



Our role

What we do

London TravelWatch was set up by Parliament to be the official voice of London's travelling public. We are funded by the London Assembly and are accountable to it via the Assembly's Transport Committee. We speak up for all those who use buses, the Underground, Docklands Light Railway (DLR), dial-a-ride, trams, taxis, cable cars and river transport, as well as cyclists, motorcyclists, pedestrians and other users of London's principal road network. We also represent users of the National Rail network in London and the surrounding commuter belt and international rail passengers using Eurostar.

Our aims

We aim to secure a better journey experience for everyone **travelling in and around London**: commuters, leisure travellers, visitors and tourists however they travel. Our multi-modal remit reflects the way most people use transport in London – making active choices between modes and interchanging from one mode to another in the course of a typical journey.

We:

- press for a better deal for London's travellers
- seek value for money for passengers on all transport services in the capital
- ensure that the particular needs of London and London's transport users are given due priority in key transport policy and planning decisions
- help the travelling public understand their rights and find good deals by providing information and advice.
- enable consumers to understand and exercise their rights when things go wrong
- work to ensure that transport operators deal with complaints appropriately and efficiently
- speak for passengers and the travelling public in discussions with opinion formers and decision makers at all levels - including local councils, **the Mayor of London**, the **London Assembly**, the Government, Parliament and the European Union.

Influencing

We regularly meet and influence the relevant parts of the transport industry on all issues which affect the travelling public including timetables, routes, frequencies, fares, ticketing, station standards, access, vehicles, safety, personal security and the information provided both to passengers and to users of London's principal roads. We also work with a wide range of public interest organisations, user groups and research bodies to ensure that all involved remain aware of the experiences and concerns of the travelling public.

Researching

We commission and carry out research amongst transport users, and collate, evaluate and interpret the research carried out by others, to ensure that our work to influence transport policy and operations is based on the best possible evidence.

Investigating

We examine all appeals brought to us by people unhappy with the responses (or lack of them) that



they have received from transport providers to their original complaint, and seek to rectify problems or secure compensation where appropriate. Where passengers' experiences highlight ongoing problems that need to be put right, we follow up the issues concerned in our policy and research work.

Analysing

We monitor the quality of transport services, including punctuality, reliability, crowding, congestion, cleanliness, accessibility, staff attitudes and behaviour, and station and waiting facilities. We also check that it is easy to buy tickets.

Connecting

The above activities all contribute to our extensive evidence base. In addition, our own experience of using London's extensive public transport network, paying for travel, and seeing for ourselves on a daily basis what transport users go through, helps ensure we remain connected and up to date.



Our 10 priorities for passengers

- services should run frequently and reliably at all reasonable times of the day and week
- networks should be accessible with adequate capacity and easy interchange between different modes of transport
- staff should be helpful, informed and committed to offering high-quality services
- information should be readily available, understandable, relevant, up-to-date and accurate
- tickets should be easy to purchase, use and understand, flexible, and properly integrated between different service providers and modes of transport
- stations or stops should be well-designed and maintained and fully accessible with a good quality waiting environment
- journeys should be safe and free from anti-social behavior, crime and the fear of crime
- streets should be clean, clear of clutter, properly signed and well maintained for all users
- buses, trams, trains and boats should be accessible for all, comfortable, clean, safe, quiet and easy to identify
- transport providers should communicate clearly and promptly with users, be approachable and open to suggestions, take complaints seriously and have proper mechanisms for redress when things go wrong.

At a glance

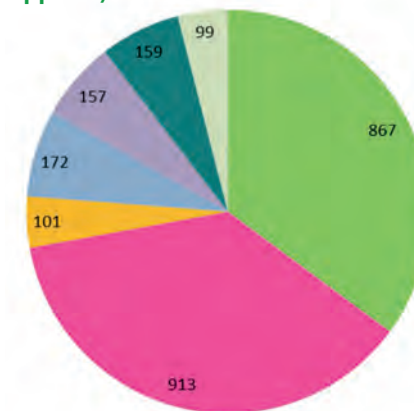


We cost London residents less than 1p a week per household.



We represent the interests of passengers in and around London who make around 13.5m journeys a day, (5.5m by bus, 5m by tube and 3m by train). This includes around 1.1 million non-residents on an average day (domestic and international visitors, as well as commuters from outside London).

Casework requiring further investigation (2,468 appeals):



- Fares including requests for refunds, penalty fares and Oyster/contactless payment queries
- Passenger unhappy with the way the operator has managed the complaint
- Complaints about staff
- Service performance including delays and engineering works
- Lack of information at point of travel
- Infrastructure issues such as quality on board, at stations including overcrowding
- Other

Chair's & Chief Executive's foreword

Arthur Leathley, Chair



Janet Cooke, Chief Executive



This year has been one of stark contrasts for the travelling public, with benefits from widespread investment starting to show through but also worrying signs of worsening performance for many passengers.

London TravelWatch is at the heart of efforts to improve travel across London, and we are delighted to see two of the biggest rail schemes for a century – Thameslink and Crossrail – come closer to completion. New trains are being introduced on other routes, and there is continued investment in bus and Tube services.

Investment in new projects is of course welcome, but the existing transport system, which is facing increasing pressure from growing passenger numbers, must also be maintained.

Millions of people who travel every day have been let down too often in the last year. Bus passengers have seen slower average journey speeds and many rail passengers have suffered unacceptable levels of performance, either due to infrastructure failures, operational problems, poor weather conditions or industrial action.

As this Annual Review demonstrates, London TravelWatch consistently presses operators and Transport for London (TfL) to bring improvements and to plan long-term changes that will benefit passengers. We are seeing progress, with better quality mainline and Underground trains entering service, more accessible bus stops and planned enhancements to other public transport services.

But when services do not work, we will always press the passenger interest. London TravelWatch was the first to call for compensation for rail passengers to be paid for journeys delayed by 15 minutes or more and we were pleased that three operators – Govia Thameslink Railway, South Western Railway and C2C–

introduced Delay Repay 15 compensation during the year. Hopefully this list will soon grow.

Some changes we campaign for appear small, but are of great importance to passengers and transport users. So we were pleased that our pressure prompted Network Rail to make toilet facilities free of charge at its stations.

We have also contributed extensively to the Mayor's Transport Strategy, and support the ambition to make 80 per cent of journeys in London on foot, by cycle or public transport. As part of this, we published our report *Cycling in London*, setting out our ideas on how to promote cycling.

At the end of September, Stephen Locke stood down as Chair of London TravelWatch after five years, during which he contributed enormously in calling for transport improvements and standing up for passengers. Under his leadership we were able to consolidate and refocus our work, generating a renewed respect and audience for our unique approach to research and lobbying. We are immensely grateful to Stephen for all that he did.

We would like to thank Board colleagues for their ongoing support. Finally we would particularly like to thank the staff for everything they have done during what has been a challenging year.



Our achievements

Making a difference for passengers

Every year we investigate a wide variety of consumer concerns. Our work ranges from high-level scrutiny of policy to assisting individuals unhappy with the responses they have received following complaints made to transport providers. Regular contact with transport users gives us the insights which underpin the independent, expert advice we give to policy-makers as well as informing our research and campaigns. When we resolve an issue for an individual user who has appealed to us, we are well placed to use their experience to argue for improvements which make a real difference for everyone.

TfL responded to our longstanding campaign to prioritise passengers and allow buses to stay on their routes when roadworks take place, by closing London Bridge northbound to all traffic except buses, taxis, cycles, pedestrians and emergency services when emergency roadworks needed to take place in February 2018. In a similar situation, we welcomed the City of London's decision to close Bank junction to all but buses, and people on bikes and foot, from 7am to 7pm on weekdays as part of an 18 month trial. We also supported Westminster City Council's works to

transform Baker Street and Gloucester Place into a two-way system, meaning two-way bus routes that passengers can understand. In each of these cases delays to buses have been kept to a minimum and there have been benefits from improved pedestrian and cyclist safety.

We identified the potential to better brand the capital's bus services overseen by TfL to make it easier for passengers to travel by bus by improving the information available about the different routes and places that they serve.

We persuaded TfL to look into this, putting them in touch with Barton's buses who do this particularly well. As a result, TfL carried out an initial trial in Barkingside last summer with new colour-coded buses, with the main destinations and interchanges listed on the side. They announced in February 2018 plans to extend the trial to cover 40 buses across 12 routes serving Hillingdon, Harrow, Ealing and Hounslow.

Many of the ideas we put forward in our transport users' priorities document were reflected in the Mayor's new Transport

Strategy. These included more emphasis on improving the accessibility of bus services including hail and ride services, further priority for bus services on London's streets, enabling more Londoners to cycle and generally improving the safety of London's streets. We also again expressed our support for TfL to manage more of London's rail services, the Bakerloo Line extension and made the point that the plans for Crossrail 2 need to be pulled together now.

In 1999 the railway closures associated with the Thameslink programme were advertised. London TravelWatch undertook a statutory examination into the impact of the closures on rail passengers. Almost 20 years on it is pleasing to see the project being delivered now with significant improvement following our involvement.

At Farringdon station we secured a big win with the installation of an additional interchange bridge and much done to increase the station capacity.

South of Blackfriars station, the Metropolitan junction was signalled in both directions allowing trains to



be easily reversed at times of disruption and the Secretary of State agreed with us that a passenger management plan should be developed for the period Blackfriars station was completely closed. And at St Pancras we ensured that the station concourse remained open during operational hours and the Pentonville Road entrance to the Underground remained open to passengers.

Throughout the project we have continued to stand up for passengers particularly when they were affected by poor performance due to the impact of engineering works.

When Chris Gibb was appointed by the Government to carry out the review into Thameslink and Southern's poor performance we made sure there was a strong passenger input and his review picked up on several issues we raised. These included continuing staff shortages, something we first raised with Ministers in December 2014, and the fact that under the terms of the Southern franchise the penalties are actually less if train services are cancelled rather than being delayed or amended. The report also drew on some of the other feedback we gave, including the need to prioritise getting peak time travel times right for the majority of passengers.

We warned that the Government's decision to fine Southern Rail £13.4m for poor performance needed to be backed up by urgent action to improve the service for long suffering passengers. We urged the Department for Transport (DfT), Network Rail as well as Southern and Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) to work together to achieve a radical improvement in performance and there have been subsequent performance improvements.

We also attended the monthly alliance board meetings between Network Rail and GTR to provide

constructive challenge on behalf of passengers as key decisions were taken about remedial action.

Referring to the good practice outlined in our interchange matters research, we met regularly with Network Rail staff to try and ensure that major stations, especially the rebuilt London Bridge station, were not let down by poor signage and wayfinding. Our meetings with the new South East Stations Director and the team who manage London Bridge, Victoria, Charing Cross and Cannon Street were particularly fruitful. A number of our suggestions for small but significant changes have been acted on, including a variation to procurement for electronic advertising boards that will mean that passenger information will take precedence over commercial adverts at times of service disruption.

Paying for travel

The cost of travel and the ability to buy tickets easily are fundamental for passengers. Last year we heard from people concerned about how and where to buy tickets, how to obtain refunds when necessary and how to appeal against the circumstances in which penalty fares were charged. We also heard from those unhappy with high ticket prices. As well

as campaigning for fares to be held at a reasonable level, we advise people on how to get the best value fares via our popular money saving tips webpage, and encourage transport providers to simplify and clarify their fare structures.

TfL continued implementing many of the recommendations from our report on their ticket office closures including undertaking work to make staff more visible and to better signpost passengers to 'focal points' on station concourses. However, despite upgrades to ticket machines TfL has no plans to make annual season tickets available to buy from them.

While the January 2018 fares increases were capped at inflation, the latest increases affected many passengers who have seen service performance decline over the past year. Passengers tell us that a principal reason for dissatisfaction with public transport (particularly rail journeys) is uncertainty that they are paying the correct or best price for their journey. This was borne out in our previous [research on value for money](#), the [impact of travel costs on low paid workers](#) living in outer London and [passengers' ticket purchasing and journey experiences](#). We continued to highlight the large and confusing variations in commuter fares, especially in and



around the edge of London – for example, passengers travelling from Redhill, are sometimes paying more to travel into London than those travelling from Gatwick Airport station, despite Gatwick being over five miles further out. We continued to press the Government and rail industry to work towards a simpler, fairer and more unified fares structure across the London area.

As this review is going to press we are pleased to see that the industry has pledged root and branch reform of the fares and ticketing system and we will be feeding into their review.

Our [Annual Season Ticket research](#) showed that the 1 million commuters living in and around London and paying more than £2billion on season tickets to travel to and from work feel unrewarded for their loyalty. We found that for many, the renewals process has become automatic, with little information and help available to ensure they are not paying more than they need to.

As working habits and travel times become more flexible, and contactless payment is easy, there are many people who no longer need annual tickets, but they don't have the right information to decide. [We called on train operators](#) to do more to explain the benefits of season

tickets and help customers decide whether season tickets are still the best option for them.

London TravelWatch led the calls for Delay Repay compensation after 15 minutes and the Government has now taken this up as policy and new franchises will all include this provision. During the year, GTR, South Western Railway and c2c all introduced compensation after 15 minutes.

The extension of the one hour hopper fare on buses and trams in London to allow unlimited changes in January 2018 made bus and tram travel even more affordable for passengers, particularly those on lower incomes with long or complex journeys to work. We previously identified the problems faced by these groups of people in our [Living on the Edge](#) research into transport affordability.

Having argued that passengers should have the right to claim for consequential loss, particularly when making their way to airports, an amendment to the [National Rail conditions of carriage](#) forced train companies to amend their terms and conditions to allow them to do so.

Standing up for transport users

London TravelWatch responds to consultations from the Mayor, London Assembly, the Government, regulators and the industry to ensure that the London transport users' perspective is fully taken into account. Their experience is often very different from elsewhere in the country, given the nature of journeys taken and the pressures on capacity. Decisions being taken now will set the framework for years to come and it is important that service specifications reflect the needs of passengers travelling in and around London.

We remain concerned that there has been no progress on the proposal to extend the Metropolitan line to Watford (Croxley link).

Our consultation with passengers highlighted the wide range of benefits to those travelling in and around London and we will continue to push for the scheme to be built.

We continued to support efforts to increase cycling levels in London, contributing to consultations on proposed new infrastructure. In our [response to the Mayor's Draft](#)



Transport Strategy we emphasised the great potential for linked cycle and rail trips from the 137 zone 5 and 6 stations in outer London and called for the Mayor, London boroughs and the station operators to work to promote and enable cycle trips to these stations for outer London residents.

Our report on *Cycling in London* concluded that measures to restrain car travel will be needed if the number of people cycling in London is to match the levels of many European cities. The report set out 12 policies to get more Londoners cycling – such as more sophisticated roads pricing, tighter parking rules to restrain driving, improved cycle parking and car-free housing.

Our report on **small stations, from which passengers make almost 100 million journeys a year** in and around London, showed the need for improvements at many. We highlighted the fact that small stations often receive proportionately less investment than larger stations and are not necessarily eligible for funding programmes. The quality of the passenger experience can vary quite significantly and we

suggested that station operators could gain quick wins and raise satisfaction levels with relatively simple improvements such as regular and frequent cleaning, providing secure cycle storage and increasing the availability of clear and consistent travel information and signage.

We continued to call for urgent action to make buses in London quicker and more reliable, writing to the Mayor of London. We highlighted a number of performance statistics that show a doubling in the number of bus routes falling below their contracted minimum reliability standard over the last five years with average speeds down from 9.6mph three years ago to 9.2mph today. We made a number of suggestions for improvements including more bus priority and an extension of operational hours, extending the Congestion Charge to cover private hire vehicles and for it to operate for longer hours.

We contributed to the London Assembly Transport Committee's **investigation into future transport** and the House of Commons Transport Select Committee **report on mobility as a service**.

We have maintained an active interest in subsequent events since the tram derailment at

Sandilands Junction in Croydon in November 2016, liaising with the Rail Accident Investigation Branch in the preparation of its final report. We will be closely monitoring the response of TfL and Tramlink to the recommendations made in the report.

We **called on the Government to fast track plans** for Crossrail 2 to relieve overcrowding and ensure that public transport capacity keeps pace with growth, setting out our concerns in a letter to the Secretary of State for Transport.

We **urged operators to learn the lessons** from recent complaints backlogs and contact centre issues which particularly affected Great Western, urging good, proactive communication to help reduce the number of repeat complaints by passengers following up their original compensation claims, leaving customer service teams free to deal with the backlog. As a result, the number of appeals we have received have returned to usual levels.

Shaping services and improving access

Londoners and visitors need to be able to choose from a wide range of transport options whether they want to walk, cycle or take the bus, train, tram



or Underground. While great progress has been made, more needs to be done to make London's transport networks accessible in the widest sense of the word. In all our work, we consider the needs of passengers with disabilities and recognise that most improvements for disabled passengers benefit everyone, in terms of additional capacity and ease of access.

We lobbied hard to ensure that passengers will be able to travel to Terminal 5 at Heathrow Airport by Crossrail when it opens and a ruling by the High Court that Heathrow Airport could not charge disproportionately for the use of its tracks into the airport made this a reality. We provided crucial evidence to assist the Office of Rail and Road's case about the expectations as to the use of the Heathrow Express Railway when it was first authorised by Parliament.

We supported Luton Airport's campaign to secure four fast trains per hour, between the airport and London St Pancras as opposed to the reduction of long-distance inter-city services included in the

franchise consultation document published by the DfT. We renewed our calls for Oyster/Contactless to be extended to Luton, Stansted and Heathrow airports. Heathrow Express services started accepting Oyster/Contactless payments from the start of TfL Rail services in May 2018 and Heathrow Express services will follow later in 2018.

We continued to press for tough action against traders and others who obstruct pavements, working with TfL to crack down on persistent offenders. This led to several successful prosecutions during the year against traders obstructing the pavement with advertising boards and shop awnings. Following our work with TfL, Sainsbury's became the first major retailer to agree to no longer obstruct London's pavements with their advertising boards. The supermarket withdrew its boards from outside all their stores on TfL's streets, the 'Red Routes'.

We began to 'name and shame' London boroughs who failed to take action over pavement obstructions on their streets, tweeting photos of the worst obstructions in Camden, Southwark, Islington and Westminster.

Our tweets helped to raise the profile of the issue

and those relating to Camden were particularly successful, with local residents and a councillor all joining our calls for the Council to take a stronger line against those who obstruct the pavement.

We have continued to make the case for step-free access in meetings with operators and submissions to TfL, highlighting the benefits for everyone. In particular, we have highlighted the fact that many stations could be made accessible by making modest improvements such as ramps from the station entrance to the platform.

In January 2018, we welcomed the Mayor of London's plans to make 13 more Tube stations, which between them account for 33m journeys a year, step-free. These stations in north west and north east London are exactly the type of stations at which we have previously campaigned for modest investment in ramped access, which can benefit a significant flow of passengers.

We kept up the pressure on TfL when it came to providing step-free access to the two central line platforms at Bank station as part of the station upgrade project.



We monitored the impact of the disruption on passengers while major works were going on at Waterloo last summer, making sure that passengers' needs were taken into account.

Network Rail's CEO, responded to [our pressure](#) in January 2018 and announced that they had [decided to scrap toilet charges](#) at the stations they manage from next year. We know from our research into 'value for money' that passengers place great importance on the availability of free toilets and resent having to pay to use them having already paid for a ticket to travel. This change will make a significant difference, particularly to older people and those travelling with children.

Engaging with transport users

We aim to make it easy for the travelling public to contact us, whether through casework, at our public meetings and events, or via our [website](#) and social media.

We consistently improve our website, ensuring that it is up to date and that the highlighted frequently asked questions reflect the queries that passengers raise with us. Regular monitoring of patterns of use

means we know which features are most popular with the public.

Our Board and Policy Committee meetings, at which we discuss current issues in transport, explore problems and look at future services, are open to the public and we live tweet from them to enable those who cannot make it in person to engage with us via Twitter. We continue to hold one Board meeting each year outside central London and last summer we visited Luton. Key topics discussed in the last year included the Mayor's Transport Strategy, Oxford Street pedestrianisation, Crossrail, Thameslink and progress with actions stemming from our review of Tube ticket office closures and bus service performance.

We continued to play a role in helping to shape the new rail passenger ombudsman scheme to ensure it best serves passenger needs.

Events and visits

We held two successful Interchange Matters best practice seminars, one of which focused on key strategic interchanges at Brixton, Lewisham and West Hampstead and the other on improving surface

access to London's airports. Guest speakers included senior TfL staff and representatives from Heathrow and Gatwick Airports.

Our Ruth Thompson Memorial Lecture in memory of our former Deputy Chair has now become an annual event. In November 2017, this took the form of a discussion on how London is progressing towards a more people-centred city led by urbanist, Riccardo Marini.

Our performance

During 2017/18 our casework team dealt with 7,788 written and telephone enquiries and complaints. We were able to deal with most of these quickly or pass them on to the operator for an initial reply, as we only consider handling cases as 'appeals' where the passenger has already complained to the service operator. We investigated 2,468 appeals from members of the public travelling in London and the surrounding areas. The vast majority of cases concerned service performance on both trains and buses, including delays, early departure, penalty fares, lack of travel information and complaint handling by rail operators. We continue to use the requirements of the Consumer Rights Act 2015 and



the updated National Rail Conditions of Travel to argue the passenger case even more strongly with rail operators.

Recent [user survey results](#) show high levels of satisfaction with the service London TravelWatch provides.

Examples of some of [our successes](#) are available on our website.

We received two requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, which were both dealt with within the statutory 20-working-day time period.

Attendance records for our Board members are available in the [Board section](#) on our website.

Our funding

London TravelWatch is funded by the London Assembly in accordance with Schedule 19 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999.

In 2017/18, our grant amounted to £1,036,000 and our total expenditure was £1,114,296.

Our full audited accounts are available on our website.



You can find out about a number of other areas where we have made an impact over the last few years in our [key achievements webpage](#). These include:

- [Getting a better deal for passengers](#)
- [Improvements to stations and interchanges](#)
- [Improving accessibility](#)
- [Improving performance](#)

Making a difference for passengers

The following examples summarise some of the key achievements already mentioned in this annual review, showing how we follow up individual complaints to help improve the overall passenger experience.

You told us

Our review of London Underground's proposed ticket office closures carried out for the Mayor of London identified issues experienced by passengers at Tube stations and we proposed actions for TfL to take to ensure passengers can buy the tickets they need and easily find staff to help them.

Pavement obstructions, particularly traders' advertising boards, make life difficult for pedestrians, particularly those who are blind, partially sighted or with reduced mobility.

Passengers have contacted us, frustrated that they have incurred additional costs because of delayed or cancelled rail services. Some have had to spend a considerable amount more on airline tickets and hotels without the right to claim for consequential loss from a rail operator.

We did this

We continued to monitor the impact of London Underground's ticket office closures. We carried out several mystery shopping exercises to test the impact of the changes on passengers and provided feedback to TfL, outlining additional changes to improve the passenger experience.

We continued to press for tough action against traders who obstruct pavements, working with TfL to crack down on persistent offenders.

We continued to argue that passengers should have the right to claim for consequential loss, particularly when making their way to airports.

This was the outcome

TfL continued to address many of the recommendations from our report on their ticket office closures including making staff more visible, directing passengers to 'focal points' on station concourses.

We were pleased to see several successful prosecutions during the year against traders obstructing the pavement with advertising boards and shop awnings. Following our work with TfL, Sainsbury's became the first major retailer to agree to no longer obstruct London's pavements with their advertising boards, withdrawing its boards from outside all their stores on TfL's streets, the 'Red Routes'.

An amendment to the National Rail conditions of travel which came in March 2018, forced train companies to amend their terms and conditions to give passengers the right to make a claim for consequential loss.

About us

Our people

Members of London TravelWatch are appointed by the London Assembly after public advertisement.

Board (as at 31 March 2018)

Jackie Ballard
Alan Benson
Richard Dilks
Glyn Kyle
Arthur Leathley
(Chair, from 1 October 2017)
Abdi Osman
John Stewart (Vice Chair)

Staff (as at 31 March 2018)

We employ 11 full-time and 6 part-time staff:

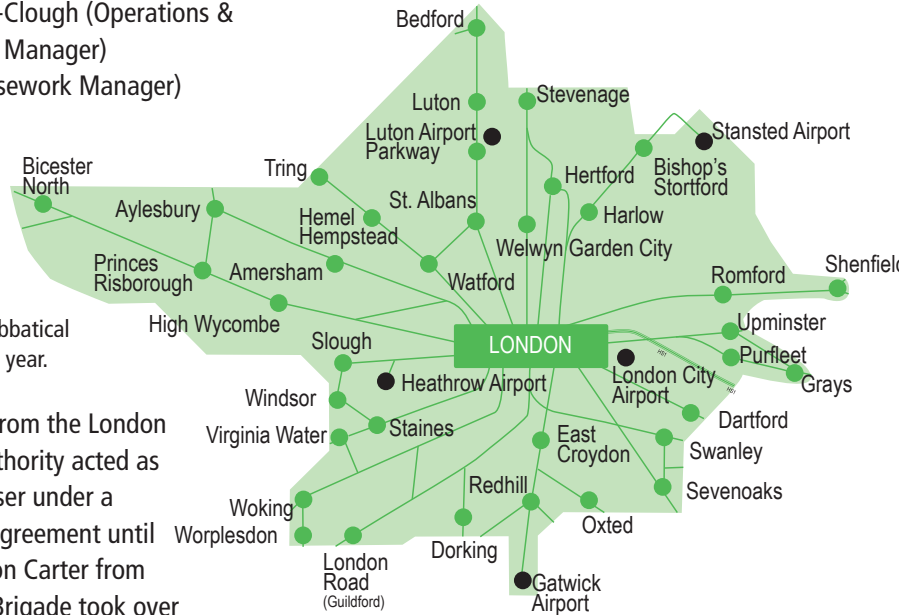
Sandra Ambo
Keletha Barrett
Tim Bellenger
(Director, Policy & Investigation)
Mike Brown

John Burgess
John Cartledge
Gytha Chinweze
Janet Cooke (Chief Executive)
Margaret Croucher
Jaskiren Deol*
Richard Freeston-Clough (Operations & Communications Manager)
Susan James (Casework Manager)
Robert Nichols*
Fayza Patel
David Rose
Vincent Stops
John Wooster

*on maternity or sabbatical leave for part of the year.

Stuart Coleman from the London Pension Fund Authority acted as our Finance Adviser under a shared services agreement until September. Sharon Carter from the London Fire Brigade took over this role from December.

Thank you to Sharon Malley, Renee Marah, Hannah Lovell and Bunmi Falodun, who left us during the year for the contribution they made during their time with us. We would also like to thank our former Chair, Stephen Locke, whose appointment ended in September 2017 after five years of service.



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ISSN: 1750-9610



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