



Coronavirus travel survey results for London

April 2020

Survey background

- On 2 April Transport Focus sent an email to 15,808 people on their Transport User Panel asking them to complete a survey about their travel in the previous seven days. This followed the start of the ‘lockdown’ in the UK, with the Government advising that people should stay at home and only travel if absolutely necessary. The survey also asked panellists about their recent experience in attempting to claim a refund on previously purchased season tickets.
- The survey closed on 7 April with 5,791 panellists having completed the questionnaire. 244 of these lived or worked in London which gives a useful snapshot of transport user behaviour/experiences
- This report summarises the findings from the research which relates to people using public transport to travel in or around London.
- N.B. the data is unweighted and has been collected from those who have agreed to undertake surveys for Transport Focus. Findings should therefore be seen as indicative rather than statistically representative of transport users generally.

Key highlights

- People are working, with high numbers in health (24%), local/central government including education (15%) and transport (13%). But trips for essential shopping account for the largest number of journeys.
- When they are making journeys, the majority of Londoners are walking rather than taking public transport, although car use is significant.
- The provision of information about services running is generally good in London. The ease of finding this information before journeys were made is highest for train services (83%) followed by bus (79%) and Underground/DLR (75%).
- Many Londoners are retaining their season tickets because they are still using the system or want to/think they might have to use them. But almost a quarter of those choosing not to claim a refund were either not sure that they could claim or about how to claim.

Feedback from transport users

- The following slides contain quotes from respondents to the Transport Focus survey who travel into or around London. They give a useful picture of what things are like ‘on the ground’ for those who need to use public transport.

An essential journey for work

It's very, very quiet and the better for it. I am a key worker - social care. The majority of my journeys involve the train. Trains are cleaner than normal. I feel most comfortable on the train during the current health crisis. *Train passenger*

There are still many people on the bus, don't think they are getting the COVID-19 messages. *NHS worker who is a bus passenger*

These journeys have been frightening, as there are still FAR too many people traveling - especially on certain lines like the Victoria Line and Piccadilly...TfL needs to be stopping people who should not be travelling, so that NHS staff (myself and my colleagues) and food shop workers can get to work safely. *Underground and train passenger*

A journey for essential shopping

Very, very quiet - used the bus to get back from the supermarket with heavy bags. Walked to the supermarket. Have avoided all other travel. *Bus passenger*

There's just about no one using these services - you can see all the empty buses going back and forth. Yet, TFL choose to blare announcements treating you like a criminal if you use public transport. We don't have a car...I feel my journey [for food shopping] was necessary, I should not be made to feel like a criminal. Underground passenger (but talking about buses)

It felt a bit "naughty" to be making the journey - I could have walked, as it was about a mile's walk, but taking the Overground reduced my walking time by about half, and I was carrying three quite heavy bags of shopping. *Overground passenger*

I needed to shop for milk and bread. So needed to visit the supermarket. Due to my visual impairment I find it easier to travel by bus than try and cross roads. It was distressing that the announcement on the bus said that the only people who should be using the public transport were NHS workers. In fact the only people on the bus were all disabled who obviously needed to use the bus service. We feel bad enough, it does not help making us feel bad. *Bus passenger*

Mode shift

If I have time I walk as much of the route as I can so I don't have to go on public transport - though I'd be uncomfortable doing this after a late shift. *Underground passenger*

I felt quite alarmed by the crowded conditions and lack of space for social distancing. The cut in Underground trains is self-defeating in the effort to prevent spread of the virus. For this reason I now drive into work alone. *Underground passenger*

Provision of information

At most stations, there was no information on how long I would need to wait before the next available train arrived. Sometimes I had to wait for almost 20 minutes without knowing when my train would eventually arrive. I found this frustrating. *Underground passenger*

Apps not updated. So showing trains that run Mon-Fri even though running a Saturday service. This caused me to miss my train. *Train passenger*

Fares and refunds

Peak fare prices for off peak trains

Trains are now running on an off peak service. I have to leave home 20 minutes earlier to get to work at the same time (I'm a nurse). Yet I still have to pay full peak fares despite this service not being provided. *Train passenger*

Refunds

It would have been nice to know how it was calculated as I know I lost a lot of money. *TfL passenger*

Other findings

- Underground users:
 - Overcrowded tube trains, due to reduced frequencies which have led to a lack of social distancing
 - Increased vulnerability to criminals and aggressive begging, particularly during times when there are few passengers
 - But there was also much praise from users who were able to travel at quieter times and be amongst few other passengers.
- Bus and train passengers:
 - more positive overall as they found that their journeys had few passengers and social distancing could more easily be practiced.
- Transport Focus have published their research here:
<https://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research-publications/publications/coronavirus-travel-survey/>