

*London is a 24-hour city
and needs transport services
to match*



The voice of London
transport users

We need a road network that is fit for purpose: roads, traffic signs and signals should be kept in good repair and roadworks completed quickly



Our function

Our name

London TravelWatch is the operating name of the London Transport Users Committee.

Our role

To be an effective champion for those who travel in and around London.

Our remit

London TravelWatch was set up by Parliament to be the official voice of London's travelling public. Our remit covers all those who use buses, the Underground, the National Rail system, the Docklands Light Railway, Tramlink, London's principal road network, (including cyclists and pedestrians), taxis, Dial-a-Ride and Thames piers.

Our aims

We aim to:

- take every opportunity to press for a better travel experience for transport users
- ensure account is taken of the particular needs of London and its region in all transport policy and planning decisions
- help the travelling public understand their rights by providing relevant and useful information

Our responsibilities

Representation

We speak for the travelling public in discussions with opinion formers and policy makers at all levels – town halls, City Hall, Whitehall and Brussels, as well as in the media.

Consultation

We are in regular contact with the transport industry, and those who regulate and fund it, about services and future plans which affect its users – including timetables, routes, frequencies, fares, ticketing, access, stations, vehicles, safety, security and the provision of information.

Investigation

We investigate complaints brought to us by people who are dissatisfied with responses they have received from service providers, and seek redress on their behalf where appropriate.

Monitoring

We monitor trends in service quality, such as punctuality, reliability, crowding, congestion, cleanliness, accessibility, staff attitudes and waiting facilities. We question, when performance falls short of the travelling public's reasonable expectations and demand improvement.



We need a transport network accessible to all

Our vision

We believe that:

- **services** should run frequently and reliably, at all reasonable times of the day and week
- **networks** should provide good access to all areas, have adequate capacity and offer easy interchange between different types of transport
- **vehicles** should be comfortable, clean, accessible, easily identifiable, quiet, non-polluting, and convenient for those travelling with luggage, shopping or children
- **staff** should be alert, helpful, well-informed and committed to offering a high quality service
- **journeys** should be safe and free from crime or the fear of crime
- **stations or stops** should be well-designed, properly maintained, fully accessible and offer a civilised waiting environment
- **streets** should be clean, well-policed, properly signed, uncongested and maintained so that they can be used with confidence and in safety by pedestrians, cyclists and motorists
- **information** should be intelligible, relevant, accurate, and available in appropriate formats before and during travel
- **fares** should be affordable and represent good value for money
- **ticket systems** should be easy to use, flexible and integrated between different operators and modes of transport
- **transport providers** should communicate with their users, be approachable and receptive to suggestions, take complaints seriously and have proper redress mechanisms when things go wrong

Our Chair

Sharon Grant
Chair



This has truly been a year of change at London TravelWatch, on every front.

I was appointed halfway through the year, and shortly after that our Board was refreshed with six new members. Janet Cooke, our new Chief Executive, had joined us only in April 2008. No sooner had she arrived than we also saw political change in London with a new Mayor, signalling important changes in transport policies and big changes in membership on the Transport Committee of the London Assembly.

With encouragement from the Transport Committee, we reviewed the way we work. We have restructured the organisation in an effort to ensure greater efficiency and responsiveness to passenger concerns, and to streamline our research and intelligence function. The number of committee meetings has been much reduced, as we move towards the Board becoming more strategic, with the staff focusing on operational responsibilities.

Just as the external economic climate caused us to take stock of our own efficiency, the effects of recession for travellers in the capital inevitably took centre stage at London TravelWatch. Against this background we put the passenger view on the many changes of emphasis heralded by the new Mayor. We responded to unprecedented public concerns about ticket office closures, and used our

influence with Government, and operators, to get real results for travellers on this and many other fronts, across all travel modes.

This was a year to review our focus as an organisation and the Board has taken the view that a smart, evidence-based approach to prioritising our discretionary work is essential. We therefore set about the task of building that evidence base, and developing a new relationship with Transport for London (TfL) around sharing research findings. I believe this will lay the foundation for solid progress in the future.

As a relatively small organisation, London TravelWatch makes the voice of transport users heard through its relationships with those who plan, operate and monitor the capital's complex and multi-modal transport system. It is through these relationships that London TravelWatch is best able to provide a voice for transport users in London: with the London Assembly, Passenger Focus, TfL and the Department of Transport, as well as with commercial providers. We began reviewing and refreshing those relationships this year, and we thank all of those bodies for their constructive response to our approaches.

Our thanks are due to our staff in this year of considerable change, especially John Cartledge who stepped down as our Deputy Chief Executive in December. We also said goodbye to a number of Board members, who had given great service over many years and deserve our gratitude. I would also like to record my personal thanks to my Deputy Chair Lorna Reith for her support particularly in the early months of my appointment, and to David Leibling who stepped in as Chair pending my appointment.

Our Chief Executive

Janet Cooke
Chief Executive



This has also been a challenging year for the staff, as they responded to changes within the organisation and across the industry.

We have modernised the organisation to reflect our core work more exactly, and to improve accountability so we are better able to represent the interests of all those who live, work and visit the capital.

We have also introduced efficiency savings across London TravelWatch, as the economic climate demanded.

Not only did the trying economic times affect the organisation internally, but it made our role as the voice of transport users even more vital, as we worked to ensure that services and facilities were not cut or reduced to the detriment of the travelling public. High levels of investment are being made in infrastructure around the capital and this must continue. This means the voice of the passengers must be influential. If we do not get it right, they will suffer for years to come. This investment means, of course, that passengers have had

to endure high levels of disruption, especially at weekends, and this is a concern, but necessary if we are going to keep London moving. Our challenge is to remain at the centre of transport policy and planning so we can influence and ensure the passengers' perspective and experience is represented and protected.

It is essential that we understand first hand the issues the travelling public face, and we arranged a programme of events taking our Board and staff out and about across the transport network looking particularly at key 'hubs' and interchanges, facilities at stations and stops, and on streets and roads.

Transport is important to London: how people move around is vital to its success. A first class city deserves, and needs, a first class transport system. People's experience of the transport system colours how they view the city, and their voice is crucial. In this review, you will read about the vast range of work undertaken by our staff and Board. I am grateful to them for their effort as we ensure that this voice is heard and championed.

Buses must be given the priority they need to run reliable services



Our year

Speaking out

London TravelWatch regularly responds to various consultations from the Mayor, the Government, the London Assembly, the regulators, transport providers and local authorities, and gives evidence when called. This ensures that the passengers' perspective is always at the heart of decision- and policy-making.

We have **regular meetings in public**, to which industry experts, opinion-formers, politicians and other stakeholders are invited to discuss issues affecting the travelling public. These meetings help to provide us with evidence, maintain and develop working relationships and allow the public a chance to see the work we do.

During the May elections for a new Mayor and London Assembly, London TravelWatch published a **manifesto for the new mayoral term**, which set out the key issues we think are vital for transport users in the capital, and the basic standards we believe the travelling public should expect from London's transport network. Transport is a key priority in the capital, and all members of the Assembly and Mayor need to know what passengers want and need.

A great deal of legislation affecting transport originates in Europe, and we also respond to European matters. During this year, we worked extensively on the European Commission's strategy on **consumer law, and enhancing passenger rights**.

We were concerned at the decision to scrap the **Western Extension Congestion Charging Zone**, as we believe it failed to take account of wider public concerns about the environment and congestion levels. We called for substantive alternative proposals to address congestion and ensure that buses and

essential car users would be able to move freely in the zone.

We gave evidence to the **London Assembly's Transport Committee** investigation into crowding on the rail network, and the **House of Commons' Transport Select Committee's** investigation into rail fares and franchises.

We contributed to the debate on the **future of the articulated (bendy) buses** on routes 501, 507 and 38. London TravelWatch said that the use of these buses on routes with a high volume of passengers had advantages in terms of accessibility, manoeuvrability on limited road space and loading and dwell times. Our view is that dispensing with them would be poor value for money.

We were pleased to see the **'Zip' Oyster photocard** for young people finally become compulsory having originally proposed the idea two years ago. We thought that a photocard meant that anyone causing trouble could be traced more easily and numbers on buses could be controlled which was a particular problem at the end of the school day.

After becoming concerned about the lack of progress on **interchange facilities** at Stratford International station and the main National Rail station, we wrote to the Government with particular concern about the arrangements between the future High Speed domestic service and the other regional services.

We protested strongly about the **'ghost bus'** (a weekly bus service running between Ealing Broadway, Kensington Olympia and Wandsworth, which replaced a withdrawn train service) which we felt was inadequate. We were delighted when the Government agreed that this was neither a satisfactory replacement for a train service, nor a full, legal closure process.

Public transport must be attractively priced, with tickets that can be used on all forms of transport



Our year continued

Tracking performance

We made significant comments on TfL's initial proposals for the **new Northern Line timetable**, most of which were adopted, thereby contributing towards major improvements in Northern Line performance during this year. We also contributed to consultation on services on the **Chesham and Amersham section** of the Metropolitan Line.

We analysed and commented on the **future of the Circle Line**, when it was proposed to change the pattern of service to improve reliability. We provided several ideas to ensure the proposal was successful and in passengers' interest, and were pleased when most were adopted, including trials before full implementation.

We publish a quarterly **performance review** of the National Rail companies serving London, which includes analyses and commentaries on the performance trends revealed by the statistics.

We reviewed the service provided and provision of information for passengers during the **Christmas and New Year period**, including the wide programme of planned engineering works. We thought that the three international airports provided an excellent level of co-ordination, and suggested that this could be used as an example of good practice across the industry. We also recommended that timetables for the holiday period should be published earlier than usual to give passengers enough time to plan.

London Overground and Southern consulted us extensively on their **new timetables**, and accepted many of our suggestions.

Network Rail's **Route Utilisation Strategies** establish investment priorities, capacity and service levels on the rail network in and around London for a generation. During this year, we worked on the strategies for routes into Charing Cross, Cannon Street, London Bridge, Victoria, Paddington, Marylebone, Euston and St Pancras. We also respond where appropriate to the Government's consultations on new franchises, which this year included the South Central franchise.

We raised concerns with several transport providers about **service disruption**, and how the disruption was communicated to passengers – including problems on the West Coast Main Line over Christmas, the delay to services on the West London Line, and cancelled trains on the Euston line.



*We need room to breathe:
transport is for people,
and they are entitled
to civilised conditions*

Paying for travel

We objected to proposals by South West Trains and First Capital Connect to reduce their **ticket office opening hours** after receiving hundreds of responses from passengers, most of whom wanted to see ticket offices remain open. London TravelWatch believes that ticket offices are about more than selling tickets: they provide information and add a sense of security and personalisation at stations. We were also concerned that some of the automatic ticket vending machines planned to cover the closures did not, and could not, offer a complete range of tickets, and could be complex for passengers to use.

We encouraged passengers to check they were **getting the best deal** on their season ticket, and to renew season tickets before the annual fare rises at the beginning of January. As a daytime off-peak fare was introduced on TfL services, we urged people to check whether Oyster PAYG would be cheaper than Travelcards, and reminded passengers that there were discounts and railcards available that might make their journey considerably cheaper.

We called on the Mayor to protect the pockets of London's travelling public, as research by Passenger Focus revealed that Londoners **paid more to travel** than anywhere else in Europe. Although it is true that Londoners have fast and frequent services, we felt that there was a limit on what the fare-payer should bear.

We examined with TfL the reasons for the two failures within two weeks of the Oyster card system, **affecting millions of passengers**. We also urged passengers to check their Oyster accounts to ensure they had not been overcharged.

We are regularly consulted on taxi fares, which are revised annually in April. This year, it was proposed that there should be a **supplement to taxi fares** to mitigate the high cost of fuel (at the time). We felt that taxi fares were already high, and did not think there should be a change from the annual fare rise, both as a rise was not in the passengers' interest, and to increase the price competitiveness with other modes of transport.

We welcomed the recommendations from the House of Commons Transport Committee on ticketing and concessionary travel on public transport, to which we had given oral and written evidence. We were particularly pleased at the agreement that the **penalty fare appeals system** lacks independence, as we had observed, and urged the Government to review the penalty fares process on the rail system.

The creation of the new London Overground rail service led to **new fare zones** being created beyond London between Hatch End and Watford High St, which were numbered 7 and 8. The existing zones A, B, C and D on the Metropolitan Line (between Moor Park, Watford, Amersham and Chesham) were re-organised and re-titled as 7, 8 and 9. However, surrounding publicity suggested that tickets issued for the London Overground zones were not valid on the Metropolitan lines, and vice-versa. We complained, and it was corrected on subsequent publicity.



Policies must be designed to encourage travel in ways which minimise any adverse effects on the environment

Widening access

After our work on **access to healthcare facilities**, in which we observed that not only was it vital that access to any new (or extended) healthcare facilities must be considered at the very earliest planning stage, but also that it was vital that hospitals and primary care trusts undertook proper travel planning, we met both the Minister for Health and the Minister for Transport. We were delighted to be able to meet the two departments together, as joined-up, cross-departmental thinking and action is vital. Subsequently, we worked closely with the NHS on consultations and reviews, ensuring access for staff, patients, carers and visitors was on the agenda. We believe that this work has started to establish principles in the planning work that the NHS does.

London TravelWatch contributed to regular consultations on **bus routes and services** throughout the year. We were particularly pleased to see our recommendations leading to an extension on route 388 (to Embankment station from Hackney Wick, via Bethnal Green, Shoreditch and the City), leading to much better interchange opportunities for passengers, and an extension on the 195 (from Ealing Hospital to Brentford), which meant better interchanges and much-needed access to the hospital.

We contributed to the London Borough of Ealing's discussion about **removing bus lanes**, hoping to persuade them that the removal would be retrograde. We believe that bus lanes (and other bus priority measures) are essential to ensure buses remain frequent and reliable, and that as many people as possible can use them.

We warned transport providers and the Government that the **current economic climate** should not be used as a reason to reduce quality of services, scale back investment programmes or downgrade commitments. We raised specific concerns about the cleaning of tubes, trains and buses, removal of graffiti, and lighting at stations, all of which contribute to a better and more welcoming environment for passengers.

We liaised with Croydon council to ensure that their **bus clearways and lay-bys** complied with disability discrimination legislation, and were fully accessible. After site visits, we were delighted that some of the least accessible bus stops were improved.

We used our influence to give support in many individual cases. For example, we received a complaint from someone who had been trying to convince London Buses to erect an enclosed bus shelter near to a local residential home for the elderly to protect them from inclement weather while waiting for buses. She had been told that this was impossible because of the width of the pavement. London TravelWatch requested a new survey of the site and we are delighted that London Buses has agreed to adapt the current bus shelter.

We need to travel with confidence: the success in reducing crime must be matched by efforts to reduce the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour



From our case files

Mrs L's Oyster card was stolen and it was reported to Oyster's helpdesk two days later. It took three weeks for a replacement card to arrive, and when she applied for a refund for tickets bought in the interim, she was advised that the card was on the system reported stolen three weeks after the date she reported it. Despite repeated correspondence, Oyster maintained that any refund would be calculated from the date on its records, which amounted to £26.40 rather than the £115.80 she felt should be refunded. After several representations from London TravelWatch, Oyster agreed to a full refund, along with a goodwill gesture for the mistakes made and the time taken to resolve the case.

Ms C explained the journey she wished to make to the booking office clerk at her departure station. Unfortunately, she was sold the wrong ticket and subsequently given a Penalty Fare at her destination. On appeal, National Express agreed that they needed to address training issues, and Ms C was given a cheque to cover her Penalty Fare plus additional travel vouchers towards her next journey.

Mr R was charged a £60 'late payment fee', despite challenging a parking ticket correctly and within the allowed timescale. On appeal we managed to obtain a refund, along with a letter of apology.

Mr V was unable to purchase a discounted ticket using his Network Card at Liverpool Street station before 10am. National Express East Anglia agreed that its ticket machines were at fault and sent Mr V travel vouchers by way of apology.

After being injured crossing a road junction, Mrs M campaigned for a new crossing to be installed to prevent similar accidents. London TravelWatch supported her request and brought the matter to the attention of TfL. TfL has now agreed to a road widening scheme incorporating extra pedestrian crossings.

Mr A was charged twice for train tickets as faulty equipment at Euston meant his on-line booking was inaccessible. Virgin Trains agreed with our request for a full refund of £70.

Ms W was unable to use her season ticket because of sickness. After we advised her, she claimed a refund, but was refused. As a result of our appeal, she was given a full refund of £287.

Mrs T and her family suffered considerable delays and extra expenses while on a trip with Eurostar. She was initially offered £375 compensation, which was deemed inadequate. After London TravelWatch's intervention, Eurostar agreed to increase the compensation to £1,656 to reflect the family's particular needs and the inconvenience incurred.

As we receive many complaints about penalty fares, we visited the Independent Penalty Fares Appeals Service and the Independent Appeals Service, as well as the various companies' customer relations centres, in order to gain insight into the work undertaken. We are grateful for the openness and hospitality we are always shown on these visits, which do help us to understand complaints procedures more fully.

Our funding

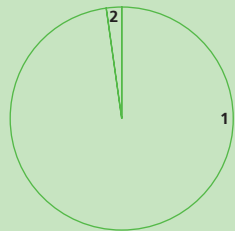
London TravelWatch is funded entirely by the London Assembly in accordance with Schedule 18 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999, apart from small sums received in bank interest, and from Passenger Focus in payment for consultancy services provided.

We are grateful to the London Assembly for its continuing support for our work.

In 2008-09, our total income amounted to £1,681,966, and our total expenditure to £1,607,718.

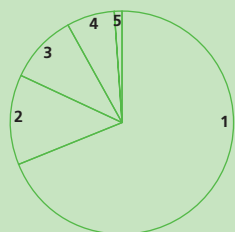
Income

- 1 London Assembly grant 98%
- 2 Passenger Focus consultancy 2%



Expenditure

- 1 Staff pay and costs 69%
- 2 Accommodation 13%
- 3 Supplies and services 10%
- 4 Members' pay and costs 7%
- 5 Depreciation 1%



Our full audited accounts can be seen by visiting our website.

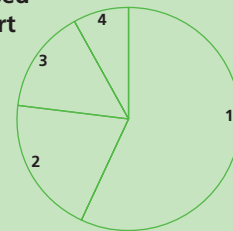
Our performance

In 2008-09, we received and investigated 1,496 issues brought to us by transport users, 4% more than last year. We also dealt with an unprecedented number of passenger responses to major consultations. We worked hard to improve our overall performance on casework this year, and this is reflected in the responses we received from our customer satisfaction surveys.

Of the 1,496 issues we examined, 57% were about problems encountered with National Rail services, 15% about London Buses, 8% about London Underground, 20% about other services provided by TfL (or jointly with National Rail) such as Oyster and Travelcards and by London boroughs, such as Freedom Pass.

Share of topics raised by type of transport

- 1 National Rail services 57%
- 2 Other 20%
- 3 London buses 15%
- 4 London Underground 8%



Our role is to act as a consumer champion, to challenge operators where we think they have failed to give good customer service, either by failing to explain their decisions or take account of the particular circumstances of the complainant's case. However, where we think that a customer's demands are unreasonable or unachievable, we will say so.

The comments we receive relate to all areas of transport. They range from changes to fares and timetables to complaints about delays, information and crowding. We are often contacted when people feel that they have been unfairly treated, with many complaints about staff, refunds and penalty fares. Often complainants are reflecting reasonable expectations: fares should not significantly increase above inflation, timetable changes should not make journeys longer or less frequent, and seats should be available on long journeys. It is important that the issues raised by the travelling public are taken into account, and we use them to inform our work when responding to consultations and planning research.

In addition, two national rail operators undertook consultations on proposed changes to ticket office opening hours, and we received 991 submissions from the public as a statutory consultee. We received 897 about the proposed changes at First Capital Connect stations and 94 about South West Trains stations.

We aim to acknowledge and record all cases we receive within five working days. In the period July 2008 – March 2009*, we met this in 89% of cases, compared to 68% last year. We also aim to refer 75% of cases to the appropriate transport provider within five working days. In the period July 2008 – March 2009*, 71% of cases were referred within five working days, compared to 65% last year. When our investigations are complete,

we aim to send a final reply to the complainant within 20 working days. In the period July 2008 – March 2009*, we met this target in 85% of cases, compared to 84% last year. For those cases where we were able to respond directly without referring the issue elsewhere, we responded to 97% of cases within 20 working days.

We survey everyone who seeks our help about the service we provide. We measure the replies on a scale from 0 to 100, where 0 indicates total dissatisfaction and 100 indicates complete satisfaction. In the period 2008 – 2009, we were given a score of 83 for the manner in which we handled cases, and 76 for satisfaction with the eventual outcome (8 and 10 points higher than last year respectively).

We also replied to requests from London Buses for comments on over 300 planned alterations to bus routes. Of these 208 were regular ongoing consultations and 90 concerned bus re-tendering. We are consulted by local highway and planning authorities on traffic orders and planning applications and responded to 179 such requests.

*London TravelWatch changed its reporting period this year to reflect the financial, rather than calendar, year.



*London's streets can –
and should be – more
pedestrian friendly, so we
can walk with pleasure*

Our people

Members of London TravelWatch are appointed by the London Assembly, normally in alternate even-numbered years for a four-year term. Any vacancies are advertised in the press and on www.london.gov.uk

Chair

Sharon Grant

Deputy Chair

Lorna Reith

Members

Our members at 31 March 2009 were David Barry, Terry Bennett, Sayeda Onjali Bodrul, Kevin Davis, Gail Engert, Daniel Francis, Sophia Lambert, Teena Lashmore, David Leibling (Chair, June to September), Sarah Pond and Andrew Probert.

Other members who served during 2008-09 were: Ron Brewer, Brian Cooke (Chair, April to May), Roxanne Glaud, Libby Kemp, Virginia Rounding and Andrew Theobald.

Staff

Chief Executive's office:

Janet Cooke (Chief Executive), Keletha Barrett, John Cartledge, Jo deBank, Helen Muchmore

Finance and Human Resources team:

Patti Tobin (Director), Sandra Ambo, Peter Ellis, Jane Sugarman, Paula Williams

Casework and Public Liaison team:

Bryan Davey (Director), Margaret Amu, Simon Barnabas, Jaskiren Deol, Christine Evans, John Hunt, Ted Light, David Rose, Mike Spittles

Research and Development team:

Tim Bellenger (Director), Carmel Cannon, Mark Donoghue, Suzanne Fry#, Greg Hargest, Jerry Gold, Vincent Stops, Poonam Tamana*

#Left during year

*Joined during year

There is a huge range of issues affecting the travelling public, and it is vital that their voice is heard and championed



About us

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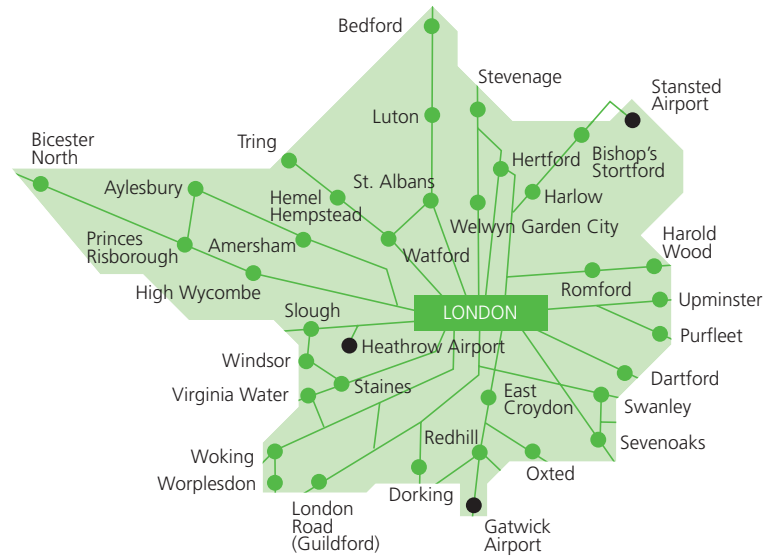
London TravelWatch is the operating name of the London Transport Users' Committee

Our meetings

Meetings of London TravelWatch are normally open to the public. For details of dates, times and venues, please check our website.

Our newsletter

Register to receive our monthly e-newsletter at <http://newsletter.londontravelwatch.org.uk/em-signup>.



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