

Response from Transport for London to Improving door-to door transport in London: Next steps**Recommendation 1**

TfL should review its policy of limiting the distance of Dial-a-Ride journeys to less than five miles. Any new distance limit should take into account differences in population density across London.

TfL already tries to satisfy requests for journeys longer than five miles wherever possible, as per the Dial a Ride Charter. This year (to date) around half (4,470 of 9,899) of the longer distance trips requested have been met.

TfL understands the desire for a more flexible approach to accepting trip requests, particularly in outer London, and will review the existing trip distance limit policy to understand if any increase to the trip limit is achievable without detriment to the overall services – for example, introducing an annual ‘allowance’ of longer journeys for customers.

TfL action date: September 2015

Recommendation 2

TfL and London Councils should investigate why Taxicard usage is falling and why expenditure is significantly below budget. Any underspend from 2014/15 should be reinvested in measures designed to ensure Taxicard reaches all users who need the service.

TfL has liaised with London Councils on the changing demand for Taxicard and agreed to participate in research that London Councils and the boroughs undertake.

The underspend on Taxicard is fairly low; less than two per cent of the funding is underspent and therefore returned to TfL (which is currently funding 85 per cent of the costs of operating the scheme). These returns come from a small number of boroughs where service demand has cost less to provide than the TfL base fund allocation.

TfL action date: London Councils are in the process of commissioning the scheme review work and TfL will feed into their review as required.

Recommendation 3

TfL should delay any decision on the closure of Capital Call until after the conclusion of the Social Needs Transport Review. If the closure goes ahead, TfL should reinvest the Capital Call budget in other door-to-door services and work with London Councils to ensure that Taxicard offers the same service standards and flexibility as Capital Call.

TfL accept the committee's recommendation that the future of Capital Call should not be considered in isolation.

TfL will suspend applications to Capital Call to new members, as we are confident that Taxicard now provides an effective service across all boroughs. However, we will keep it open to the approximately 1,400 people who are currently members, and to anyone who already has an application being processed. We will also work closely with London Councils to ensure Taxicard will continue to offer the same service standards and flexibility as Capital Call.

TfL action date: April 2015 Immediate

Recommendation 4:

NHS England London should instigate a review of the provision of Patient Transport services by NHS Trusts in London, with the objective to define and enforce minimum service standards.

TfL would welcome a review of patient Transport provision in London and would be happy to participate in an NHS led review.

TfL action date: NHS to Progress

Medium-term (within the next 1-2 years)**Recommendation 5**

Consistent eligibility criteria should be established for Dial-a-Ride, Taxicard, Capital Call and NHS Patient Transport, and a single application process for people wanting to become users of these services should be introduced.

TfL welcomes the recommendation and believe that this is a key step towards delivering an integrated service for customers.

TfL will work to deliver consistent eligibility criteria and a single application process for the three services it has whole or part responsibility for - Dial-a-Ride, Taxicard and Capital Call - for people wanting to use these services. TfL is liaising with NHS Patient Transport services on opportunities for including their services within those processes as well, either at the time they are introduced by TfL or at a later date (subject to NHS ability / willingness to do so).

TfL action date: Feasibility Review to be completed by September 2015, delivering a single application process for Dial-a-Ride, Taxicard and Capital Call by March 2016 (dependent on the findings of the review).

Recommendation 6

A single customer feedback system for Dial-a-Ride, Taxicard, Capital Call and NHS Patient Transport should be established. This would enable complaints about all services to be directed to the same place. User surveys should also be integrated across these services.

TfL will work to deliver a single customer feedback system for the three services it has whole or part responsibility for - Dial-a-Ride, Taxicard and Capital Call - along with integrated customer surveys of these services. TfL is liaising with NHS Patient Transport Services on opportunities for including their services this system, either at the time they are introduced by TfL or at a later date (subject to NHS willingness / ability to do so).

TfL believe that this is a key step towards delivering an integrated service for customers of these services and would complement the progress towards this delivered by consistent eligibility criteria and a single application process.

Note that TfL and London Councils already routinely share a range of data to understand usage and performance across the different services.

TfL action date: Feasibility Review to be completed by September 2015, delivering a single customer feedback system for Dial-a-Ride, Taxicard and Capital Call by March 2016 (dependent on the findings of this review).

Long-term (over the next 3-5 years)

Recommendation 7

A single booking process for Dial-a-Ride, Taxicard, Capital Call and NHS Patient Transport should be established. This would enable service users to request journeys from any of these services at a single online source, or from local call centres covering all services.

TfL welcomes the recommendation and will work towards achieving a single booking process across the three services that it funds and/or operates - Dial-a-Ride, Taxicard and Capital Call.

We believe that this would deliver greater customer service, and enable a more efficient way of operating. It is a key step towards delivering integrated services for customers.

As with recommendations 5 and 6, TfL is liaising with NHS Patient Transport services on opportunities for including their services within those processes as well. However, it should be noted that across the four services there are multiple commissioners, and a large and diverse group of providers under various contracts without common termination dates. This is therefore a significant undertaking although we agree with the Committee that the customer benefits would be considerable.

TfL action date: Depending on progress in delivering recommendations 5 and 6, TfL aim to integrate the booking services for Dial-a-Ride, Taxicard and Capital Call by March 2017.

Recommendation 8

All door-to-door services should be commissioned jointly by TfL, boroughs and NHS Trusts. Commissioning should take place at a local or sub-regional level. Commissioners should seek to deliver a mix of regular and on-demand services, operated by public, private or voluntary sector providers. Funding would be provided by TfL, boroughs and NHS Trusts according to existing expenditure levels. The introduction of individual travel budgets for service users should also be considered.

TfL warmly welcomes the concept of joint or integrated commissioning as this supports our long term aims for how we deliver our door to door services.

The ongoing TfL Social Needs Transport review is tasked with providing the foundation for door to door services whether commissioned, operated or funded by TfL.

Changing societal trends are forecast to place additional demands on door to door services, despite the significant accessibility enhancements that have been implemented or are in the course of being implemented on mainstream public transport modes. TfL considers that integrated commissioning is essential to meet these challenges and future customer expectations. The location and form of such commissioning requires further work with partners, and pilot projects are likely to be required to prove best practice.

Delivering of an integrated service as described in this recommendation is necessarily dependent on delivery of recommendations 5, 6, and 7 along with effective engagement and joint working with all stakeholders.

Individual budgets should be explored as part of the solution.

TfL action date: Joint commissioning is a long term objective and is dependent on progress in delivering recommendations 5, 6 and 7. TfL would aim to deliver this in 2018.

Recommendation 9

TfL should review the structure of Dial-a-Ride, as part of the changes proposed under Recommendation 8. TfL should continue to provide the Dial-a-Ride service for the foreseeable future, but it should be commissioned locally rather than operated as a centralised, London-wide service.

The integration of services as proposed in recommendations 5, 6, 7 and 8 and the outcome of the Social Needs Transport review will require extensive planning and effective delivery. The detailed commissioning and service delivery arrangements required will define the new operating model and the future structure of TfL's Dial-a-Ride operation. However, TfL acknowledges the committee's desire for more locally responsive commissioning and will take this on board in the design of any new arrangements.

TfL action date: The structure of Dial-a-Ride will be reviewed on a regular basis and amended where required in line with the timescales for delivering recommendations 5 to 8.