

Weekly capping on Oyster for Tube and rail passengers launches today

September 27, 2021



Weekly capping on Oyster for adult pay as you go customers will go live today (Monday 27 September), meaning that anyone travelling on Tube and rail services across London will benefit from never needing to buy a weekly Travelcard again.

The upgrade, which follows significant technical development and successful discussions with the train operating companies, means that those who regularly use the iconic smartcard to travel around London will no longer need to plan how to pay for travel throughout the week, as the system will give them the best possible fares for all their journeys made between Monday and Sunday.

Daily caps on Tube and rail services are set at one fifth of the price of a weekly cap, and if customers travel more frequently, weekly caps ensure they don't pay more than the equivalent weekly Travelcard. Weekly capping is already available for those using pay as you go with contactless, and Oyster customers who only travel on bus and tram services across London. As well as providing weekly capping, the new technology will also make it easier for taps that have been accidentally missed to be refunded. Weekly capping for those with Zip cards and other discounts is expected to launch during 2022 following further technical development.

London has led the way globally in developing transport ticketing technology with the first trials of smartcard technology, which would lead to the Oyster card, beginning as early as 1992. This led TfL towards the wider development of ticketing using contactless bank cards which was first introduced on buses in 2012 and later expanded to the Tube and rail services.

Using an Oyster card, contactless card or device to pay as you go is easy and flexible. Customers only pay for the journeys they make, which is ideal if they commute flexibly. As ridership continues to increase on London's public transport network, new analysis shows that eight out of ten fare paying customers travelling on the Tube are now doing so using pay as you go with contactless or Oyster, rather than more traditional Travelcard or paper single tickets.

Almost four million different people travelled on the Tube last week, compared to five and a half million people pre pandemic. At least two million journeys are being made every weekday and on Wednesday 22 September there were 2.4 million journeys made – the highest weekday since the pandemic began. Analysis of journeys made in recent weeks showing that around 79 per cent used pay as you go with contactless or an Oyster card – with the number of contactless journeys continuing to grow significantly.

On buses, the proportion of fare paying customers using pay as you go is currently around 72 per cent. Bus ridership is currently at around four and a half million journeys a day across London as more Londoners start returning to their workplaces and heading out to enjoy all the city has to offer.

Mike Tuckett, Head of Customer Payments at TfL, said: “Pay as you go has been a huge success for London and following the pandemic we are seeing how the flexibility and convenience that it offers is benefiting those whose travelling habits might have changed.

“Following significant technical development and successful discussions with the train operating companies, we are pleased to now be able to extend weekly Tube and rail capping to Oyster customers, meaning that they can now benefit from knowing they won't pay more than an equivalent weekly Travelcard for their journeys across London.”

Andy Bagnall, Director General of the Rail Delivery Group, said: “It's great to see train operating companies and TfL working together to make fares easier and better value in London, which is crucial to encourage more people onto trains, boost local businesses and protect the environment from polluting traffic jams.

“We want to be able to offer this type of flexible ticketing to people in towns and cities beyond the capital, including tap-in, tap-out with a price cap for commuters, which is why we have long called for government to undertake wholesale reform of the regulations that underpin the fares system.”

Ros Morgan, Chief Executive, Heart of London Business Alliance, said: “Automatic capping for pay as you go Oyster users is a fantastic initiative that will incentivise people to travel around London, visit restaurants, bars and cultural institutions and support the local economy in doing so.

“London is an interconnected ecosystem so by encouraging visitors and office workers to travel around the city, TfL is playing a vital role in helping it get back on its feet.”

The popularity of pay as you go has seen it expand across rail services in recent years. Pay as you go with contactless extended to services from London to Luton Airport Parkway and Welwyn Garden City in 2019, and for GWR and TfL Rail services to Reading station in 2020.

For more information about pay as you go – please visit tfl.gov.uk/fares

Photo credit: Transport for London