



Diversity Peer Challenge
Transport for London

Report

22-24 November 2011



1. Background

This report is a summary of the findings of a Diversity Peer Challenge organised by the Local Government Group and carried out by its trained peers. The report satisfies the requirements of the Equality Framework for Local Government for an external assessment at the **Excellent** level. The Peer Challenge is designed to validate a council's own self-assessment at the **Excellent** level by considering documentary evidence and by carrying out a series of interviews and focus groups with employees and other stakeholders.

The basis for the Peer Challenge is a benchmark against five areas of performance. They are:

- Knowing your communities and equality mapping
- Place shaping, leadership, partnership and organisational commitment
- Community engagement and satisfaction
- Responsive services and customer care
- A modern and diverse workforce

The Peer Challenge is not an inspection, rather it offers an external assessment of a council's own judgement of itself against the Equality Framework benchmark, by critical friends who have experience of delivering an equality/diversity agenda in their own councils.

Peers were:

Cllr Andrew Judge – LB Merton
Michael Keating – LB Tower Hamlets
Sophia Looney- LB Lambeth
Pat Oakley – London Fire Brigade
Gill Elliott – Local Government Association

The team appreciates the welcome and hospitality provided by Transport for London and would like to thank everybody that they met during the process for their time and contributions.

2. The Decision

Following this Diversity Peer Challenge, we have reached the following decision:

Transport for London has completed a satisfactory self-assessment against the criteria for the Excellent level of the Equality Framework.

Transport for London (TfL) is an exemplar organisation that is dedicated to improving the experience of its customers and believes that this requires a deep understanding of their diverse needs and requirements. The organisation has

excellent data about the communities in London and its customers, which it has used to drive service improvements for all. There is good leadership on equalities from the Mayor of London, as expressed in the Transport Strategy, through the TfL Commissioner down to senior managers. Staff at all levels, understand the importance of providing a good customer service for an increasingly diverse community. All these positive features will stand the organisation in good stead for the 2012 Olympics in London next year. The Equalities team has an excellent record of achievement in supporting improvement.

Community engagement is impressive. Arising from this the knowledge of the concerns of different groups of users has led to excellent projects and initiatives such as the Safer Transport at Night project. (STAN). Engagement with young people is particularly wide ranging and this is followed through with very good apprenticeship and graduate schemes which are targeted at equalities groups.

The approach TfL has taken to mitigate the effect of budget reductions on station improvements which would include the provision of step free access is noteworthy. The continuation of excellent service provision is predicated on continuing diversity and inclusion programmes including disability awareness, customer focussed training and the availability of station staff at all times to provide customer assistance.

At a time when the organisation is undergoing a massive re-organisation programme designed to create a more streamlined and integrated service, particular attention needs to be paid to ensuring that robust, coherent and compatible systems of managing data, differentiated surveying of customers and staff, collecting information and analysing data is developed. TfL should actively pursue the development of a programme management system that enables officers to share good practice and monitor compliance to strategic values and corporate aims.

“Equalities and Inclusion runs through TfL like marble – almost” – Independent Disability Advisory Group

3. Recommendations

To help TfL improve even further we have three broad recommendations. These are to:

1. Maintain momentum on the importance of Equalities and Inclusion. Throughout the visit it was consistently clear how a strong understanding of excellent diversity and equality practice has enhanced how TfL addresses its business of transporting people in London. Being assessed as “Excellent” should provide the confidence to addresses the next set of challenges, but gives no room for complacency.

2. Provide clearer articulation for employees of what mainstreaming means. A clear message was the importance of mainstreaming excellent diversity and equality practice in day-to-day business. However it was not always clear that there is a consistent understanding of what this means and how this vision might be described and developed. Further reflection on why mainstreaming is important to the organisation and how to do it should be a driver to further service improvement.
3. Give more consideration to TfL's broader leadership role on the delivery of excellent diversity, equalities and inclusion practice outside the organisation. Given its London-wide responsibility for services TfL has the potential to lead and develop the understanding of private and voluntary sector organisations as well as other public services about the importance of how effective equality practice improves service delivery. This leadership has the potential to create new partnerships to tackle the financial challenges likely to remain for several years at the same responding to the ever changing needs of London's population.

4. TFL made the following observations on the impact of the peer challenge:

5. Detailed findings

5.1 Knowing your communities and equality mapping

Strengths:

1. TfL has excellent data about its communities and customers and their changing needs. Summary reports and equality group fact sheets are produced and updated in relation to all equalities groups. They contain existing knowledge; profiles and key facts. The fact sheets are promoted to all staff and managers. TfL research data can also be made available to other organisations.
2. The organisation uses a range of methods to gather data. Mystery shopping is used with segmented groups of users e.g. hearing impaired assessors. Research is being carried out to understand the digital market and the potential for use by those with less access to the internet.
3. User surveys are carried out for over ground, buses and London Underground (LU). The data is segmented according to equalities characteristics of passengers. Trend data is available for all users not just residents. The annual

London Travel Demand Survey of 8000 households is segmented across all characteristics. An online reporting tool is being developed.

4. Use is made of supplementary research to boost understanding where less is known. There is a rising proportion of samples of specific groups. The TfL Market Segmentation study in 2009 boosted information on the over 65s. An over ground user survey allows online access in different languages.

5. Adhoc research is undertaken to ensure access/inclusion e.g. bus diversion communication; East London line re-opening; journey experiences of disabled and young people; new bus for London consultation; countdown sign evaluation; teens into active travel; legible London user testing etc.

6. Research data is used effectively to target campaigns: teen road safety campaign 2009; cycle safety; HGVs 2010; Safer Transport At Night 2010. This project uses segmented data to target specific activity with fantastic outcomes contributing to reduced crime in key areas.

7. The “Your Railway” campaign followed on from research by the Docklands Light Railway (DLR) into the barriers to its use. The campaign includes the Community Ambassadors programme; policy consultation, walking audits and user satisfaction surveys. As a result black and minority ethnic (BAME) usage of the DLR is up from 17percent to 24 percent.

8. Knowledge about the community and customers has led to clear service improvements within TfL. The research project “London Underground towards an accessible tube” targeted people with mobility issues, hearing impairment, visual impairment and learning disability. The research provided a very comprehensive assessment of views, needs, and priorities for improvement.

9. London Tramlink demonstrated a range of partnership interventions that aim to tackle the issue of crime on the tram service. Surveys indicated that older people and women were apprehensive about using the network at night and initiatives have been developed to raise passenger confidence around safety issues.

10. Community knowledge led to marketing activity which increased cycle users amongst hard to reach groups.

Areas for consideration:

11. A consistent characteristic of organisations validated as ‘Excellent’ against the EFLG, the Fire and Rescue and Social Housing Frameworks, is the strength of their knowledge about the communities they serve. It is important therefore for TfL to build on their strength in this and have an articulated explanation of how “knowing your community” helps improve the delivery of the business. Where and when is this demonstrated?

12. By using the requirements of the Equality Act and demonstrating 'due regard' to the public sector Equality Duty TfL could further improve the organisation's knowledge of its communities and strengthen their articulation of how their services help improve the quality of life of all those who live, work and visit London.

13. Strengthen the People and Leadership work programme by linking it more effectively to community engagement.

14. A great deal of data is generated but does the organisation have the capacity to use all of it effectively? Even at a time of financial constraint TfL should continue to develop tools to analyse data and apply the lessons.

5.2 Place shaping, leadership, partnership and organisational commitment

Strengths:

15. The Mayor's leadership on equalities is expressed through the Accessibility Implementation Plan, part of the Transport Strategy and Equal Life Chances for All. The Strategy is seeking a more accessible and integrated transport system. 'Step Free' access to the transport system is an integral part of the Strategy.

16. At a time of great financial constraint the Mayor has decided to retain existing concessionary fares as well as introducing some new categories such as job seekers and veterans.

17. The TfL Commissioner raises equality issues at a senior level and provides leadership to the organisation on equalities and inclusion.

18. Senior managers are engaged with and fully supportive of the equality agenda and clearly see their role as embedding the effective equality and inclusion practice into the business. They understand that the quality of the passenger experience depends on understanding everyone's needs, recognising any potential challenges and thereby working out effective solutions to address them.

19. Partnership work is strong. TfL has a changing role in bringing boroughs together and providing leadership on road safety issues. The organisation has a strong partnership role such as coordinating the work of different providers at the Finsbury Park interchange. Understanding and addressing equalities issues are part of the discourse it has with boroughs in considering borough project proposals.

20. There is a sense of confidence and resilience about how understanding equalities and inclusion implications will continue to enhance solution to problems against a context of change such as Project Horizon and funding cuts.

21. The Equalities and Inclusion team provides considerable equalities expertise and passion which has helped TFL to maintain its work on this agenda. As the nature of its role moves from “doing” to influencing the challenge will be to maintain and continue this confidence.

22. Procurement within TFL is excellent. A skills team enables suppliers to meet contractual obligations e.g. for apprenticeships and the London living wage.

Areas for consideration

23. Developing the considerations raised above about ‘knowing the community’ greater articulation is needed about the centrality of how excellent Equalities and Inclusion practice improves customer service.

24. Staff networks highlighted concerns about senior managers’ involvement and middle management blockages in enabling these networks to be as effective as they could be.

25. The quality of some internal paperwork including the self assessment and workplans would benefit from being clearer and more focused. As an excellent organisation, TfL should consider how it can describe and explain its vision and practices better.

5.3 Community engagement and satisfaction

Strengths:

27. TfL engages with an impressive range of stakeholder groups. Engagement is continuous, well organised and concerned with how to drive improvement. The organisation works well with partners such as boroughs to ensure effective community connections are made and exploited to deliver benefits.

28. There is a good practice guide on how to engage with all of London’s communities which provides comprehensive guidance and good signposting.

29. The Reputation Survey work segments results by BAME, commuters, leisure users, gender, people with mobility problems, students, off peak users, non-users, weekend users. There is also some analysis by social class and age.

30. Examples of excellent engagement include:

- Working with disability groups around bus improvements

- Consultation with a wide range of forums and external events e.g. Barking and Dagenham Access Group; Age Concern Hillingdon, Wandsworth Mobility Forum; Royal National Institute for Blind People (RNIB); Richmond Equality Partnership; London Civic Forum
- High levels of consultation and engagement with key stakeholders and user groups in the design, prototyping and implementation in the Victoria Line upgrade
- All Surface transport consultations are available on line
- Commitment to working with the 'On the Buses' report of London Age and Transport for all

31. Engagement with young people is excellent. TfL has a Youth Panel of 14-25 year olds who act as advocates cascading information or adding it direct to the website. Other stakeholders are also involved. TfL is involved with youth councils, youth parliaments, children's services, youth workers and a number of groups such as Nutmeg and Whizz Kids. There is educational engagement via the London Transport Museum's 'Inspire' programme and related ambassadors. The last engagement programme on the central line was an artist-led project for young people in Tower Hamlets and Newham exploring communication which was also funded by the Arts Council. Communication is targeted at young people – LIP marketing campaign. The schools and young people group meets quarterly with a senior director of Surface Transport. The London Transport Museum holds sessions with children in years 5 and 6 around safety and behaviour on public transport.

32. London Underground commissioned Royal Institute for Deaf People (now called Action on Hearing Loss) to conduct an evaluation of the induction loop systems and produced a clear action plan in response.

33. The communications and marketing team maintains an internal stakeholder network which facilitates information sharing across the organisation; keeps an up to date list of contacts; enables easier consultations and campaign co-ordination. A monthly stakeholder newsletter is circulated by e-mail. Articles include issues which relate to research/data e.g. children and young people safety on roads, crime and safety, disabled students and the Step Free tube.

34. The Croydon Tramlink carries 28 million passengers per year. TfL supports junior citizens' events and takes schools on tours of the depot to encourage young people to treat trams with respect.

Areas for consideration:

35. Differential data is not part of performance scorecards. TfL carries out customer satisfaction surveys on the Overground, bus, London Underground etc. Although, equality groups are not published separately, they are routinely

examined. Data on equalities is published in summary on the intranet including trends, profiles, changes and patterns.

5.4 Responsive services and customer care

36. TfL understands who its service users are and there is a strong articulation of 'customer service' within the organisation. The focus on excellent Equalities and inclusion practice has resulted in tangible benefits for all travellers.

37. Comprehensive customer satisfaction studies are undertaken as a matter of routine using a variety of methods. These have identified and met gaps in service use, e.g. young disabled people were unhappy with the Dial a Ride service so a traveller mentoring scheme was introduced to help access mainstream transport. TfL are also developing travel support cards to give disabled people improved access to the travel network. The Dial a Ride service is a good demonstration of continuous improvement. Having taken over responsibility for it in 2002 from charities, TfL has been clear that accessible transport is not an optional extra but firmly part of mainstream provision. At the same time TfL has maintained strong user involvement with the scheme to ensure it continues to meet need.

38. The Safer Travel at Night Scheme has clear outcomes and successes are based on a good understanding of the issues.

39. The DLR Ambassadors Project is anchored in a dialogue with local communities to help overcome hurdles to using the service and has demonstrated how encouraging access can broaden the experience of vulnerable and traditionally hard to reach sections of the community, for example older people or others from some BAME groups.

40. The smart phone live bus department information is superb and is a key part of the Safer Travel at Night scheme and meeting the needs of disabled users.

41. Procurement is cutting edge. During the East London Line procurement, work was undertaken with contractors to embed equalities and diversity principles and supplier diversity. Major contractors such as Balfour Beatty Carillion mainstreamed an understanding of diversity in their other contracts. Better retention of staff has been one outcome from employing local people.

42. TfL makes use of the central office of information and best practice on accessible digital consultations. Work has been done to increase access to consultations using digital media. The Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) shows good consideration of impact/nature of mitigations. Internet user testing was done by people with a range of disabilities across a range of services e.g. oyster card; congestion charge; journey planner; weekend travel.

43. TfL has achieved the Crystal Mark award for plain English. There has been an accessibility audit of the website and improvements put in place. The audit is about to be repeated.

44. The Croydon Tramlink takes effective action to address vandalism as part of reassurance for passengers. It is also introducing better CCTV coverage of tram stops which supports the STAN work. The tramline is completely accessible. Driver training addresses relevant issues for passengers from equalities groups. The Tram Neighbourhood Team is a visible presence for assistance and intervention on the network. There is CCTV at all stations and on the vehicles. There are arrangements with British Transport Police to patrol and prioritise known areas of difficulty. Lighting has been improved and graffiti is removed very quickly. Damaged stock and infrastructure is repaired immediately.

45. TfL has taken an impressively robust approach to bus companies in respect of the proper and consistent use of ramps.

Areas for consideration:

46. The scaling back on 'Step Free' stations was prompted by realisation that the complete programme was unachievable and there has been a suggestion of an alternative policy around equalising journey times. However greater clarity of communication is needed for stakeholders and passengers on the policy that replaces the 'Step Free' commitment.

47. There is a lack of London wide standard bus signs and information for complaints and feedback. One solution could be the use of one prominent phone number and bus ID on every bus.

48. Research shows that some groups and passengers with concessionary fares use buses more and tubes and trains less. Whilst there seem to be no plans to change this, moves to bring Overground rail fares into line with tube fares by 2013 is ongoing, which should benefit equalities groups.

49. Toilet availability on Crossrail stations is a live issue in that toilets may not be provided at every station.

5.5 A modern and diverse workforce

Strengths:

50. Through the Apprentices and graduate trainee programme TfL effectively encourages young people to look to future employment with the organisation.

51. Staff network groups believe that the 'problems' they raise are taken on board by the organisation.

52. Front line staff have progressed to senior management positions in a high quality field, indicating that upward mobility within the organisation is still a possibility for non-graduates.

53. Employees are not afraid to speak out about unfairness or bullying behaviour. The organisation has introduced mediation to resolve grievances. A number of managers have been trained to respond to harassment complaints.

54. The performance development scheme is well established throughout the organisation and highlights managers' behaviour around equalities issues.

55. TfL has a good record on Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender (LGBT) issues and the organisation is regularly in the Stonewall Equality Index of the top 100 organisations nationally.

56. With 'more a nudge than giving direction' there is constructive dialogue with bus companies about driver training and behaviour. Bus driver instruction via the Big Red Book is excellent.

57. The campaign to increase the diversity of drivers of taxi and private hire vehicles used a wide range of excellent materials to target LGBT and BAME communities which are currently under-represented.

58. The Operational Learning programmes evidence shows integration of equalities and diversity issues and has been well received.

59. There is evidence of how a sophisticated understanding of the exact nature of the diversity of the workforce can tackle relationships in the workplace and address performance management issues constructively.

60. LU equality training is being delivered by internal operational staff which has proved to be more effective in getting messages across about the importance of providing a good service for all customers.

Areas for consideration:

61. The difficulty of delivering a coherent Corporate Human Resources system across the TfL network cannot be underestimated. Good practices as well as inherent difficulties exist in each of the business units and further consideration is required about how to ensure that the best becomes standard practice.

62. A reliable system of monitoring all aspects of staff development, progression, satisfaction needs to be developed. Monitoring information needs to be disaggregated to highlight areas of discrimination and disadvantage. Further consideration is required about how to sponsor and encourage potential talent

that exists in the organisation. Meeting both these challenges will be vital in the context of reductions in resources.

63. It was not clear whether responses by equalities groups in the Your Say survey are disaggregated and understood by equalities groups in the same way as the LU Speak Up survey. When the two are amalgamated it will be important to ensure that this detailed level of analysis is undertaken and that the results are used to improve practice, connecting with the staff network groups who have also discussed dissatisfaction rates. This should enhance understanding of the drivers of any differential dissatisfaction and enable wider ownership of any potential improvements put into place.

64. While TfL has a wide range of active staff networks there is an opportunity to further maximise their impact. All networks could enhance their role to ensure performance improvements are secured and understanding of issues and concerns within different equalities groups within the workforce are routinely heard by senior managers. Communications about the potential role of these networks may help this, as there are issues which could be addressed directly, such as the disabled staff network highlighting concerns about a lack of specialism and knowledge around reasonable adjustments.

65. The organisation still needs to encourage more women and BAME graduates to become engineers. Consideration could be given to sponsoring suitable candidates through university.

66. Operational Learning course evaluations are very positive but results are not disaggregated by equality characteristics.

67. Although peers asked for information about the retention of women bus drivers this was not received. TfL needs to ensure bus companies are not indirectly discriminating against women by not providing adequate facilities or not monitoring and investigating allegations of harassment.

68. With regard to taxi and private hire vehicles, the profile of BAME drivers is starting to improve but there is little data on the impact on figures for LGBT and women. TfL should look at why the failure rate for BAME is so much greater than white staff and look at the tests applied to be a black cab driver and decide if all the tests are still relevant given the advances in technology.

6. Examples of innovative projects and initiatives

6.1 Procurement practices

TfL has been very successful in its use of its procurement practices to drive and deliver equalities outcomes for local suppliers and the local labour market. For example the contract with the tram operator has no requirement to employ local

labour or balanced workforce. However the tram operator is taking part in the TfL wide initiative on apprenticeships by offering apprenticeships.

6.2 Independent Disability Advisory Group (IDAG)

TfL has established a group of paid disability advisers to consult with on transport issues. The concept of bringing such a group together is innovative and appears to be useful. The group has allowed TfL access to a 'critical friend' which scrutinises and advises the organisation to enable support for disabled people to travel independently as well as to create an inclusive environment for disabled employees. IDAG meets quarterly and speaks to a range of people within TfL. It has influenced the development and the delivery of major projects and strategies, offering expert and independent advice from a disabled person's perspective.

6.3 Steps into Work

This TfL wide programme started in 2006 with placements for people with learning difficulties at stations. In 2008/9 it expanded to include office based roles. The programme is run in partnership with Remploy and Barnet College who provide a full time job coach and full time tutor respectively. Trainees are on the scheme for twelve months and can gain a level 3 BTEC qualification.

Since the first intake 70 people have been through the scheme and 40% of these have found fulltime employment. Remploy provide additional support to the trainees to help them find work. TfL has employed four trainees in Customer Services who are still working for them.

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