

# TfL busking scheme celebrates 20 years since opening with new auditions and pitches

November 6, 2023



**Transport for London (TfL)** is marking 20 years from when it began its live busking scheme on London's transport network by reopening its competitive audition process for the first time since the pandemic and introducing the first ever pitches to the Elizabeth line.

Talented musicians have taken to perform on London's transport network since 2003 with the London Underground Licensed Busking Scheme, brightening people's journeys with genres from rock, to classical and pop for 364 days-a-year. 20 years on, the network now has more than 200 registered buskers that have passed the audition process, with TfL on the hunt for fresh talent to add to its roster.

Busking auditions will take place for the first time since 2017, with the application process now live. Auditions will take place in early 2024, managed/co-ordinated by Found in Music, who run Busk in London, a programme supported by the Mayor of London. Musicians of all genres are invited to apply to reflect London's cultural diversity. Shortlisted musicians will perform to a panel of musical experts and TfL operational staff in a busy station environment and judged on technical ability and audience response.

Two new pitches have also opened this autumn at Bond Street station, in a first for the Elizabeth line. Musicians can now be heard at the Davies Street and Hanover Square entrances of the central London station. TfL is looking into setting up further pitches in other Elizabeth line stations. With around 4.3 million journeys taking place each week across the Elizabeth line, millions of people will benefit from the uplifting live music as they travel across London.

Justine Simons OBE, Deputy Mayor for Culture and the Creative Industries, said: “I am delighted at the return of TfL’s busking auditions and the introduction of pitches to the Elizabeth line. Busking is a thriving artform across our city and has brought TfL’s stations alive over the last 20 years. This competition provides musicians with a fantastic opportunity to show off their talents, as we build a better London for everyone.”

Emma Strain, TfL’s Customer Director, said: “From the Jam to The Kinks’ ‘Waterloo Sunset’, London has a long history of inspiring and celebrating music, and as we enter our busking programme’s twentieth year, I can’t wait to hear the songs of a whole new generation of buskers. It is a vibrant part of London culture and we’re proud to celebrate 20 years since we introduced the busking scheme on our network by opening auditions again and two new pitches.”

Kate Jones, Found in Music’s Programme Director, said: “Found in Music is delighted to be working with TfL on the audition process for the iconic London Underground Busking Scheme. London is world renowned for music with a multitude of venues to visit and performers to appreciate. Busking has a key role to play in the music ecosystem and provides artists with a free, public stage to hone their skills whether on the street, at one of Busk in London’s high-profile locations or on the Underground. We are really looking forward to discovering new talent during the audition process.”

*Photo credit: Transport for London*