

# Surface Transport Panel



**Date:** 25 February 2016

**Item:** NSL Contact Centre Performance

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## This paper will be considered in public

### 1 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to update the Panel on the contact centre performance of NSL, the service provider responsible for delivery of the taxi and private hire vehicle inspection services, following a request at the Audit and Assurance Committee on 8 December 2015.

### 2 Recommendation

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

### 3 Background

- 3.1 The taxi and private hire vehicle licensing service has been outsourced since 2004 and the contract was re-let in 2013 and awarded to NSL. NSL provides a contact centre to book vehicle inspections in advance at six vehicle inspection centres located across London. NSL is also responsible for the delivery of the licensing system (TOLA) which is used to record vehicle inspections, and also used by TfL's Taxi and Private Hire for delivery of driver and operator licensing and the Knowledge of London.
- 3.2 The contract with NSL contains a number of service level agreements (SLAs), including an SLA on contact centre performance which requires 80 per cent of calls to be answered within 20 seconds.
- 3.3 At the time the contract was awarded to NSL there were a total of circa 72,400 vehicles licensed taxi and private hire vehicles, circa 22,000 taxis and circa 50,000 private hire vehicles. Forecasts for growth in vehicle volumes were modest, in keeping with analysis of trends from previous years.
- 3.4 However, as the Panel will be aware, there has since been an unprecedented rise in the number of private hire drivers and vehicles with the number of drivers growing from 59,000 in 2009/10 to 97,000 and vehicles now almost numbering 76,000.

### 4 Performance

- 4.1 NSL performance in overall delivery of the vehicle inspection service has attracted excellent feedback in License, Compliance and Enforcement meetings with senior taxi and private hire stakeholders who welcome the flexibility offered to the trades including the ability to reschedule appointments and the introduction of a mobile vehicle inspection unit for larger operators. NSL also offers a personal service for all

organisations requesting regular block bookings, reducing the administrative burden of making regular bookings.

- 4.2 However, in the past twelve months the contact centre performance has deteriorated and resulted in concerns being raised by the trades due to difficulties in getting through to the contact centre and booking a vehicle inspection. This is primarily due the increase in the number vehicles being booked in for inspection.
- 4.3 This issue has been compounded due to the location of NSL's contact centre, as the capacity was built around previous growth requirements. The location and resources were able to comfortably meet forecasted volumes but couldn't easily be scaled up to meet the unprecedented demand.
- 4.4 To address the issue of customers not being able to get through by phone in the short to medium term, NSL introduced a call back service in May 2015. Customers contacting NSL to book a vehicle inspection were greeted with an automated message asking them to leave contact details. Call backs were typically made within 24 hours. However, this generated additional calls and enquiries as customers would understandably continue to try to contact NSL to speak to a customer services representative. Appendix 1 outlines the call handling statistics for 2015.
- 4.5 The performance of the vehicle inspection centres and the mobile inspection unit has continued to improve with positive feedback regularly being received from the trade and SLAs continue to be met in this area. The chart in Appendix 2 provides a summary of performance from July to December 2015 across all six inspection centres where, out of a total of 62,000 vehicle inspections, just seven have failed to be completed within the contractual time. The chart also demonstrates consistent level of vehicle inspections required.
- 4.6 Overall customer satisfaction is outlined in Appendix 3.

## **5 Progress and Future Enhancements**

- 5.1 To tackle the issue of telephone calls we have been actively working with NSL and a number of changes have already been put in place including the relocation of the contact centre to a larger premises and recruitment and training of an additional four staff.
- 5.2 The call back service was removed in its entirety in January 2016 to ensure customers were able to speak to a customer services representative rather than waiting for a call back. While improvements are still required in contact centre performance, there is daily progress and the average speed of answer is currently under one minute.
- 5.3 Mondays and Tuesdays continue to be the busiest days for calls with an average of 1,500 calls received compared with around 1,000 calls for the remainder of the week and resources are being reviewed to address the daily peak demands.
- 5.4 All available contact centre data is being modelled to ensure the service demands are scalable and meet the ongoing increases in demand. This will be completed by March 2016 and the outcome will help inform commercial discussions in

renegotiating the telephony SLA to better reflect the increase in calls and the ratio of calls.

- 5.5 NSL is also reviewing call scripts and rolling out additional training to staff to reduce call handling times which will further increase capacity.

**List of appendices to this report:**

Appendix 1: Telephony Performance for 2015

Appendix 2: Summary of NSL performance at vehicle inspection centres

Appendix 3: Customer Satisfaction Scores by TPH Licensees for NSL services for 2013/14 and 2014/15

**List of Background Papers:**

None

Contact Officer: Peter Blake, Director of Service Operations, Surface Transport  
Number: 020 3054 8095  
Email: [PeterBlake@tfl.gov.uk](mailto:PeterBlake@tfl.gov.uk)

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## Appendix 1 – Telephony Performance for 2015

Month in 2015	Sum of Total Calls In	Sum of Total Calls Answered	Sum of Total Calls Abandoned	Average Time to Answer (secs)
Jan	20,644	19,605	780	53.4
Feb	20,404	19,314	946	66.6
Mar	28,032	24,828	3,204	124.5
Apr	19,760	19,129	631	7.9
May	16,088	15,872	216	6.4
Jun	18,090	17,862	228	6.1
Jul	16,723	16,602	121	2.9
Aug	13,877	13,760	117	3.1
Sep	19,965	19,679	286	5.6
Oct	19,931	19,427	504	7.2
Nov	18,424	17,657	767	9.8
Dec	16,795	15,075	1,720	5.9
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>228,733</b>	<b>218,810</b>	<b>9,520</b>	<b>29.2</b>

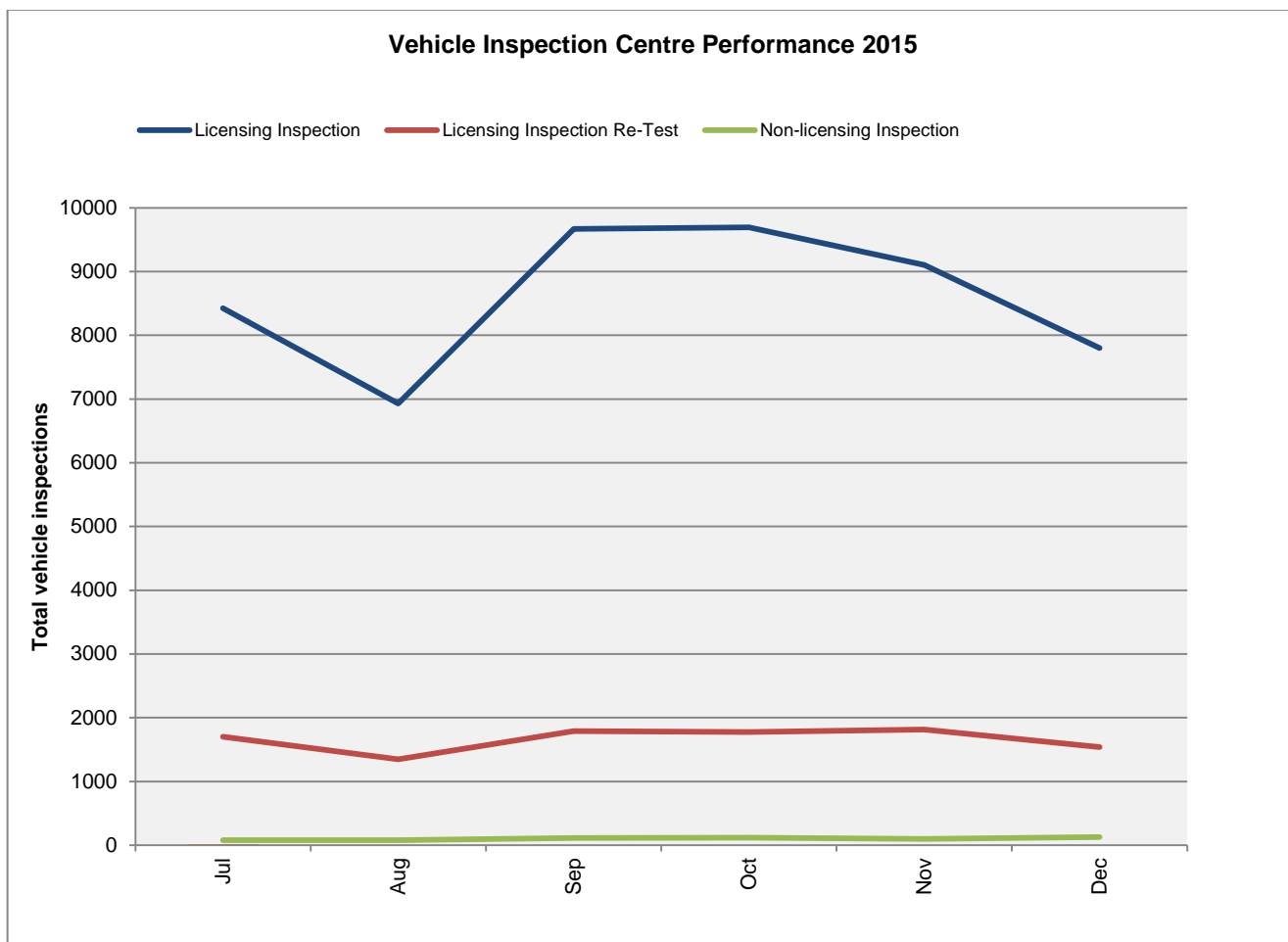
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## Appendix 2 - Summary of NSL Performance at Vehicle Inspection Centres

The chart depicts the total number of vehicle inspections between July and December 2015 across all six vehicle inspection centres.

Performance Indicator 10 (KPI) in the contract with NSL requires the end to end time for taxi vehicle inspections to be completed within 50 minutes of arrival at the inspection centre and 40 minutes for private hire vehicles.

Over 62,000 vehicles have been seen at the inspection centres in the last six months of 2015. Of these, there are just seven individual occurrences where NSL have exceeded the allocated time to complete an inspection (0.01 per cent).



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### Appendix 3 – Customer Satisfaction Scores by TPH Licensees for NSL services for 2013/14 and 2014/15

The chart below shows customer satisfaction scores received from taxi and private hire licensees using NSL services. The survey is done by financial year so 2015/16 figures are not yet available.

#### Satisfaction with the service received from NSL

(All owner/keepers)

CSS satisfaction  
mean score  
on scale of 0-100

