
Communications update

Author: Richard Freeston-Clough, Head of
Communications & Policy

Agenda item: 7
LTW680
Drafted: 01.03.22

1 Introduction

This report provides an update on our media coverage and the impact we have made on social media as well as some website statistics covering January to March 2022.

2 Our media coverage

We have had a really successful couple of months in terms of media coverage, featuring in numerous articles in both the national and London press and taking part in nine media interviews.

Our biggest success came when we responded to the decision to increase bus fares in London by 6.5%, when the overall TfL fares increase was 4.8%. We took part in four interviews on the topic: LBC Radio (which has almost 700,000 weekly listeners), Greatest Hits Radio (which was syndicated to other commercial radio stations like Classic FM), BBC London News and the Evening Standard podcast. We featured in articles in the Telegraph (monthly print reach, 2.6m; monthly digital reach, 22m), the Evening Standard (daily print circulation of 860,000, a daily readership of 1.6m and 600,000 unique daily visitors to its website) the Daily Mail (daily readership of 1.5m and 14m daily unique daily website browsers) and the Guardian (print circulation of 170,000 and a daily average of 10.3m unique website views).

The Evening Standard covered our personal security research and we did an interview for LBC Radio on our bystander behaviour work.

We appeared in stories in the Standard and Telegraph about train service timetables as well as in an interview with LBC Radio on the same topic. We were also in Guardian and Daily Mail stories about the requirement to wear face coverings on TfL services and when it was removed. We were

interviewed by ITV London News (around 350,000 viewers on a typical weekday) when TfL announced it would be removing the requirement to wear a face covering on its services.

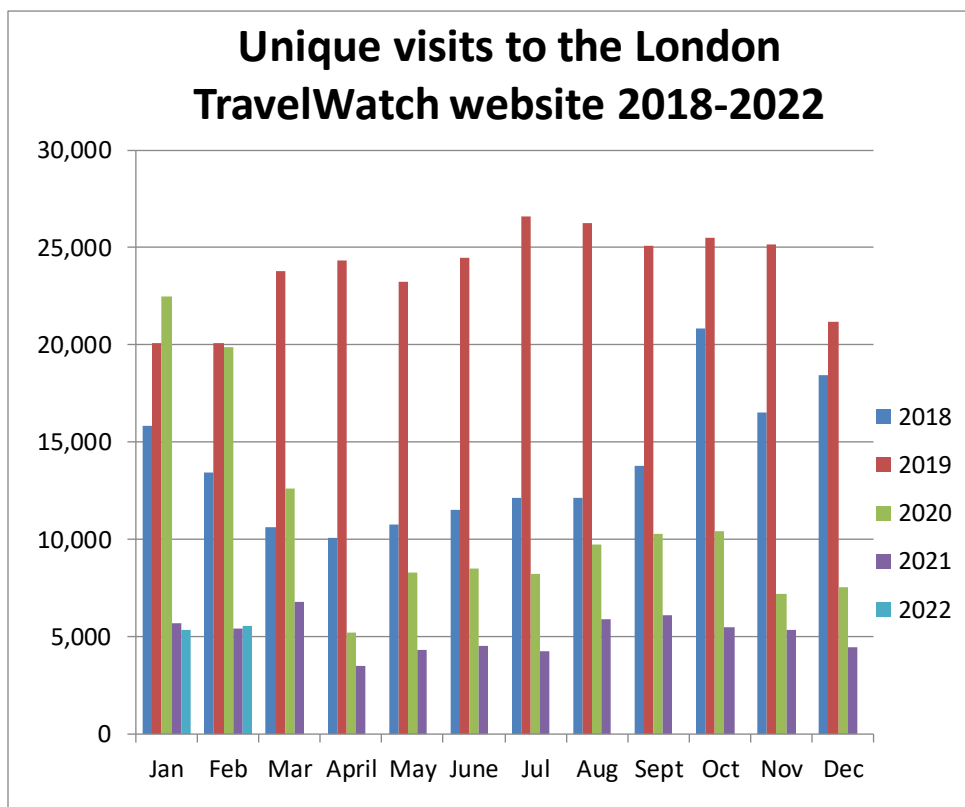
We took part in a radio interview on BBC Radio Surrey/Sussex about the National Rail fares increase and did an interview with BBC London News about TfL's new buses with commuter comforts. In addition we received coverage in several local press articles.

3 Website usage

The graph below compares the website viewing figures for the last few years. There were 5,377 unique visits to the website in January and 5,564 in February. We have maintained our low bounce rate (how quickly someone leaves the website without interacting) but viewing figures remain low compared to pre-pandemic levels for a number of reasons outlined in the last communications report to the board. We are doing some work to improve our website's search engine optimisation to try and improve the quality and quantity of website traffic to our website from search engines. Hopefully this will help boost the numbers over the next few months.

Month	Unique visitors (2021 in brackets)	No of visits	Viewed pages
January 2022	5,377 (5,666)	6,287	9,181
February 2022	5,564 (5,438)	6,465	9,541

The busiest day in the period in terms of hits was 7 January, probably due to some media coverage we received and our social media activity. This was followed by 28 February, probably due to our job opportunities being publicised.



Most popular webpages in January and February 2022

The homepage continued to have the most views and our pages on Oyster and Freedom Passes continue to be popular. When it comes to news/blog items, our blogs on clearing the way for London’s buses and on rising commuter numbers were most popular.

	Page	Page views	% Page views
1	Homepage	3,920	20.94
2	/oyster-and-contactless-payments-where-can-i-use-my-pay-as-you-go-oyster-card/	2,857	15.26
3	/oyster-and-contactless-payments-where-can-i-top-up-my-oyster-card/	1,272	6.79
4	/oyster-and-contactless-payments-will-you-can-you-get-a-receipt-for-your-contactless-payment/	756	4.04
5	/freedom-pass/	748	4

Popular news items/blogs January and February 2022

- 1) Blog: Clearing the way for London’s buses
www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/blog/clearing-the-way-for-londons-buses/ - 75 views
- 2) Blog: Can the train take the strain as commuters continue to return to the office?
www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/blog/can-the-train-take-the-strain-as-commuters-continue-to-return-to-the-office/ - 63 views

- 3) News: New research highlights the importance of maintaining frequent night time Tubes, trains and buses: www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/news/new-research-highlights-the-importance-of-maintaining-frequent-night-time-tubes-trains-and-buses-as-nearly-half-of-women-say-they-avoid-travelling-at-certain-times/ - 60 views
- 4) News: Bus fares increase will hit the low paid hardest: www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/news/bus-fare-rise-will-hit-the-low-paid-hardest-says-watchdog/ - 49 views
- 5) News: London TravelWatch reaction to fares announcement: www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/news/bus-fare-rise-will-hit-the-low-paid-hardest-says-watchdog/ - 47 views

Most downloaded documents

Our personal safety research was the most downloaded item from the website (498 downloads). This was followed by the job description for the Head of Campaigns and Advocacy role (121 downloads) and the job description for the Campaigns and Advocacy Officer role (88 downloads).

Visitor details

Around two thirds of our website traffic came from search engines, with 21% coming direct and 11% coming from website or social media referrals (the main ones being Bus Users UK, LinkedIn and Transport Focus). Google and Bing were the most popular search engines used.

56% of users accessed the website via a mobile phone, with 41% using a desktop computer and 3% using a tablet. Around 56% of people used an Apple device with Samsung the next most popular brand used.

While the majority of views of the website were from users in the UK, we also had views from the USA (2.5%) and Germany (0.69%). In total, we had views from 92 countries.

4 Social media

Between January and February 2022 our Twitter followers increased by 1.2% from 6,071 to 6,143. For every Twitter account we follow, we are followed by an average of 2.6 users, up from 2.58 in the last reporting period.

We received a total of 184 retweets and 381 likes, on a variety of topics. Our tweets received 182,800 impressions.

The most popular tweet came from our thread on bystander behaviour, which received 59,689 impressions. A tweet encouraging the boroughs to free the bus on the roads they are responsible for was also popular with 12,098 impressions.

At the end of February, we also promoted our bus asks for the London boroughs in a Twitter thread which proved popular. The lead tweet had 3,021 media views of our #freethebus video, with 56 likes and 35 retweets. The rest of the thread had 29 retweets and 63 likes. Notable mentions in replies came from Tower Hamlet Living Streets, London Assembly Members and borough council candidates.

Our short personal security videos on travelling safely at night and with tips on how people can be good bystanders were well received on social media. The bystander behaviour videos, which were supported by advertising on Instagram to help us reach our target audience of women and younger people, were viewed almost 23,500 times in total, while our initial launch video was viewed almost 2,000 times.

Another way of measuring the impact of our activity on Twitter is to look at our engagement rate, which measures the amount of interaction people have with a piece of content. It is influenced by users' comments, shares, and likes. Our engagement rate between January and February was 1.8% compared to 2.1% in the previous quarter. Users tend to have an average engagement rate of between 0.5-1%.

The 'mention map' below shows the people who have connected with us on Twitter in recent weeks, 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.



5 Recommendation

Members are recommended to note this report.

Richard Freeston-Clough, March 2022

Appendix – Press mentions/media appearances from January to March

Commuters must wait another six months to spend a penny on South Western trains – 11 January 2022

The Telegraph

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2022/01/11/commuters-must-wait-another-six-months-spend-penny-south-western/>

24-hour bus lanes trial set to become permanent as bus journey times improve – 11 January 2022

Coach&BusWeek

<https://cbwmagazine.com/24-hour-bus-lanes-trial-set-to-become-permanent-as-bus-journey-times-improve/>

Andy Edwards: buses are a vital ingredient in Ireland's climate action plan – 12 January 2022

Go Ahead

<https://www.go-ahead.com/media/blog/andy-edwards-buses-are-vital-ingredient-irelands-climate-action-plan>

Dave Hill: Sadiq Khan is right to start smart road user charging conversation – 18 January 2022

On London

<https://www.onlondon.co.uk/dave-hill-sadiq-khan-is-right-to-start-smart-road-user-charging-conversation/>

Sadiq Khan says Londoners WILL have to keep wearing masks on Tube and buses even as Boris Johnson ends rule for them to be worn anywhere else –
19 January 2022

The Daily Mail

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-10419203/Sadiq-Khan-says-Londoners-wearing-masks-Tube-buses-Boris-Johnson-ends-rule.html>

Let the mask madness begin: Confusion as commuters are told to wear and not wear coverings at the SAME station after TfL and rail firms issued conflicting orders - as some shoppers ditch them ALREADY – 20 January 2022

The Daily Mail

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-10422045/Commuters-face-told-wear-not-wear-masks-train-station.html>

Londoners won't return to work if Tube not at full capacity, Sadiq Khan warns – 21 January 2022

The Evening Standard

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/london-tube-return-work-sadiq-khan-plan-b-funding-government-b977990.html>

Covid train schedules threaten to wreck return to the office – 22 January 2022

The Telegraph

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2022/01/23/covid-train-schedules-threaten-wreck-return-office/>

'I travelled on London's bleakest bus route and it was everything wrong with public transport' – 25 January 2022

MyLondon

<https://www.mylondon.news/news/news-opinion/i-travelled-londons-bleakest-bus-22854944>

Nearly half of women avoid travel at certain times for fear of their safety – 25 January 2022

The Evening Standard

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/travelwatch-survey-women-travel-night-safety-concerns-sarah-everard-sabrina-nessa-b978649.html>

'Lay on more trains to help London get back to the office' – 25 January 2022

The Evening Standard

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/london-work-from-home-office-trains-transport-commuting-b978640.html>

Free bacon sandwiches and coffee to lure commuters back on the railways – 27 January 2022

The Telegraph

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2022/01/27/free-bacon-sandwiches-coffee-lure-commuters-back-railways/>

London bus police patrols under threat due to TfL funding crisis – 7 February 2022

MyLondon

<https://www.mylondon.news/news/zone-1-news/london-bus-police-patrols-under-23007967>

South Western Railway to restore timetable following Omicron disruption – 11 February 2022

The Evening Standard

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/south-western-railway-omicron-commuter-timetable-b982074.html>

London buses: TfL reveals new high-tech eco-friendly buses with USB ports, sunroofs, real-time information screens and more – 11 February 2022

MyLondon

<https://www.mylondon.news/news/zone-1-news/london-buses-tfl-reveals-new-23074306>

New green, productivity boosting buses introduced – but no more will be delivered until a long-term funding deal is secured – 11 February 2022

Transport for London

<https://tfl.gov.uk/info-for/media/press-releases/2022/february/new-green-productivity-boosting-buses-introduced-but-no-more-will-be-delivered-until-a-long-term-funding-deal-is-secured>

The Leader podcast: Why London's been hit by the biggest fare rise in a decade – 14 February 2022

The Evening Standard

<https://www.standard.co.uk/comment/london-latest-transport-sadiq-khan-tube-buses-fare-rise-decade-b982518.html>

Sadiq Khan announces biggest London Tube and bus fare hike in a decade – 14 February 2022

Evening Standard, The Telegraph, The Daily Mail, The Guardian, MyLondon, LBC, On London, Politics.co.uk

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/london-tube-underground-bus-public-transport-fare-ticket-increase-b982405.html>

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2022/02/14/sadiq-khan-raises-tube-bus-fares-beyond-inflation-blow-commuters/>

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-10510527/Sadiq-Khan-hikes-Tube-bus-fees-20p-blames-government-price-rise.html>

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/feb/14/london-tube-and-bus-fares-to-rise-almost-5-from-next-month>

<https://www.mylondon.news/news/zone-1-news/sadiq-khan-announces-biggest-london-23088325>

<https://www.lbc.co.uk/news/london/london-tube-and-bus-fares-biggest-price-rise-decade/>

<https://www.onlondon.co.uk/dave-hill-fares-unfair/>

<https://www.politics.co.uk/news-in-brief/london-transport-fares-to-rise-by-almost-5-per-cent-from-march/>

Uber passengers could face paying up to 20% more in London in weeks after taxi app suffered VAT defeat in court in yet ANOTHER cost of living squeeze – 15 February 2022

Daily Mail

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-10514145/Uber-passengers-face-paying-20-London-weeks.html>

London Travel Fares Set To Increase In Biggest Rise In A Decade – 15 February 2022

Capital FM, The Shade Borough, The English Times

<https://www.capitalfm.com/news/london-travel-fares-rise-tube-bus/>

<https://theshadeborough.com/sadiq-khan-announces-biggest-london-tube-and-bus-fare-rise-in-a-decade/>

<https://englishtimes.uk/london-travel-fares-set-to-increase-in-biggest-rise-in-a-decade>

London Underground: TfL says mask-wearing on the tube to end as government rolls back rules – 21 February 2022

MyLondon

<https://www.mylondon.news/news/uk-world-news/tfl-says-mask-wearing-tube-23169980>

Transport for London drops rules on compulsory face masks – 23 February 2022

The Guardian, The Daily Mail, SW Londoner

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/feb/23/transport-for-london-drops-rules-on-compulsory-face-masks>

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-10542561/The-END-masks-Tubes-trains-buses.html>

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/feb/23/transport-for-london-drops-rules-on-compulsory-face-masks>

Sir Bob Neill MP: TfL must have the tools to help itself – 24 February 2022

Comment Central

<https://commentcentral.co.uk/sir-bob-neill-mp-tfl-must-have-the-tools-to-help-itself/>

Does the government really need to run Transport for London by remote control? – 28 February 2022

On London

<https://www.onlondon.co.uk/does-the-government-really-need-to-run-transport-for-london-by-remote-control/>

Commuters hit by biggest rise in rail fares in almost a decade – 1 March 2022

The Telegraph

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2022/03/01/commuters-hit-biggest-rise-rail-fares-almost-decade/>