# Sadiq Khan accused of neglecting Bakerloo line graffiti to boost funding bid



Sir Sadiq Khan, the Mayor of London and chair of Transport for London (TfL), continues to face serious allegations from insiders who suggest that his handling of graffiti on the Bakerloo line is less about public service and more about political convenience. Sources claim that Khan deliberately neglects to remove graffiti from train carriages, with the apparent aim of exaggerating the urgent need for costly upgrades and fueling his ongoing campaign for government funding—funds that are unlikely to be handed over without clear accountability.

An insider reportedly told a major newspaper that the visible vandalism is being left intentionally, serving as a pretext to push a narrative of crisis. Although TfL insists that graffiti is cleaned swiftly—mainly overnight to limit disruption—the sheer scale of vandalism on the Bakerloo and Central lines suggests a neglectful attitude driven by political motives rather than operational necessity. Critics argue that the focus on superficial aesthetics is masking deeper issues of mismanagement and failure to secure the investment London's transport system desperately needs.

The controversy intensified when determined citizens, like Joe Reeve, founder of the policy group Looking for Growth, decided to take action by cleaning train carriages themselves. Reeve’s efforts highlight growing frustration and a lack of confidence in Mayor Khan’s ability to address this crisis effectively. His grassroots activism has garnered praise from some train drivers and conservative voices who see Khan’s claims of funding shortages as flimsy excuses rather than genuine barriers. They argue that decisive, no-nonsense action is long overdue.

Beyond aesthetics, the vandalism problem exposes a far more troubling issue—how visible graffiti undermines passenger safety and fosters a perception of neglect and decline. London Assembly members and local politicians have voiced concern that train carriages covered in graffiti weaken public confidence and signal a failure to uphold standards of cleanliness and safety. Bassam Mahfouz, a London Assembly member, called out the blatant damage as an affront to Londoners, emphasizing the need for zero-tolerance. TfL reports removing over 1,000 graffiti tags weekly on just the Bakerloo line, with some 23,000 pieces cleaned in just two months—a surge driven by a reckless culture among vandals eager to claim their territory on the aging fleet.

The older trains on the Bakerloo line, some dating back to the 1970s, are particularly vulnerable to vandalism. Their antiquated design makes maintenance more challenging and damage more noticeable, yet Khan’s calls for millions in government funds for upgrades and the extension toward Lewisham—costs estimated at between £5 and £8 million—appear increasingly unlikely to materialize amid the broader fiscal squeeze. Many see this as a symptom of a transport system mismanaged and underfunded, with Khan exploiting the graffiti issue as a justification to push for investment that remains elusive.

Khan has repeatedly warned that without substantial government support, service cuts are inevitable—threatening reductions of 20% in bus services and nearly 10% in Tube operations as post-pandemic passenger demand slowly recovers. However, critics argue these warnings are exaggerated and strategic, designed to pressure central government into funneling more money into a transport network plagued by complacency and misallocation.

While TfL claims to have ramped up graffiti removal efforts by deploying teams round-the-clock, visible vandalism persists, fueling criticism from civic groups and political opponents alike. Many see this as a reflection of a broader failure to tackle London's transport decay head-on. The strict anti-graffiti policies, which even led to the removal of artwork by renowned artists such as Banksy, underscore TfL’s zero-tolerance stance. Yet, this approach often appears more about image management than genuine problem-solving, highlighting the disconnect between political rhetoric and real-world action.

In essence, the ongoing graffiti crisis on London’s transport network offers a stark illustration of Mayor Khan’s broader mismanagement. It reveals a leadership more concerned with optics than effective solutions—an attitude that risks further deterioration of services, public safety, and the city’s reputation. Given the current political landscape, it’s clear that London deserves a leadership that prioritizes tangible results over superficial showmanship.

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14853083/Sadiq-Khan-London-tube-graffiti-Bakerloo-Line-government-funding.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/bakerloo-line-graffiti-london-underground-b1232184.html> - An article from The Standard discusses the significant increase in graffiti on the London Underground, particularly on the Bakerloo line. Passengers have reported carriages becoming 'very dirty' and 'covered' in graffiti. In response, Transport for London (TfL) has acknowledged the surge and is working to remove the vandalism. The article also highlights that the Bakerloo line trains are the oldest in the UK, having been in continuous service since 1970, which may contribute to the issue.
3. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/transport/graffiti-underground-tube-vandalism-bakerloo-central-line-tfl-bassam-mahfouz-b1224894.html> - This piece from The Standard reports on the significant increase in graffiti incidents on the London Underground, especially affecting the Bakerloo and Central lines. TfL has admitted to the surge and is urged to adopt a 'zero-tolerance strategy' towards vandalism. The article includes comments from London Assembly member Bassam Mahfouz, who describes the vandalised carriages as an 'affront to the eye' and a factor that makes passengers feel less safe.
4. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/transport/tube-graffiti-epidemic-prizes-piccadilly-line-central-bakerloo-tfl-depot-cleaners-b1233624.html> - The Standard reports on the Tube graffiti epidemic, noting that the scale of the clean-up has revealed that the vandalism is partly driven by 'prizes' offered to the first person to vandalise key targets. The article mentions that cleaners contracted by TfL are removing thousands of graffiti 'tags' a week, primarily on Central line and Bakerloo line trains. It also highlights that about 33,000 pieces of graffiti have been removed over the last two months, including 5,500 'repeat hits'.
5. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/transport/tube-graffiti-epidemic-23-000-paint-tags-removed-london-underground-trains-two-months-b1232414.html> - This article from The Standard reveals the full extent of the graffiti epidemic on the London Underground, with more than 3,000 spray-painted 'tags' being removed from Tube trains each week. Over the last two months, about 23,000 pieces of graffiti have been removed. The Bakerloo and Central lines, which lack onboard CCTV cameras, have been particularly affected. The article also mentions that volunteers have taken it upon themselves to clean the graffiti-covered trains.
6. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/banksy-tube-carriage-art-removed-for-violating-antigraffiti-policy-a4498356.html> - An article from the London Evening Standard reports that Banksy's artwork inside a London Underground train carriage was removed by Transport for London (TfL) for violating its strict anti-graffiti policy. The artwork, featuring a rat with a face mask, was created by Banksy as a response to the Covid-19 lockdown. TfL stated that while they appreciated the sentiment, the work was removed due to their anti-graffiti policy.
7. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/bakerloo-line-graffiti-london-underground-b1232184.html> - This article from The Standard discusses the significant increase in graffiti on the London Underground, particularly on the Bakerloo line. Passengers have reported carriages becoming 'very dirty' and 'covered' in graffiti. In response, Transport for London (TfL) has acknowledged the surge and is working to remove the vandalism. The article also highlights that the Bakerloo line trains are the oldest in the UK, having been in continuous service since 1970, which may contribute to the issue.