



Our role

What we do

London TravelWatch was set up by Parliament as the official voice of London's travelling public. We are funded by the Greater London Authority and are accountable to the London Assembly's Transport Committee. We speak up for all those who use buses, the Underground, the national rail network, Docklands Light Railway (DLR), dial-a-ride, trams, taxis, cable cars and river transport, as well as cyclists, motorcyclists, pedestrians and other users of London's principal road network.

Our aims

We aim to be an independent and effective champion for everyone travelling in and around London: Londoners, commuters, visitors and tourists.

We:

- press for a better journey experience for London's travellers
- ensure that the particular needs of London and Londoners are taken account of in transport policy and planning decisions
- help the travelling public understand their rights and find good deals by providing information and advice
- speak for all transport users in London however they travel - we are the only consumer body to be completely multi-modal
- seek to ensure that transport operators deal with complaints appropriately and efficiently.

Our responsibilities

Representing passengers

We speak for passengers and the travelling public in discussions with opinion formers and decision makers at all levels, including local councils, the Mayor of London, the London Assembly, the Government, Parliament and the European Union.

Discussion

We regularly meet and seek to influence the relevant parts of the transport industry on all issues which affect the travelling public including timetables, routes, frequencies, fares, ticketing, station standards, access, vehicles, safety, personal security and the information provided both to passengers and to users of London's principal roads. We also maintain close contact with a wide range of public interest organisations, user groups and research bodies to ensure that we remain aware of the experiences and concerns of the travelling public.

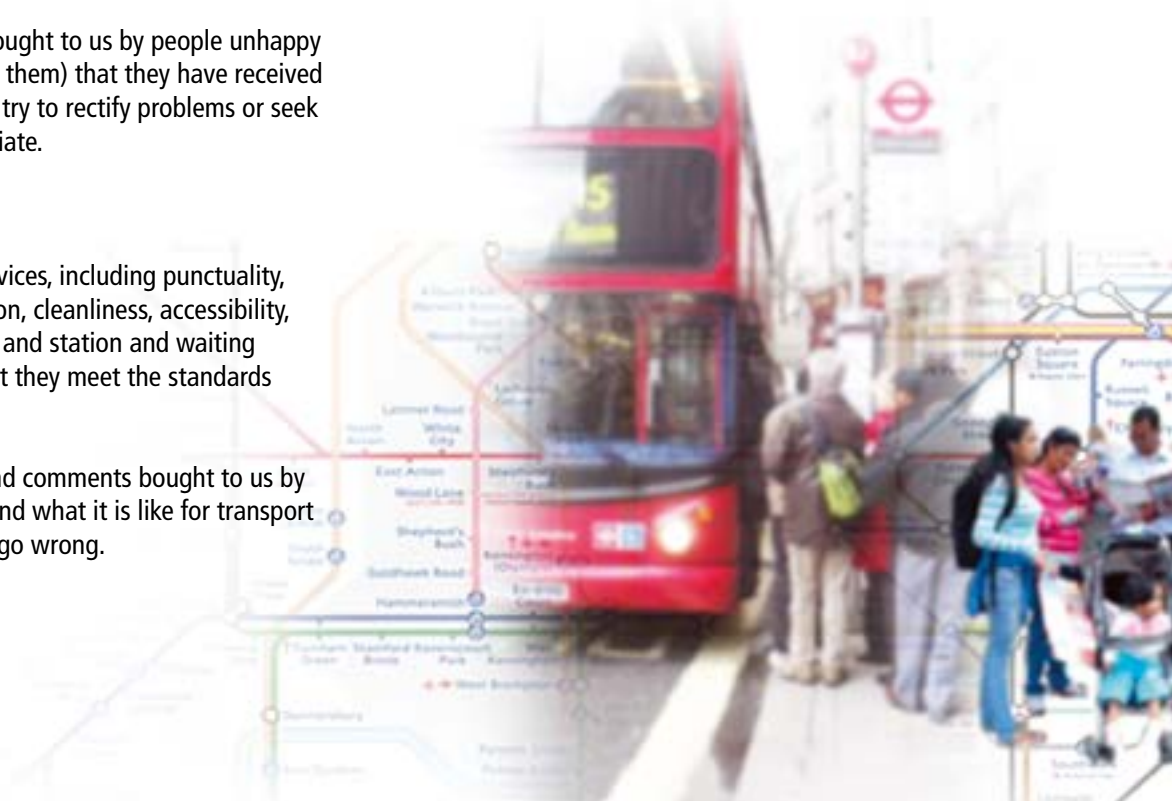
Investigation

We examine all complaints brought to us by people unhappy with the responses (or lack of them) that they have received from transport providers, and try to rectify problems or seek compensation where appropriate.

Analysis

We monitor the quality of services, including punctuality, reliability, crowding, congestion, cleanliness, accessibility, staff attitudes and behaviour, and station and waiting facilities. We try to ensure that they meet the standards travellers expect and deserve.

Our casework - complaints and comments brought to us by the public - helps us understand what it is like for transport users in London when things go wrong.



What we want for passengers

We think that:

- services should run frequently and reliably at all reasonable times of the day and week
 - networks should provide good access, adequate capacity and offer easy and convenient interchange between different types of transport
 - staff should be helpful, informed, alert and committed to offering high-quality services
 - information should be available, understandable, relevant, up-to-date and accurate
 - tickets should be easy to use and understand, flexible, and integrated between different service providers and modes of transport
- stations or stops should be well-designed, properly maintained, fully accessible and offer a good quality waiting environment
 - journeys should be safe and free from crime and the fear of crime
 - streets and pavements should be clean, properly signed, uncongested and well maintained so that they can be used confidently by motorists, pedestrians and cyclists
- buses, trams, trains and boats should be accessible, comfortable, clean, safe, quiet, easy to identify, and suitable for passengers with mobility difficulties or travelling with luggage, shopping or children
 - transport providers should communicate clearly and promptly with their users, be approachable and open to suggestions, take complaints seriously and have proper mechanisms for redress when things go wrong.



Chair's foreword

Stephen Locke, Chair



It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to this year's Annual Review, my first as Chair of London TravelWatch, having succeeded David Leibling last December. I am very grateful for his support in ensuring a smooth transition.

I was joined on 1 January by a completely new Board and we have learned together, with the help of an excellent internal induction programme, a wide range of presentations by visiting speakers and visits to key parts of London's transport operations.

London's transport system, and the issues it raises, is immensely complex. I have been mindful of the need to find out as much as possible about the roles and standpoints of those who use services and those who provide them. I offer my thanks to the many people and organisations that have given their time to me – 26 of them so far.

One clear message from my first few months is that London TravelWatch needs to be exceptionally efficient and focussed as an organisation if it is to succeed in its task of ensuring that services meet the needs of all the capital's travelling public. To help in this task we have now agreed a set of criteria that will help us to stay focussed on the needs of consumers. We have also introduced a streamlined system of governance, with just two committees – Governance and Policy – supporting the main Board.

Despite continuing heavy investment in major projects, London's transport challenges are enormous.

The capital's population has grown by over a million in the last decade and is likely to reach 10 million by 2030. But many of our transport routes are already stretched, and new capacity-building is time consuming and expensive.

Against this background, London TravelWatch's limited size and resources require us to prioritise rigorously. Fortunately, we have three great assets on our side – our independence, which means that we have no need to fear vested interests; our multi-modal remit, which means that we can deal with all aspects of travel in a city where journeys often involve more than one mode; and our ability to work with partners where others share the same objective.

We also have a dedicated and enthusiastic staff, and my warmest thanks go to Janet Cooke and her colleagues for all their help and support.



Chief Executive's report

Janet Cooke, Chief Executive



It has been another busy year during which we welcomed our new Board, moved offices and played our part in working with transport operators and providers to help ensure that the transport arrangements for the 2012 Games worked so smoothly. We were pleased to see operators join up their working under the 'One Team Transport' banner and will push them to continue collaborating effectively so that passengers really do benefit from the Games transport legacy.

I thank our previous members for the work they put in over the four years of their appointments and also for the collaborative way in which they prepared for transition to a new administration.

In mid July we moved to much smaller premises near Tower Bridge sharing accommodation with the London Pensions Fund Authority. This, combined with the savings delivered as a result of our major staff restructure last year, means that we have cut our operating costs by a third since 2010. Critically, by refocusing our priorities and adopting smarter ways of working, we have been able to achieve this whilst at the same time continuing to deliver our business plan priorities.

After the turmoil of the past few years we are delighted to once again be able to concentrate on what we can achieve for transport users. We will soon be publishing several pieces of research: into how the existing system of purchasing and using

tickets (especially Oyster) works for passengers; to identify service areas or locations which passengers rate poor value for money, and to establish passengers' priorities for improvement on the Underground. Our findings will form the basis for campaigning through the coming year. We also plan to update our work on good practice at interchanges to improve integration between different transport modes through clearer signage and better information.

Once again credit must go to our staff whose continuing professionalism and commitment meant that, despite the challenges they faced as they all took on new responsibilities, we met our key objectives for the year. This is so important because of the huge differences to the quality of life our work can make for the millions of people who use London's transport network every day – particularly for the captive commuter market.



Our achievements

Paying for travel

The level of fares and the ability to buy tickets easily are fundamental issues for passengers. We hear constantly from people who are concerned about how and where to buy tickets, how to obtain refunds when necessary and how to appeal against penalty fares, as well as from those unhappy at the cost of travel. In addition to campaigning for fares to be held at a reasonable level, we give advice on best value fares and encourage transport providers to simplify and clarify their systems.

We used our [response to the Department for Transport's \(DfT\) consultation on fares and ticketing to make a series of radical proposals for changes to the ticketing structure](#) to make it clearer for passengers and provide a more flexible and less complex approach to peak time pricing. We called for the Government to adopt a 'miles based' approach, similar to the Italian system, which would help part-time workers who are unable to benefit from season ticket savings.

We argued that passengers must have access to clear and concise information on tickets and fares so they can make informed choices about when and where to travel. While we welcomed the suggestion that a wider range of outlets should be able to sell rail tickets, we also called for the Government to require train operators to install ticket machines at all their stations in the London area, and to ensure that at each station at least one takes cash.

The closure of ticket offices or reduction in their opening hours remains a key concern for passengers. After we objected to London Midland's proposed [changes to ticket office opening hours](#) at its stations in Hertfordshire, the opening hours were retained at all four of the stations concerned. However, we remain disappointed that this company's 29 additional ticket machines, as well as its existing ones, still only accept credit or debit cards.

[We raised with TfL a number of issues relating to ticket vending machines at London Overground and DLR stations](#) and pushed for them to be resolved.

We identified cases where Pay As You Go top ups or Travelcard products had not been uploaded to passengers' Oystercards when a payment had been taken. This is difficult for passengers to resolve on the DLR because there are no booking offices on the network. We also raised concerns about the lack of change available from ticket machines at DLR stations leading to the issue of short change vouchers, to ticket jams or to the non-operation of ticket machines.

[We expressed concern at the level of January fare rises](#), which left passengers in London facing average increases of 6.2 per cent. We called for the Mayor to be given greater influence over the setting of national rail fares in the London area which could make fare levels much more consistent between modes. We also called for greater transparency from all operators about their fares schemes.



Making a difference for passengers

Every year we investigate a wide variety of consumer concerns. Our work ranges from high-level scrutiny of policy to assisting individuals with specific transport problems. Regular contact with transport users gives us the insights which underpin the independent, expert advice we give to policy-makers as well as informing our research and campaigns. Often, having resolved an issue for an individual user, we will use their experience to lobby for improvements which make a real difference for everyone.

We advised campaigners and raised passengers' concerns during the consultation about the Wimbledon loop service, which was scheduled to terminate at Blackfriars in 2018 as part of the revised Thameslink service pattern. [This helped to persuade the Government to retain the services](#) which provide a direct route from Wimbledon and

Sutton to St Pancras International and other stations in North London and Hertfordshire.

We welcomed the [Law Commission's recommendations on taxi and private hire regulation](#). We were especially pleased to see that these included national minimum safety standards for both taxis and private hire vehicles and an increase in enforcement powers for licensing officers against out-of-area vehicles and drivers.

On behalf of passengers we monitor performance data relating to all modes of transport in London. Our quarterly monitoring reports offer independent scrutiny of transport operators' performance from the passengers' perspective, highlighting areas of concern to raise with operators. This is in line with the Government's drive to make more data available so that public scrutiny of service providers is increased. In September 2012, following a long

campaign, [TfL acted on our request to publish its complaints data regularly](#) to enable us all to better understand customers' concerns and help make suggestions about how services could be improved. The data show the number of complaints for each mode of transport, per 100,000 journeys, allowing easy comparison with train operating company complaints figures.

We regularly hold transport providers to account, inviting them to our public meetings to explain instances of poor performance and how they plan to remedy these. [In June 2012 London Tramlink undertook to address a dip in their service performance that we had identified](#), and since our intervention, passenger satisfaction levels have increased.

Over the past year we engaged with TfL as it began a review of its customer services function, to ensure that passengers' needs are always at the heart of its thinking.



The Olympic and Paralympic Games

We were praised for the 'championing role' we played during the planning process for the Olympic and Paralympic Games with our emphasis on passenger information, travel demand management and coordination between providers, helping to shape the arrangements for successful inter-operator working.

Our [mystery shopping exercise](#) with [Transport for All](#) looked at disabled access at key Games stations, allowing us to raise issues we found with operators so that in many cases these could be rectified before the Games. The large number of visits to the frequently asked questions (FAQs) section on our website confirmed its popularity. The section was based on queries we had received from the public and provided a comprehensive set of links to key websites and information they might need when planning travel to and from events.

During the Games, we maintained pressure on TfL and other operators to keep standards high and to react swiftly and effectively to events as they unfolded. Staff kept a watching brief on activities, meeting and communicating regularly with TfL, the Transport Co-ordination Centre (TCC), and operators. Our staff and members made a point of travelling to various venues and interchanges and fed back their experiences. [In our report on the Games transport legacy](#), we outlined the challenges facing operators to deliver a positive permanent transport legacy for passengers, building on the things which worked well during the Games when a seamless service operated throughout, with consistent real time information, highly visible staff and effective signage. We have also discussed with the DfT ways that operators can take a more flexible approach to train timetabling during future major events as they did during the Games.

We are developing a good practice guide on the subject.

The increased profile given to London's transport by the global media meant that over the past year we have welcomed visitors from Australia, [Singapore](#), [China](#), Sweden and Romania, providing opportunities to share good practice.

Standing up for passengers

London TravelWatch responds to consultations from the Mayor, London Assembly, the Government, regulators and transport providers to ensure that the London travellers' perspective - which is often very different from that of passengers elsewhere in the country, given the nature of journeys taken and the pressures on capacity - is at the heart of policy-making. Decisions are being taken now which will set the framework for years to come and it is important for London's transport users that service specifications are right.

We responded to a number of important rail consultations last summer and to the subsequent [Brown Review of Rail Franchising](#) set up after the Government halted its franchising programme when problems were discovered during the West Coast Main Line re-franchising process. We do not think that the current DfT franchise model functions in the best interests of passengers and recommended a more flexible alternative to the current 'one size fits all' approach. We argued that the passenger interest in London would be better served and protected by devolving responsibility to the Mayor of London for specifying, securing and monitoring those franchises that include significant elements of local 'Metro'

style services. We think that longer distance commuter services should continue to be specified by the DfT but that there should be significant involvement in specifying and monitoring them from local bodies such as TfL. Intercity services should have much less specification reflecting the fact that greater commercial flexibility is more appropriate for this type of operation. Our view is that, in all franchises, risk needs to be compartmentalised and there must be a clear specification of what the franchisee is required to achieve.

We responded to several individual consultations before the process was suspended. Our key priorities for the [Essex Thameside](#) franchise were an extension of Oyster and smartcard ticketing across the route and investment in rolling stock to reduce overcrowding. Our top priorities for the [South Eastern](#) and [Thameslink](#), [Southern & Great Northern](#) contracts were more services, increased capacity and improved station standards.

In our [response to the DfT's consultation on rail decentralisation](#), we welcomed the prospect of responsibility for rail services in Britain being devolved, recommending that the Mayor of London and TfL should take responsibility for Southeastern and Greater Anglia suburban services.



This would empower the Mayor to bring other local railways up to the standards set for London Overground, with more attractive stations, enhanced ticketing facilities, additional staffing where appropriate, and improved passenger information. We would also like to see the DfT working with TfL towards the devolution of suburban train service elements of other franchises.

We called for urgent action by the rail industry and its regulator in response to the findings of a report by the Rail Accident Investigation Branch (RAIB) into an incident between St Pancras and Kentish Town in May 2011. Hundreds of passengers were trapped for nearly three hours on a crowded train with no effective ventilation, no working toilets, and – for most of the time – no information. We raised the need for effective plans to handle stranded trains in our regular meetings with rail companies and

the Office of Rail Regulation (ORR), stressing the need to take account of best practice across the industry and the opportunities presented by new communications technology.

Unusually there were two rail closure proposals during the year. Our closures panel considered the possible closure of Watford station by London Underground if and when the Croxley Rail Link opens. As part of the process, we held a well attended local meeting in Watford to consider the views of local passengers.

In our response to the DfT consultation on the possible closure of scheduled passenger services between Wandsworth Road, Kensington Olympia and Ealing Broadway we called for the Government to prevent train companies from avoiding or delaying a formal closure process when they start to make major

changes to a route. This would stop operators running unadvertised and unused skeleton services (as they did in this case) purely to avoid the legal requirement to consult the public about withdrawing a train service. The decision to withdraw the current bus and train service, which ran only once a week, was ratified by the ORR.

We worked with operators to ensure that passengers were aware of how they would be affected by the withdrawal of the London Bridge – Peckham Rye – Victoria rail service when the new London Overground (East London line) section from Surrey Quays to Clapham Junction opened in December 2012. Our website provided passengers with answers to many FAQs and these pages proved extremely popular with the public.



Shaping services and improving access

We want Londoners and visitors to benefit from a wide range of transport options whether they want to walk, cycle or take the bus, train, tram or Underground. While great progress has been made, more needs to be done to make London's transport networks accessible in the widest sense of the word. In all our work, we consider the needs of passengers with disabilities and recognise that most improvements for vulnerable groups also offer benefits to all.

Following a long campaign by London TravelWatch, [Network Rail completed work to make both sides of the road between Paddington station concourse and Praed Street step free in February 2013](#). This will improve the access for many passengers that previously had to negotiate four very high kerbs, a particular problem for wheelchair users, less mobile passengers and those with wheeled luggage or buggies. It will also improve access to bus services to central London.

[We lobbied TfL and borough councils](#) to ask them to use all their powers to clear pavements of all illegal obstructions which cause problems for disabled and visually impaired people. We worked with the RNIB and Transport for All to increase awareness of the problems caused by these obstructions and helped persuade TfL to extend the number of roads subject to their zero tolerance approach to advertising boards.

After our intervention, Crossrail revised the design for Paddington station to include step free access to the Bakerloo line platforms. It also agreed to consider reusing the construction shaft to provide lift access from the street to the Bakerloo platforms.

We [wrote to the DfT and the ORR](#) to register concern that Network Rail was not providing step-free access as part of the major enhancement works at Alexandra Palace station. Although the project does not prevent this from being provided in the future, it raises a number of issues of principle that have wider significance for the whole rail network. We also submitted evidence to the House of Commons Transport Select Committee's inquiry into access to transport for people with disabilities.

We continued to press TfL and boroughs to improve bus stop accessibility and were encouraged that TfL increased their target to making 95% of all their bus stops accessible by 2016.

Although we would like to see measures which improve the pedestrian environment of Oxford Street, we spoke out against calls to ban buses from the area as they bring thousands of workers, shoppers and visitors into central London and are the only form of public transport which is accessible to all with a wide geographic coverage. We would like to improve the efficiency of the use of road space in this area by prioritising pedestrians' needs, closing off more of the side roads crossing Oxford Street, reducing the number of buses terminating in it, and regulating access by taxis, which take up 37% of the road space, but only carry 1% of the passengers.

Engaging with transport users

To represent travellers in London effectively, we need to keep in touch with them and encourage them to share the results of their journey experiences with us. We aim to make it as easy as possible for the travelling public to contact us, whether through casework,

at our public meetings and events, or via our [website](#) and social media.

Our Board and committee meetings, at which we discuss current issues in transport, explore problems and look at future services, are open to the public. Topics considered this year have included the Olympic transport legacy, TfL's customer service and the performance of London Tramlink. The public were also able to put their questions to London's Transport Commissioner, Sir Peter Hendy, and TfL's Director of Games Transport, Mark Evers, via traditional and social media. Our members made visits to Paddington, London Bridge and Victoria stations to better understand local passenger experiences, and over the year we engaged with most of the transport groups in our area.

We held successful transport users' engagement events in Harrow and Lewisham town centres. Hundreds of passengers took the opportunity to ask questions and give their views on aspects of travel in and around these areas. They also had a chance to look around the New Bus For London at the events. Issues raised included public transport accessibility, rail franchises and local bus services.



Other numbers



We cost the London council tax payer less than 1p a week.



We represent the interests of passengers in and around London who make around 4m journeys a day by tube, 3m journeys by National Rail and 6m journeys by bus.



Of the casework which required further investigation:
45% related to National Rail;
15% related to Oyster;
7% related to London Underground;
11% related to buses
and 22% related to other queries.

Making a difference for passengers

The following examples summarise some of the key achievements already mentioned in this annual review showing how we follow through the public's concerns to improve the overall passenger experience.

You were concerned

We did this

This was the outcome

Some of the stations serving the Olympic and Paralympic venues were not as accessible as they could be.	We reported these issues to the relevant authorities ahead of the Games.	Remedial action was taken to make it easier for disabled travellers to Games events.
Passengers were worried about losing the Wimbledon loop service which was scheduled to end in 2018 as part of the Thameslink works.	We added our voice to concerns during the consultation about the potential loss of the Wimbledon loop service.	This helped persuade the Government to retain the services which provide a direct route from Wimbledon and Sutton to north London, St Pancras and other stations.
Four high kerbs on both sides of the road between the Paddington station concourse and Praed Street made it hard for passengers travelling to and from the station and the bus stop.	We lobbied Network Rail to ask them to provide step free access.	Network Rail completed work to make both sides of the pavement step free in February 2013.

Our performance

During 2012-2013 our casework team dealt with 5,500 written and telephone enquiries and complaints. Most of these could be dealt with quickly or passed on to the operator for an initial reply, as we only investigate cases where the complainant has not already received an adequate response. We investigated almost 1,500 appeals from members of the public travelling in London and the surrounding areas. The vast majority of our cases concerned either Oyster Cards, penalty fares or buses, although those involving train cancellations, consequential loss and delays were also common. Although we were well prepared for possible cases relating to the Olympic and Paralympic Games, we received no appeals arising from them.

Our funding

London TravelWatch is funded by the London Assembly in accordance with Schedule 19 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999. In 2012-13, our total income amounted to £1,212,272 and our total expenditure was £1,156,672. We met the costs of the office move through savings arising from the previous year's staffing restructure as well as from the savings made by reducing accommodation costs.

Our full audited accounts are available on our website: www.londontravelwatch.org.uk



About us

Members of London TravelWatch are appointed by the London Assembly.

Board (as at 31 March 2013)

Josephine Channer
Richard Dilks
Glyn Kyle
Stephen Locke (Chair)
Abdikafi Rage
John Stewart
Ruth Thompson (Vice Chair)

Thank you to the previous Board members whose terms of office ended during 2012/13:

David Barry, Terry Bennett, Gail Engert, Sharon Grant (Chair), Sophia Lambert and David Leibling (Deputy Chair).

Staff (as at 31 March 2013)

We employ 12 full-time and nine part-time staff:

Sandra Ambo
Keletha Barrett
Tim Bellenger (Director, Policy & Investigation)
John Burgess
John Cartledge
Gytha Chinweze
Janet Cooke (Chief Executive)
Margaret Croucher
Jaskiren Deol
Peter Ellis
Richard Freeston-Clough
Sharon Malley
Robert Nichols
Angela Okello
Susan James (Casework Manager)
David Rose
Mike Spittles
Vincent Stops
Wendy Stevens*
Andrew Totten*
John Wooster*

*joined this year

Thank you to Kate Lewis who left us during the year, as well as to Tom Campling, George Simpson, Kathiravan Uthayanan and Ben Whelan for the contributions they made during their six-month secondments from Network Rail.



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