# Sadiq Khan overturns TfL ban on abortion decriminalisation ads amid parliamentary vote



In a significant move, London Mayor Sadiq Khan has intervened to reverse a ban imposed by Transport for London (TfL) on advertisements advocating for the decriminalisation of abortion. This decision comes amid a growing debate over women’s reproductive rights and aims to ensure that voices advocating for change are heard. The advertisements in question, placed by the British Pregnancy Advisory Service (Bpas), were designed to rally support ahead of a parliamentary vote on proposed reforms to abortion laws.

Previously, TfL had turned down Bpas’s adverts, which included anonymised accounts of women who faced police investigations following terminations or pregnancy losses. TfL justified its actions by asserting that the adverts might cast the Metropolitan Police in a negative light. This rationale has sparked outrage among advocates for women's rights, who argue that the campaign merely seeks to highlight the urgent need for legal reform rather than disparaging law enforcement. Mayor Khan's office has expressed an expectation for an "urgent review" of this decision, emphasising the necessity of acknowledging women's experiences in shaping abortion policies.

Sadiq Khan’s engagement on this issue reflects broader societal changes regarding abortion, highlighted by the impending parliamentary vote on amendments to the crime and policing bill. These amendments seek to remove women from the purview of criminal law concerning abortion in England and Wales, a shift broadly supported by various organisations, including medical colleges and trade unions. As Heidi Stewart, chief executive of Bpas, remarked, “This campaign was launched in support of Tonia Antoniazzi MP’s amendment... This is a pivotal moment for MPs to reform our abortion law.”

The campaign's urgency is underlined by fears that failing to reform the law could perpetuate harm to women, as indicated by Antoniazzi herself. She labelled the decision to ban the advertisements as “stunned,” arguing that the police should not hold jurisdiction over abortion law. Her proposed amendment aims to ensure that women are protected from potential criminalisation and the trauma associated with police investigations.

This situation also raises questions about the consistency of TfL's advertising policies. In recent times, TfL has faced scrutiny over its decisions regarding controversial adverts. For instance, Khan has been critiqued for allowing advertisements promoting Islamic finance that feature polarising figures, juxtaposed with restrictions placed on other potential advertisements. Critics argue that this inconsistency highlights possible biases within TfL's approach to managing its advertising space, suggesting the need for a more uniform policy.

As the debate over abortion legislation intensifies, Khan's decision to initiate a review represents a critical moment in London's legislative landscape. The mayor appears to be positioning himself firmly as a proponent of women's rights, alongside various advocacy groups striving for societal change. The forthcoming parliamentary vote will likely serve as a pivotal determinant in shaping the future of abortion laws in the UK, making it more pressing than ever for women's stories and voices to be adequately represented in public discourse.

In light of this evolving discussion, it is essential that the London public and policymakers engage thoughtfully with the sensitive nature of these issues, ensuring that real-life impacts resonate throughout legislative reforms.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/jun/02/london-mayor-reverses-tfl-ban-on-ads-abortion-decriminalisation), [[2]](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/jun/02/london-mayor-reverses-tfl-ban-on-ads-abortion-decriminalisation)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/jun/02/london-mayor-reverses-tfl-ban-on-ads-abortion-decriminalisation), [[2]](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/jun/02/london-mayor-reverses-tfl-ban-on-ads-abortion-decriminalisation), [[5]](https://www.gbnews.com/news/london-news-sadiq-khan-tfl-preacher-advert-mayor-abandons-promise-2669402239)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/jun/02/london-mayor-reverses-tfl-ban-on-ads-abortion-decriminalisation), [[3]](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2024/10/10/sadiq-khan-tfl-advert-tube-islamic-preacher-burning-dollar/), [[6]](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-london-21894518)
* Paragraph 4 – [[7]](https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/mayor-in-crackdown-on-body-image-advertisements)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/jun/02/london-mayor-reverses-tfl-ban-on-ads-abortion-decriminalisation> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/jun/02/london-mayor-reverses-tfl-ban-on-ads-abortion-decriminalisation> - The Guardian reports that London Mayor Sadiq Khan has intervened to reverse a ban by Transport for London (TfL) on advertisements from the British Pregnancy Advisory Service (Bpas) advocating for the decriminalisation of abortion. The adverts, approved by the Advertising Standards Authority, featured anonymised stories of women investigated or prosecuted after a termination or pregnancy loss. TfL initially rejected the ads, citing potential negative implications for the police. The mayor is seeking an urgent review of this decision, emphasising the importance of women's voices in the debate over abortion law reform.
3. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2024/10/10/sadiq-khan-tfl-advert-tube-islamic-preacher-burning-dollar/> - The Telegraph reports on criticism faced by London Mayor Sadiq Khan for allowing advertisements featuring Islamic preacher Ismail ibn Musa Menk, known as Mufti Menk, holding a briefcase of burning US dollars. The ads, promoting Islamic finance firm Wahed, have been urged to be reconsidered due to concerns over promoting segregationist and divisive teachings. The decision contrasts with previous TfL bans on other advertisements deemed offensive or promoting unhealthy body images.
4. <https://www.gbnews.com/news/london-news-sadiq-khan-mayor-of-london-action-mufti-menk-wahed-ads-gb-news-tfl-outrage> - GB News reports that London Mayor Sadiq Khan has vowed to take urgent action to assess controversial advertisements across the Transport for London (TfL) network. The ads feature Islamic preacher Ismail ibn Musa Menk and ex-UFC fighter Khabib Nurmagomedov, promoting Islamic finance firm Wahed. Concerns have been raised about the individuals featured in the ads, with calls for TfL to reconsider their suitability.
5. <https://www.gbnews.com/news/london-news-sadiq-khan-tfl-preacher-advert-mayor-abandons-promise-2669402239> - GB News reports that London Mayor Sadiq Khan has been criticised for appearing to abandon his promise to investigate controversial advertisements featuring Islamic preacher Ismail ibn Musa Menk and ex-UFC fighter Khabib Nurmagomedov. Despite initial assurances, no action had been taken on the billboards in question, leading to accusations of inconsistency in TfL's advertising policies.
6. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-london-21894518> - BBC News reports that the High Court ruled Transport for London (TfL) acted lawfully in banning a Christian group's bus advert suggesting gay people could change their sexuality. The court found the advert would 'cause grave offence' to those who were gay. The ruling also addressed the procedural fairness of TfL's decision-making process.
7. <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/mayor-in-crackdown-on-body-image-advertisements> - London City Hall announces that the Mayor of London has taken action to ban advertisements that could pressure individuals to conform to unhealthy or unrealistic body images across the TfL network. The revised TfL advertising policy aims to prevent ads that may cause body confidence issues, particularly among young people, and establishes an Advertising Steering Group to monitor and review TfL's approach to advertising.