

Date: 1 November 2017

Item: London Underground Station Action Plan

This paper will be considered in public

1 Summary

1.1 This paper updates the Panel on the delivery of London Underground's (LU) Action Plan, which was developed to address the issues raised by London TravelWatch (LTW) in their review into ticket office closures.

2 Recommendation

2.1 **The Panel is asked to note the paper.**

3 Background

3.1 As part of LU's station modernisation programme, 'Fit for the Future – Stations', all ticket offices were closed on the network with the exception of 11 stations regulated by the Department for Transport on the Bakerloo and District lines.

3.2 The Mayor made a commitment in his manifesto to conduct an independent review into this ticket office closure programme. LTW completed this review on behalf of the Mayor in late 2016.

3.3 LTW's review recommended improvements in the following three areas:

(a) staff visibility and availability;

(b) customer assistance; and

(c) purchasing tickets for travel.

3.4 An Action Plan was developed to address each of these areas and agreed at the TfL Board on 15 December 2016. The Panel was last updated on progress at its meeting of 2 March 2017. The following three sections of this paper will provide an update on progress within each of these areas.

3.5 Please note that although LU's station operating model was not within the scope of LTW's review, recent changes to it have addressed some of LTW's concerns and will therefore be discussed within this paper.

4 Staff Visibility and Availability

4.1 The LTW review stressed the importance of staff availability and visibility in assisting customers and providing a safe and secure network. The report made particular reference to poor staff visibility at our smaller single-staffed stations, which could lead to occasions when customers could not find a member of staff when they required assistance. In response LU has made the following interventions:

4.2 Station Operating Model

Following a review of the new station operating model, in February 2017 we committed to recruit an additional 325 roles for our stations. Of these new roles, 200 are full time positions and 100 are of a supervisory grade.

4.3 As at the end of Period 6, we have filled 225 of these new positions and are on track to recruit all 325 by the end of the year. New recruits have been prioritised to smaller single-staffed stations and those with unstaffed control rooms.

4.4 Gateline Management

A gateline management tool has been developed to assist local managers in identifying where and when gates are being left open and, typically, unstaffed. At single-staffed stations, there can be occasions when the gateline needs be left open by the member of staff on duty, for example, when accompanying a disabled customer to a train. As a result, rather than highlighting these individual occasions, managers have been briefed to use the tool to identify abnormal trends where gates are being left open for longer than is expected.

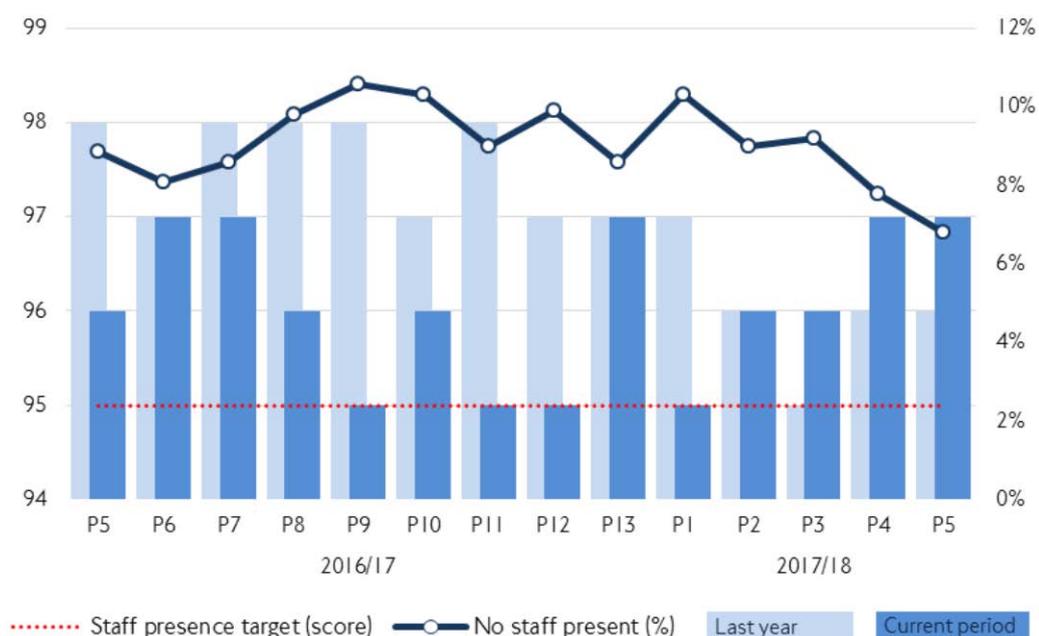
4.5 Local Action Plans

32 stations with the lowest Staff Presence scores (as measured through our mystery shopping surveys) have developed and implemented local action plans to improve the visibility of their station staff. The plans included measures such as roster adjustments and ticket machine functionality refreshers.

4.6 Impact on Presence Scores

The actions detailed in this section have generally had a positive impact on staff presence. In the most recent results period, an overall staff presence score of 97 was achieved, two points above the target of 95. The network score can mask issues at smaller stations; however, this has also seen improvement. Mystery shopping reported that staff were not visible on only 97 out of 1,421 visits (6.8 percent), which is the lowest proportion since Period 12 2015/16.

Figure 1: Staff presence trend analysis



4.7 Two thirds of the previously identified 30 worst-performing stations are now hitting their staff presence target. Previously problematic stations such as Barbican, Brent Cross, Hammersmith (H&C), Queensbury, South Woodford and West Hampstead have all hit their target for the last three consecutive periods.

4.8 Focal Points and Staff Visibility

The LTW review also noted that following ticket office closures, stations lacked a clear “focal point” for customers to seek assistance. The review also noted that staff can be difficult to pick out in their uniforms, especially in crowded ticket halls. Over the past year, we have trialled a range of interventions to improve the ease at which customers can get help at our stations.

4.9 The initial set of trials were carried out at King’s Cross St Pancras, Brixton, Euston, South Kensington, Amersham, Westminster, Tower Hill, Russell Square, Green Park Paddington and Chorleywood. Trials have investigated a combination of changes to station assets, uniform and staff positioning within the ticket hall. Independent research was carried out to assess the effectiveness of the interventions and has been used to inform a second phase of trials at Westminster, Liverpool Street, Oxford Circus, South Kensington, Uxbridge, Knightsbridge, Euston, and Tottenham Court Road. The second phase of trials commenced on 16 October 2017.

4.10 Red Tabards

In the first phase of the trial, Customer Service Assistants wore red high visibility vests (figure 2) on the unpaid side of the ticket hall to increase their prominence to customers. The dark red vests had “Here to help’ and an ‘i’ symbol (for information) on the back. Customers responded positively to the improved visibility.

Figure 2: Red High Visibility Tabards



4.11 In the second phase of the trial, all members of staff at Oxford Circus, South Kensington, Tottenham Court Road, Knightsbridge and Uxbridge will be asked to wear a brighter red tabard in all areas of the station (unless performing platform duties, safety checks or accessing the track). Following further feedback from customers and staff, we expect to roll out the tabards more widely across the network.

4.12 We are also reviewing opportunities to improve the visibility of the core uniform as part of its “mid-life” refresh.

4.13 More Visible Customer Information Zones

As part of the trial, information zones at a number of stations were enhanced, using eye-catching wall and floor vinyls (figure 3). Trial data found that enhancing the information zone did raise customer awareness and enable some customers independently to get the information they needed. Research revealed that this success was primarily down to vinyls used on the wall, rather than those on the floor. These were often obscured by customers standing on or walking across it.

Figure 3: Enhanced information zone

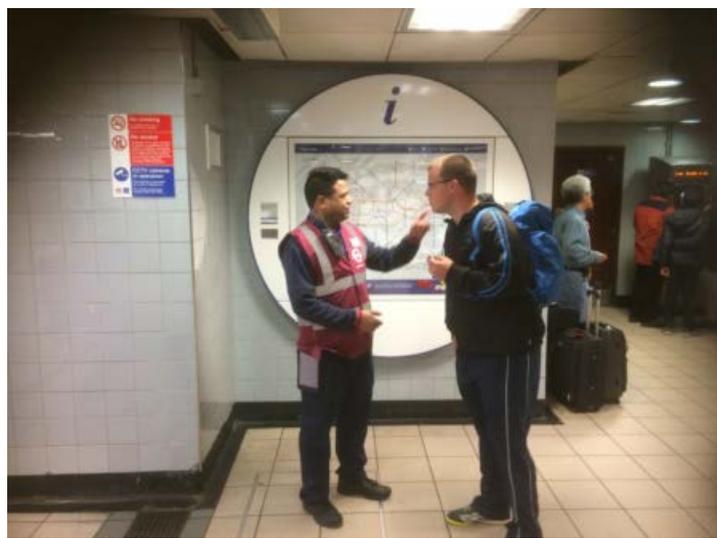


4.14 Follow-up analysis suggests that information zones at a further 20 stations would benefit from similar treatment. This financial year we expect to have upgraded the information zones at stations such as Canary Wharf, Bayswater, and King's Cross St. Pancras.

4.15 Staff Positioning in Ticket Halls

As part of trials, a member of staff was permanently located at the information zone on the unpaid side of the ticket hall at Euston (figure 4). Research showed this was popular with customers who felt that this was effective at creating a focal point. The trial also revealed considerable variation in demand for assistance from the staff member. The efficiency of deploying staff in this way will need to be assessed on a location by location basis.

Figure 4: Staffed information zone



4.16 The second phase of trials will investigate whether more can be done to make the gate-line a focal point for customer assistance. This will be trialled at a mix of “Gateway” and “Destination” stations as a member of staff is already always at or close to the gateline, therefore, we do not expect to have resourcing challenges trialling this. The trials are expected to commence at Oxford Circus, Liverpool Street and Westminster from 23 October 2017.

4.17 Help Point Visibility and Clarification of Purpose

A bright blue vinyl was applied to the fascia of the customer help point at Chorleywood (figure 5) to draw more attention to and assess whether perceptions of help point function could be altered. Research suggests that they are a tool of last resort for emergency use only. While the change improved visibility, it did nothing to alter the understanding of its purpose.

Figure 5: Help point at Chorleywood and a proposal for the future



- 4.18 The next trial will test a new set wall graphics (see above). These seek to clarify the dual purpose of the help point – with the green button used for emergencies and the blue button used if seeking information. Please note that red is not used for emergencies as this colour is associated with fire alarms, which are integrated into some help points.

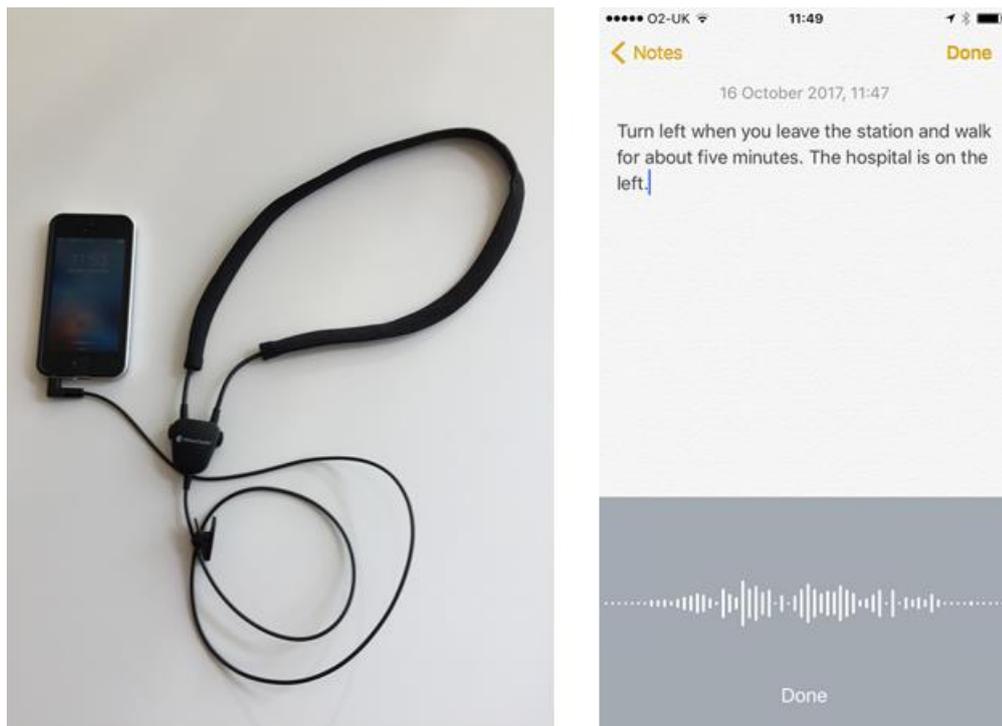
5 Customer Assistance

5.1 Hearing loops

Following an initial trial of portable hearing loops in January 2017, we conducted a test using the neck-loop variant in May 2017 with several customers with a hearing loss. The device worked well and allowed the conversation to move to quieter areas of the station with less interference. However, the customers taking part in the trial recommended using the “voice to text” functionality on the iPads as a preferred alternative method of communication. Not only do some new hearing aids not support hearing loop functionality, but many of the customers taking part found “voice to text” to be a more practical form of assistance.

- 5.2 From November 2017, we will be providing all staff at Waterloo and Leicester Square with the neck loop variant hearing loops (see figure 6). The trial will last for three months and has been set up to get feedback from a greater number of hearing impaired customers. In addition to this, we will also be encouraging the staff at these stations to use the “voice to text” function on their iPads to communicate with hearing impaired customers. Depending on the trial findings, we may rollout the loops across further stations. We will make all staff aware of the “voice to text” functionality.

Figure 6: Neck loop used in trial and “voice-to-text” iPhone functionality



5.3 Staff Training

We have reviewed our staff training, with key sections modified to emphasise the importance of actively offering help to customers. In particular, those displaying characteristics that suggest that they are either unfamiliar with travelling on the network or require extra help.

5.4 Our trainers are undertaking an enhanced training module on customer focus and helping disabled customers. This will improve the customer focus of training delivered to new and existing staff. The LU induction material has also been revamped with a much greater focus on customer service.

5.5 Most senior operational managers have now taken part in Disability Equality Training. As part of this, they accompanied a disabled customer on a journey around our network, followed by an afternoon of classroom based learning.

5.6 Turn Up and Go

We have committed to improving our “turn up and go” (TUAG) service for disabled customers. As a first step, we have carried out a survey of customers to get their feedback on the current process. So far, we have received feedback from over 130 disabled customers and organisations representing disabled people.

5.7 In addition to this, we have interviewed over 50 members of staff, visited representative six stations and mapped sample customer journeys as part of the process improvement works.

'Turn up and go' Issue	Improvement planned
Customers are not always met at interchange or destination station as planned	Developing an app to support the TUAG process to reduce the likelihood of not being met.
Trains may terminate early or be re-routed	Build communication with Service Control and Train Operators into the process improvement plan for TUAG.
Some staff are reluctant to provide assistance or they think they cannot leave the gateline	Staff communications and myth-busting briefing.
Customers cannot find a member of staff to help	We plan to trial a new Customer Assistance Point at East Acton that connects to a staff member's iPad to help customers to get the help they need when they arrive at stations.

5.8 Our next steps will be to clarify the TUAG process in the rule book and communicate the new processes.

6 Purchasing Tickets for Travel

6.1 Ticket Machine Functionality

Since 21 May 2017, both boundary extension tickets for customers in possession of non-Zone 1 Travelcards and discounted National Rail through tickets have been made available to customers on all ticket machines. Since their launch, there has been relatively low use. We will communicate the enhanced functionality to customers to improve awareness.

6.2 Information warning customers that they will not be able to get a refund on their Oyster card within 48 hours of purchase were added to ticket machines in May. Work continues to determine how this functionality can be improved, while still providing adequate protection against fraudulent use. The time required before a customer can obtain a refund will be reduced from 48 to 24 hours early in 2018.

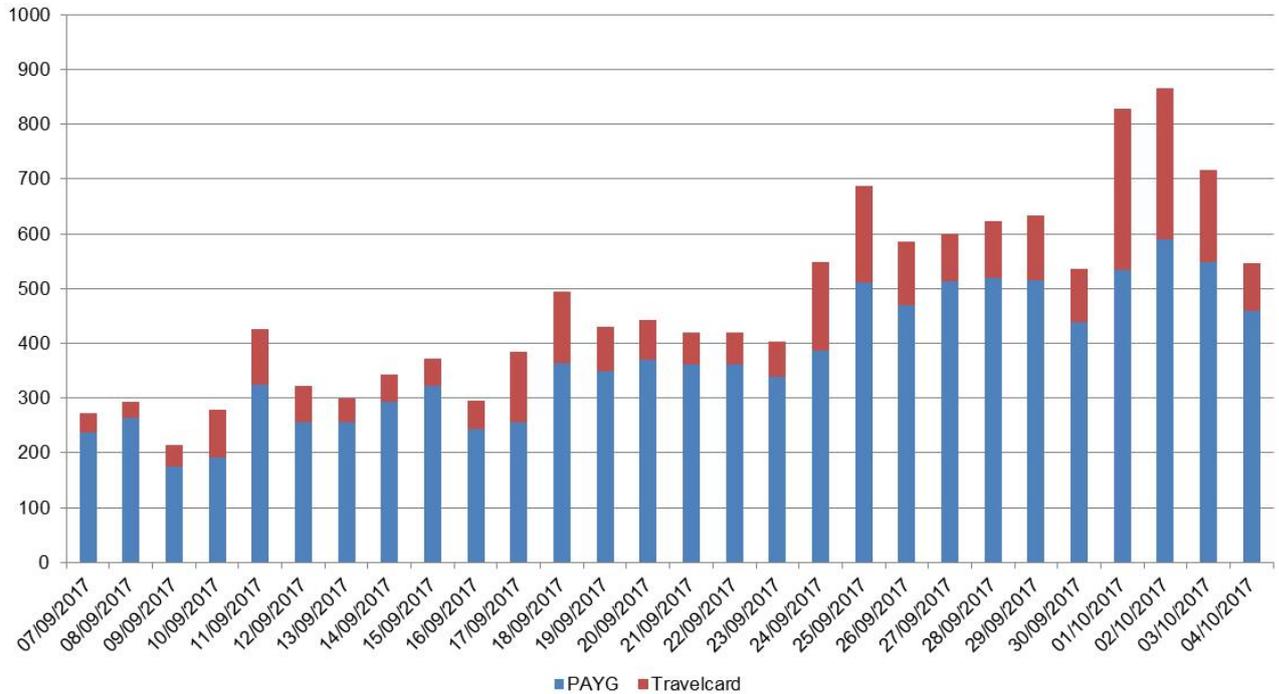
6.3 TfL Oyster and Contactless App

The TfL Oyster and Contactless app was launched to Android and Apple customers in September 2017. The app allows customers to:

- (a) check their 'pay as you go' (PAYG) balance;
- (b) see their season tickets;

- (c) top up pay as you go credit, and buy season tickets; and
- (d) get notifications if their pay as you go balance falls below £10 or if their season ticket is about to expire

Figure 7: Oyster app downloads per day (first 3 weeks)



6.4 There have been more than 91,000 downloads over the first three weeks, split roughly 55/45 between Apple and Android. At this stage, there has been no marketing activity. Sundays and Mondays are the busiest for downloads.

6.5 Since July 2017, customers have been able to collect their season tickets and PAYG credit at any station 30 minutes after purchasing it online when they touch their card on a yellow card reader as part of a journey. Other features, such as the ability to manage contactless payments will be introduced in Autumn 2017.

6.6 Visitor Centres

Improved signage schemes have been installed at all stations which have a visitor centre to improve wayfinding from all areas of the station.

Figure 7: Examples of new signage



- 6.7 We have trialled extended opening hours at some of our Visitor Centres to determine the extent and nature of demand outside of current hours. These trials demonstrated a sufficient demand at King's Cross St Pancras and Victoria to warrant opening these centres for an additional hour on Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings. Usage is being monitored on an ongoing basis and we will regularly reassess opening hours against demand.

7 Next Steps

- 7.1 We continue to collaborate with LTW on the delivery of the Action Plan. The LTW Board received an update at their meeting in May 2017 and their officers are updated at quarterly review meetings.
- 7.2 Subject to the Panel's agreement, we will provide a further update on progress at the Panel meeting in March 2018.

List of appendices to this report:

None

Background papers:

TfL Board meeting paper of 15 December 2016
Customer Service and Operational Performance Panel meeting paper of 2 March 2017

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