



## Taxi Trade Concerns

TfL is well aware of the concerns of taxi drivers and the demonstrations held by a number of taxi drivers this week. This notice sets out our formal response to these concerns.

Firstly, TfL regrets and is sorry that drivers felt the need to stage such demonstrations and for the inconvenience caused. Whilst we understand taxi drivers' frustrations we feel that the demonstrations are not necessary or warranted. We are already well aware of the concerns of the taxi trade, especially in respect of the problems of touting by unlicensed minicabs and any illegal activity by licensed private hire vehicles and operators. These are issues that were raised with me by the LTDA, LCDC and Unite in my first weeks in post and are matters that I have been in constant dialogue with them about.

I can assure all drivers we are doing all that we can to address such problems.

Demonstrations such as the one held this week cause significant inconvenience to others at a time of immense hardship and challenge for many hardworking Londoners. In addition they divert our time and attention away from addressing the issues raised.

I can assure all of London's hard working cabbies that TfL genuinely understands the frustrations expressed by cabbies and I have seen for myself some of the issues and challenges you are faced with on a daily basis. I am, of course, particularly concerned with the conflicts that have arisen between the taxi and private hire trade, especially in and around private hire operating centres (or "satellite" offices as they are widely known). However it is not correct that nothing is being done. The Mayor doubled the size of the cab enforcement team and they have made over 6,000 arrests for touting and cab related offences since 2003 with 1,321 between 1 August 2008 and 31 March 2010. We also introduced the one strike and out policy for both drivers and operators and have revoked over 250 licences to date. Any operator found to be employing staff that we find touting on street will have their licence revoked.

It is important that drivers understand that no specific decision was taken by TfL to licence private hire operators from venues and no requirement for planning permission was withdrawn. Both of these claims have been made to us many times by taxi drivers and are incorrect. The establishment of these offices at venues are allowed through the general requirements of the original 1998 Private Hire Act. I accept that the significant increase in these operations has caused numerous issues, particularly when bookings are taken outside the venue itself. However, we accept that the expansion of these offices has been significant and the time has come to review the impact of this expansion on the taxi and private hire trade and, of course, the travelling public.

As a result of the concerns raised with me since my appointment and through formal discussions in recent months with the LTDA, LCDC and Unite as well as my own personal observations I set out below the actions and activities we are undertaking in the areas of concern:

- We are currently in the process of reviewing the TfL Compliance Team's deployment and priority strategy to increase the focus of officers in the key areas of concern.
- We continue to work and liaise closely with the Cab Enforcement team with regards to using intelligence to focus resources in the key areas. I can assure all drivers that we are committed to dealing with these problems and protecting the travelling public and law abiding taxi and private hire trades.
- We will be consulting on a range of proposals in August 2010 which seek to tighten up the criteria for minicab operating centres in venues and requirements for private hire operators and drivers.
- Following extensive and productive discussions on these issues since my appointment with the LTDA, LCDC and Unite and through discussions with representatives of the private hire trade I have instructed that **no further applications for private hire operating centres within venues will be processed from 1 June 2010** until the situation has been completely reviewed and the consultation detailed above has been concluded.
- I recently approved the recruitment of a dedicated, full time nightshift Licensing Team whose responsibility will be primarily focused on ensuring all requirements for private hire operators are in line with the licensing requirements.
- We are unable to take specific enforcement action against operators or drivers based on camera or video evidence submitted by drivers. However, any evidence submitted to TfL to [ltph.enforcement@tfl.gov.uk](mailto:ltph.enforcement@tfl.gov.uk) will be used to gather intelligence and to target enforcement activity in the most problematic areas.
- TfL are aware of trade concerns with regards to the use of the M4 bus lane but it has to be understood that TfL are not responsible for the management or enforcement of the lane. Despite this fact we continue to liaise with the Highways Agency and the Police with regards to this matter.

Whilst I am well aware that some drivers may feel these measures are not enough I do believe that they provide a clear plan of action to address many of the concerns that have been raised and I would ask all drivers to consider this carefully before participating in further demonstrations.



**28 May 2010**

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