

INFORMATION ABOUT THE LONDON TAXICARD SCHEME

What is the service for?

The London Taxicard Scheme is to help people with mobility difficulties travel door to door. These journeys can be for a variety of social outings such as: visiting friends, going to the hairdressers, shopping, entertainment etc. It can also be used for medical appointments, but should not be used for hospital appointments; if you need help getting to the hospital your GP or Hospital can arrange hospital transport.

How many trips do I have?

The annual trip limit in this borough is currently 104 trips . The scheme runs from 1 April until 31 March each year.

If you join the scheme part way through the year your limit is calculated based on the number of months left.

Each year on 1 April your allocation is automatically reset to 104 trips, there is no need to contact us.

What will my trip cost?

Members pay a minimum charge of **£1.50** for each trip.

The Council subsidy is up to £10.30 for each trip.

Total maximum cost of each trip before you pay any extra: £11.80.

Example 1:

- When you reach your destination the taxi meter has £10.00 on it.
- You will pay the standard charge of £1.50
- The Council will pay the balance of £8.50

Example 2:

- When you reach your destination the taxi meter has £15.00 on it.
- You will pay the standard charge of £1.50 + £3.20 (a total of £4.70).
- This is because you have to pay the difference between the total cost of the trip:
£15.00 and the maximum subsidy of £11.80 ($£15.00 - £11.80 = £3.20$)
- The Council will pay the balance of £10.30

Taxis are metered, so the cost of your trip is affected by distance and time, you need to be aware that the following circumstances can affect the cost:

- heavy traffic
- taxi waiting for you
- extra stops on route
- diversion because of roadworks
- bad weather conditions
- night and bank holiday rates

Additional Service for Richmond Taxicard Members

If you need to make longer or more expensive trips than the current system allows, Richmond Taxicard holders are also able to use their trip allocation in a different way.

The change is called 'stage coaching'.

What does this mean?

You can now use 2 trips from your allocation for '1 journey'.

How does this work?

If you think your journey is going to cost more than the maximum subsidy amount per trip (£11.80) you can now increase this to £23.60.

When you get into the taxi you need to tell the driver that you want to use 2 trips, the driver will swipe your card as usual when you first get into the taxi.

When you reach the subsidised limit of £11.80 the driver will need to swipe your card again, this will allow you to use another subsidised trip of £11.80.

Please note: You can only have your card swiped twice (2 trips) you must not ask the driver to swipe it a third time. Computer Cab will discipline the driver, and may not allow him to continue with the scheme. As we are keen to have a good relationship with drivers and keep a good supply of available taxis in this area it is very important that this does not happen. The Council will not pay for more than 2 trips at one time.

How much will it cost me?

Each time the card is swiped you will have to pay £1.50, this means if you are using 2 trips and your card is swiped twice you will have to pay the driver £3.00, but you will be able to make a journey up to a cost of £23.60.

Example 1

You decide that you would like to use 2 trips from your allocation to complete your trip, because of the distance you will be travelling.

- When you reach your destination the taxi meter has £20.00 on it.
- You will pay the double trip charge of £3.00
- The Council will pay the balance of £17.00

Example 2

- When you reach your destination the taxi meter has £26.00 on it.
- You will pay the double trip charge of £3.00 + £2.40 (a total of £5.40).
- This is because you have to pay the difference between the total cost of the trip: £26.00 and the maximum subsidy of £23.60 ($£26.00 - £23.60 = £2.40$)
- The Council will pay the balance of £20.60.

How does it affect my trip allowance?

The trip allowance for all Richmond users currently remains 104 trips a year, if your card is swiped twice, you will use 2 trips.

It is therefore important to keep a check on how many of these 'double trips' you are taking so that you do not run out of trips, especially for return journeys.

When booking, Computer Cab can always let you know how many trips are left on your allocation.

Example:

You have 20 trips left from your original allocation, and you travel a distance where you need to use 2 trips to get to your destination, **and** 2 trips to go home.

- That is a total of 4 trips, your allocation is now 16.

You are able to use this service when you book taxis by telephone, and when you hail a taxi in the street.

Lost or Stolen cards, who do I contact?

You can either contact us direct for an application form or contact the Association of London Government (ALG) direct at the address below.

You will have to supply the following information:

- Reason a replacement is needed
- Name
- Address
- Another passport size photograph (to produce a new photocard)

ALG will then cancel your old card and issue you with a new card and number.

You must also let them know if your address changes

Association of London Government (ALG) - Taxicard
New Zealand House
80 Haymarket
London, SW1Y 4TZ Tel: 020 7747 4722

Supply of taxis

Richmond Council works continuously with Computer Cab to increase the availability of taxis in this area, we will update you if other companies become available.

The following information is about how the London Taxicard Scheme operates, this is to help you use the scheme, and answers some of the most frequently asked questions.

By understanding the way the scheme works I am sure you will find the service very useful.

Q. How do I book a taxi?

A. Requests for a taxi are made by telephoning the company contracted by the London boroughs to provide this service (currently Computer Cab). The latest contact telephone numbers are on the back of your London taxicard.

Requests can be ASAP (as soon as possible) or for a specific time in advance.

Q. Can I book in advance?

A. Yes, but this is recorded as a request, and does not 'pre-book' a particular taxi it means your request is on the computer system, and a call will go out for a taxi 15 - 20 minutes before the requested time. It does not guarantee a taxi will be found.

Q. What if I decide I do not want the taxi?

A. If you book a taxi and decide you do not want it, for example: the taxi is late; you cannot wait; you've changed your mind; someone else is going to pick you up etc. **You must ring and cancel your booking**, otherwise if the taxi is on it's way you will lose one of your trips and the Council will have to pay for the trip.

If you are ringing about a late taxi, make it clear you are following up an existing booking **not** making a new one. A second booking could result in 2 taxis being sent to the same pick up point. One will be a wasted trip, and result in a trip being deducted from your annual allocation, and the Council will have to pay the cost of the trip.

Q. Are taxis guaranteed to arrive?

A. Unfortunately, the provision of a Taxi cannot always be guaranteed, there are occasions when it will not be possible to find one.

Certain times are very busy; rush hour, pouring rain, major sporting events etc.

Q. What information should I give when booking a taxi?

A. When requesting a taxi you should always give complete addresses, and any postcodes where possible, and be precise about your collection point at a large destination with numerous exits.

Other important information:

- If you are a wheelchair user, and need an accessible taxi.
- If you can only use a particular type of taxi.
- If you have a visual or hearing impairment.
- Any other information that you feel is important the taxi driver or the person taking your booking should know.

The person taking your booking does not know any personal information about you, they have not seen your application form. So if there is anything you feel they should know about your mobility it is up to you to tell them, this information may help them understand any difficulties you have.

- Q. Can I use my Taxicard to visit friends?
A. Yes, this is exactly the sort of journey Taxicard is for. You can also use it to go shopping, visit a museum or any other outings.
- Q. Can I take a friend with me?
A. Yes, you can take someone with you at no extra charge.
- Q. Can I use my Taxicard for a hospital appointment?
A. No, this is not what Taxicard is for, you should use hospital transport for this type of journey, but you can use Taxicard for GP or other medical appointments such as the dentist.
- Q. Why is there always a charge on the meter when the taxi arrives?
A. The taxi will always arrive with a 'run in' amount on the meter, this is because the meter starts running as soon as the driver agrees to do the job. The amount can vary, it depends on how far the driver has had to come to collect you, but it should not exceed £3.40.
The meter is also running from the minute the driver arrives to collect you, so you are already starting to pay for your trip. Wherever possible be ready when the taxi pulls up, if you do keep the taxi waiting the total cost of your journey may be more than £11.80, and then you will have to pay the amount over £11.80 as well as the normal £1.50 charge. Most local trips will not go over £11.80, unless you are held up in very heavy traffic.

Remember: Taxis can be both early and late! **We are now asking all members to be ready 15 minutes before a taxi is due to arrive.** If you are not ready, the taxi's meter may continue to run adding to the cost of your trip, or it may not wait and there could be a delay in getting another taxi to you.

For more detailed information on the London Taxicard Scheme, and how to use it, please also refer to the handbook sent out with your taxicard by ALG.

The Richmond Council team responsible for this service is:

The Accessible Transport Unit (ATU)
4 Waldegrave Road
Teddington
Middlesex
TW11 8HT
020 8831 6094 / 6312