

Meeting: Taxi Operational Performance Seminar
Date: 22 August 2018
Location: 230 Blackfriars Road
Attendees: Transport for London (TfL), Metropolitan Police Cabs Unit, London Cab Drivers Club (LCDC), Licensed Taxi Drivers Association (LTDA), Rail, Maritime and Transport workers' union (RMT), United Cabbies Group (UCG), Unite the Union (Unite),

Summary Meeting Notes:

Agenda: 1. Review of Actions / 2. Licensing update / 3. Compliance and Enforcement update / 5. AOB (including discussion regarding compliance officer recruitment)

Review of Actions:

Knowledge statistics:

TfL explained that work is ongoing to support students undertaking the Knowledge of London (KoL); this includes better engagement with students and a proposal to introduce a compulsory self assessment check to provide informal, constructive feedback. TfL highlighted its ongoing engagement with the Knowledge schools and its progress in seeking accreditation and possible funding for the Knowledge. TfL also announced that a prospectus it had created to promote the Knowledge would soon be ready for publication. NOTE: the document can be viewed [here](#).

The trade raised concerns regarding the practice of “red lining” candidates as part of the Knowledge examination process and felt it placed additional pressure on students. TfL explained that this was introduced over 20 years ago aimed at ensuring resources were focussed on those making adequate progress in the exam system. TfL agreed to look into this further and see if anything additional can be done to support KoL candidates (see actions).

The trade asked whether TfL had looked at other avenues of funding the Knowledge. TfL said accreditation of the Knowledge could potentially enable applicants to apply for study loans, and that it is exploring whether some of the Department for Education’s adult education budget, which is being devolved to the Mayor, could be accessed.

Fleet ownership statistics: As requested by the trade, private taxi vehicle ownership vs fleet ownership data was presented with the split in ownership being approximately 50 per cent.

Lost property: TfL provided an update on the lost property review which is currently being conducted by the Lost Property Office (LPO) who are working with the Metropolitan Police Service.

The trade explained that drivers are having difficulty handing in lost property ‘out of hours’ when police stations and the LPO are closed. They asked if other TfL locations such as bus stations could be used. TfL said this was being considered as part of its review.

Touting: TfL provided an update on enforcement action it had carried out at “Ye Olde Axe” following concerns raised by the trade. The challenges of enforcing privately owned vehicles parked on taxi ranks were discussed. TfL explained that it required both police and borough officer assistance at this location.

Licensing Update:

TfL presented its quarterly presentation for licensing, available [here](#)

The trade identified what they believe to be a discrepancy in the reported figures between the number of taxi driver applicants and the number of those accepted to start the KoL. TfL will look into this (see actions).

The trade raised concerns regarding the online driver licensing process saying they had received reports of documentation going missing/not being received. TfL asked for specific examples so that it can investigate further.

The trade asked about new bus lane signage which could be used to allow only electric taxis to use certain bus lanes. TfL confirmed it had requested signage approval from the DfT for taxi only charging bays and ZEC taxi ranks, and that as part of its package of requests had included bus lane signage. However, TfL stated that it has no plans to make changes to bus lane access for taxis.

The trade raised concerns about a reduction in the size of the taxi fleet, the proportion of Zero Emission Capable (ZEC) taxis and asked what action TfL is taking to monitor this. TfL closely monitors the number of vehicles it licenses and has implemented a delicensing scheme to support the trade and to encourage vehicle owners to switch to zero-emission capable taxis. TfL is currently considering ways in which it can make the delicensing scheme more attractive for taxi owners. TfL also contributes to the £7,500 OLEV grant that is taken off the purchase price of any ZEC taxi.

Additional note – TfL has not, at this time, commissioned active monitoring the economic impact of the ZEC requirement on the taxi trade; however it was considered in an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) that was conducted when the proposal was first put forward. The cost of vehicles, fuel costs, insurance and other associated costs are also considered annually as part of the review of taxi fares and tariffs. To date 823 ZEC taxis have been licensed.

The trade raised concerns regarding ultra low emission zones that are being by some London boroughs, saying that they believed these plans would prohibit the majority of taxi vehicles from accessing these locations. The trade said that they provided accessible transport to vulnerable groups and were already complying with the Mayor’s ULEZ standards, for these reasons they asked if TfL would encourage the boroughs to exempt taxis on these grounds (see actions).

Compliance and Enforcement Update:

TfL ran through key highlights in its presentation, available [here](#).

The trade asked if a reduction in touting revocations between 2016 and 2017 and a rise in journey related sexual offences in the same period were related. The MPS felt that the two were not linked as journey related offences involved licensed drivers

while touting was usually carried out by unlicensed drivers. TfL, the MPS and the trade discussed TfL's on-street enforcement tactics.

The trade asked about the number of taxi vehicle checks that were conducted in the past year, TfL reported that checks were conducted proportionally with respect to the taxi and private hire trade although they may have been influenced by the need to train new compliance officers on both types of checks.

The trade requested information on the number of compliance officers TfL currently has employed and the number that are accredited under the Community Safety and Accreditation Scheme (CSAS). TfL confirmed that there are currently approximately 250 compliance officers and 109 of these have CSAS accreditation. TfL confirmed that CSAS powers allowed officers to work more efficiently.

The trade requested guidance regarding the use of cycle lanes for setting down / collecting passengers (see actions).

Information was presented regarding two taxi driver prosecutions that had taken place in the last quarter. The trade asked about one of the prosecutions - for overcharging a wheelchair user, asking specifically if taxi drivers had been made aware of their obligations under the Equality Act. TfL confirmed that drivers receive Equality Act information when they are licensed or re-licensed, and that information had been published on its website, in its trade publication OnRoute, shared on social media and in its weekly email bulletin to drivers.

The trade asked whether Taxicard bookings differed and explained that drivers typically started the meter on arrival for these jobs. TfL agreed to look into this (see actions).

Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) update: The MPS ran through the key highlights in their presentation, available [here](#).

The trade mentioned a recent prosecution of a suburban taxi driver for plying for hire in central London, saying that they believed taxi booking apps were facilitating illegal activity by passing these jobs on to drivers who were out of their licensed area. The MPS said that they believed that it was ultimately the responsibility of the driver accepting the job to ensure that they were in their licensed area. The trade said that they believed there was ambiguity due to TfL not regulating taxi app companies or having a definition of pre-booking. TfL reiterated that it does not have the necessary powers to regulate taxi apps and that it remains committed to seeking a statutory definition of plying for hire and pre-booked services to provide clarity, taking into consideration the rise of app-based taxi and private hire services.

AOB:

The trade asked if TfL would provide full minutes of taxi engagement meetings. TfL publishes all notes, actions and presentations in relation to these meetings online where they are publicly available. The purpose of summary notes and actions is to ensure that key points from a meeting are recorded and followed up on where required. Trade attendees are always afforded an opportunity to review and feed into the content of the notes and actions.

Open actions:

| Meeting Date | Item Name | Action Details | Due Date | Commentary |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| 22/08/2018 | Knowledge examination process | TfL invites further discussion around the issue of red-lining with stakeholders and will consider a review if there is a consensus of opinion. | Future meeting or workshop tbc | As per action |
| 22/08/2018 | New applicants | TfL will look into the reported difference between the number of new taxi applicants and those recorded as being accepted to study the KoL. | Next meeting | As per action |
| 22/08/2018 | Low emission zones | TfL to consider raising the trades concerns about taxis being excluded from borough-led low emission zones. | Next meeting | As per action |
| 22/08/2018 | Taxicard | TfL to give advice on whether starting the meter on arrival for a Taxicard booking has Equality Act implications. | Next meeting | As per action |
| 22/08/2018 | Taxi accessibility | TfL to provide guidance on taxis setting down and picking up on cycle lanes. | Next meeting | As per action. |