

# Getting the timing right

**Making the most of quieter times for deliveries**





## About the Re-timing Deliveries Consortium

Freight industry representatives, retailers and London boroughs have come together to form the Re-timing Deliveries Consortium and change perceptions about the best times to make and receive deliveries during the day and night.

Working within existing regulations, the Consortium is re-timing deliveries to the participating retailers' stores within the member boroughs. This is the first time the challenges, impacts and benefits of re-timing deliveries have been assessed on such a scale. The work is showing what can be achieved when different organisations work in partnership effectively.

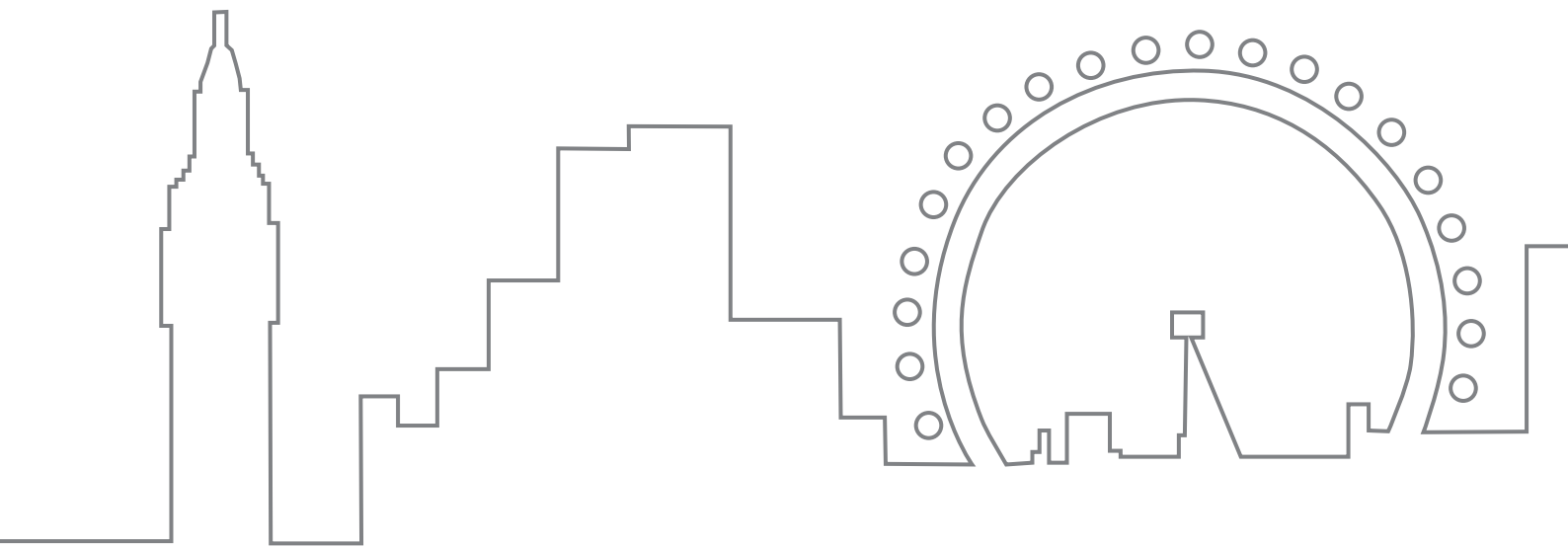




## Contents

<b>Timing it right .....</b>	<b>page 4</b>
<b>Working together to re-time.....</b>	<b>page 6</b>
<b>Local authorities - benefits and considerations....</b>	<b>page 8</b>
<b>Businesses - benefits and considerations.....</b>	<b>page 12</b>
<b>Fleet operators - benefits and considerations.....</b>	<b>page 14</b>
<b>Moving towards re-timing .....</b>	<b>page 18</b>

# Timing it right



It can be pressing, precious, well spent or even wasted. Yet however we choose to use our time, it's undoubtedly a valuable commodity in bustling, modern cities.

In any area with limited road space, congestion is inevitable if everyone travels at the same time. Unsurprisingly, roads in London are busiest between 07:00 and 11:00 on Mondays to Fridays, as the city gears up for the traditional working day.

Goods vehicles account for a quarter of all traffic in the Capital during this peak period. As a result, unpredictable journey times, inaccessible loading bays and missed delivery slots are common concerns for all involved in making and receiving deliveries.

The online shopping revolution has brought a sharp rise in the number of home deliveries and in customers' expectations, meaning that parcels are delivered where and when people want them. And with London's population predicted to reach 10 million by 2030, the challenges of making and receiving deliveries are only likely to become more demanding over coming years.

With this in mind, ensuring that deliveries are completed at the most efficient, convenient and mutually beneficial time is crucial for everyone involved.

This doesn't mean established ways of working are redundant. Nor does it mean that delivering overnight is the only option.

Organisations on both the supply and demand sides of the freight industry are already working together to adapt, and are finding that even small adjustments can deliver major benefits, including time and cost savings.

With only so many hours in the day to get things done, avoiding the busiest times for deliveries can lead to other benefits: for example, staff can concentrate on offering a better service to customers rather than receiving deliveries.

Streets are also safer, as goods vehicles and vulnerable road users are less likely to travel at similar times, while reduced congestion will help to improve air quality.



## About this guidance

This guide aims to help local authorities, businesses and fleet operators make the most of the opportunities that re-timing deliveries can offer, outlining the benefits and key issues to consider when planning deliveries.

Drawing on the Re-timing Deliveries Consortium's experience, the advice offered is largely based on lessons learnt in the retail sector. Although each organisation is different, most of the principles should be equally relevant to other sectors and can be adapted to suit your specific circumstances.

It won't always be feasible to make deliveries earlier or later and, where re-timing is an option, there are sometimes challenges in doing so: vehicle noise can be more disruptive when there is less traffic on the roads, for example. However, these issues are by no means insurmountable and the guidance outlines how common concerns can be tackled by working together.

# Working together to re-time

The issues that affect re-timing options vary depending on the type of delivery and the site involved. To get the timing right, it's essential to ensure the right people are involved in the process from the outset.

Early, candid conversations help everyone to understand each other's priorities and the mutual benefits of getting the timing right. Solutions can then be developed to meet everyone's objectives and issues can be ironed out as they arise.

The road to re-timing process map below shows the importance of bringing stakeholders together early, while the table to the right explains who needs to be involved.

The following sections outline the benefits of re-timing to each party and the main points to bear in mind.



## The road to re-timing

### Key stakeholder meeting ▶ Site assessment ▶ Action plan ▶ Re-time ▶ Review and revise

Hold initial discussion between local authority, business and fleet operator

Identify potential sites

Commit to ongoing involvement

Ensure other parties are kept up-to-date with progress

Visit site and area to identify operational or local access constraints

Commission independent assessment, if required

Evaluate business case and confirm feasibility

Confirm delivery adjustments, including:

- Revised timings and supply chain operations
- Access or traffic order changes
- Site, technology or equipment changes

Inform staff, residents and customers

Define monitoring plan

Agree implementation criteria (eg six month pilot)

Confirm start date

Start new approach

Monitor benefits and issues for business and local area

Record results

Analyse impacts on all stakeholders


















Consider refining practices, if necessary

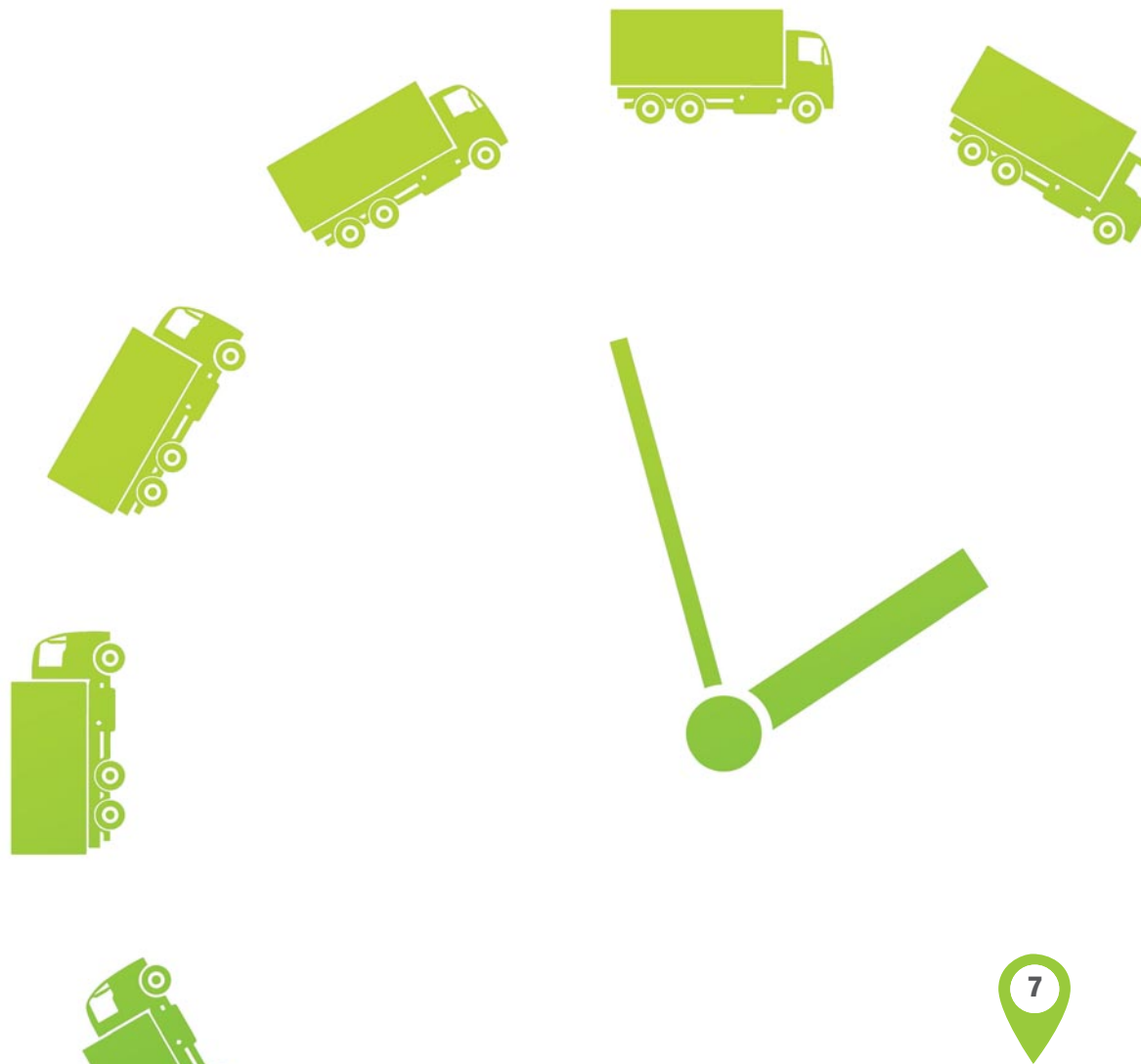
Agree criteria for longer-term changes

If unsuccessful: use lessons and consider other sites

• Embed into business-as-usual practices •

**The main parties and their key contributions are:**

Contribution	Local authorities	Businesses	Fleet operators
Identify opportunities to re-time deliveries			
Provide area and site-specific information			
Provide routing, scheduling and delivery information			
Represent interests of local residents			
Review traffic orders and other restrictions			
Review current and potential operations			
Contribute to re-timing action plans			
Implement changes to enable deliveries to be re-timed			
Develop business case			
Influence local transport strategy to encourage re-timed deliveries			



# Local authorities

Local authorities play a vital role in encouraging deliveries at different times.

As well as supporting the local economy by helping businesses to operate more efficiently, borough officers are ideally placed to make sure that any changes are introduced without adversely affecting residents.

Providing that deliveries are completed quietly, spreading them more evenly throughout the day ensures a better environment for businesses, residents and visitors to the area. Other benefits include:

- ▶ Safer streets, with less risk of collisions between goods vehicles and vulnerable road users
- ▶ Reduced congestion and more efficient use of on-street loading facilities
- ▶ Air quality improvements, as traffic moves around the area more easily

## Considerations

Planning and development control, traffic, and environmental health teams all play an essential part in the re-timing of deliveries. Working together helps ensure the benefits of re-timing activity are realised, sustained and developed in the future.

The icons below indicate which considerations are most relevant to which teams:

 **Planning and development control**

 **Traffic and highways**

 **Environmental health**

## Identify re-timing opportunities



### Focus on individual businesses

Do any businesses have a lot of local sites? If so, re-timing deliveries to all of these sites could make a real difference locally

### Focus on an area

Are there any local areas which include lots of delivery sites? If so, work with all these businesses to spread deliveries more evenly

## Use existing information



Sourcing the right information helps you assess the pros and cons of a re-timing proposal and suggest tailored measures to improve it. For example, it's useful to understand:

- Noise levels in the area
- Local traffic flows, congestion and air quality
- Plans for the area (for example, a potential increase in residential properties)
- The resources of the business proposing to make the delivery





## Delivery note: engaging residents

Complaints may be made against re-timed deliveries because they represent a change in routine. The Re-timing Deliveries Consortium found that completing an independent assessment through a third party organisation, such as the Noise Abatement Society (NAS), is an effective way of finding out the nature of an issue. The Consortium adopted the following approach for engaging with residents:

- 1) Senior local authority officials were briefed about the proposed change and decided whether to inform elected members on a case-by-case basis
- 2) When elected members needed to be aware, a briefing note was circulated to pre-empt likely questions. The re-timing activity then started
- 3) Any complaints from residents were made either directly to the local authority or the on-site store manager. While the complaints were investigated, posters advertising the NAS's 24-hour helpline for noise disturbance were displayed on-site
- 4) If the complaints continued, they were independently investigated by the NAS. A working group of local authority officers, NAS, retailers and operators was set up to analyse and ease the potential cause(s) of the disturbance

### Improving air quality



### Record the results



- Tracking the success of re-timed deliveries (and any related planning restrictions and complaints) across your borough, helps you understand the likely impacts of future proposals and make faster, more informed decisions
- Gathering evidence of the benefits of re-timed deliveries encourages more businesses to adopt best practice and reassures residents that their interests are being protected
- This evidence base also allows you to build a profile of re-timing activity in an area, which helps you assess (and predict) the likely impact of any re-timing proposals

### Representing residents' interests

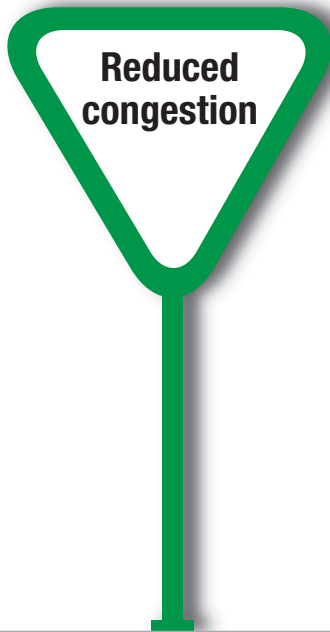


- Balance the benefits of re-timing deliveries, including reduced congestion and air quality improvements, with potential impacts for residents, such as increased noise at otherwise quieter times
- Decide who needs to be aware of re-timed deliveries and the best ways of informing them. Remember, re-timing largely goes unnoticed when it's done well, though the scale and nature of the changes are likely to decide the level of engagement needed locally
- If you receive complaints about re-timed deliveries, try to understand why the problem arose and how it could be avoided. Before rescinding permission for deliveries at different times, work with the retailer and operator to resolve the issue

### Enforcement as a last resort



- Two-year enforcement restrictions affect future re-timing options. As business activities at specific sites may change in this time, explore all other options first
- Imposing restrictions on large goods vehicles could create congestion, as smaller vehicles may need to make more journeys to deliver the same amount



### Considerations

#### Existing premises



- As businesses and site uses change, historic planning conditions and restrictions may no longer apply
- Investigate existing conditions and restrictions, and update them if necessary

#### Planning applications and new developments



- Getting the infrastructure for deliveries right from the outset can save the time and money needed to adapt existing sites later on
- Review the design of the delivery point in any proposed new development to ensure deliveries can be made at any time – for example, could loading areas be enclosed or sound-proofed to reduce noise?
- The growth of online shopping means people are receiving more home deliveries. The inclusion of a secure delivery point within new residential developments is just as important as at business premises
- Work with the developer and businesses to identify appropriate times for deliveries, rather than enforcing restrictions



## Delivery note: traffic management orders

The Re-timing Deliveries Consortium's progress has been helped by reviews of traffic management orders in the relevant boroughs. Changes that have been tested include:

- 1) Extending the length of delivery bays
- 2) Lowering kerbs to let larger vehicles make fewer deliveries
- 3) Reconsidering single and double yellow lines
- 4) Amending delivery restrictions from 20 to 40 or even 60 minutes
- 5) Changing loading only restrictions from 10:00–16:00 to 19:00–23:00

## Delivery note: review planning conditions

Out-dated planning conditions may restrict delivery timing options. The Re-timing Deliveries Consortium is reviewing planning conditions dating from the 1950s to assess whether the restrictions still apply.

## Traffic management orders



- Review traffic orders to allow deliveries to be more efficient
- Assess whether changing current loading restrictions could encourage re-timing
- Minor changes, such as altering a loading bay's hours of operation, can be piloted before decisions are made about any longer-term changes
- Testing approaches in this way avoids the need for expensive infrastructure changes and means future improvements can be made more easily



# Businesses

Ensuring that deliveries arrive at the right time for your business saves time and money. Work with suppliers and local authorities to identify more efficient ways of working and reap the benefits, such as:

- ▶ **More cost-effective deliveries, at a time to suit you**
- ▶ **More reliable delivery patterns, as journeys are less likely to be delayed by congestion, enabling you to plan the working day more effectively**
- ▶ **A better experience for your customers if products are always available when they want them, premises are clear of delivery equipment and staff have more time to focus on offering a good service**
- ▶ **Being a better neighbour and enhancing your corporate social responsibility by reducing the number of vehicles delivering to your site**

## Considerations

### Building the business case

- Re-timing deliveries can save money, but some investment might be needed at first to make it work. Ensure the business case adds up and look at what could be adapted to improve your return
- Consider how re-timing could enhance your business, such as ensuring stock is available when you need it, or delivering outstanding customer service
- If your organisation runs its own fleet of vehicles, could moving to different delivery times help you avoid Penalty Charge Notices at particular sites?

### Share information

- Discussing your plans early helps borough officers and suppliers to understand your needs and explore options that work for everyone
- By recognising the local authority's perspective, you can work towards building its confidence in your operational capability. Sharing your policy documents to show how you will work (including your processes, equipment and training) could help address concerns

### Finding suitable sites

- Work with the local authority to identify mutually beneficial locations to re-time deliveries

### Assessing existing sites

- Do a site assessment to improve your understanding of the immediate environment and identify potential challenges
- Check whether any planning, loading or noise restrictions apply
- Review space and storage requirements which may affect the suitability of deliveries at alternative times

## Delivery note: Environmental Health Officer (EHO) notices

EHOs have a duty to investigate noise disturbances. If problems are found, EHOs can issue:

- 1) A warning – a notice of intended action if the situation continues
- 2) Notice or order prohibiting activity

By involving EHOs early, the Re-timing Deliveries Consortium members found they could create a good working relationship with the officer and reduce the risk of prohibitive enforcement.

Learning the reasons why previous EHO notices were issued can help ensure that future re-timing activity is more likely to be received positively.

## Delivery note: the right sites

The Re-timing Deliveries Consortium is achieving a step change in re-timing activity by delivering at different times to the member retailers' outlets within the participating boroughs, maximising the benefits for everyone.



### New sites

- When identifying new sites, find out as early as possible the best time to receive deliveries
- Plan the design of the delivery point carefully to boost your options for delivery times and the vehicle sizes that can be accommodated

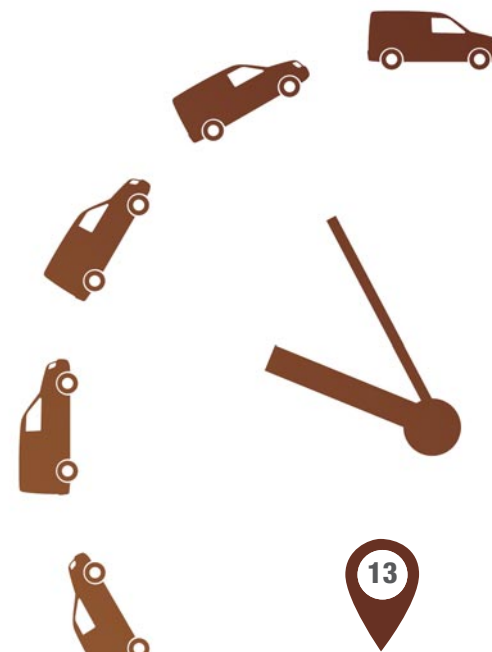
### Supply chain

- If you operate on a business-to-business basis, work with your customers and suppliers to ensure any changes in delivery times allow for onward despatch

### Staffing

- Assess whether enough staff will be available when you want to make and receive deliveries
- Having staff available to receive deliveries when the business is otherwise closed may be more productive and minimise disruption for customers
- Decide whether staff roles can be expanded to improve efficiency – for example, could security personnel receive deliveries outside of business hours?
- Think about the implications of any changes for staff (eg impacts on their contracted hours and/or their safe travel to and from work) and ensure they are aware of, and happy with, the plans

- Ensure site staff understand the importance of quiet practices, such as not slamming doors and not talking loudly outside delivery points
- Consider whether anyone actually needs to be there to accept the delivery. If you have access to a secure location, goods can be left there and processed at a more convenient time



# Fleet operators

Work with your customers and relevant local authorities to complete deliveries at different times, and make the most of benefits such as:

- ▶ **Fewer Penalty Charge Notices and related administration costs, by delivering at times when restrictions do not apply**
- ▶ **Fuel savings, by avoiding congested areas at peak times**
- ▶ **More efficient usage of your fleet, by completing more journeys in the same time frame**
- ▶ **Better customer service, through improved delivery and journey time reliability**
- ▶ **Safer journeys – vehicles travelling at quieter times are less likely to be involved in an incident with vulnerable road users**
- ▶ **Enhanced corporate social responsibility, through fewer harmful emissions from your vehicles**
- ▶ **Less congested – and less stressful – journeys for drivers**

## Considerations

### Analyse delivery options

- Understanding the parameters of a delivery is crucial to assess the potential for re-timing. Identify the pre-requisites for deliveries – and which elements could be adapted – to become more efficient

### Coordinate the conversation

- As a service provider in a competitive market, you need to provide a high level of customer service
- Your understanding of both delivery point and road challenges, including local congestion, makes you ideally placed to coordinate conversations between your customers and local authorities
- Clearly explain why you need to change delivery times and the benefits it will bring to all
- If a customer places an order with you for delivery at a busy time of day (for example, before 10:00), discuss the need for that specific time and explain the benefits of alternatives
- Including the relevant local authority's EHO in the discussion should make it easier to resolve any issues

### Location

- Work with your customers to decide if their sites are suitable for re-timed deliveries and ask if anyone else delivers at other times
- Analyse journey times to identify potential sites – this helps you understand the benefits of re-timing certain deliveries and supports your business case
- Identify times to avoid – for example, if there is a school nearby, try not to deliver at the start or end of the school day

### **Delivery note: productivity improvements**

It's a common misconception that restrictions on overnight deliveries were suspended during the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Even though the restrictions remained in effect, one business improved delivery productivity in London during this period, by making 30 per cent of its deliveries between 22:00 and 04:00.

### **Delivery note: bring out the benefits**

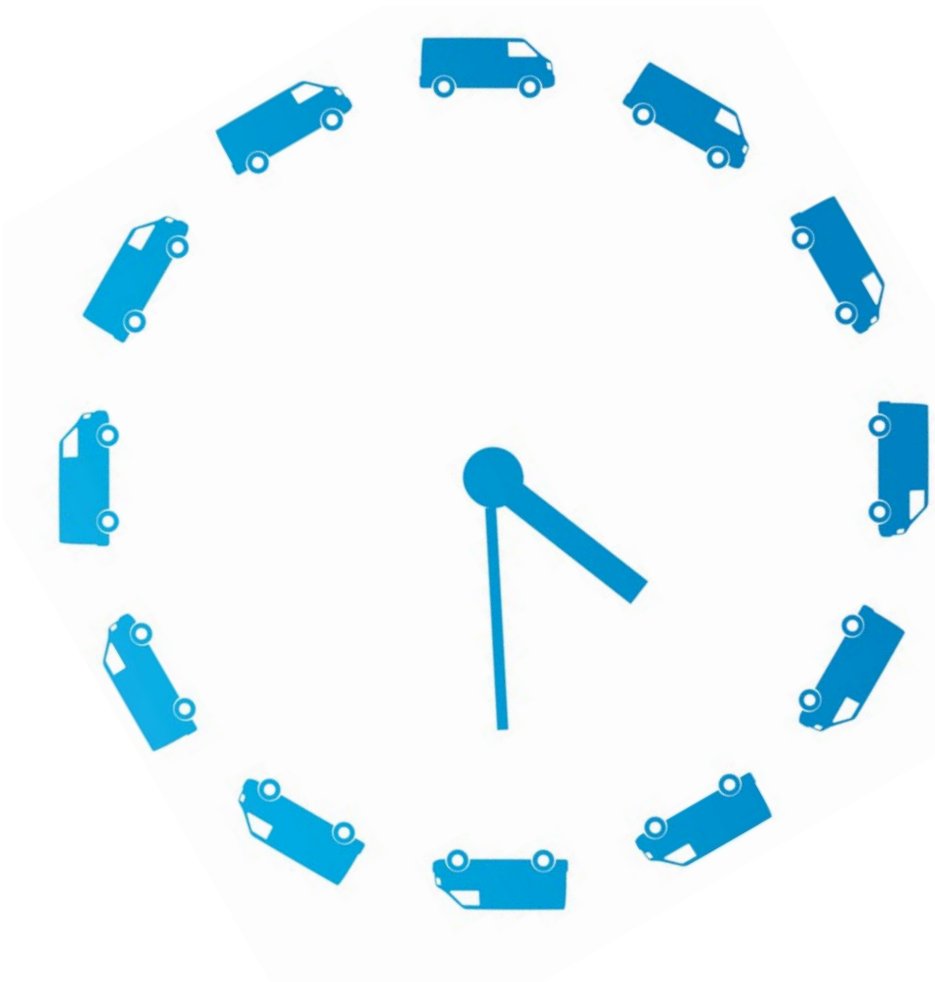
The Department for Transport's Quiet Deliveries Demonstration Scheme suggested that fleet operators often do not feel comfortable negotiating the delivery times with their clients.

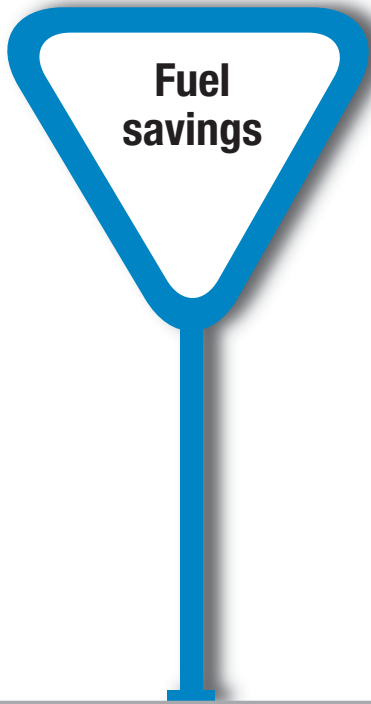
However, operators have a key role to play in bringing their customers and local authorities together; focusing on the benefits to all can help engage the different parties in the discussion.



### **Customer requirements**

- Your customers may not appreciate the issues which affect your operation – work together to develop solutions that benefit you both
- Save time and money by getting things right with new customers from the outset, instead of making changes later
- Find out whether the client needs deliveries at a certain time of day, and why (for example, staff shift patterns), so you can suggest alternatives
- Propose different approaches to resolve these issues – for example, if the customer has a secure storage area, could the delivery be left there and processed later at a more convenient time?





### Delivery note: London Lorry Control Scheme (LLCS)

- 1) London Councils operates the LLCS, to control the movement of HGVs exceeding 18 tonnes in weight at night and at weekends, and minimise noise disruption to residents
- 2) The scheme is not a lorry ban and restrictions do not apply to delivery points, but it does control vehicle movements to prioritise a core network of roads at these times
- 3) If you need to drive an HGV on a restricted road while the scheme is operational, you can apply for a free permit to do so
- 4) Find out more from the London Councils website – [www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/services](http://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/services)

### Local regulatory frameworks

- Local authority officers can help you understand their regulatory frameworks and how they affect your operation. This makes it easier to identify times when you're less likely to be affected by multiple regulations



### **Delivery note: regulations do not need to be restrictive**

The Re-timing Deliveries Consortium has found that on-street regulations don't need to be viewed negatively. They can help reduce the risk of operators falling foul of restrictions by encouraging delivery and servicing activity when the regulations don't apply.

### **Delivery note: chain reaction**

Re-timing Delivery Consortium members continue to work with representatives from both their inbound and outbound supply chains. This ensures an understanding of delivery capacity throughout a 24-hour period, seven days a week.

#### **Supply chain**

- Think about the impacts of any delivery time changes on your supply chain – for example, will you need to change the times of your deliveries into your distribution depot, to meet the new timings that goods will need to leave?

#### **Staff training and information**

- Before delivery timings change, ensure drivers and delivery staff understand what is expected of them
- Assess each site to make sure drivers fully understand the requirements for each individual delivery

#### **Equipment**

- Investing in quieter equipment, such as roll cages or vehicle technology makes re-timing easier
- Make sure the vehicles used are appropriate for the site and the deliveries; consider safer, cleaner, more efficient vehicles when renewing your fleet



# Moving towards re-timing

This guidance will help you get started on the road to re-timing.

For further support, Transport for London (TfL) offers a 'matchmaking' service for businesses and boroughs to nominate sites that would benefit from different delivery times.

As part of the service, TfL will:

- Assist in ensuring all stakeholders are willing to participate
  - Work with you to develop an action plan
  - Maintain contact with all parties to help implement the plan
- Provide support to help work through any issues that arise once deliveries are being made at the new time

Email [freight@tfl.gov.uk](mailto:freight@tfl.gov.uk) to find out more and register your interest in the service.

## Further information

**London Councils** – operator of the London Lorry Control Scheme (LLCS)  
[www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/services](http://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/services)

**Noise Abatement Society**  
[www.noiseabatementociety.com](http://www.noiseabatementociety.com)

**Department for Transport** – Quiet Deliveries Demonstration Scheme  
[www.gov.uk/government/publications/quiet-deliveries-demonstration-scheme](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/quiet-deliveries-demonstration-scheme)

**TfL** – re-timing information and guidance on operating restrictions  
[www.tfl.gov.uk/info-for/freight/moving-freight-efficiently](http://www.tfl.gov.uk/info-for/freight/moving-freight-efficiently)

