

Passengers set to benefit from new contactless payments on Metrolink

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Metrolink passengers across Greater Manchester are set to benefit from a new and easy-to-use contactless payment system – transforming the way people pay for public transport.

Launching on Monday 15 July, it will see Greater Manchester joining a small band of leading global city-regions including New York, Rio and Singapore, which are currently also introducing the technology.

It also marks one of the first tangible steps towards Our Network – the Mayor’s ten-year plan to create an integrated, modern and accessible public transport system.

Metrolink customers can already use their contactless bank card to buy a ticket at a ticket machine, and this will remain an option. What the new ‘intelligent’ contactless system will do is cut out the need to buy a ticket or download the app – with passengers simply required to touch-in and touch-out at tram stops, with the system working out their fare, up to a daily cap.

Mayor of Greater Manchester Andy Burnham, said: “On Monday we opened applications for Our Pass and today I’m pleased to be able to announce that contactless will launch on Metrolink on 15 July.

“These initiatives are the first of many on our journey towards the integrated, London-style transport system we want to see here.

“Contactless payments on Metrolink in particular will be a major boost for many people, including commuters and the millions of visitors we get every single year.

“It is something people visiting London will already be familiar with and will make travel by tram easier, and improve access to jobs, leisure, skills and education opportunities across Greater Manchester.”

TfGM has been working closely with leading global payments provider Visa to introduce the new system. Recent research conducted by Visa highlighted that complex payment options acted as a barrier to travel and was also the cause of many complaints. The research also revealed public transport use could increase by as much as 27% if payment was easier.

Nick Mackie, Visa Global Head of Urban Mobility, said: “The future of our cities is intertwined with – and reliant on – a public transportation system that is easy for residents and visitors to use while also being cost effective to operate.”

“Our partnership with Manchester uses the power and ease of contactless payments to improve the experience of living, working and travelling around the city.”

TfGM’s launch of contactless ticketing on Metrolink represents the first aggregated Pay As You Go implementation on light rail outside of London, following the Contactless Transit Framework developed by UK Finance, and features in their latest Contactless Transit Report.

Eric Leenders, Managing Director, Personal Finance UK Finance, said: “Digital payments are transforming the way we pay for goods and services in the UK, and transport is no exception.

“Research by UK Finance shows 69 per cent of adults in the UK are now using contactless payments, as consumers choose to opt for the speed and convenience of paying with their contactless cards.

“We are delighted to see TfGM’s launch of contactless ticketing on Metrolink, following several years of work between the finance and transport industries.”

The new system will mean customers can simply touch-in at the start of a journey and touch-out at the end using a contactless bank card or another contactless-enabled payment device, such as a phone or watch. The system will then automatically work out the total daily fare for a customer’s journeys and the price will be capped – to ensure they are paying no more than the relevant adult daily 1-day travelcard price.

Day-capping is especially beneficial to those who are less frequent travellers on Metrolink and who buy adult day and single tickets – which totalled more than 11.5m in 2018.