

Fare evasion on trams falls by a third as part of crackdown by Metrolink

February 22, 2024



Fare evasion on Greater Manchester's tram network has fallen by a third as part of an ongoing crackdown by **Metrolink** with support from the TravelSafe Partnership.

With more KeolisAmey Metrolink (KAM) staff carrying out ticket inspections, fare evasion has fallen from over 16 per cent in July 2023 to 10.6 per cent in January 2024.

Five million tickets are inspected every year – up from four million – with Metrolink fining 100,000 fare evaders in the past year, while taking a further 5,000 people to court over unpaid fines.

A new plan to tackle fare evasion on Metrolink was introduced in October last year. This included increasing the penalty fare from £100 to £120 and recruiting an additional 50 customer service representatives (CSRs) to bring the total number of frontline staff to 169 across the network.

CSRs have also received new revenue inspection devices to help them identify persistent fare evaders,

according to a report to the Bee Network Committee.

As a result of this new approach Metrolink is on target to generate an extra £2 million in net revenue per year, all of which will be reinvested back into the network for the benefit of all passengers.

Danny Vaughan, TfGM's Head of Metrolink, said: "Fare evasion is something we take very seriously and while most people who travel by tram do so legally by purchasing a ticket, there are some who continue to think the rules do not apply to them.

"Since implementing our new plan to tackle fare evasion last year, we're seeing hugely positive results. We have more people than ever checking tickets, and that higher visibility not only provides a deterrent to those ignoring the rules but also helps provide that reassurance to passengers."

Damien Chabas, Managing Director of KAM, said: "I am incredibly proud of our staff on the frontline who are making a real difference in tackling fare evasion on Metrolink.

"We know that our customers have welcomed the increased staff presence, which has also helped us grow patronage to pre-Covid levels.

"But there is still plenty of work to do, and that is why KAM is working closely with TfGM to see how we can build on what we've achieved so that fare compliance can continue to improve.

In the year to 6th January 2024, CSRs issued 67,545 penalty fares for fare evasion – up from the previous year's 54,156.

Since April 2019 more than 210,000 penalty fares have been issued to people travelling without a ticket.

CSRs are supported by police through the TravelSafe Partnership, which also includes Transport for Greater Manchester, operators and other agencies.

The role of the TravelSafe Partnership is to tackle crime and antisocial behaviour, and to reassure passengers that they can travel safely. Officers dedicate more than 5,000 hours per week patrolling the Metrolink and bus networks, day and night, seven days a week.

Vernon Everitt, Transport Commissioner for Greater Manchester, said: "These results show that we are making significant progress in tackling fare evasion head on.

"By increasing the number of staff out on the Metrolink network, and introducing improved ticket checking technology, we are sending a clear message: if you travel on Metrolink without paying, there's a real chance you'll be fined up to £120 and could be prosecuted. It's simply not worth the risk.

"The plan to protect revenue across Metrolink and buses will continue to be a real focus for us so that we can reinvest in building the Bee Network and improving transport services for the people and businesses of Greater Manchester.

“I want to thank everyone at Metrolink, TfGM, bus operators and the TravelSafe Partnership for all their hard work in tackling fare evasion.”

Photo credit: Transport for Greater Manchester