

Taxi Operational Performance Seminar – 5 December 2019

Attendees: Transport for London (TfL), Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) Cabs Unit, London Taxi Drivers' Association (LTDA), Rail, Maritime and Transport workers' union (RMT), Unite the Union (Unite) and London Cab Drivers Club (LCDC).

Compliance update:

TfL provided an update of its compliance operations and its plans to improve capability, resilience and flexibility within its Compliance, Policing and On-Street Enforcement (CPOS) Directorate; this included an update of its resourcing and operational plans. TfL outlined some of its plans for 2020, including:

- New area-based teams
- All authorised officers to receive refresher training and additional training to enable them able to carry out more thorough vehicle examinations and operator checks
- New technology will be introduced to improve performance
- The introduction of parking enforcement powers on TfL red routes
- Greater focus on proprietors and fleets

LCDC: Asked how many compliance officers will be dedicated to taxi and private hire operations.

TfL: Said approximately 200 officers will be dedicated to taxi and private hire from a wider pool of approximately 420 compliance officers, which can also be drawn upon.

LCDC: Asked about TfL's plans to improve fleet and taxi vehicle compliance.

TfL: Explained that it would use intelligence it obtained from on-street checks to carry out checks on fleets where concerns had been noted. It said it would seek to work with fleets and proprietors to ensure vehicles were compliant.

Unite: Asked if a driver would be given the opportunity to carry out a roadside repair if their vehicle was stopped with a light bulb not working.

TfL: Confirmed that this would be fine, provided the driver carried a spare and that the repair could be carried out safely on the road-side.

LCDC: Asked if TfL could provide an online portal so that drivers could check the second MOT status of rented vehicles.

TfL: Said this could already be checked online here:
<https://www.gov.uk/check-mot-history>

LCDC: Asked how many compliance operations were undertaken at Heathrow Airport.

TfL: Confirmed that it carries out compliance operations at the airport five or six times a week at different times of the day and night both with uniformed and non-uniformed officers. It confirmed that it would bring detailed statistics of its Heathrow operations to the next trade meeting which will be held Spring 2020.

MPS: Provided an update of its operations and mentioned ongoing concerns regarding driver behaviour at Hans Road, Knightsbridge, but emphasised that this was not limited to taxi or private hire vehicles.

The MPS asked that trade representatives could inform their members that enforcement, including camera enforcement, will be taking place in the near future at this location.

LCDC: Asked for an update on the separation of collision data for taxi and private hire vehicles.

TfL: Confirmed that it was working with the MPS to ensure that this information was accurate upon publication and that it should be available in summer 2020.

LCDC: Asked when journey related taxi and private hire sexual offence data would be published.

TfL: Explained that it was imperative that this information was accurate upon publication and that validating the data was an in-depth process. TfL confirmed that once the information had been verified it would be published.

Licensing Update

TfL provided an operational update of its licensing function.

LCDC: Raised an issue that affected one of its members regarding the inaccurate charging of a renewal taxi driver's licence.

TfL: Confirmed that it had rectified the problem for the licensee in question and that it was at the final stages of implementing a wider software fix that would prevent this from happening. It also confirmed that it had either prevented applicants from being overcharged or had prioritised the refunding of any licensee/applicant who had paid more than they should have.

LCDC: Asked whether the TPH licensing team was at staffing capacity / headcount.

TfL: Confirmed that it was recruiting and training staff as fast as possible where there were vacancies. Currently there were three vacant positions within an approximately 170 strong licensing team.

LCDC: Asked about 'mock appearances' that were conducted as part of the Knowledge of London (KOL) examination process.

TfL: Explained how it had improved its engagement with KOL students which included inviting students to attend sessions to test and improve their learning at an early stage in the process.

Unite: Asked when the latest licensee demographic statistics would be updated.

TfL: Confirmed it renewed licensee demographic information annually and that it would update the information it published online shortly.

TfL: Explained some of its planned changes to the Suburban portion of the KOL (Stage 6) which were generally supported by attendees.

All attendees: Engaged in a discussion about the taxi delicensing scheme and expressed opinions on how this may potentially affect the size of the licensed taxi fleet in future.

AOB:

LCDC: Raised the issue of taxi app charges saying it believed these fees were detrimental to the taxi trade.

TfL: Reiterated that it does not have powers to license or regulate taxi apps and that Government would need to provide it with those powers by changing primary legislation. However, TfL confirmed that it would provide a substantive response to the trades queries as soon as possible.

LCDC: Said it was disappointed that the outcomes of the 'Improving safety in Private Hire Vehicles' consultation had not been published.

TfL: Explained that the Department for Transport consultation on statutory guidance for national minimum standards is relevant to some of the proposals put forward in its 'Improving Safety in Private Hire Vehicles' consultation and that as a result, it is important that it considers the implication of these recommendations on its next steps.

Ends