

Subject: Transport Accessibility for Londoners with a Sensory Impairment

Report to: Transport Committee

Report of: Executive Director of Secretariat

Date: 9 March 2016

This report will be considered in public

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report provides the background for a discussion of transport accessibility for Londoners with a sensory impairment.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 **That the Committee notes the report, puts questions on transport accessibility for Londoners with a sensory impairment to the invited guests and notes the discussion.**

3. Background

- 3.1 The Transport Committee has agreed to use this meeting for a discussion of access to the transport network for Londoners with a sensory impairment.
- 3.2 Significant numbers of Londoners have a sensory impairment. For instance, Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) data indicates that around 175,000 Londoners are living with sight loss.¹ The number of profoundly or severely Deaf people in London has been estimated to be over 80,000, although many more live with other forms of hearing loss.² Furthermore Sense estimates that over 30,000 Londoners have a significant dual sensory impairment (deafblindness).³
- 3.3 Transport for London (TfL) has sought to support people with a sensory impairment to use the transport network in a variety of ways. These include, but are not limited to, online information about the accessibility of the network, the digital iBus system in buses to provide audio-visual information on upcoming stops⁴, training of staff in the needs of disabled passengers, travel

¹ <http://www.rnib.org.uk/knowledge-and-research-hub-key-information-and-statistics/sight-loss-data-tool>

² https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/london_assembly_health_committee_-_access_to_health_services_for_deaf_people_-_june_2015_-_updated.pdf

³ <https://www.sense.org.uk/publications/regional-data-future-deafblind-population-london>

⁴ <https://tfl.gov.uk/info-for/media/press-releases/2009/april/all-londons-buses-now-fitted-with-ibus>

mentoring for disabled passengers⁵, and the new Wayfindr app for visually impaired passengers.⁶

3.4 The following terms of reference for this investigation have been agreed for the investigation.

- To explore the challenges facing Londoners with a sensory impairment in their use of the transport network in London;
- To consider how Transport for London and other providers support people with a sensory impairment to access the transport network; and
- To identify ways in which Transport for London and other providers could improve the accessibility of the transport network for people with a sensory impairment.

3.5 On 25 February 2016, the Committee undertook a site visit to explore the challenges faced by transport users with a sensory impairment and TfL priorities in this area. The visit included a bus journey on a new Routemaster bus with hearing impaired passengers, and examining the use of the experimental Wayfindr app for visually impaired passengers at Euston station.

4. Issues for Consideration

4.1 The following guests have been invited to participate in today's meeting:

- David McNeill, Director of Public Affairs and Stakeholder Relations, TfL;
- Sarah Teichler, Customer Strategy Manager, London Underground, TfL;
- Robert Harris, Engagement Manager, Guide Dogs;
- Dr Tom Pey, Chief Executive, Royal London Society for Blind People;
- Roger Wicks, Director of Policy and Campaigns, Action on Hearing Loss;
- A representative of Transport for All; and
- A representative of a train operating company.

5. Legal Implications

5.1 The Committee has the power to do what is recommended in this report.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

List of appendices to this report:

None

⁵ <https://tfl.gov.uk/info-for/media/press-releases/2014/march/travel-mentoring-service-for-disabled-londoners-launches-in-croydon>

⁶ <https://tfl.gov.uk/info-for/media/news-articles/visually-impaired-londoners-trial-new-travel-app>

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

List of Background Papers: None

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