
Secretariat memorandum

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Agenda item: 8

LTW557

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Update on implementation of the recommendations of the Mayor's ticket office review

1 Purpose of report

- 1.1. To advise members on the progress made on implementation of the recommendations arising from the review of ticket office closures on London Underground.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1. Members are asked to note the report.

3 Background

- 3.1. The London TravelWatch review made the following recommendations:

1. Staff should be available to assist passengers at all stations
2. Staff should stand out from the general public as their visual presence is of fundamental importance to passenger feelings of safety. To achieve this, staff uniforms should be made more visible through use of brighter colours
3. There should be a clear focal point in every station where passengers can find staff
4. Assistance for passengers with disabilities and those who are unfamiliar with the network should be consistently available
5. Staff should avoid grouping together, and should be proactive in looking for passengers who may require help or advice
6. Staff should have local knowledge of stations at which they work, using their iPads to assist passengers with onward journeys where necessary
7. Signage on ticket machines should be updated so that passengers are clear about the different functions available at the different machine types

8. More broadly, TfL should consider how they can make passengers more aware of what products and services are available to them at ticket machines
9. Ticket machines should be updated to provide a wider range of functionality
10. Annual season tickets should be available to purchase on ticket machines
11. The 48 hour restriction on Oyster card refunds should be removed
12. Help point routing procedures should be revised to ensure that calls made by passengers are always answered
13. Hearing loops should be available and clearly signposted at every station
14. Visitor Centre messaging, branding and opening hours should be adjusted to make their purpose, location and availability clear to all passengers

4 Progress against these recommendations

- 4.1. TfL published an immediate response to the review which can be found at the end of the original report to the TfL Board of 15 December 2017¹.
- 4.2. Since then there has been progress on a number of recommendations, but others have taken longer to implement.

5 Staff availability

- 5.1. Following the review TfL agreed to recruit additional staff (325 posts, 125 part-time and 200 full-time) to station roles and also to amend working practices to improve staff visibility in ticket halls. Staff are being recruited and allocated to stations in accordance with previous stations by station reviews.
- 5.2. Many of these people will be rostered at “Metro” and “Local” stations, which should considerably improve staff visibility at these locations.
- 5.3. Stations with the lowest visibility scores across the network have implemented local action plans to improve the visibility of their station staff. The plans included measures such as local roster adjustments and ticket machine functionality refreshers. These plans are having a positive impact, with staff presence scores at the worst 30 performing stations increasing from a low of 58 in Period 9 to 71 in Period 2 (latest results).
- 5.4. Discussions with TfL have suggested that the additional staff (once trained) and amended working practices have improved staff visibility at stations, but not as much as had been hoped for. TfL attribute this to low staff morale, and the continuance of behaviours and practices amongst staff from the previous pre-ticket office closure patterns of working.

¹ <http://content.tfl.gov.uk/board-20161215-item14-ticket-office-review-final.pdf>

6 Staff uniforms and passenger safety

- 6.1. New red high visibility vests have been tested with staff engaging with passengers at stations. A rollout of the final design garment is underway at present. Staff have also been issued with new cases to carry handheld devices.



Figure 1: Red High Visibility Vest

- 6.2. TfL commissioned a poster campaign on their stations highlighting the availability of staff and the first to last train coverage from January 2017 onwards. There has also been a review of CCTV coverage and lighting at London Underground stations.

7 Lack of focal point at stations

- 7.1. A number of example types of 'focal point' were trialled at various stations of different types across the network.
- 7.2. London TravelWatch carried out a mystery shopping exercise of these trial focal points in May 2017. The results of this are attaches as Appendix A. Our assessment is that of the trial installations put in so far, these have not met our expectations for such focal points.
- 7.3. The mystery shopping exercise result was also reflected in research that TfL commissioned to look at this issue also.
- 7.4. Customer Service Assistants were provided with red high visibility vests (as above in figure 1) to wear in the ticket hall to increase their prominence to customers. The dark red vests had "Here to help" written on the back with an 'i' symbol for information. Passengers (according to TfL) responded very positively to the improved visibility. Phase 2 of the trial will test a brighter red version of the vest, coloured to match the red in the uniform, at five further stations.
- 7.5. Information zones at a number of stations were enhanced, using eye-catching wall and floor vinyls (figure 2). Research found visibility of the information zones was improved by enhancing the surrounding wall, but little benefit from the installation of floor vinyls. Passengers indicated that high level signage to some information zones would be beneficial.
- 7.6. For the trial period, a member of staff was located at the information zones (figure 3).

- 7.7. From a passenger perspective, this provided a clear focal point on the station for customers to get the help they needed. However, at some stations, staffing the information zone throughout the day presents an operational challenge to London Underground.
- 7.8. TfL also tested ways to improve the visibility of customer help points (figure 4). While an improvement, customer research suggest still more needs to be done to highlight the location and function of help points. Many passengers see the help points as a passenger alarm only, and not an option for obtaining general assistance.

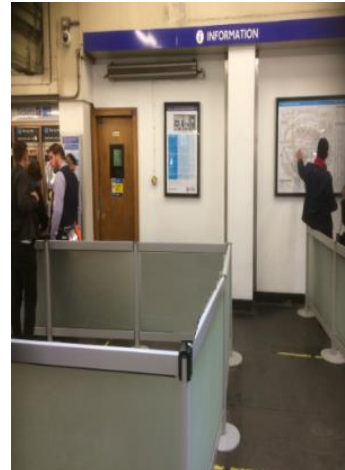


Figure 2: Enhanced information zone. Figure 3: Staffed information zone



Figure 4: High visibility help point

8 Assistance for passengers with disabilities

- 8.1. A review was carried out of the 'turn up and go' process, with staff iPads being used to improve the consistency of the service e.g. by confirming staff attendance at destination and interchange stations.
- 8.2. TfL has committed to improving their turn up and go service for disabled and older passengers. As a first step, TfL carried out a survey of passenger and staff experience with the current process. Feedback from 70 disabled passengers and a number of station staff was collected to understand where TfL can improve.

'Turn up and go' Issue	Improvement planned
Passengers are not always met at interchange or destination station as planned	Developing an app to support the 'turn up and go' process to reduce the likelihood of not being met. As a quick-win, we are changing the process to ensure staff radio ahead with a passenger's destination and requirements
Trains may terminate early or be re-routed	Build communication with Service Control and Train Operators into the process improvement plan for 'turn up and go'.
Some staff are reluctant to provide assistance or they think they cannot leave the gateline	Staff communications and myth busting briefing
Passengers cannot find a member of staff to help	We plan to trial a new help-point at East Acton that connects to a staff member's iPad to help passengers to get the help they need when they arrive at stations.

9 'Grouping' of staff can make it difficult for customers to ask questions

9.1. This is a related point to general staffing levels.

10 Staff local knowledge

10.1. A review was carried out of local information available on handheld devices. In addition as part of the change programme many staff were allocated to stations that they not previously worked at. As this has now become more settled staff local knowledge of their new stations and local environment should improve.

11 Signage on ticket machines should be updated so that passengers are clear about the different functions available at the different machine types

11.1. Signage has been updated to differentiate machine types. Fare posters have been amended to include information on other ways to purchase tickets e.g. online or via contactless payment card.

12 Ticket machines should be updated to provide a wider range of functionality

12.1. Ticket machines have been updated so as to allow the purchase of Boundary Zone extension tickets and also for Railcard discounts on through tickets to National Rail destinations from 21 May 2017.

12.2. A new Oyster 'app' is being developed that will allow passengers to purchase Oyster products online such as 'Pay as you go' and Travelcards, and collect these from any station or bus within 30 minutes of purchase, without the need to use a ticket machine. This is currently being trialled and should be publicly available by the end of 2017. This will not be available to passengers using pre-2010 issued

(first generation) Oystercards, but they will be offered the option of changing their card.

13 Annual season tickets should be available to purchase on ticket machines

- 13.1. This recommendation has not been implemented and as noted at previous London TravelWatch Board meetings TfL's response does not seem to address the issues faced by Annual Season Ticket holders. London TravelWatch has subsequently commissioned research on the needs of Annual Season Ticket holders, the results of which will be presented to a future meeting.

14 The 48-hour restriction on Oyster card refunds should be removed

- 14.1. Information to warn customers of the 48-hour refund rule was added to ticket machines in May. Work continues to determine how this functionality can be improved, while still providing adequate protection against fraudulent use. Work to reduced the duration when a refund is not available to 24 hours is underway and should be ready early in the New Year.

15 Help point routing procedures should be revised to ensure that calls made by passengers are always answered

- 15.1. A new help point strategy has been implemented with a review of help point locations, and the use of new technology where appropriate. This also includes a commitment to move help points where these are not in the most appropriate places for passenger or operational use.

16 Hearing loops should be available and clearly signposted at every station

- 16.1. All stations are fitted with induction loops and these need to be clearly sign posted.
- 16.2. Initially a number of portable hearing loops were trialled in January 2017 but were found to be unsuitable for use within Underground station environments due to the high levels of background noise and electrical interference. Following this initial trial, TfL conducted a further test of the neck-loop variant of the device utilising staff iPads in May (figure 5). The device worked well and allowed the conversation to move to quieter areas of the station with less interference.



Figure 5: Neck loop design hearing loop

- 16.3. However, the hearing aid users taking part in the trial recommended using “voice to text” functionality on the iPads as an alternative method of communication with hearing impaired customers. Some new hearing aids do not support hearing loop functionality and the customers taking part in the trial preferred “voice to text” as a form of assistance.
- 16.4. TfL will continue to research the use of neck loops with a wider group of hearing aid users, whilst additionally providing station staff with some guidance on using voice to text to communicate with hearing impaired customer using their handheld devices.

17 Visitor Centre messaging, branding and opening hours should be adjusted to make their purpose, location and availability clear to all passengers

- 17.1. Visitor centres have had their profile raised on the TfL website and there is also additional signage within London Underground station to them. The tube map index has had a small ‘I’ symbol inserted to denote a visitor centre at the station, but it is not very prominent. The opening hours of some Visitor Centres were extended, and the hours at Kings Cross St Pancras and Victoria were extended by an additional hour on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays. Usage will be monitored over the summer period and the additional hours reviewed in September. No Visitor Centre is open beyond 6.00 pm on a daily basis, except Heathrow Airport which closes at 8.30 pm. The information on the TfL website Visitor Centre section does not give prominence to the transport ticket selling function, but the Fares and Payment section does mention this.

18 London TravelWatch priority

- 18.1. The issues raised in this report impact on all users of London Underground stations, and so have a high priority for London TravelWatch.

19 Equalities and inclusion implications

- 19.1. There are various implications arising from this report for disabled people as outlined above.

20 Legal powers

- 20.1. Section 248 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 places upon London TravelWatch (as the London Transport Users Committee) a duty to consider - and where it appears to the Committee to be desirable, to make recommendations with respect to - any matter affecting the functions of the Greater London Authority or Transport for London which relate to transport (other than of freight).

21 Financial implications

- 21.1. There are no financial implications for London TravelWatch arising from this report.