# Robert Jenrick's viral fare dodging crusade sparks debate over London transport enforcement



Shadow justice secretary Robert Jenrick has recently garnered attention for his confrontational stance on fare dodging within London’s transport network, particularly following the release of a video where he challenges individuals attempting to evade fare payment on the Tube. Speaking on BBC Radio 5 Live, Jenrick expressed his belief that actions such as fare evading, along with other anti-social behaviours like graffiti and loud music on public transport, are contributing to a broader societal decay. His intention, he claims, is to "shame people into action" and compel city authorities to take a firmer stance against such behaviour.

In the video, which has received over 3.5 million views on social media, Jenrick criticises London Mayor Sadiq Khan for not addressing what he labels "lawbreaking" and presents himself as taking action where the authorities have failed. He articulated his frustration about “people fare dodging” and the perception that law-abiding passengers feel discouraged when others benefit from not paying. The Transport for London (TfL) organisation has responded robustly, reiterating that fare evasion is "unacceptable" and reinforcing their strategy to tackle the issue through enhanced measures.

The financial implications of fare evasion are significant, with TfL estimating losses of around £130 million for the year 2022-23 due to fare dodging. The organisation has set ambitious goals to reduce the fare evasion rate from 3.9% to below 1.5% by 2030. A key element of their strategy is the expansion of their team dedicated to investigating habitual offenders. Although progress has been made, with a decrease in evasion rates from 3.9% to 3.4%, these numbers underscore the ongoing challenge TfL faces.

Despite the concerted efforts, enforcement appears to be a financial burden, costing approximately £22 million over the past year with only £1.3 million recouped from penalty fares. Critics suggest that public engagements like Jenrick's may distract from the need for professionally trained personnel and appropriately resourced strategies. The Transport Salaried Staffs’ Association has emphasised the importance of relying on effective enforcement rather than grandstanding for social media attention.

Meanwhile, other transport operators are also striving to address fare evasion. For instance, c2c Rail reported a significant increase in revenues recouped from fare dodgers, amounting to nearly £600,000 in just one year, driven by enhanced data-driven strategies and an expanded Revenue Protection team. Comparatively, London’s fare evasion statistics reveal that while fare dodging remains a concern, other cities, such as New York, experience even higher rates of evasion, reported at around 13%.

As these efforts to combat fare dodging unfold, they reflect broader societal issues regarding compliance and public trust in authorities. Jenrick's actions call into question the balance between public accountability and the role of the government in ensuring order on public transport. As TfL and other authorities reinforce their efforts, the dialogue surrounding fare evasion and its implications on society continues to evolve, forcing policymakers to consider not just the revenue lost but the greater impact on community integrity.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cvg9r40p749o)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cvg9r40p749o), [[2]](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-london-67125173), [[6]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cx2945435zyo)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/transport/tfl-transport-london-tube-underground-buses-fare-dodging-enforcement-evasion-b1175002.html), [[4]](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/08/12/tfl-crackdown-fare-dodgers-cost-money-london1/), [[7]](https://tfl.gov.uk/info-for/media/press-releases/2024/march/higher-penalty-fares-on-tfl-services-to-reduce-fare-evasion-and-ensure-consistency-across-transport-networks)
* Paragraph 4 – [[5]](https://www.c2c-online.co.uk/media-centre/latest-news/c2c-recovers-596493-from-fare-evaders-in-record-year/), [[4]](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/08/12/tfl-crackdown-fare-dodgers-cost-money-london1/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[2]](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-london-67125173), [[3]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/transport/tfl-transport-london-tube-underground-buses-fare-dodging-enforcement-evasion-b1175002.html)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cvg9r40p749o)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cvg9r40p749o> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-london-67125173> - In 2022-23, fare dodging cost Transport for London (TfL) £130 million, with evasion rates at 3.9% across buses, trains, and trams. TfL aims to reduce this to below 1.5% and plans to increase penalty fares. The rise from £116 million in 2019 is partly due to improved detection methods. TfL employs approximately 450 revenue inspectors across its network to combat fare evasion.
3. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/transport/tfl-transport-london-tube-underground-buses-fare-dodging-enforcement-evasion-b1175002.html> - Transport for London (TfL) spent nearly £22 million over the past year to tackle fare dodging on the Tube and bus networks, issuing £1.3 million in penalty charges. Despite a slight decrease in fare evasion from 3.9% to 3.8%, the total number of journeys increased by 300 million. TfL emphasizes that the harm caused by fare evaders extends beyond lost revenue, often involving intimidation or abuse towards staff and customers.
4. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/08/12/tfl-crackdown-fare-dodgers-cost-money-london1/> - A crackdown on London Tube and bus fare dodgers cost around 20 times more than it recovered over the past year. Transport for London (TfL) spent nearly £22 million on enforcement, issuing £1.3 million in penalty fares. TfL insists it takes fare evasion 'extremely seriously', stating that the crackdown 'provides an important deterrent to potential fare evaders and helps ensure that around 96 per cent of our customers do pay their fares correctly'.
5. <https://www.c2c-online.co.uk/media-centre/latest-news/c2c-recovers-596493-from-fare-evaders-in-record-year/> - In 2024, c2c Rail recouped a record £596,493 from fare evaders, an 88% increase from 2023. The company expanded its Revenue Protection team and employed data-driven tactics to identify fare evasion. Between January 1 and December 31, 2024, c2c issued over 8,863 penalty fares, up from 3,542 in 2023, with £337,068 collected from these fines.
6. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cx2945435zyo> - Transport for London (TfL) spent nearly £22 million over the past year to tackle fare dodging across the Tube and bus networks, issuing £1.3 million in penalty charges. Despite a slight decrease in fare evasion from 3.9% to 3.8%, the total number of journeys increased by 300 million. TfL emphasizes that the harm caused by fare evaders extends beyond lost revenue, often involving intimidation or abuse towards staff and customers.
7. <https://tfl.gov.uk/info-for/media/press-releases/2024/march/higher-penalty-fares-on-tfl-services-to-reduce-fare-evasion-and-ensure-consistency-across-transport-networks> - Following the Department for Transport's decision to increase the penalty fare to £100 across National Rail, the Mayor approved an increase to the penalty fare on all TfL services from £80 to £100. TfL is committed to tackling fare evasion as revenue from fares is vital for investment in safe, clean, and reliable public transport. During 2023, TfL prosecuted 19,614 people for fare evasion, an increase of 56% on 2022, and investigated 421 people for habitual fare evasion who made more than 50,000 irregular journeys across the Underground network.