

1. From London TravelWatch's consultation response to TfL. Please can you provide an outline of the key points you raised with TfL in relation to the proposed changes to bus routes in London.

Buses are used by more Londoners than any other type of public transport. They're the backbone of how people move around the city, providing the most accessible, affordable and city-wide way for people to travel. Whether it's for getting to work, caring responsibilities, health appointments, essential errands, or even social visits, buses are a vital part of people's lives.

That's why London TravelWatch are concerned about proposed changes to bus services. They will impact 78 bus routes across 23 boroughs, including the withdrawal of 22 routes (with some areas no longer served at all), and affect of people across the Capital.

Our [Who uses the bus? research](#) found that bus passengers tend to be on lower incomes, and are more likely to be people of colour, women, or younger people. These groups are likely to be hit hardest by the cuts, alongside disabled people and older people who might rely on buses in their day-to-day lives.

While we accept that funding conditions mean that TfL has to make significant financial savings, it's important this is done in a way that causes the least disruption to people travelling around London, doesn't disadvantage those who can least afford it, and doesn't stop people from making their journeys together.

While we're worried about both the scale of the proposed changes and that buses have been chosen at all, here are the top 3 issues we think TfL need to reconsider:

1. Changing between buses

If these proposals go through in full, there would be a significant in the number of bus journeys that require a change. It would mean that **93,000 daily journeys** on day bus routes will involve a change of bus where it doesn't currently. Some people will need to change twice or even three times to complete their journey.

These changes would have a big impact on people, not only through longer journey times but also the quality of the journey.

We call on TfL to make sure that all changes of bus can be made at the same bus stop.

2. Accessibility

For many disabled people, the bus is the only way to travel in and around London because it is the only step free, affordable form of public transport available. If the proposed cuts go through disabled people will be disproportionately affected.

Cuts to buses may reduce access to priority seating, wheelchair and pushchair space, increasing the chances someone who needs these spaces won't be able to get on the bus if it's already filled. There are also issues outside of the bus itself –

from lack of seating and shelter at bus stops to street clutter and high kerbs between bus stops, making it difficult for people with accessibility needs to travel between them if they need to change.

We think that TfL should make sure that if a change must be required between buses, it can be made at the same bus stop.

3. Safety and the night bus

Less frequent buses and more journeys that require a change aren't just an inconvenience, they can also be a safety issue. Concern about safety whilst waiting at bus stops is even more acute at night.

We know from our research that most people say that night-time is the least safe time to travel. Frequent and direct services reduce the risk of people being left stranded or waiting for a long time in dark, unfamiliar or unsafe locations, with few bystanders around. However, under these proposals one in five of those who can currently take a direct night bus to their destination will in future need to change buses.

We think TfL should abandon their night bus proposals.

2. Has there been any impact to a bus service user's journey and journey planning in London as a result of changes to London's bus network over the last 5 years?

Pre-pandemic bus journey times were hitting historic lows. While the pandemic led to an increase in average bus speeds, these are again beginning to fall. At a time when more people need to be enticed away from their cars to choose public transport, poor bus performance puts people off.

A lack of bus prioritisation and available road space for buses is contributing to longer bus journey times, likely contributing to falls in bus use, with people thinking the service is unreliable and slow. This means that buses become less inclusive and attractive to use. TfL acknowledge that there is a clear correlation between declining bus demand and deteriorating bus speeds. In financial terms, slower buses undermine the economic viability of buses, which means that they will require more subsidy.

It is critical that significant efforts to improve bus priority begin now because it is already clear that there is a real risk of a post-Covid car-led future. Buses are the main sustainable alternative to cars, especially for longer journeys. However, if buses become increasingly unattractive the risk of passengers switching to cars will become an increasing reality. We fear this especially in outer London, where we know that there are already higher levels of car ownership and poorer public transport connectivity.

We know too that a 40% increase in bus use will be required if the Mayor is to meet his target of 80% of journeys in London being made by cycling, walking and public

transport by 2041. If such an increase in bus use is to be achieved, significant efforts will need to begin now and be sustained in the years ahead.

3. *Has London TravelWatch noted changes to bus routes in Hackney that have impacted upon a specific user cohort's ability to travel around the borough or London?*

TfL's last large-scale central London bus consultation in 2018 had a significant impact on bus services in Hackney, including severing some key links from the borough into the City.

Since the changes were implemented, London TravelWatch has not received any correspondence about the impacts on passengers. However, as mentioned previous our [Who uses the bus? research](#) found that bus passengers tend to be on lower incomes, and are more likely to be people of colour, women, or younger people. These groups are likely to have been hit hardest by the cuts, alongside disabled people and older people who might rely on buses in their day-to-day lives.