

Sir Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London
City Hall
Kamal Chunchie Way
London E16 1ZE

CC. Seb Dance, Mete Coban, Will Norman

10 June 2026

Re: Progress on diesel vans is going in reverse

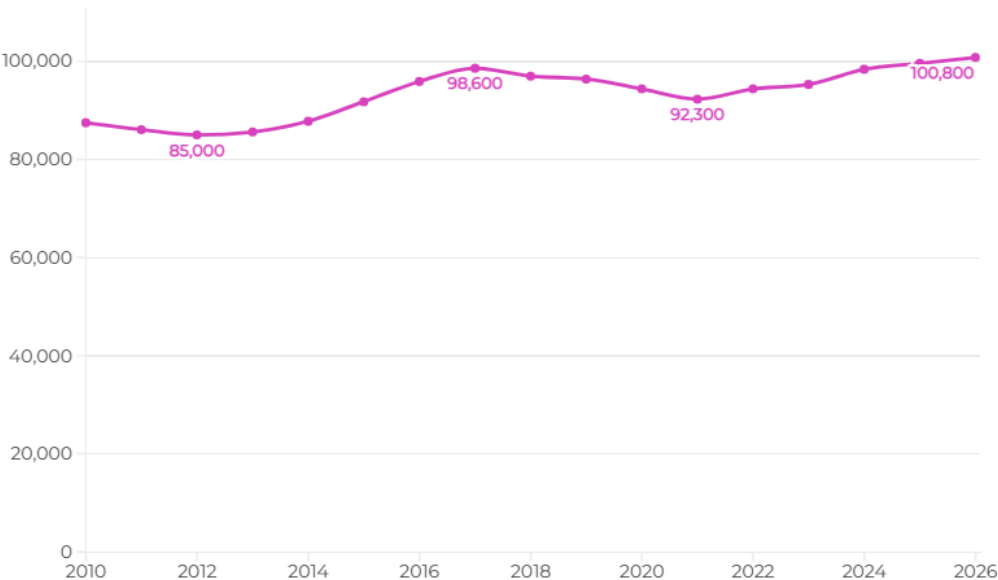
Dear Mayor Khan,

We are writing to express our deep concern that London is falling dangerously behind on cleaning up diesel vans, despite your stated ambitions on air quality, climate action, and health inequalities.

ULEZ was a world-leading policy delivered by your leadership. However, just 2% of diesel vans scrapped under your ULEZ scrappage scheme were replaced with an electric van, despite more than £100 million being spent.

New Department for Transport data shows that there are now **more diesel vans registered by businesses in London than ever before**. For the first time, the number has broken the 100,000 mark, reaching 100,761 diesel vans registered by businesses in London at the end of 2025.

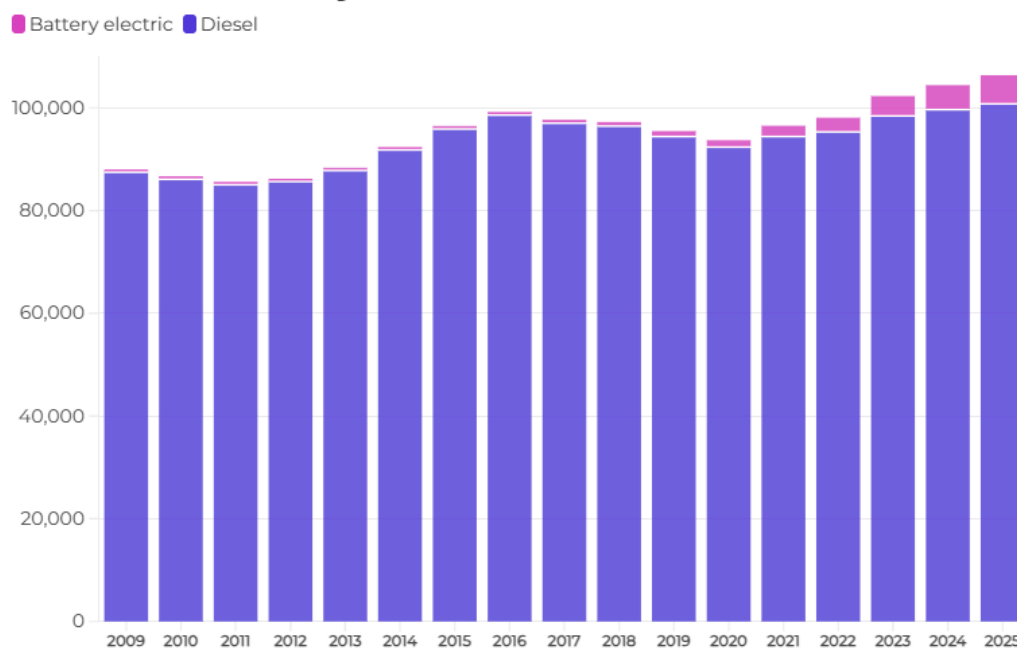
Diesel company vans registered in London have hit the 100k mark for the first time



Source: Department for Transport - Licensed vehicles at the end of the year

At the same time, there were just 5,582 battery-electric vans registered by businesses in London. In other words, for every electric van registered by a business on London's streets, 18 diesel vans are polluting our air.

For every battery electric company van, there are still 18 diesel company vans in London



Source: Department for Transport · Licensed vehicles at the end of the year



This trend is moving in the wrong direction. While the number of diesel cars registered by businesses has fallen sharply from a high of 78,100 in 2015 to a low of 22,400 in 2025, diesel vans continue to dominate London's roads. Clearly, **current policies designed to move us away from diesel vans are not effective.**

The consequences for public health are serious. Vans are now the single biggest transport source of NO_x emissions in central and inner London. These emissions contribute to nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), a toxic gas linked to asthma attacks, lung disease, heart disease, strokes, and thousands of premature deaths. Without action on diesel vans, it's clear we won't reach the World Health Organization's air quality guidelines.

Of course, you're well aware that for Londoners living with asthma and other lung conditions, this is not an abstract policy debate. Families across the city are still breathing polluted air every day, with children, older people, and those with existing respiratory illnesses most at risk.

It does not have to be this way.

The alternatives already exist. Electric vans are increasingly affordable and practical for urban deliveries, while cargo bikes are proving highly effective for last-mile logistics across the city. Businesses that have made the switch are already seeing benefits, including lower running costs, quieter streets, and cleaner neighbourhoods. But we need better policies to drive this transition at the pace required.

Other European cities are showing what ambitious leadership can achieve. In the Netherlands, zero-emission zones for freight are accelerating the transition away from diesel vehicles and giving businesses the certainty needed to invest in cleaner transport. In this model, a date is set after which all newly purchased vans must be electric to enter the zone.

The Dutch model works because it establishes clear, long-term rules and ensures that companies operate on a level playing field. It rewards those businesses of all sizes that have leaned into the transition, and allows cities to set different dates for HGVs and LGVs in line with technological availability, as well as exemptions for those who need them to ensure a just transition. It sends a strong signal that the future of urban freight must be zero-emission.

London now needs the same level of ambition.

We urge you to introduce a clear roadmap towards a Dutch-style zero-emission freight zone in London. Without decisive action, we fear the number of diesel vans will continue to rise, undermining your air quality and climate goals for years to come.

London has led the way before on clean air policy. It can do so again.

Yours sincerely,

Oliver Lord, UK Director and Strategy Lead, Clean Cities

Prof Sir Stephen Holgate, Special Advisor to the Royal College of Physicians on Air Quality

Jemima Hartshorn, Founder and Director, Mums for Lungs

Rosamund Adoo-Kissi-Debrah CBE, Founder, Ella Roberta Foundation

Andrew McCracken, Director of External Affairs, Asthma + Lung UK

Anna Krajinska, UK Director, T&E

Nicola Pastore, Director, Solve the School Run

Alice Roberts, Campaigns Director, CPRE London

Ben Pearce, Head of Health Effects of Air Pollution Programme, Impact on Urban Health

Izzy Romilly, Head of Urban Transformations, Possible

Catherine Kenyon, Head of Clean Air Programmes, Global Action Plan

Tom Fyans, Chief Executive, London Cycling Campaign