

## 1. Introduction

This report outlines the impact we have made through our influencing activity: in the media, through social media and our website and at meetings we have attended. The statistics refer to April and May 2020.

We made an impact in a number of areas relating to the Coronavirus pandemic including holding a successful webinar, our joint survey work with Transport Focus and our urgent questions to TfL and train companies after the Government's announcement on 10 May.

Due to the switch to reporting to a public Board meeting this report does not contain confidential website viewing or social media figures. These will be circulated separately to the Board at the end of the quarter.

## 2. Our communications work

This section is split between impacts and outputs and includes an attribution rating for the impacts which makes it clear how much influence we actually had in the achievement. This will use a scale of 1-5 (where 1 is 'contributed' and 5 is 'made it happen').

### *Impact this quarter*

### 2.1 Ensuring operators take passengers' safety and security into account as more people started to return to work

*What was the issue?*

The Government announced on 10 May that those workers who could not work from home but were not regarded as key workers could start returning to work but should avoid using public transport if possible. However, many people in London have no alternative to public transport.

*What did we do?*

We [asked TfL and rail companies](#) a series of urgent questions that need to be answered to ensure passengers can travel safely and maintain social distancing when travelling by public transport in the capital.

*What was the outcome?*

TfL and train companies responded within a couple of days with answers to our questions which we summarised on our website. TfL also published a list of times and stations to avoid on their website and c2c published details of their busiest services and encouraged people to avoid them.

**Attribution rating: 3**

*How did we claim the win?*

We tweeted about our progress and updated our website accordingly.

*Next steps*

We will continue to monitor progress and press TfL and train companies to do all they can to reassure passengers and ensure they can travel safely.

## **2.2 Refunds for Eurostar passengers**

*What was the issue?*

Eurostar passengers were not able to get automatic refunds for tickets they had booked but were unable to use despite being unable to travel during the lockdown. Passengers wishing to cancel their journey in advance were offered vouchers instead of refunds if their train had not yet been cancelled.

*What did we do?*

We raised the issue with Eurostar saying that all passengers should be entitled to a refund and those who had been given vouchers should be able to exchange them for a full cash refund.

*What was the outcome?*

As a result of our intervention, all passengers who are unable to travel are now able to apply for a refund and those who have previously accepted vouchers and had their train subsequently cancelled can now exchange their vouchers for a refund.

**Attribution rating: 5**

*How did we claim the win?*

We updated the refund page on the website to explain the new situation.

**Outputs this quarter**

## **2.3 Transport user experiences during lockdown**

*What was the issue?*

We wanted to find out about the experiences of those still travelling around London during the 'lockdown', particularly key workers.

*What did we do?*

We worked with Transport Focus who sent a survey to over 15,000 members of their transport user panel on 2 April which asked about their experiences of public transport during lockdown. It also asked questions about people's experiences in attempting to claim a refund on season tickets.

*What was the output?*

We put together a report covering the London results (based on several hundred responses from a total of around 5,000) which we sent to key stakeholders and journalists. We featured in two stories in the Daily Mail (daily readership of 1.5m and 14m daily unique daily website browsers) which mentioned the findings.

## **2.4 Passenger attitudes towards returning to public transport after lockdown**

*What was the issue?*

We wanted to gauge passengers' attitudes towards returning to public transport after lockdown to give us a body of evidence to draw on in our discussions with the industry and ensure we are best placed to provide passengers with reassurance.

*What did we do?*

We worked with Transport Focus to develop a weekly omnibus survey which would enable us to look at how Londoners' attitudes towards returning to public transport compared to the rest of the country. The survey began at the start of May.

*What was the output?*

The London results featured in articles in the Daily Mail, Global Rail Review (circulation 7,000 and 29,000 unique website views a month), Passenger Transport (over 200,000 unique visits to its website each year) and bus and coach industry magazine, Route One (circulation of 7,000 and 30,000 unique website visits a month).

## **2.5 Emerging from lockdown – leading the debate**

*What was the issue?*

We wanted to lead the debate as decisions were being made about post-lockdown transport in London.

*What did we do?*

We organised a webinar, *Emerging from Lockdown* on Zoom and broadcast it on YouTube. We had a diverse panel including Deputy Mayor for Transport, Heidi Alexander and gave stakeholders and members of the public an opportunity to attend and ask questions.

*What was the output?*

The webinar was viewed by a peak audience of 220 people, with an average of 200. After the event the on-demand video on YouTube was viewed by almost 1,100 people. Our live tweets had almost 27,000 impressions (the total number of times tweets are seen by users [although they don't necessarily click on the links and this includes repeat views]) with 65 retweets and 92 likes. The webinar has also provided us with an opportunity to develop stronger relationships with some of the attendees as well as some useful intelligence to feed into our discussion with TfL and train companies.

## **2.6 Our 10 asks for transport users**

*What was the issue?*

There were a number of issues relating to public transport that needed to be resolved for passengers following the Government's announcement on 10 May that people who could not work from home but were not regarded as key workers could return to work.

*What did we do?*

We produced a series of 10 asks for TfL, train companies and councils to make sure that public transport could cope with an increased number of passengers as more people start to return to work in London.

*What was the output?*

A few operators have acted as a result of our asks:

- TfL have published a list of their busiest stations
- C2C have identified West Ham station as one to avoid and identified their five busiest services.

## **2.7 London TravelWatch guide for people returning to public transport**

*What was the issue?*

Many people returning to public transport on 1 June would not have travelled for 10 weeks and may have been unaware of what to expect and concerned about issues such as crowding and ability to social distance.

*What did we do?*

We produced a guide to give passengers an idea of what to expect when schools started reopening on 1 June and as non-essential shops begin to reopen.

*What was the output?*

As a result, our Director did an interview for BBC London news (which tends to get between 20-30% of the audience share when it airs) on 1 June where she spoke about the challenges of increasing numbers of people travelling on public transport as lockdown eases.

### **3. Other media coverage**

Our Director wrote an article for Local Transport Today (which has 20,000 print subscribers and 20,000 online subscribers) on travel in London after lockdown and the Daily Express (daily circulation of 300,000, with around 5m unique website visits) published a comment piece from her following the Prime Minister's announcement on 10 May about the easing of lockdown.

Our Director also did interviews for BBC London News on the TfL bailout and featured in a piece for BBC Scotland on what passengers in Scotland could expect as lockdown eases.

We featured in an article on problems people are having getting season ticket refunds in the Evening Standard (which has a daily print circulation of 860,000, a daily readership of 1.6m and 600,000 unique daily visitors to its website)

We also featured in articles in a number of local newspapers and on websites including the On London website (run by former Guardian journalist, Dave Hill, which receives around 25,000 unique monthly visitors).

### **4. Events and meetings**

We held a successful webinar *Emerging from Lockdown* on 6 May (mentioned earlier). We are currently in the process of planning a joint webinar with Transport Focus for early July which will look at what transport users need from providers to enable them to travel with confidence post-lockdown.

## 5. Popular news and pages on our website in April and May 2020

As mentioned in the last communications report, the number of unique visits to the London TravelWatch website fell in mid-March, presumably as fewer people were using public transport. April visits were also at a similar level but the number of visits started to increase in May, coinciding with the easing of lockdown and more people starting to return to work after the Prime Minister's announcement on 10 May. There were spikes when we published our 10 asks for the transport industry in mid-May and our guide for people returning to public transport on 1 June.

The most popular webpages in April and May were:

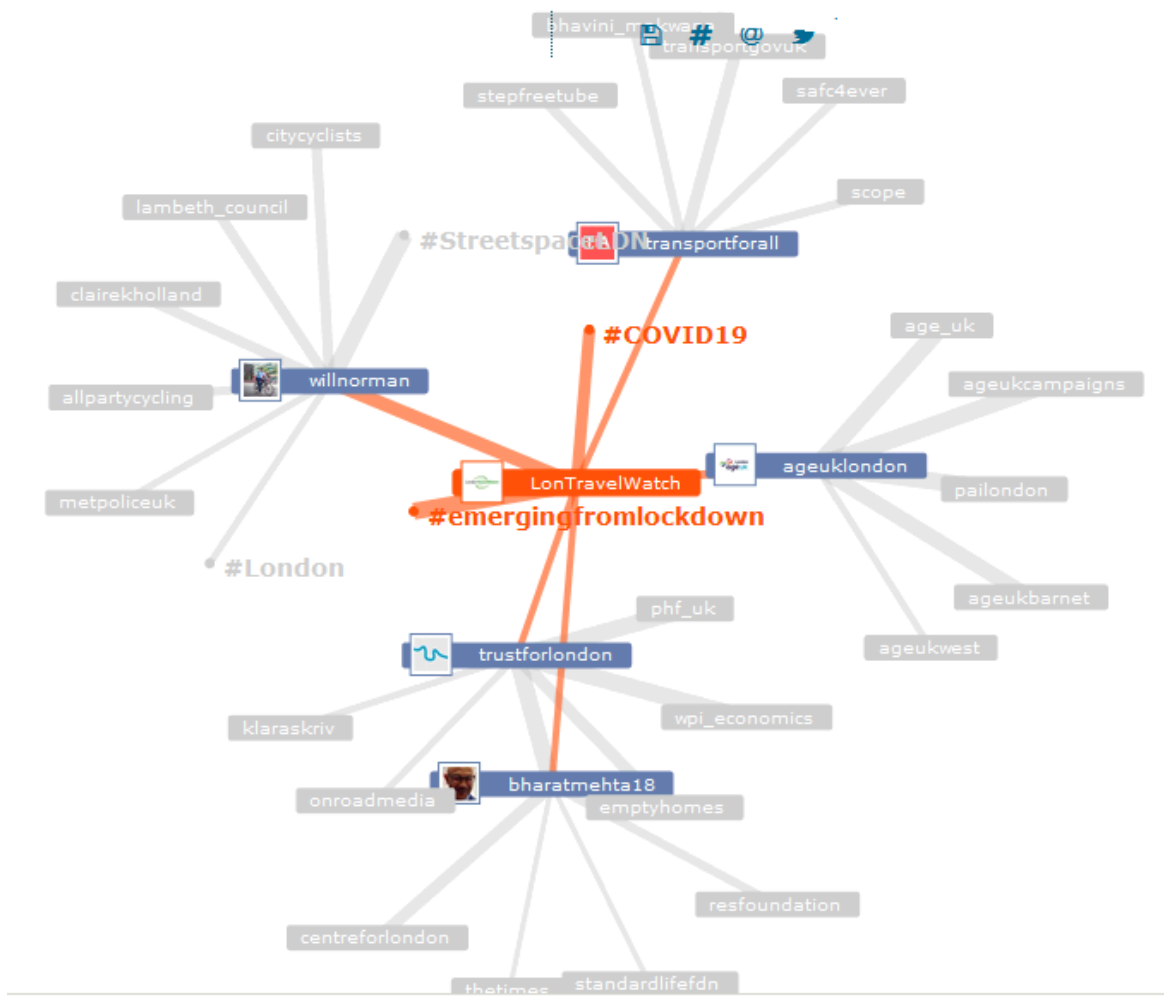
1	/home/
2	/faqs/general/freedom_pass
3	/refunds_and_compensation/season_tickets_information_for_passengers_seeking_refunds_during_coronavirus_crisis
4	/faqs/oyster/where_can_i_use_my_pay_as_you_go_oyster_card_
5	/faqs/buses/can_you_tell_me_about_the_freedom_pass_and_concessionary_travel_

The most popular news items included our advice on season ticket refunds, our blogs; emerging from lockdown, cycling through the crisis and essential journeys for key workers; and the story on our omnibus survey work with Transport Focus.

More detailed website statistics covering the whole of the first quarter of 2020/21 will be circulated to members separately.

## 6. Social media

The 'mention map' below shows the people who have connected with us on Twitter during the past two months, their connections and popular associated hashtags. It shows the diverse connections you can make on Twitter and the potential to reach a wider audience through prolific tweeters with a broad range of followers.



Detailed social media statistics covering the whole of the first quarter of 2020/21 will be circulated to members separately.

## 7. Recommendation

Members are recommended to note this report.

**Richard Freeston-Clough, June 2020**