

# TfL: Ridership figures to stations close to Christmas attractions exceeding pre-pandemic levels this year

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London is continuing to roar back from the pandemic this festive season, with soaring ridership numbers at key Tube stations close to Christmas attractions, and entries and exits at Oxford Circus station 27 per cent higher on Black Friday than on average for each of the previous four Fridays.\*

The run-up to Christmas, known as the 'Golden Quarter' is a vital period for the retail and hospitality sectors, with many businesses relying on it for a significant proportion of their annual profits – and TfL figures reveal how Londoners and visitors are using the capital's transport network to enjoy the capital's vast array of retail opportunities and festive events.

The Tube stop for Battersea Power Station, on the Northern line extension, saw an incredible 52,814 entries and exits on 4 November, the day of the Battersea Park fireworks – almost double the number seen on the previous Saturday.\*\* Kew Gardens station saw a 53 per cent increase in entries and exits during the first three days of Christmas at Kew, which opened on 15 November, in comparison to the same three days

the previous week.\*\*\*

In addition, the Heart of London Business Alliance data revealed footfall on Saturday 25 November after Black Friday this year was 29 per cent higher compared to the previous Saturday average in November.

TfL and Visit London have launched a new Tube map titled “A Christmas Too Big to Miss,” marking the locations of the best festive attractions across London this year. Similarly, to other Tube maps, it gives guidance on accessibility, as well as advice on how far the attractions are from the stations.

A recent [TfL report](#) showed that bus demand between January and October 2023 was eight per cent higher than in same period in 2022 and buses continue to be a cost-effective way to travel over the festive period, with the Hopper fare offering unlimited bus and tram journeys within an hour.

The Mayor has hailed his Superloop, launched in July, as a ‘game-changer’ for bus travel, with two more routes added to the suburban network earlier this week providing another boost for those travelling from outer London. [New data](#) from TfL shows that there had been a 62 per cent increase in weekly passengers on the SL7 route (linking West Croydon to Heathrow) since it became part of the Superloop network, which saw it double in frequency to four buses an hour in each direction – and most other Superloop routes have outperformed the six per cent year-on-year passenger growth across the capital’s 700 routes.

Footfall has also risen sharply in the West End, with [Shaftesbury Capital](#), owner of Seven Dials and Covent Garden, recently revealing footfall was up 12 per cent year-on-year. The area, which suffered a drop in visitors after the pandemic, has said its footfall is now 16 per cent above 2019 levels. Earlier this month, a new pop-up shop opened in Carnaby Street as part of the Mayor’s innovative ‘London Made Me’ retail training and shop programme, giving 12 creative entrepreneurs the opportunity to build and launch their own collective retail store for the festive period and bring their brands to life in a prime high street location.

The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, said: “ We have worked really hard so that London could roar back after the pandemic, and Christmas this year in the capital is set to be one simply too big to miss. From ice skating to Winter Wonderland, there’s a vast array of festive attractions to choose from and a special Christmas Tube map to help you get there.

“London is also one of the world’s best retail destinations, and it’s great to see that promotions such as Black Friday and Small Business Saturday were huge successes. Businesses need our help now more than ever, and I continue to call on the Government to reinstate tax free shopping for international visitors, which would give a much needed boost to businesses and high streets across the country.

“Whether you’re doing some Christmas shopping, visiting a festive attraction or attending a gig, I encourage Londoners and visitors alike to get out there this Christmas and experience everything the city has to offer.”

Andy Lord, London’s Transport Commissioner, said: “With London’s cultural and social calendar having truly sprung back this year, it’s set to be a Christmas you can’t miss. There’s a host of events in central London to mark the festive season and we’re also encouraging Londoners and visitors this year to look

outside central London and check out events on their doorstep, as well as the wonderful range of free events. Wherever you choose to go, you can rely on TfL services to help you get there and make the most of your trip, and on our up-to-date, easy-to-access information to help you enjoy all the festive fun in London.”

In addition to world-leading shops and festive attractions, the capital’s nightlife has been named a top strength compared to competitor cities, and, despite some changes in work patterns, Friday and Saturday nights remain the most popular nights of the week in central London with people travelling in for evenings out. Ridership on the Night Tube and Night Overground services shows that around 60,000 journeys take place on a Friday night between 00:30 and 04:30, and close to 70,000 journeys on a Saturday night between 00:30 and 04:30 – showing that people across London are now enjoying all the night life that the capital has to offer, while others are continuing to travel for work through the night.

The Mayor’s Night Time Enterprise Zones have helped support the capital’s high streets with Bromley High Street seeing a significant increase in visitors after 21:00 during its range of events. Vauxhall has seen visitor numbers increase by 28 per cent for events, and Woolwich has seen footfall increase by 23 per cent across 10 events.

Amy Lamé, London’s Night Czar, said: “London’s nightlife is the best in the world and this festive season there’s more than ever on offer to enjoy- and the Night Tube, Night Overground and Night buses will help you get home! It’s fantastic to see London roaring back from the pandemic with so many people visiting Christmas attractions and our world-class shops. The ‘Golden Quarter’ is a vital time for our hospitality businesses and I urge Londoners and visitors to try out somewhere new this Christmas, whether it be a pop-up shop, a new restaurant or a festive club night.”

Laura Citron, CEO at London & Partners, which runs Visit London, said: “London’s iconic festive season is already in full swing, with countless ice rinks, light displays, shows, and events across the city to get visitors in the Christmas spirit. With all-new attractions like Kingdom of Winter, the biggest indoor festive experience in the city and Wishmas, a unique immersive walkthrough experience, it’s set to be a London Christmas too big to miss this year. We’re delighted to be welcoming more visitors this year as people flock to the city to experience London at one of its most popular and exciting seasons.

“We’re excited to be launching our ‘A Christmas Too Big To Miss’ campaign and Tube map, highlighting the biggest, brightest, and boldest things to do in London in celebration of the festive season.”

Hannah Essex, Co-CEO of SOLT & UK Theatre, said: “After a difficult few years for establishments that rely on tourism, it is encouraging to see the city bustling with visitors this Christmas. London theatre is a key driver for tourism in the capital, and its audiences boost local economies. For every £1 spent on a theatre ticket, an additional spend of £1.40 is generated in surrounding businesses, adding up to £1.94bn per annum of extra value added to local economies by theatre audiences.

“The West End has shown a robust recovery since the pandemic, helped by the incredible re-invention and resilience of our members, but it is a mixed picture. There are challenges that still face the sector, not least continually rising production costs, but despite this we are seeing the green shoots of recovery, thanks to the amazing range of world class productions hosted in London and across the country.”

Dee Corsi, Chief Executive, New West End Company, said: "The festive season is well and truly underway in the West End, with the Black Friday weekend driving the period's first significant peak in footfall. We forecast a marginal year-on-year boost in consumer spending this year, reflecting the West End's reputation, particularly at Christmastime, of facilitating unique experiences which simply cannot be found online.

"HMV, the latest addition to Oxford Street, is itself a symbol of the transformation of physical retail in recent years. The new store, which opened to much fanfare on Black Friday, is designed to offer the very best of experiential retail, promising a programme of live gigs and signings throughout the year.

"The continued draw of physical retail was evident across the Black Friday weekend, which saw queues of shoppers waiting in line to snap up the best deals. Little wonder then that the Saturday was the West End's busiest day of 2023 so far. In what is a milestone for the district, the Saturday was also able to reach pre-pandemic footfall levels – coming in slightly higher than the Saturday after Black Friday in 2019.

"The buzz of Black Friday weekend sets a positive tone for the rest of the festive trading period, welcome news for businesses across the West End for whom the next few weeks are absolutely critical. We know that the sheer breadth of the West End's offering is the reason for its enduring appeal, and visitors to the district this Christmas will also be able to enjoy a plethora of festive experiences as they do their shopping, from the dazzling Christmas lights to the West End's very first ice-rink."

Ros Morgan, Chief Executive of Heart of London Business Alliance, said: "Visitors are returning to the West End ahead of the festive period, with businesses, theatres and other attractions in the heart of London working hard to deliver for them.

"However, visitor numbers are yet to reach pre-pandemic levels. That is why we continue to push for policies to encourage people to visit London, such as tax-free shopping for international visitors and long-term strategic funding for TfL to improve transport infrastructure."

\*Entries and exits (Oyster, contactless and paper tickets) at Oxford Circus station:-

Friday 24 November 2023	Around 216,960
Friday 17 November 2023	Around 177,214
Friday 10 November 2023	Around 165,389
Friday 3 November 2023	Around 172,102
Friday 27 October 2023	Around 168,714

\*\*Entries and exits (Oyster, contactless and paper tickets) at Battersea Power Station station:-

Saturday 4 November 2023	Around 52,814
Saturday 28 October 2023	Around 27,460

\*\*Entries and exits at Kew Gardens station:-

Friday 17 November 2023	Around 16,311
Thursday 16 November 2023	Around 14,527
Wednesday 15 November 2023	Around 16,067

Friday 10 November 2023	Around 9,949
Thursday 9 November 2023	Around 10,905
Wednesday 8 November 2023	Around 9,872

*Photo credit: Transport for London*