

MOBILITY FORUM REPORTS

6 May 2015

Transport for All Report for Croydon's Mobility Forum

Please find below a short report.

Transport for All's pan London mobility forum was attended by reps from over 20 boroughs – including of course Croydon. The focus on this forum was looking at the historic legal case taken by Doug Paulley against the First Bus group over priority access to the wheelchair space. Doug Paulley and his lawyer Chris Fry were guest speakers at the forum and they spoke about the origins of the case and how their battle led them to the High Court - generating a ripple of media attention on its way.

Also on the morning panel was accessibility champion Lord Holmes who also is a senior figure in the Equality and Humans rights commission which provided funding for the case. Whilst the initial case against First Group was won by Doug, the appeal in the high court went against him. The judge did however put down some recommendations on how improving access to buses for wheelchair users could be improved.

In the afternoon representatives from TfL London Buses, Go Ahead Brighton and Stagecoach were invited to speak about their efforts to improve accessibility. GoAhead in particular has some best practise which could be followed by other bus companies.

Other topics covered included the installation by TfL of some new manual boarding ramps on the Underground. TfA members Alan Benson from Richmond has been working with ramp engineer on a new design of narrower ramps. These are to be rolled out this summer.

Croydon Accessible Transport

Taxi and Private Hire Drivers' Disability Awareness Training

This short course was developed in response to two main demands; first the needs of taxi passengers with mobility problems to be transported safely and in complete accord with the 2010 Equalities Act and legislation at local level and secondly the needs of drivers of accessible taxis and cars to be able to understand these requirements and to carry out their duties safely, confidently and courteously.

Whilst the present course has been limited to a half-day's training in recognition of perceived limitations in terms of drivers' availability, time and resources, when Government legislation makes such training programmes mandatory we propose to extend the course to a full day, which is likely to be the minimum requirement in any case and will also enable us to deliver the material in a more comprehensive way. It

is our intention that this course will be one of the main Government-endorsed training programmes.

The course is backed up by a comprehensive reference book in the shape of the Drivers' Handbook which, it is intended, will be kept in drivers' cabs.

National legislation to which this course relates includes:

- Section 165 of the Equality Act 2010, which places duties on drivers of designated wheelchair accessible taxis and private hire vehicles
- The 1974 Health and Safety at Work Act
- The concept of "duty of care" as enshrined in case law
- The Official Highway Code, pub. The Stationery Office 28th September 2007

Legislation at local level is as follows:

The Brighton and Hove Council (B&HC) licensing authorities specifically require that "...all drivers...are adequately trained in embarking, disembarking and safe carriage of passengers in wheelchairs.

Proprietors must be able to demonstrate to the Authorised Officer that training has been provided upon demand." (Section 28.4 of the Blue Handbook for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Drivers, Vehicles and Operators, 3rd edition, approved by the Licensing Committee of B&HC on the 6th March 2014.) Also section 147.10 states that "All operators will be required to have a document setting out their policies and procedures in relation to those with a disability".

The overall aim of this course is the safety of the passenger and the driver. This is achieved by the following two interlinked objectives:

Objective 1:

Having successfully completed the course, the professional taxi driver will be able to transport passengers with disability issues safely and in comfort and in full compliance with all current relevant legislation and best practice.

Objective 2:

That the driver understands the necessity of carrying out risk assessments, has received sufficient training to be able to achieve this and importantly feels empowered to carry this through and if necessary decline to undertake a job.

Learning outcomes:

At the end of the learning course participants will be able to:

LO1 understand and to be able to comply with legal requirements relating to transporting passengers with mobility and other difficulties

LO2 understand legal requirements relating to the use of disability adapted vehicles

LO3 have acquired the practical skills needed to assist those with mobility needs and “hidden” disabilities

LO4 understand and demonstrate correct and courteous ways of addressing passengers and the appropriate professional etiquette needed when offering physical assistance

LO5 To be able to carry out risk assessments as required and make decisions regarding the carriage of passengers based upon these

LO6 In terms of personal and ongoing professional development, to achieve a high degree of professional expertise in passenger transport.

Attendees will be any professional licensed taxi or private hire driver or anyone engaged in transporting people with significant mobility problems or who are wheelchair users, whether operating accessible or non-accessible vehicles.

Accessible vehicles are those that can take a wheelchair passenger and non-accessible are those which cannot, however a non-accessible vehicle may nonetheless have some adaptations for ease of access/seating and the drivers would still need to complete the first unit of the course. This is the slide presentation and the small element of practical work in seeing guiding and steadying techniques demonstrated by the trainer and having an opportunity to practice these. The multiple choice paper must be completed successfully.

The second unit is the practical training for embarking, securing and disembarking a wheelchair user. This is assessed by the trainer and the assessment sheet completed and signed-off by both trainer and attendee. For drivers of accessible vehicles who successfully complete unit 2 after having completed unit 1 an accessible certificate will be issued.

Drivers who are exempt from manual lifting or manoeuvring are nonetheless required to observe the second unit of the course as this informs their understanding of accessible work in general. They will be issued a non-accessible certificate and could complete unit 2 at a later date and have their certificate upgraded should their circumstances change.

The necessary minimum abilities and qualifications to attend the course are a basic but adequate understanding of spoken and written English and a driving licence. This is to ensure that the course content is understood verbally and that a candidate can complete the simple multiple-choice paper.

Special consideration will be given to those with e.g. dyslexia whereby the questions could be read to a candidate; this is information that would be sought confidentially

from prospective trainees prior to the course itself. However there is a requirement by the Licensing Authority that drivers shall have basic spoken and written English.

In order to obtain certification for an accessible driver the practical assessment must be undertaken, which means that the driver must be fit and well enough to achieve this.

The course would also be offered to inform those involved in the infrastructure of vehicle operations e.g. control room workers, for whom certification would not be necessary and therefore for whom the above prerequisites would not be necessary. They would still benefit from completing the whole course if this is possible, as this will be of enormous benefit when for example taking a booking, as they will have gained insight into the needs of both passenger and driver and this will in turn inform the information gathering process.

London Dial-a-Ride

CROYDON PERFORMANCE

Quarter 4 covering mid-December 2014 – March 2015

	Full Year		
	2014	2015	change
Requests	23,367	22,707	-2.8%
% scheduled	86.0%	89.9%	+3.9
Passenger cancellations	14.5%	16.5%	+2.0
Completed journeys	17,144	17,008	-0.8%

Performance overview:

Compared to the previous year, demand for the Dial-a-Ride service from Croydon residents decreased by 2.8% in the 4th quarter of 2014/15. However, Dial-a-Ride was able to significantly increase the proportion of requests scheduled from 86.0% to 89.9%. This resulted in completed journeys decreasing by only 0.8% despite an increase in the passenger cancellation rate.

Updates on service improvements

- The Dial-a-Ride Local Area Panel meeting covering Croydon will be held on the 9th June and will be attended by representatives of Merton Community Transport. Mobility Forum members wishing to raise issues with the Dial-a-Ride CT partner covering this borough are welcome to attend this meeting. Please contact Dial-a-Ride on the usual number 0345 222 7777 option 4 to

book a place or email DAR@tfl.gov.uk. Non-members are also welcome to attend.

- The development of a new disability equality training module for Dial a Ride staff is continuing, with the details of the course now in preparation following the customer focus groups that took place in March.
- Dial-a-Ride has made amendments to the way that it allocates customers to black taxis, in order to ensure the safety of electric wheelchair users. Following feedback from our taxi sub-contractor it has been established that electric wheelchairs cannot be safely secured in black cabs so customers with such a mobility aid will no longer be allocated to these vehicles in the future.

Discretionary Travel Services

RENEWALS

As of 27 April 2015 28,089 older persons had renewed their passes online (64.14%) and 9,210 had applied to renew by post. This is an excellent response to our request that as many people apply to renew on-line as possible. London wide we had a target of 50% to apply online and our Croydon residents have done us proud. As in the past, there are a significant number of pass holders who have not applied to renew by the expiry date, however it may be that they are no longer able to use public transport so do not wish to renew. Expired passes can be used as flash cards to gain access to free travel until 16th May, however after that date residents will no longer be able to renew – they will need to make new applications.

NEW APPLICATIONS

From 1 July 2015 new applicants for freedom passes will no longer need to go to the Post Office, and the contract with the Post Office ends on 30 June. Over the past year there have been an average of just 140 new applicants for older persons passes each month.

For residents requiring Older Persons Passes there will be three ways to apply for a first time older persons pass.

- A) **CONVERSION:** Those with an expiring 60+Oyster card will be able to go online to “convert” their Oyster card to an Older Persons Freedom Pass two weeks before they reach state retirement age. The conversion portal has been working well for some months now and the increase in the number of residents who get their 60+pass first and later convert it has coincided with the decrease in the number of people needing to make new, first time applications for an older persons’ pass.
- B) **ON_LINE:** It will be possible to apply for a pass online and the portal which is currently undergoing user testing is expected to go live mid-June. There will be a link to the application portal from the freedom pass website at www.freedompass.org and we will update our own website to include this. Branches of Croydon libraries will be working in partnership with London Councils to offer advice and support to any resident who would like to apply

online but needs help to do so or needs access to a computer. For those who have access to a scanner it will be possible to upload proof of identity, address and a photograph to complete the entire process online. Otherwise, applicants who submit an online application can follow on-screen instructions to send their proofs and photograph to London Councils by post to complete their application.

- C) **POSTAL:** By the end of June it will be possible to visit the Freedom Pass website and download and print a new style Older Persons freedom Pass form to complete and submit to London Councils by post for those who do not want or unable to apply online even with help from friends & family or the library staff. **HOWEVER** it is important for everyone, especially support groups to note that a fresh download is required for each application form you wish to print as each download generates a unique barcode. If people incorrectly download once then produce several copies of that download they will all bear the identical barcode which would cause problems once the applications are submitted. Library staff will also have access to an initial stock of a small number of printed application forms to use in the first year of the new application system. However although printed forms will be available the Libraries will not bear the cost of posting these out – they must be collected from the libraries, so anyone attending a library to collect a form might prefer to take their proof of ID, address and photo with them and ask for support to apply online instead. This will have the benefit of being acknowledged immediately and allowing residents to report change of address or lost/stolen/damaged passes in the future using their Freedom Pass account.

For residents wanting to apply for a first time disabled persons pass our application process will initially start in the same way as at present with the completion of a paper form submitted to Travel Services, and applicants will need to submit proof of Identity, address and a photograph to us. However, once approved, the applicant will **not** be required to take a letter of authority and their proofs and photograph to the Post Office. Instead the travel team will be given greater access to the London Councils database enabling us to create new records and order the passes ourselves, making a significant improvement to our customers' journey. In the months ahead London Councils will be working towards developing an on-line application portal for disabled people to use so that they no longer need to complete a paper form or post it and so will have an equal opportunity to access this concession on-line. The on-line route for disabled applicants is taking a little longer to develop as it is not just a combination of identity and age which lead to entitlement, and all the London Boroughs need to agree the questions on the online application. At a meeting of London Councils new applications project group on 28th April we were advised that it is hoped this new on-line process will be available by the end of the year.

London Tramlink

Accessibility Awareness

Tramlink, in conjunction with Disability Croydon have commenced Accessibility Awareness training for frontline customer facing staff.

The course allows guided discussion with the participants on how to recognise additional need, and ease the journey of passengers who may have visible and non-visible impairments.

The course, led by James Kelleher Chief Executive Officer at Disability Croydon is designed to be very active and involves staff learning first hand on the tram travel experiences of passengers.

The course should raise awareness of the diverse needs of our many tram passengers, and is being assessed against a programme of Mystery Travellers.

Town Centre Works

Apologies for the state of some of the stops in the Town centre as we upgrade them as part of the Connected Croydon upgrades undertaken by the Council.

Although it is never nice when you have construction work, you'll see from the dramatic changes to the pavements elsewhere in the Town centre, the stops will be great when the work is completed.

Platform Displays and Tram Announcements.

Again, sorry for the errors that have crept into some of the Destination Displays and the Tram Announcement system. Following the works over Easter we had a fault on the Platform display system which was showing the wrong destinations for some trams in the town centre.

London Overground Rail Operations Ltd

I am pleased, once again, to be at the Mobility Forum. My report for this meeting is relatively short, as there has not been much new information to share since we last met in February.

Train **performance** on the East London Line continues to be a challenge, caused by the ongoing problems at London Bridge. Performance has stabilised somewhat over the past couple of months, but at a level below what we are used to seeing (low 90%).

We are working with Network Rail and colleagues at Southern and Thameslink to continue to improve the level of service that we can provide. More timetable changes to the Southern services will take place in mid-May to make things even better.

As noted in our last report, we are placing **additional staff** at key stations to provide help for the additional people who are using our trains at this time.

As noted previously, **Brockley** and **Honor Oak Park** are now fully accessible. **New Cross Gate's** new lifts are due to open imminently.

The East London Line is now completely made up of **five car trains**.

LOROL takes over the **West Anglia** routes from Liverpool Street to Cheshunt/Enfield Town and Chingford on 31st May, with a full **Turn Up and Go** service from day one.

You may have heard that Transport for London is beginning the search for a new operator for London Overground. LOROL has operated the service since November 2007 and our contract will end in November 2016.

The process to decide who runs the Overground after that point has begun and a decision will be made in early to mid-2016.

LOROL is owned by two companies, and they are currently deciding how or whether they will bid to run the Overground again – we can expect more news on this shortly

If anyone has any questions or would like me to speak to any other groups that they are involved with, please let me know

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CROYDON PUBLIC TRANSPORT NEWS

London Buses

Tender News

119 (24 hour) re-awarded to LG Metrobus with double deck, type to be confirmed, PVR 16 with 17th AM peak bus linked to 202. Start date 29 August 2015

198 re-awarded to Arriva London South with existing fleet double deck buses currently on route 135, PVR 12. Start date 29 August 2015

264 (24 hour) re-awarded to Arriva London South with existing fleet double deck vehicles released from New Routemaster conversions PVR 15. Start date 29 August 2015

312 re-awarded to Arriva London South with new and existing electric single deck, PVR 7. Start date 5 September 2015. The route will continue to terminate and stand at TC garage.

405 re-awarded to LG Metrobus with double deck, type to be confirmed, PVR 10.
Start date 29 August 2015

Plans for changes in the New Addington area involve withdrawing the T31, T32

Changes to the 64,130,353,359

Details later

London Tramlink

There is a significant amount of work to be undertaken at Wimbledon Station itself including the moving and protection of Network Rail cables prior to the construction works commencing. This work will commence in January however due to our requirement to keep Wimbledon Station open during the Wimbledon tennis fortnight the work has been split into two packages. The first, London end will be completed before Wimbledon fortnight and the second which involves the closure of the existing Tramlink platform will occur after the tennis with the new platform open late 2015.

Tennison Rd Railway Bridge

Unfortunately, the company carrying out this work has advised that instead of opening in April as planned, the bridge will not now be open until June 16.