



JUST EAT
Takeaway.com

How algorithms support couriers: ***a transparency report 2026***





Introduction

Just Eat Takeaway.com operates across multiple markets, connecting millions of customers with restaurants and stores, and the couriers who deliver their orders.

Couriers can be engaged with our platform in different ways, and the specific terms of that engagement vary across the markets we operate in. This report focuses on the broader picture: how algorithmic tools support couriers throughout their journey, from onboarding through to delivery, pay, and account decisions. It has been written from the perspective of the self-employed courier. Where relevant, each section also briefly notes how certain tools or systems apply to couriers that are directly engaged and couriers working with third-party delivery providers.

Technology plays an increasingly central role in how platforms like ours operate, and we hold ourselves to a clear standard: **being open about how our algorithmic tools and models work**. This report sets out that approach across the full courier journey. While we operate across a wide range of working arrangements, we focus here on the big-picture overview of our algorithms across models and on the systems that matter most to couriers in their day-to-day experience.

What is an algorithm?

An algorithm is a set of rules that tells a computer how to process information and reach a decision or recommendation. We use these systems daily; for example, a GPS processes location, traffic data, and destination to suggest the best route for a trip.

Our commitment to human oversight

At Just Eat Takeaway.com, algorithms are tools that support our operations and our couriers. They handle complexity at speed and provide useful information, while people remain responsible for judgment and accountability. Automated systems that operate on their own are designed so that couriers keep the ability to decline or choose differently. And for any decision that materially affects a courier's access to work, their income, or their standing on the platform, a human reviews it before it takes effect.

Just Eat Takeaway.com's position is straightforward: algorithms support, people decide. It is a choice by design, and it runs through every stage of our courier journey.



The app's practicality and the support chat are very helpful to a large number of couriers on a daily basis.

JET Engagement Survey, Courier #1098



PART #1
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1 **Joining the platform:** **registration & getting started**

Getting started on our platform is simple and quick, giving every prospective courier a clear path to their first delivery. Before anyone can deliver, we need to know who they are – legislation requires it, and so do we. This section explains how that process works.

Before a courier is onboarded, a series of checks confirm their identity, their legal right to work, and, in some markets, their background. Documents are reviewed, data is cross-referenced, and insurance is validated. Our systems process this information, but every application is reviewed by a human agent who holds responsibility for the outcome, including any decision to decline. We are developing automated tools that will give agents faster information and suggestions during the review process; as these tools evolve, a rejection will remain a human decision.

Our biometric checks include: a one-time photo match between a courier's selfie and their identity document. The system handles this accurately in the vast majority of cases, and where it doesn't, the cause is almost always image quality: poor lighting, a shaky camera, or not facing the lens directly. If a courier photo doesn't match after three attempts, their account is temporarily put on hold, pending a human review. They also receive an immediate notification with the option to appeal. A human agent then reviews the photos and, in the vast majority of cases, reinstates the account with guidance on how to retake the photo successfully.

Biometric verification serves a single purpose: confirming identity at onboarding, in line with legal requirements. It is used only for that one-time check. Our checks and decisions rest on identity, right to work, and insurance. Where implemented, biometric verification is conducted with the courier's consent and in line with applicable data protection laws. Personal characteristics, such as ethnicity, gender, religion, or age, play no part in them. And any unresolved automated flag is always reviewed by a person before it can affect an applicant.

MODEL DIFFERENCES

The registration and onboarding process differ across models. Couriers who are directly engaged go through a process that includes interviews and a recruiter-led document review. For couriers working through a third-party delivery provider, registration and onboarding are managed by the fleet operator, but mandatory checks in line with local regulation are in place.





2 **Getting to work:** *order assignment & scheduling*

Two systems **shape a courier's working day more than any other**: one forecasts demand and shapes availability, and the other matches, within seconds, which courier is offered which order.

Before any courier picks up their first order of the day, significant work has already taken place behind the scenes. Our demand forecasting tools analyse historical order data, seasonal patterns, local events, and real-time signals to predict how many couriers will be needed, in which areas, and at what times.

That forecasting shapes which slots are available in a given area, and couriers decide whether to take them. Some markets also give couriers flexibility over their own working windows, from choosing their own within the parameters set by demand to a more open model where the network stays open for most of the day, allowing couriers to join and start delivering without planning ahead.

The system **creates the opportunity**; the courier decides whether to take it.

When an order comes in, the assignment system has seconds to act. Every few seconds, it scans pending orders and available couriers in a given area and matches them based on proximity, estimated travel time, current workload, and route efficiency – the operational factors that make for an efficient delivery. **Deliveries are offered to one courier at a time and stay open for 60 seconds. Accepting is always a choice: if a courier declines or lets the window pass, the order simply moves to the next best match.**

The rules that govern how this matching system works – what factors it weighs, how it balances competing priorities – are configured by human operations teams. Human oversight ensures rules are regularly reviewed and adjusted to reflect operational realities.

MODEL DIFFERENCES

For couriers who are directly engaged, the forecast feeds into shift-planning tools that generate and assign work schedules. Assignment is built around the availability preferences each courier submitted. Human planning teams review and adjust these outputs before any shifts are finalised and communicated to couriers. It is a structured process, consistent with the obligations of an employment relationship and national labour legislation. In the case of third-party delivery providers, the employer is responsible for the scheduling process.





3 **Ensuring we deliver:** ***agreed service levels & human support***

When a courier chooses to accept an order, they agree to complete that specific delivery to the service levels set out in their contract. These relate only to the delivery itself: collecting the order within the expected window, delivering it to the customer on time, and completing the delivery once accepted. These standards are agreed with the courier in advance and are what our customers and restaurant partners have come to expect. **They define the result, not how, when, or on what terms the courier works.**

The system looks only at the delivery process itself, from the moment a courier accepts an offer to the moment the order is delivered. Everything outside that window – number of completed deliveries, accepted or declined offers, etc – is entirely their own choice. How the delivery is carried out is equally up to the courier: the courier app does not direct couriers along any particular route. Couriers choose their own way to the partner and to the customer, using whatever navigation aid and means of transport they prefer, and can adapt it at any time for safety or personal reasons. Location data is collected only while the courier is on a run and the app is active, and stops the moment the run ends. Couriers can see the statistics for their own deliveries through weekly summaries, and we are improving the app so they can access this information in real time.

The vast majority of deliveries meet the agreed service levels without any issue. The algorithm identifies a pattern only where the agreed service levels have not been met across multiple deliveries, not because of a single incident.

The system is built to recognise genuine, recurring patterns such as cases where agreed service levels are repeatedly not met, while filtering out the ordinary ups and downs of urban delivery, like traffic, weather, and restaurant delays. **It takes a sustained pattern across multiple deliveries, rather than any single delivery or piece of feedback, for a case to reach human review.**

When a persistent pattern is escalated for a human-led review, the agent reviews the relevant data and orders before any communication is sent to the courier. Every courier whose account is affected has the right to appeal, and this process is handled by a different human agent from the one who made the original decision. Our process is built to ensure every courier keeps the right to be heard before any account decision is final.



JET's app is easy to use and offers flexible shifts and timings. It also displays the distance required to travel for each order, which is very helpful.

JET Engagement Survey, Courier #10754

MODEL DIFFERENCES

Couriers that are directly engaged are supported through structured performance monitoring and feedback processes as part of their employment relationship, governed by employment law and collective agreements. In the case of third-party delivery providers, the employer of the courier is responsible for performance or quality of service monitoring.





4 Courier earnings: **pay & incentives**

For couriers, offer pay per delivery is made up of transit pay, paid for every delivery, and incentives. Transit pay consists of a base pay and pay related to the specific task.

Each delivery is priced based on its estimated complexity, using time and distance as inputs: the journey from the courier to the partner and from the partner to the customer. Where a delivery is more complex than the base pay covers, an automated system calculates additional compensation using these same inputs.

The pricing depends on the delivery, not the courier. If two couriers were standing next to each other and an order came in for the same partner, the same customer, under the same conditions, they would receive identical offers, regardless of which courier fulfills the delivery.

Markets use locally applicable statutory pay benchmarks as a reference when reviewing pay, and any change is made deliberately by people. Human teams assess whether these base pay rates should be adjusted, informed by data analysis of delivery time, distance, season, demand, and local conditions.

In some markets, additional compensation may also be included to reflect the difficulty of a particular delivery. Factors such as the number of items, partner and customer location, the time of day, the day of the week, and weather conditions are used to recognise when a delivery requires extra effort.

Other incentives are added on top of the transit pay when demand is high or conditions in a particular area require more couriers, allowing supply to adjust to changing demand. Algorithms assess where and when premiums are needed and set their amount using real-time data. The full offer, including **premiums**, reflects real-time network conditions and is shown before acceptance.

Tips are also shown from the outset and passed on to the courier. Additional reimbursements may apply when a delivery requires extra time or distance, such as returning an order to a partner because the customer is unavailable. **Automated tools flag these specific situations using the relevant delivery details, while human agents oversee exceptions and review cases where an adjustment may be required.**



The application is easy to read, customer service is fast, and payments are made on time.

JET Engagement Survey, Courier #11068



MODEL DIFFERENCES

Couriers who are directly engaged through JET receive an hourly wage set by their employment contract. Algorithmic tools play no role in determining their base pay. In the case of third-party delivery providers, the employer is responsible for the payment of the courier whilst JET performs due-diligence checks and controls to ensure third-party delivery providers are compliant with applicable rules and regulations.





5 **When things go wrong:** **fraud prevention & compliance**

Any large platform operating at scale faces a range of threats: fake accounts, GPS manipulation, shift-claiming bots and orders falsely marked as delivered. Our automated detection tools are essential for spotting these patterns, since no human team could manually monitor the hundreds of thousands of orders our markets handle each year. These tools look for anomalies and unusual patterns; they do not make judgments about individual couriers.

When a fraud detection system flags an account or a transaction, it generates an alert for the human operations security team. Every flagged case is investigated by a human.

If a courier believes an action on their account is wrong (whether related to a fraud flag, a payment dispute, or any other operational matter), they can raise it directly through our support channel. Our support system routes common queries quickly through an automated assistant, and couriers can always escalate to a live human agent.

PART #2
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Delivering high standards: 5 things to know about how our algorithmic systems work

The debate around algorithms and platform work is important, but many of the concerns raised do not reflect how Just Eat Takeaway.com operates. Below, we address five of the concerns we hear most often, directly and specifically against our own systems.

1

No tracking after the run ends

THE CLAIM

GPS tracking, constant monitoring, and algorithmic penalties for route deviations mean couriers are under continuous surveillance. Some platforms go as far as using facial recognition to monitor workers during their shifts.

HOW WE OPERATE

Location data is collected only while a self-employed courier is doing a run and the app is active. Tracking stops the moment the run ends. Data is used for routing, delivery coordination, and order matching, not for individual surveillance. Identity verification is a one-time check at onboarding to confirm identity, in line with national regulations. It plays no role in how orders are assigned, how service quality is assessed, or how pay is calculated.



Tracking helps us deliver.
*When couriers clock out,
the tracking turns off*

Algorithms flag, but humans decide

THE CLAIM

Automated systems can deactivate workers – ending their access to income – without human review, explanation, or a meaningful path to appeal.

HOW WE OPERATE

No system at Just Eat Takeaway.com automatically deactivates a courier. Fraud detection and compliance tools identify recurring anomalies and generate alerts, but those alerts go to human operations teams who investigate and make informed decisions. Every deactivation decision is made by a person, with accountability, and a courier who believes a decision is wrong has the right to appeal. Our process ensures that the appeal is reviewed by a different human agent from the one who made the original decision and is resolved within a defined timeframe. Every courier has the opportunity to be heard



Algorithms flag. Humans decide.

Courier safety is our priority

THE CLAIM

Speed-optimisation algorithms and aggressive delivery time targets push couriers to ride dangerously, contributing to higher accident rates across the sector.

HOW WE OPERATE

Our delivery time estimates are calibrated for urban delivery. Our tools account for traffic patterns, parking, and transit and are not designed to require or reward speeding. We reward self-employed couriers through incentive programmes for being available and completing deliveries in high-demand areas, not for going faster. When the system monitors service quality, it applies layered thresholds designed to filter out the ordinary unpredictability of urban delivery – traffic, weather, restaurant delays – so that a single late arrival or isolated incident never flags a courier. Couriers are also free to decline any order, take a break at any point, and log off entirely without penalty.



Our systems are built around getting the delivery done in time, not getting it done faster.

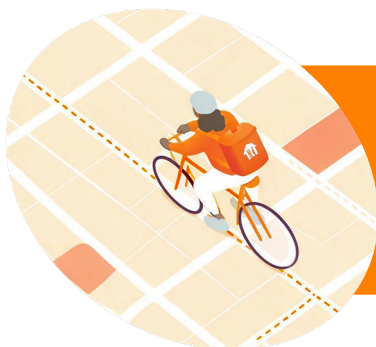
Zero tolerance for discrimination

THE CLAIM

Algorithms trained on historical data can replicate, and sometimes amplify, existing inequalities. Facial recognition can perform less accurately for some groups, and customer rating systems have been found to embed bias that can then trigger automated sanctions against workers.

HOW WE OPERATE

Assignment decisions at Just Eat Takeaway.com are based on proximity, availability, and route efficiency – not on any characteristic ascribed to the courier. Our day-to-day operational systems work from an anonymised courier ID number and location rather than personal characteristics, and protected class attributes play no role in how orders are matched, how runs are constructed, or how pay is calculated. Our technical teams apply specific design controls to reduce bias risk: some of our systems deliberately avoid using individual courier history in their calculations, relying instead on zone-level patterns. Fairness is reviewed regularly as part of our algorithmic governance. And customer ratings do not automatically trigger sanctions at Just Eat Takeaway.com – where feedback is collected, it is reviewed by humans as part of a broader quality picture, not converted into automated penalties.



Location and availability.
That's how our system matches couriers to orders

Equal and transparent pay

THE CLAIM

Personalised dynamic pricing means that couriers doing the same work receive different pay – a form of pay discrimination. Concerns have also been raised about systematic non-payment for specific situations like travel between orders.

HOW WE OPERATE

Pay is not personalised. If two couriers were standing next to each other, and an order comes in for the same partner, the same customer, under the same conditions, the offer they receive is identical regardless of which courier receives it. The full amount is always visible before the courier accepts. In most markets, where a courier waits at a partner beyond a market-specific threshold, or where a delivery requires extra distance through no fault of the courier — such as returning an order because the customer is unavailable — additional reimbursements apply. Automated tools flag these situations, but it is a human agent who reviews and approves the reimbursement. Incentives may be added on top of transit pay when demand is high, or a particular area needs more courier capacity. These are based on real-time network conditions, not on the courier's identity or performance.



***Pay is consistent,
transparent, and visible***



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Thank you.

