment to Mayor of London budget, February 2020 <https://www.london.gov.uk/who-we-are/what-london-assembly-does/assembly-members/publications-caroline-russell/publication-caroline-russell-city-hall-greens-budget-amendment-2020-2021>

<sup>8</sup> The Toilet Paper: Improving London's loos, London Assembly Health Committee, Nov 2021

<https://www.london.gov.uk/assembly-publications/toilet-paper-improving-londons-loos>

<sup>9</sup> Good Growth funded public toilets (2), MQ by Caroline Russell AM, Oct 2021 <https://www.london.gov.uk/who-we-are/what-london-assembly-does/questions-mayor/find-an-answer/good-growth-funded-public-toilets-2>

<sup>10</sup> The Tube toilets map is available to download and order in print here: <https://tfl.gov.uk/forms/12387.aspx>



<sup>11</sup> Labour block new public toilets for Londoners, Jan 2023 <https://www.london.gov.uk/who-we-are/what-london-assembly-does/news-caroline-russell/labour-block-new-public-toilets-londoners-0>

<sup>12</sup> Bond Street's new Elizabeth line station now open, Transport for London, Oct 2022 <https://tfl.gov.uk/info-for/media/press-releases/2022/october/bond-street-s-new-elizabeth-line-station-now-open>

<sup>13</sup> Toilets were part of the specification for the construction of the original London Underground lines, as can be seen in an 1877 advert for investment in the completion of the Metropolitan Inner Circle (now known as the Circle line). "The contract includes the construction of Refreshment Rooms or Restaurants, Lavatories &c. at each of the three stations" – Truth, p.600, 15 Nov 1877

[https://www.google.co.uk/books/edition/Truth/E6U6AQAAMAAJ/hl=en\\_gbpv=1\\_dq=metropolitan+london+railway+lavatories\\_pg=PA600\\_printsec=frontcover?pg=PA600&dq=metropolitan%20london%20railway%20lavatories](https://www.google.co.uk/books/edition/Truth/E6U6AQAAMAAJ/hl=en_gbpv=1_dq=metropolitan+london+railway+lavatories_pg=PA600_printsec=frontcover?pg=PA600&dq=metropolitan%20london%20railway%20lavatories)

<sup>14</sup> Toilet facilities in the City of London, City of London, Jul 2023

<https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/services/streets/clean-streets/public-toilets>

<sup>15</sup> Our work to upgrade Clapham Junction Station is underway, Network Rail, Jul 2023

<https://www.networkrail.co.uk/running-the-railway/our-routes/wessex/clapham-junction-station-upgrades/>

<sup>16</sup> A look at the upgrades underway at Clapham Junction station, Ian Visits, Jun 2023

<https://www.ianvisits.co.uk/articles/a-look-at-the-upgrades-underway-at-clapham-junction-station-63643/>

