

TfL & Unite the Union Update: 2.30pm 2nd April 2020

Attendees:

- [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED] (TfL)
- [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], (Unite the Union)

Apologies:

- [REDACTED] (TfL); [REDACTED] (Unite the Union)

Meeting Notes

Key actions/points:

- [REDACTED] to share two-paged letter with Unite to get their feedback (Tripartite themed letter to ensure consistent comms around current situation)
- Unite to raise any specific concerns which are of concern including those no longer serving food
- Unite to raise concern about any specific relief facilities still of concern
- TfL to reiterate to operators about daily reporting on crowded buses
- [REDACTED] to speak with Metroline about furloughing
- TfL to share lines from CFO with Unite so they can collectively push in a consistent manner with TfL in lobbying government.

General Update

- Travel down 95% on the tube and 85% on the bus. Still running a reasonable service for key workers
- 200 services have moved to an enhanced Sunday service
- Currently not seeing any concerns at pinch points (e.g. Canning Town)
- Sickness levels across operators approx. 20% on average
- NHS Nightingale Hospital has just opened and focus now on transportation for the hospital. Currently transport in/around hospital is only for NHS staff. There is a shuttle service from the new car park to the hospital with G4S staff doing security checks to ensure they are NHS staff. Stagecoach are running the shuttle service
- Relief facility for drivers provided at carpark (portacabin) and at the hotel where NHS staff are staying. This is an ongoing and ever changing situation
- TfL continuing to lobby central government for financial support and hope to have an update with days
- Overcrowding concerns there are two measures in place: (i) NMCC are sending out broad messages to impacted buses and (ii) should it be required (but has not yet) there is a plan in place to put extra buses on for impacted routes

Sanitiser/wipes/bus and garage cleaning

March 27th

- Enhanced cleaning with guardicide started a couple of weeks ago. Generally being done correctly but there have been product and attendance issues but trying hard.
- Sanitisers: TfL have secured some extra resource with 10,000 units expected. Initial allocation based on order of need with some already sent to Tower Transit who have been without.
- TfL trying to buy a production line for a period of time to secure collective resource (50,000 units – hopefully available within 4-6 weeks time).
- Sanitisers: Unite - important to ensure distribution is based on schedules (i.e. to prevent giving to somebody who is about to go off for 7 days) and also based on relief facility availability.

- Wipes: this is the next area of focus but TfL don't have supplies currently.

April 2nd Update

- 10,000 sanitisers dispatched and shared based on priority with the following operators having received: Abellio, Arriva, Metroline, Tower Transit and HCT
- We have shared the ask that the sanitisers are prioritised on routes with limited facilities with local arrangements in place for this.
- An order has been placed for another larger batch (across TfL) and these are due to arrive next week and again will be prioritised for bus operators based on those struggling most with supplies
- No update on wipes but senior manager in [REDACTED] team focusing on this topic more generally
- Face masks: PHE guidance still remains that it is not required for non-NHS staff but should this but TfL will monitor situation with renewed interest in this. However, national shortage of masks means that this will not be easy to source.
- Face masks: agree to get some comms out to drivers to reaffirm PHE position and that also masks readily available online do not have the desired impact
- TC flagged concern on Twitter about some buses not appearing clean. Update from operators is that anti-viral cleaning is being prioritised and therefore some smaller more noticeable bits may appear unclean. This will be addressed in Tripartite letter which [REDACTED] will share with Unite
- [REDACTED] also raised concern about potential cleaner shortages in future

Assault Screens

March 27th

- Film being applied by operators, generally fine but some bus types raised issue of visibility with near side mirror in covering up. So just trying to make sure in covering holes this doesn't create a further safety issue.
- Consideration also for other gaps in the driver cab if applicable (e.g. cash handling bit etc).

April 2nd Update

- Most operators have applied film to cover over speaking holes. Recent spitting incident at Greenford proved it is working
- Still some issues about material used and making sure it doesn't restrict views of drivers. In general there is progress but noted this is work in progress.

Front passenger seats

March 27th

- Notices have been supplied to be used by operators.
- Also press lines about encouraging social distancing
- Paper band/sash is being developed to be used on all seats immediately behind the driver cab to strongly discourage passengers sitting there
- We are working on an announcement in the peak from NMCC to all buses to encourage passengers to space themselves out

April 2nd Update

- Noted about interim use of A4 sign and not being applied on all routes
- First batch of sashes have arrived at Abellio's Walworth garage with more due to arrive today (April 3rd). Abellio will facilitate onwards distribution to other operators.

Remote Meal Relief and canteens

March 27th

- Canteens: pleased with decision after lobbying that government have reversed decision about closing canteens at bus operators
- Canteens: there have been a few local issues where contractors downed tools and operators are trying to get them back up again. Similarly the reinstated advice about canteens being for take away only has resulted in seating being removed from some local cases. Canteens – some specific issues e.g. Cricklewood – [REDACTED] to takeaway
- TfL will follow up with operators and understand what is acceptable for canteen use
- Meal reliefs: TfL performance team has worked through route by route with the performance teams with each operator
- Meal reliefs: majority of locations we've managed to find a resolution, using other facilities or temporary facilities
- Meal reliefs: identifying some priority locations where we have outstanding issues and these will be tackled today and next week with temporary facilities such as portacabins.
- Meal reliefs: we are also parking up buses to provide some space to rest
- Meal reliefs: cleanliness of those – recognise that is the next issue and we have been working all together to get the closest person to help

April 2nd Update

- 20 toilets have been ordered. Discussion on where they go is based on greatest need
- Noted that moving to a Sunday service has allowed some meal reliefs to move back to garages that might previously have been a concern
- Signage out a meal relief facilities to remind staff of social distancing
- Buses are also being parked across the network to help with more space.
- Issue at Harrow has now been resolved but request for Unite to raise any problematic routes with [REDACTED] / [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED] raised Brent Cross as a concern with the foodcourt in the shopping centre now closed. [REDACTED] to feed this into [REDACTED] at TfL
- [REDACTED] also raised concern of drinking water and making sure drivers have access to this. [REDACTED] to raise on bus operator call 3rd April
- Garage canteens – most have reversed issue with seats coming out and they have been reinstated but with social distancing applied
- Unite raised concern about some canteens that did serve food are no longer doing so. [REDACTED] did suggest that in some cases this was because some canteens were selling very little. Unite to come back with any stand out canteens if this is not applicable though

Access to LUL toilet facilities

March 27th

- Really positive conversations with LU over the last few days who are apologetic and acknowledge at a local level messaging perhaps didn't get through.
- Email address for specific issue escalation sent to operators

April 2nd Update

- Dedicated email address given to operators (two or three in TfL who can pick this up). [REDACTED] to share email address with Unite – this is for LU toilets only.
- Couple of locations not fully sorted but we are in the process of escalating with LU

- Some of the recently installed Mayoral toilets (priority 40 routes) are having issue of going through soap and loo roll very quickly. Reports of some soap dispensers forced open and soap taken.
- Acknowledgement that provision of sanitiser and that loo roll less of a contentious issue that this should reduce but that we need to get message out there that if this does continue that this is unacceptable behaviour.

Distancing in garages

March 27th

- Operators are reinforcing this message more can be done
- Positive messaging coming out but there have been some local challenges.
- Highlighted positive example at Go-Ahead where designated offices and suitable occupancy have been made clear along with standing down H&S reps asking them to talk to staff across the week
- Operators putting drivers at standby at home, reduce congregating
- Unite raised concerns about this and it being a big gig economy TU bit sceptical, sounds gig economy, check payments
- Make sure wording on 2m guidance is clear – ██████ to raise with operators
- Suggestion from Unite to use Tripartite forum to put something out regarding messaging on social distancing etc

April 2nd Update

- Many safety reps are being stood down to reinforce social distancing
- Noted the issue with Go-Ahead on Twitter about a briefing being in breach of social distancing. This has been dealt with and ██████/█████ will be raising again with operators

Schedules Changes

March 27th

- Buses have moved to a Saturday schedule
- Most School buses have also come off
- As of yet it has not been split between operators evenly and purely done on demand
- Where demand has gone down further, they will move down to a Sunday service but with the request for some extra services in the morning to cover peak.

April 2nd Update

- 200 routes have not gone to an enhanced Sunday schedule
- 80 odd routes moving to this next week
- Unite request to ensure rostered earnings are not impacted by schedule changes

Sick Pay/Furloughing

March 27th

- Gov guidance come out. Negotiations ongoing.
- Messaging is key, we shouldn't be worrying people.
- ██████/█████ speaking to operators about appropriate messaging not to give drivers undue concern at this time
- All groups need to be considered regarding longer periods of leave: extremely vulnerable; vulnerable; childcare
- People stuck abroad
- More guidance from government expected on this

April 2nd Update

- TfL have still not heard from DfT and therefore cannot provide a substantial update

- Preferred TfL position is the government gives a full settlement. However, until we hear from the DfT on the principles of what money they will be providing we cannot provide any comment on this
- Concern raised by Unite that those self-isolating or shielding are getting statutory sick pay in some instances and that this is not acceptable. Push for operators to pay as per normal and take a short-term hit with furloughing then able to pick this up.
- Metroline highlighted as operator offering furloughing agreement. ■■■ reiterated that TfL had strongly advised operators not to do anything until the DfT has provided an update. ■■■/■■■ to pick up with Metroline immediately.
- Each operator is adopting different approaches in terms of sick pay
- Collective lobbying from Unite on this was agreed as a useful approach. TfL to share lines from CFO with Unite so they can collectively push in a consistent manner with TfL.

Drivers licences – medical and DQC

March 27th

- Issue is with DQC due to expire during this period who cannot access periodic training
- Issue has been raised with traffic commissioner.
- Unite raised point that if licence is not valid then drivers will be in breach of contract
- ■■■ to raise with operators to provide assurance.

April 2nd Update

- DQC – Government announced they are going to extend to 30th September (6 month extension) (see: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-temporary-changes-to-driver-cpc-requirements>)
- Medical licences no update yet
- Operators have also agreed not to apply the contractual clause on licences should they expire because of COVID.
- Hoping to have an answer of DVSA on the medical issue

AOB

- ■■■ to share two paged letter on tripartite comms and ask for Unite feedback
- ■■■ to share Unite newsletter with TfL
- Another call to be arranged Wednesday/Thursday next week.