



## TfL 'could save £17m' by axing free travel for partners of staff

- TfL under pressure to scrap free travel perk
- Nearly 22,000 free travel cards given out each year
- Scrapping 'over generous' benefit could save £17.8m a year, say critics
- TfL says cost of free travel is 'nil'



Free perk: Critics have spoken out against the benefit given to partners of TfL staff

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Matthew Beard

12 March 2013

Transport for London today came under pressure to scrap a benefit scheme which provides free travel to partners of staff and others.

Almost 22,000 free travel cards are handed out each year to a person nominated by a staff member. Beneficiaries can be a spouse, housemate or lodger.

TfL says there is no cost to the scheme but critics point to the loss in fare revenue and claim that scrapping the "over generous" benefit could save the taxpayer £17.8 million a year. The criticism comes as TfL faces budget cuts from central government and pressure to meet pledges to minimise fare increases.

The Standard understands that TfL, which has an annual budget of about £9 billion, will have its government grant cut by £150 million in 2014-15 with more modest annual cuts of £30-£50 million in the two years before that.

London Assembly Conservative budget spokesman Gareth Bacon said: "With budgets being tight, a perk that allows TfL employees to nominate somebody for a free travel pass just isn't right.

"Our estimates say that in excess of £17 million could be saved by cutting this benefit, money that could be used to fund further council tax cuts for Londoners already suffering from significant increases in the cost of living."

A TfL spokeswoman said: "The cost of providing free travel to staff and their nominees on TfL services is nil, given that much of this travel is for work purposes and the remainder is insufficient to require additional services to be operated to cope with it.

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"Any additional revenue generated if nominee passes were withdrawn would be very small given that not all nominees use the benefit to any significant extent."

The Assembly Tories claim there were 21,788 passes in use last year — a rise from 15,897 over the previous year. It calculated that the passes were worth an annual £35.8 million and the loss in revenue was approximately half of this — £17.8 million.

TfL has committed to making "efficiency" savings of £7.6 billion over the next decade.

But frontline services on bus and Tubes are protected and there is pressure to increase savings as a proportion of the organisation's budget.

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**Wat Tyler** 1 day ago

Here we go again, if it were up to this rag, the mail and the express every benefit that workers have would be taken away. The Standard has led a hate campaign against Ken Livingstone and now it wants workers benefits to be done away with. what worries me is that by the mere fact the reporters are working for a living, even though turning out this rot, they are working people, they are doing the bidding of their capitalist bosses against their fellow workers., they ought to be ashamed of themselves. perhaps this is why the paper has to be given away free as no one with any sense would buy it

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-1

**Anonymous** 22 hours ago

And now Cameron is opposing Leaveson !

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**Anonymous** 22 hours ago

Better if he Leaves soon!

0

**landsberger** 3 days ago

So the reality is a Conservative AM is the so-called 'critic', keen, obviously to make a name for himself. I am sure he forswears his travel expenses as an Assembly member and takes neither the tube nor a taxi.

Yes \*IF\* all the partners bought an ALL zones travelcard, they could generate £17m in revenue, but it isn't going to happen.

I mean, why give a transport allowance at all to any staff ? Why pay them at all ? Any reduction in terms and conditions will generate notional 'income'. The question is whether we should get involved in a Dutch auction of wages and working conditions to pay off the bankers' mistakes.

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+3

**sallydarin** 2 days ago

You tell them!!! We deserve to be paid the wage that we get when we run a Company 24/7!!! We keep London moving in all ways. people need to remember this. What do the MP's do for us as Taxpayers? Apart from bleed us dry and take from us ?

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**morani58** 3 days ago

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