

Meeting Transcript- Transport Committee roundtable with bus drivers (Private Hearing)

Date: Thursday, 9 February 2017

Start Time: 2.00pm

Location: Committee Room 2, City Hall

Attendees:

Caroline Pidgeon MBE (Chair)

Keith Prince (Deputy Chair)

Caroline Russell

Florence Eshalomi

Georgina Wells

Richard Berry

15 Bus Drivers and Representatives

Please note that names and other identifying details have been redacted to maintain anonymity of guest speakers.

1. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** Can I get everyone's attention, please? Thank you so much for coming in this afternoon to meet some Members of the Transport Committee of the London Assembly as part of the bus safety investigation we are doing. We have had a hearing and we wanted to have some roundtables to talk to drivers, operators and campaigners to really understand from you some of the issues you face to help shape our work in trying to influence Transport for London (TfL).
2. We have agreed we will present all the information we receive from today as anonymous, in light of the fact I do not whether some of you have told your employers you are attending. We will produce a transcript but all names and identifying information will be removed to protect you. It may well be that you have told your employers you are here, but you may not. I just wanted to make that clear so that what you tell us today is in complete confidence. We are going to record the discussion so we do not miss anything. We will produce a transcript. We will anonymise it and let you have a chance to look at the transcript before it gets published so you can correct any mistakes. Is that OK with everyone? You are happy with that. Lovely, thank you.
3. I thought maybe to start off with we could go around and introduce ourselves to give us a flavour. You can say which bus company you work for and maybe which sorts of routes you drive so we know whether it is inner or outer London. I am Caroline Pidgeon. I chair the Transport Committee.
4. **Keith Prince AM (Deputy Chair):** I am Keith Prince. I am the Deputy Chair of the Transport Committee.
5. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** Let us go around this way.

6. **Georgina Wells (Assistant Scrutiny Manager, Greater London Authority):** I am Georgie Wells. I am the Assistant Scrutiny Manager for the Transport Committee.
7. **Richard Berry (Transport Scrutiny Manager, Greater London Authority):** I am Richard Berry. I am the Transport Scrutiny Manager for the Transport Committee.
8. **Guest Speaker:** I work for [REDACTED].
9. **Guest Speaker:** Yes, and also [REDACTED].
10. **Guest Speaker:** [REDACTED].
11. **Guest Speaker:** [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
12. **Guest Speaker:** I work for [REDACTED].
13. **Guest Speaker:** I work out at [REDACTED].
14. **Guest Speaker:** I work for [REDACTED]
[REDACTED].
15. **Guest Speaker:** [REDACTED].
16. **Guest Speaker:** I work at [REDACTED].
17. **Guest Speaker:** [REDACTED].
18. **Guest Speaker:** [REDACTED].
19. **Guest Speaker:** [REDACTED].
20. **Guest Speaker:** I am the [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
21. **Guest Speaker:** I am a [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
22. **Guest Speaker:** I am a [REDACTED] in London and central London.
23. **Caroline Russell AM:** I am Caroline Russell. I am also a Member of the Transport Committee.
24. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** Florence [Eshalomi AM], who is another Member, will be joining us shortly. We have just had a committee overrun.

25. We have got an idea of garages, which gives us a flavour right across London, which is fantastic. What I would like, just as an opening sort of question, is to find out what are the most common safety problems you experience whilst driving in London and have you had a near-miss or incident in say the past couple of months? Who would like to go first?
26. **Guest Speaker:** One of the big ones, and probably the most newsworthy ones, are when we come into conflict with cyclists. Obviously from a bus driver perspective - because I am not just going to say this is the problem as there is also a background to it - the conflict with cyclists is probably the most newsworthy. We think the way you plan the roads is not very productive. It certainly does not encourage safety. There is no monitoring of cyclists or there is not very much monitoring of cyclists. You have given them wider lanes which obviously impacts on other road users. I do not think that the plan to manage the other road users, bearing in mind that these cycle lanes have gone broader, is effective. We think that is a concern.
27. Second to that would obviously be straightforward collisions, whether that be with stationary things or other moving vehicles. We believe that is a consequence of the tendering regime. At this moment in time, the tendering regime encourages bus companies to push, push, push. The only thing that matters to a bus company is that they qualify for their Quality Incentive Contracts (QICs) bonus. If you maintain the gaps between buses, or you ensure buses leave on time, there is a bonus. We deal with a lot of the bus companies in London through negotiations. Every single one of them says, "QICs are our bonus". QICs are their profit, so by maximising their QICs they maximise their profit. To maximise their profit through QICs they have to push and push and push.
28. Nowadays there is a system that runs off of the iBus. Yes, it maintains the headways but sometimes it means bus drivers are forced to finish an hour late. Although I accept you are not bus drivers I am pretty confident your most enthusiastic work is not done when you are forced to finish an hour late. The same rolls out right across London. There is very little consideration given to the driver and the fact they have done a whole day and then have to finish an hour late. You can just imagine the other pressures around that because, believe it or not, bus drivers have families as well so their children will not be being picked up. For me, I was fortunate as my partner could live at home and bring up our child. My biggest problem was when I got home very late for dinner because I had been forced to drive. It is called a service requirement. That is an absolute fallacy. I would get home late. That causes me more stress. That stress comes to work with me the next day and so on and so forth. So in short, from a bus driver's perspective, we do not think you have the managed the --
29. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** That is TfL, not us. We are not TfL, just to be clear.
30. **Guest Speaker:** No, OK. Sorry, I apologise. We do not think TfL have properly managed the integration of cyclists. We believe that could have been done better. We do not believe that the contracts system we currently operate is conducive to safety.

31. Sorry, you have got me going now. As a bus driver, when I first started, the rulebook was god. Rule number 1 was that passengers' safety and comfort was the priority. If anyone in this room thinks that passengers' safety and comfort is a priority now you are foolish. Profit is. None of us disagree with that.
32. **Guest Speaker:** I totally agree with what was said. You can feel, as the years continue, the constant roll for profit over people, over passengers. How many times have you been a bus passenger when you have got the message and been kicked off the bus because the bus needs to be turned? This seems to be one of the ongoing things.
33. However, if you are looking at accidents stress is the main cause of the problem.
34. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** We are going to get on to fatigue and stress in the next section so we will go into detail on that, yes.
35. **Guest Speaker:** What was said about the cyclists is dead right. In the narrow roads of London you have this huge bus, it is eight and half feet wide and 38 foot long on average. You have cyclists coming down both sides of the bus and banging on the sides because they want you to move over for them. If you move one way you squash one and if you move the other you squash the other. There is nothing done about cyclists. We constantly have Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC) courses, courses where we are taught to deal with cyclists and look for them. The cyclists are told nothing. They put their head down, pedal like the clappers and everything must move out of the way.
36. **Guest Speaker:** Hear, hear.
37. **Guest Speaker:** Unfortunately, we live in a world where everything is sharing one small space. You have cars and van drivers all driving around like the clappers, everybody is going mad and there is nothing done to actually make the cyclists aware of themselves. They do not understand the magic words, "Give way".
38. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** I have got that on cyclists. I have heard that so I do not need that one repeated. Is there anything else that is causing the common safety problems you are experiencing?
39. **Guest Speaker:** Yes, controllers. I had an experience. I work for [REDACTED] now, unfortunately.
40. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** You get all the different companies and whatever and this kind of shared knowledge.
41. **Guest Speaker:** No, I got forcibly transferred. I was not asked. I got Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) TUPE transferred. Within less than a year of joining [REDACTED] with 27 years' experience, I got told, "Oh sorry, we have lost the route. You have to go to another garage". In our garage we actually had one route transferred three times in a month. The same garage went from [REDACTED] to a garage

that was owned by [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] then sold to [REDACTED]. In a month, I went through three employers.

42. Anyway, the thing about controllers, as I am navigating [REDACTED] I had a controller call me three times. The third time he said, "If you do not answer I will put you on report".
43. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** But you are going around a difficult junction.
44. **Caroline Russell AM:** While you are driving around the corner?
45. **Guest Speaker:** Yes. I waited, I got to my first --
46. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** He or she could see that?
47. **Guest Speaker:** No, they cannot see. They are calling you on the radio. They cannot see what you are doing.
48. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** They cannot see you from their control room?
49. **Guest Speaker:** No. This is the company iBus controllers.
50. **Guest Speaker:** TfL have CentreComm, where they --
51. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** We went to Stockwell, did we not, and they had cameras?
52. **Keith Prince AM (Deputy Chair):** Yes, but that is TfL not the bus company.
53. **Guest Speaker:** Maybe they feed off the TfL closed-circuit television (CCTV) or something. They cannot see you necessarily anyway.
54. **Keith Prince AM (Deputy Chair):** You mean they cannot in the cab? Does that mean they cannot see where you (Overspeaking)
55. **Guest Speaker:** They can locate you on the iBus system but we were going to come back to that later. That is probably out of date and too slow.
56. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** OK, we will come back to that. Yes, so you were at [REDACTED].
57. **Guest Speaker:** I waited until I got to the first stop and I called him and said, "Excuse me, I want your name and your number". Probably not a lot of drivers do this because they are intimidated because people think they are your line manager. He said, "What do you want that for?" I said, "I want to report you". He said, "Oh, just put duty controller". I said, "No, that is not good enough". I told him what had happened and he cut me off. Later on he came on and I said, "I know who you are. I am going to report you." He eventually apologised. I should have reported him but I did not.

58. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** No, but you made your point. So controllers can be quite pushy and aggressive when you are driving?
59. **Guest Speaker:** Yes. It is dangerous trying to call you while you are driving.
60. **Guest Speaker:** The most common safety problem - going away from the cyclists - is other car drivers as well. TfL does this lovely advertisement on television (TV) with "blah-blah-blah". In the 1980s when they did advertisements on the TV for the old London Transport (LT) - bit of a 'bus geek' meeting, these two will know - it was aimed, "This is a bus. This is a car. This is what you do; signal, give way, let the buses out, blah-blah-blah."
61. I am a bus driver and a route controller. A lot of our accidents are with stationary cars parked on red routes. You phone the police. Around where we are we have one police officer who does detecting on the red routes. Traffic wardens - no longer run by TfL - should still be run by TfL for red routes. It would solve a lot of the problems.
62. Advertisements for car drivers as well because of the amount of times we have cars going into the back of a bus, that side-swipe a bus and do not understand about blind spots. If they come down the nearside of a bus the driver cannot see them.
63. We are in [REDACTED] that area of London, and have notorious one-way systems where you have three lanes and the bus needs the two lanes. The problem is coming around on the left-hand corner and there is a car in the left-hand lane not paying attention.
64. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** When you say "cars", is it people in their private cars or is it private hire?
65. **Guest Speaker:** Private cars. Private hires are really bad. They will stop anywhere.
66. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** I have seen pictures of them doing all sorts of things, yes.
67. **Guest Speaker:** Yes. Private cars - any cars really - come along and do not understand the bus will need the two lanes to turn left or sometimes to turn right.
68. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** What about taxis, are they better?
69. **Guest Speaker:** Black Cabs are not too bad where we are.
70. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** I was going to say I thought they would be better, so it is private hire and cars.
71. **Guest Speaker:** Private cars. There is not enough advertisements saying, "Give way to wider vehicles". It is in the Highway Code but it is not advertised.
72. **Keith Prince AM (Deputy Chair):** Whereabouts did you say you work out of?

73. **Guest Speaker:** We work out of [REDACTED]. The [REDACTED] one-way system is one of the notorious ones. There are four of us here who will know the [REDACTED] and the amount of side-swipes we get off cars.
74. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** Let us move on to the next area of questions.
75. **Guest Speaker:** One of our biggest safety issues is not necessarily on the road but what was brought up before, pressure from controllers and managers and stuff like that. It is also our driving hours. Driving tired is one of the worst things you can do. Driving when you are ill with a cold or flu is as bad as driving drunk really. Taking time off for whatever reason is not liked by our managers so drivers come to work when they are not fully fit to drive a bus. I believe our hours are too long. We can drive up to five and a half hours per half a duty, have a minimum of a 40-minute break, and then go and do perhaps another four or five hours if you are really unlucky. My shift this week has been a nine-hour driving duty. That is an awful long time for central London with 100% concentration. It is too long.
76. **Guest Speaker:** Then you will start early today and start late tomorrow or start late today and start early tomorrow.
77. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** The break between shifts as well.
78. **Guest Speaker:** Yes. The minimum is ten hours. You think, "That is OK". However, by the time you get home, have your meal, socialise with your family if you are allowed to, perhaps have a few hours' sleep and then, if you have time, tea and toast and get to work the next morning. This is all allowed, not just with union agreements, but in law as well. Our United Kingdom (UK) driving laws, domestic, are different from say the European coach-driving laws. They drive a lot less than we do.
79. **Guest Speaker:** I would like to agree with what was said. The way the radio system if I was driving along in my bus, I had Bluetooth and was answering phone calls I would lose my job. I could be fined up to £2,500. I can be reported to the Traffic Commissioner and lose my licence, my livelihood, my ability to earn. Yet these companies think it is perfectly acceptable to operate a system which is, in effect, a mobile telephone system through iBus and call us up when they feel like it. They know that we are driving.
80. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** How often are those calls though?
81. **Guest Speaker:** Constant.
82. **Guest Speaker:** At any time you like.
83. **Guest Speaker:** Yes, at any time.
84. **Guest Speaker:** Travel on a bus and sit near the front and listen to what the driver actually --

85. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** I will next time and try to hear how many times.
86. **Guest Speaker:** Yes, please do.
87. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** Several times an hour they are on at you?
88. **Guest Speaker:** Yes.
89. **Guest Speaker:** When I am controller and call you up in our garage - I am saying in our garage - you do not need to answer me because I watch you and can actually see you moving. If I call you up and you do not answer me it does not bother our garage. It is in the rulebook you are not allowed to answer the radio while the bus is in motion. If drivers do answer the radio there needs to be a new system --
90. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** Get them when they are at a stop or something.
91. **Guest Speaker:** I was at [REDACTED] last week. They are bringing a new digital system out next year. It is out of date. When you call the driver up some will answer you and some will not. I feel sorry for what you went through. You should not have gone through that. However, the pressure on the controller to turn the buses is immense. Sometimes it is out of date. I could be looking at you moving but you are two bus stops behind. I could be trying to turn that bus and need to contact that driver before that driver gets too far. There is pressure for the controllers and the drivers. It is not just me. We have our managers behind us. They have to turn that bus at that point. That is where conflict comes for the poor driver, because I have turned that bus early. It should not be like that. It should not work on the QIC bonus.
92. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** I think we have that point. We have got lots of sections to go through.
93. **Guest Speaker:** Before you move off that one - because it is important you understand this - this is not a supervisory problem. If you were to go the company and say, "Your supervisors need to ..." It is not a supervisory problem because the pressure comes from way above there.
94. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** Yes, the pressure is coming down.
95. **Guest Speaker:** That is important.
96. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** Let us look at some specific areas. We wanted to look at fatigue and stress.
97. **Keith Prince AM (Deputy Chair):** Obvious question, really: does tiredness affect the way you drive? Are your breaks ever cut short due to congestion or other delays on your routes?
98. **Guest Speaker:** Yes.
99. **Guest Speaker:** All the time.

100. **Guest Speaker:** Being a representative at [REDACTED] I have to represent drivers when there are problems. There has been a huge increase in disciplines for attitude and demeanour by drivers to controllers. When you listen to the calls - it is certain controllers, not all controllers as everyone is different - they are sort of badgering the driver and, unfortunately, drivers react. You say, "Well, just take the instruction and deal with it later". That is not quite how it works in reality with the stress drivers are under sometimes. You listen to these radio calls and the drivers are literally screaming down the radio, "Do not call me. Do not talk to me." Then, of course, it ends up in a disciplinary for attitude and demeanour which is a gross misconduct thing and they are looking at a possible dismissal. I have had four in the last two weeks. There are two drivers currently on suspension with disciplines next Tuesday for exactly that.
101. **Guest Speaker:** While we are on this subject, you have to look at it from all angles. You do get enormous stress from the radio. The problem is that whilst the controller is trying to do their job you are trying to do yours. The other thing to consider - especially if you are a new driver - is that you take what a senior person says on the radio as being gospel. You have to do that. We find a lot of the newer drivers get themselves into all sorts of problems. You also have to think about where the radio button to make the call back is. It is on your driving foot. If they want you to answer the radio why do they not have a little button or a paddle on the steering wheel? But no, it is on your driving foot. You have to take your foot away from the brake --
102. **Guest Speaker:** The right foot, yes.
103. **Guest Speaker:** -- and the gas pedal and put it down there.
104. **Guest Speaker:** On your heel.
105. **Guest Speaker:** You have to twist yourself to put it down there. It is done because they can blame you. When it all goes wrong and you answer that radio on the move and you hit something they can turn around and blame you, "Well, you know you should not do that".
106. **Guest Speaker:** That is right. That is what they do.
107. **Guest Speaker:** This is how the stress is built because we all know --
108. **Guest Speaker:** I think the original design was to prevent you from calling while you were going. That is the whole point. If you put it on the same foot you cannot do both at once.
109. **Guest Speaker:** The point is that through the pressures put on the driver some take that as gospel and try to answer the thing while they are moving. If you are in slow-moving traffic you do not have a break. You have got 12 tonnes of bus going forward. If somebody stops you have to stop the bus.

110. **Keith Prince AM (Deputy Chair):** Just to get back on track, although that is very important, the question was about your breaks being cut short and if you have experience of your breaks being cut short.
111. **Guest Speaker:** When I go out driving your breaks can get cut short. It depends on your contract as well. Some contracts you do not get paid all the way through the day. I know with some contracts if you are doing a ten-hour day with a three-hour break in the middle you do not get paid for the three hours at certain companies. With our company we get paid from start to finish. Legally it is a half-hour break you are allowed. It depends on the company if it is 40 minutes or whatever. The way the companies look at it is you are getting paid by the company. You may be on a three-hour break but you are getting paid for it by certain companies. Yes, sometimes you will call that driver who is on a three-hour layover and say, "Could you help us out? We are stuck. Could you come off your break early?" The way the company looks at it is, "They are getting paid for it so they are still employed by us". However, that driver could be doing a 12-hour shift and you are literally giving them sometimes a half hour, 45-minute or an hour break just to help the companies out. When I was a driver that was hard sometimes.
112. **Guest Speaker:** There is a danger here that we could be actually missing what goes on through the day. More often than not drivers get more than one break and some of the breaks will be described as stand time or recovery time. We live in dangerous times. Terrorism is a serious threat again. We have stand time. During that stand time we should be checking vehicles to make sure nothing has been left behind that should not be left behind. That stand time is also recovery time. This is so, so critically important. Again, I throw it over to yourselves, if you were to spend ten hours a day - which is what drivers can drive every day - focusing 100% you would want a break so you could step away. I think we have laws around computers where if people spend so much time looking at a computer screen they are entitled to take a break. Although the drivers might not be looking at a digital screen they are looking at an even bigger screen where they have to be watching that way, that way, that way and so on and so forth.
113. When I was a bus driver I was probably the most tired at the end of the day because I had done my job properly and it meant driving into things. The recovery time during the day at the end of each trip is essential. It is being absorbed into running time now because of the QICs message. If you are a supervisor - and it is not the supervisor's problem, because if he does not do this he will be finding himself signing on - and the driver is ten minutes late why would it not cross my mind, "Oh, he has ten minutes recovery time there. Straight in and straight out." Drivers in this room, raise your right hand if you have ever heard that phrase. This is a common practice. It is not just about eating into the meal break - which is what we are talking about when we talk about the 40 minutes or 30 minutes - they also use the recovery time through the day.
114. The meal relief business is absolutely disgraceful because the European Working Time Directive says you should have time away from the workplace as a break. Not our drivers. They stay with that bus. In some cases they will stay with that bus all day long which means even in their break they cannot shut off properly.

115. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** So what do you do if you have your 40-minute meal break and you are not leaving the bus, you have your packed lunch and you sit and eat on the bus?
116. **Guest Speaker:** If you have brought your packed lunch, you will sit on the bus and eat it, yes.
117. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** What if you need the loo or something?
118. **Guest Speaker:** Well, there you go. This is absolutely no exaggeration. We have a facilities committee meeting that meets monthly or bi-monthly. At this meeting we talk about what is needed. Now, do you know, the only commitment TfL makes to us is that every route in London will have a facility at the end of the route. If you are on an hour-long route - and there are them - you can go an hour, an hour back and then you can go to the toilet. My problem with this is if these were dogs the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) would be in touch with us but it is all right to treat bus drivers like that. This is a massive concern for us. Sorry to go on, but this has a knock-on effect. Demotivated staff are not the most productive in the world. If you want to demotivate people this is a really, really good way to do it.
119. **Guest Speaker:** The break issue is quite important and finishing. When I started not that long ago, nearly 12 years ago, the so-called service requirement if you were finishing late was if something out of the ordinary had happened such as a major accident, something that was not planned. Roadworks are planned. football matches are planned. We know everyday traffic is going to happen. These are all now cases that are being used as, "That is normal service. You are going to finish because the traffic is always that bad." I am not having a dig at you, because the controllers know what each bus is doing, what that driver has done, where he is supposed to be etc.
120. If you have driven from your garage right to the other end of the route and the bus finishes there, you run right back to the garage out of service. They will let that bus run now because of the targets and the bonuses etc. Whereas before they would say, "Well, you are not going to finish on time. The company is going to pay you overtime. Oh, well, it is only halfway so you can finish on time. Your job is done. Your shift is over." That does not happen anymore. They leave you to run and run and run.
121. It was mentioned about the recovery time on the stands. We take a minimum of five minutes. That is to check the bus, do your blinds, log card and go to the toilet - if you can find one - all in five minutes. You have to be pretty damn quick to do all that as well as check the bus for lost property - so-called security checks which is why it is insisted that is done - and all this sort of thing.
122. Our jobs have changed from being quite pleasant. I always enjoyed my job but now you are just constantly going back and forth, back and forth until you have completely finished. The pleasure has gone out of it. Stress levels have increased beyond all recognition. I did the Hello London thing back in June and it is the same

story. I met people from all different companies, different garages and we all mixed together. It was nice because we all had exactly the same problem with the new system that is in place. That is a big cause of fatigue, tiredness, accidents and grumpy bus drivers because we are not grumpy really.

123. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** I know none of you are ever grumpy.
124. **Guest Speaker:** No. It is our concentrating faces.
125. **Guest Speaker:** Not to sound disrespectful, but I do not know where he was driving buses that he got to have his meal relief in the bus. That certainly does not happen nowadays. I was a driver on the [REDACTED] before it was split up. The meal relief was at [REDACTED] and that was it. The next time you go around [REDACTED], where the bus stop is, just down from it you will see a wooden table. That is where I used to stand and have my sandwiches. If it rained I had to stand underneath [REDACTED]. The companies do not care. All these meal reliefs at the side of the road are disheartening. It breaks your heart actually to stand there in the freezing cold. There are guys standing out there now in the rain.
126. **Keith Prince AM (Deputy Chair):** Are you not allowed to eat your food on the bus then?
127. **Guest Speaker:** No, another driver gets on the bus so we do not have a bus to eat on.
128. **Guest Speaker:** A stationary bus is not a productive bus.
129. **Keith Prince AM (Deputy Chair):** Right, I see. So you were chucked off.
130. **Guest Speaker:** Another driver has taken it.
131. **Guest Speaker:** Back in the LT days the nearest garage to the route had the route. Now you companies tender miles away from the garage. [REDACTED] have actually rented a flat at the Oval and the drivers there can go into the flat. There are a lot of companies that just leave you standing. You are walking around with a sandwich and a cup of a coffee in all sorts of weather.
132. **Guest Speaker:** There is a rule in our garage that when drivers have their meal break they get on the bus that the next driver is taking over and they go up and down while eating their dinner on the back of the bus.
133. **Guest Speaker:** I know in his garage they had a route that changed over right outside the garage but it was not cost effective. So they moved the changeover point down to Sainsbury's. They told the driver, "You can use Sainsbury's restaurant". With the best will in the world Sainsbury's do not want a bus driver going in there eating his packed lunch because he is not buying anything off them. They would not give them any walking time to back down to the garage. It is not the length of the break, it is the quality.

134. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** Yes, space, in terms of space.
135. **Guest Speaker:** You need to be able to sit somewhere that you can relax. If you have a row with someone you need time to be able to chill out in comfort and get yourself back together to be able to be fit to go back out to drive.
136. **Guest Speaker:** The biggest contributor to stress is the shift patterns and that most routes have what they call a standard rota: early, middle, 'lates'. That is punishing. That is probably the most [stressful] I would say - that is my opinion - apart from the job itself and all these other things.
137. **Guest Speaker:** Split rest days.
138. **Guest Speaker:** Yes.
139. **Keith Prince AM (Deputy Chair):** In your shift one week you do earlies, the next one you do middles, the next one you do 'lates'?
140. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** It is what they do on the Underground, is it not?
141. **Keith Prince AM (Deputy Chair):** Yes, that is really bad news.
142. **Guest Speaker:** Split shifts as well. For example, this week I have Monday and Sunday off this week. You do not get two days together, obviously.
143. **Guest Speaker:** You do not always get two days together.
144. **Guest Speaker:** It is not the shifts. When we come into this work we understand it is shift work because it is nearly a 24-hour service now. It is the way the shifts are laid out. The companies schedule to the most cost-effective way. Sometimes this will mean when you have split rest days you go from a very late shift, which might finish as late as 3.00am, a day off and then to a very, very early shift. I do not care, with the best will in the world, you have not properly recovered by then.
145. **Guest Speaker:** You are going to bed at 3.00am in the morning and then you are waking up at 3.00pm the afternoon.
146. **Guest Speaker:** It does not give you a day off, does it?
147. **Guest Speaker:** I was going to go on with the recovery time, really. We have live changeovers on our route. Of course we cannot check the bus while it is live with passengers on. When we get down to our first stop and our recovery time we have to check the bus. Our recovery time has gone obviously checking the bus. There was never a toilet on another one of our routes. It has been extended to Lavender Fields and there is no toilet down that end. The toilet we did have has been locked up now. They said to us basically, "Do not drink so you will not need to go to the toilet or make friends with one of the locals". Because this bus goes down to a dead-end of a council estate, you spin around and come back, "make friends with one of the locals

so you can use their toilet”. That is what we were told. The toilet facilities are absolutely shocking.

148. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** The facilities and the breaks, yes.
149. **Guest Speaker:** The one at (Overspeaking) if you can even call it a toilet. I ring up probably every week because it is always blocked. The toilet facilities are just slack, to say to the least.
150. **Keith Prince AM (Deputy Chair):** That is bad, definitely.
151. **Guest Speaker:** Staff come up to me and tell me what is going on with the driving side, “Do not go to the toilet. You cannot go.” As soon as you operate a route outside London into [REDACTED] - or I have spoken to a couple of drivers who operate routes into [REDACTED] - the councils do not care. The councils do not care about the London bus driver. There is no communication with TfL and [REDACTED]. I will use [REDACTED] because we go with them. We tried to get toilets on four different routes with [REDACTED] Council. No, they will not do it because TfL will not pay Surrey the money for the drivers and Surrey will not put the money up as well to TfL. For the drivers who I represent when I do any disciplines, most of it happens in [REDACTED] or it happens on the route where it goes outside the London remit as such. We have a route and the last toilet they have got is in [REDACTED] which is London. As soon as you go out to [REDACTED] which is [REDACTED] there is nothing. Drivers will stop and use toilets. They are leaving passengers then unattended on the bus --
152. **Keith Prince AM (Deputy Chair):** That cannot be good, can it?
153. **Guest Speaker:** -- so they can go to the toilet.
154. **Guest Speaker:** That is probably gross misconduct, is it not?
155. **Guest Speaker:** No, by law you are allowed to stop to use any toilet facilities.
156. **Guest Speaker:** You have to switch the engine off.
157. **Guest Speaker:** Yes, but you are leaving those passengers unattended on the bus.
158. **Guest Speaker:** You might have to chuck your passengers off as well.
159. **Guest Speaker:** Yes, because you cannot leave with the bus not running, with no lights in the dark.
160. **Guest Speaker:** Our company says, “If you want to go off as long as you leave the doors open and turn it off”. Then, as you say, you are leaving the bus in the dark. You cannot leave it switched on. You have your own personal safety. Drivers are getting stressed because they have got to get out of the cab with passengers behind to go to the toilet.

161. **Keith Prince AM (Deputy Chair):** Can you lock a bus? You cannot lock a bus, can you?
162. **Guest Speaker:** No.
163. **Guest Speaker:** You have just got a little T-key that shuts the cab. Anyone with a square key can open it. It is not rocket science.
164. **Guest Speaker:** On some of our routes we do not have the drivers' facility rooms. Oval we do have a drivers' room. We have other routes where the end of the point is in the middle of nowhere. By the time you walk down to civilisation - like where you can get McDonald's, Starbucks or something like that - it is a 15-minute walk and you are already rushing. You have a 40-minute break. It takes you about 15 minutes to get down there so you are rushing. You have to shove the food in your mouth and then rush back. You do not physically have time to destress before you start your next shift anyway. It is not like having a break. It could be a 12-hour shift and it is just continuous going.
165. **Keith Prince AM (Deputy Chair):** I assume this continued pressure to meet the targets is you do not have to meet the targets. You just have to do what the controller tells you. You are losing break times and you are losing recovery time. I am asking the question but it is a pretty stupid question: does that pressure to meet those targets cause stress?
166. **Guest Speaker:** Of course it does, yes.
167. **Guest Speaker:** Yes.
168. **Guest Speaker:** Of course.
169. **Guest Speaker:** By which you lose your job, basically.
170. **Guest Speaker:** It is about the same. It causes stress but also compounds the other elements of the job that are stressful. It takes away the recovery time so therefore that is a stress. The stress you add, that you might have washed away during your recovery time, is still there so it compounds it.
171. **Guest Speaker:** Hello London is a good course. I enjoyed it for the two days. However, it is focused on, "Bus driver, you have got to be happy to the passengers, happy to the passengers". I do not know how many people have done Hello London in here.
172. **Guest Speaker:** Yes, I have done it.
173. **Guest Speaker:** Hello London only concentrates on the drivers and everything else. Actually, Hello London does not cover the whole aspect. You are saying about the stresses and people and breaks. Hello London should cover the whole aspect of the whole operating system. It does not.

174. **Keith Prince AM (Deputy Chair):** Yes, that is a good point. This is a bit of a random question. Do many of you work south of the river?
175. **Guest Speaker:** South, yes.
176. **Keith Prince AM (Deputy Chair):** Yes, and north?
177. **Guest Speaker:** I have.
178. **Keith Prince AM (Deputy Chair):** You know, I live in the south. I have noticed that in the south, passengers say hello to the drivers and the drivers say hello back. When they get off in the south, everyone says thank you.
179. **Guest Speaker:** They would not say that in [REDACTED]
180. **Keith Prince AM (Deputy Chair):** Well, maybe not in [REDACTED]
181. **Caroline Russell AM:** Hang on, Keith, I say hello and thank you, and I live in the north.
182. **Guest Speaker:** Yes, and when they get off, the passengers say thank you. I have not noticed that so much in the north.
183. **Guest Speaker:** That is not accurate. That is just a perception. We have good people north, south, east, west. People are polite and reasonable. Not everybody who gets on the bus is a swine. London is a funny place, really, is it not, because if you walk along the riverside and ask someone for the time there will be four people before someone stops and actually responds. People just generally do not have the time. They do not understand how the service works. The most common complaint a bus driver will get is, "I have been waiting 20 minutes for you". "Well, no, you have not. You were waiting for the bus that was late. I am actually on time." They do not understand, and certainly do not understand the pressure a bus driver is under, or they would not get on and talk to them in such a bad way. The point you make about whether it is north or south is not accurate. You are just lucky that you have been in the right place at the right time.
184. **Guest Speaker:** In [REDACTED] no one says thank you to the bus driver. In [REDACTED] they all say thank you.
185. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** Let us move on. Can we move on to training? I am conscious of time. Caroline, do you want to do training and maybe you want to do the next one as well, maintenance?
186. **Caroline Russell AM:** I am also doing roads, yes. So training next. Just as an opening starter question, do you feel you have been offered adequate training to allow you to do your job safely?
187. **Guest Speaker:** You said about safety.

188. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** It is about training. Have you had enough training this year to enable you to work safely?
189. **Guest Speaker:** At our company, [REDACTED] on the driving side of things in conjunction with the Automobile Association (AA) they are doing advanced driving, anything from one star to one stars. They are rolling that out now at our garage. It is like advanced driving, going out with an empty bus with an instructor and lasts for three years.
190. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** Do you think that is helpful?
191. **Guest Speaker:** It is, yes, helpful, but of course you are going to be slower at driving because you have to drive --
192. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** More safely. OK.
193. **Guest Speaker:** Not service standards.
194. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** This is interesting because it is about bus safety and about reducing danger on the roads. When you do your advanced safety training are you saying it makes you drive differently from the way that very often you are forced to drive in order to keep up with the pressure?
195. **Guest Speaker:** Yes, the service standards. You are going to be slower and, yes, sometimes you could have the controller on the radio go, "You are the only one running late. What is the problem?"
196. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** That is because you are complying with what you found on your advanced safety training. Has anyone else had training in this last year?
197. **Guest Speaker:** At [REDACTED] they rolled out the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM) commercial vehicle assessor's course. I did the advanced driving course with the IAM and the assessor's course as well. All this is fine. You have to look at it in context as well though. Do not forget the companies that do the safety courses are also there to make a profit. They want to make sure they continue to do this course. The first batch of people who went through went through blindingly easily. The basic bus test was just as hard as, "Yes, you will pass. Oh yes, that bloke, it was his fault anyway". It was that sort of thing. The problem you have is it does not matter how highly trained you are if you do one of these courses if, when you get back to the garage, you are browbeaten back into being a steering wheel attendant. It all becomes worthless. I have done the IAM. They were going to roll it out and in the end, "Oh, it is a bit too expensive. We cannot do that now" and they did not.
198. **Caroline Russell AM:** What we are hearing here is that there is a tension between these advanced driving courses and the way the contracts need the buses to be driven. That is thing one. Has anyone else had any other type of training in this last year?

199. **Guest Speaker:** No.
200. **Guest Speaker:** The only time you get further training - I do not know about my other colleagues, but certainly at [REDACTED] - from everything you learn at our various training schools - which you then completely ignore once you go into service because it is completely different - is if you have had too many accidents. It is under a disciplinary thing. Of course, it is not just the driving, it is passengers. When I was at training school, all those years ago, we had a leaflet on how to deal with difficult passengers. Yes, it was really useful.
201. **Caroline Russell AM:** Is this because difficult passengers - sorry if I am being dim - make it difficult for you to concentrate on driving properly or --
202. **Guest Speaker:** Your main job is obviously to drive to the service card and what have you. If you have a difficult passenger who is shouting at you, banging on the screen because something has not gone their way, you still have to carry on driving or deal with that situation and then get back to calm, a quick 'fag' and drive.
203. **Caroline Russell AM:** You are saying the leaflet was inadequate training for dealing with the kind of passenger interactions you are getting?
204. **Guest Speaker:** Yes. If you get that interaction with the passenger wrong - whether the passenger is right or wrong - you end up in a disciplinary hearing with a manager saying, "You should have done this, you should have done that".
205. **Guest Speaker:** I have driven buses for 22 years. The standard I had to meet when I became a bus driver was to be over 25, held your licence in the UK for over a year, have a maximum of three points on your licence etc as a minimum criteria before you could apply to be a bus driver.
206. **Keith Prince AM (Deputy Chairman):** Was that under LT?
207. **Guest Speaker:** In 1995, just as it went over from LT to Cowie's, as it was then, before it became [REDACTED] You went on a training bus and trained virtually one-to-one for several years until you passed the test, you were fine and you were done. Now there is a huge amount of pressure on the company to get bums on seats as far as driving buses is concerned, to the extent we now have drivers coming in who are younger and who do not speak English. We have a lot of foreign drivers who were recruited by Skype, showed their thing on the screen, "Yes, fine. We will pay for you to come across from Romania, Poland, wherever you are, and put you up for a couple of weeks until you get settled." If you have an existing licence and are coming with a car licence or a passenger carrying vehicle (PCV) licence they whack you through a quick two-week intensive course and put you out on road. You are done.
208. **Caroline Russell AM:** How many weeks was it you used to do.
209. **Guest Speaker:** Seven to eight weeks.

210. **Guest Speaker:** More or less one-to-one to make sure you are OK. You would have a driving instructor go out with you the first day. That does not happen anymore. What tends to happen is new drivers have a lot of incidents and accidents. You have mystery traveller people who come to check the drivers as you are going along without you knowing. To get points part of that is interaction with customers etc and we are having a whole bunch of new drivers who cannot even speak English. The normal question when people get on is, "Do you pass such-and-such point?" or, "How long is it going to be until you get to such-and-such a point?" That tends to be a standard mystery traveller type question. They are losing points before they even start because they do not have a command of English.
211. **Caroline Russell AM:** Two more quick ones and then I have another question.
212. **Guest Speaker:** I started bus driving in 1983 when it was LT. I do not think I have ever been as proud of passing any test as I was of that one.
213. **Caroline Russell AM:** It was more stringent?
214. **Guest Speaker:** You felt like you had earned your spurs, as it were. It was not about the length of the thing.
215. **Caroline Russell AM:** The rigour?
216. **Guest Speaker:** Yes. You had 15 days. That is all you had. If you did not get through it was up to them whether they kept you for another test. It was all done at Chiswick. Every bus driver in London knew what was expected of them. You had basically one type of bus, the Routemaster. They told you, "If this happens when you are driving, this flag comes down and this light goes on the bus does not move. It does not matter if you are in the middle of Hyde Park, the Queen is coming through and the personal protection officer says, 'Move that bus'. You do not move it. You tell him to move it but you do not move it."
217. **Caroline Russell AM:** That was a safety thing?
218. **Guest Speaker:** Safety was absolute.
219. **Guest Speaker:** If the flag dropped in the old days it meant the air had gone out of the system.
220. **Guest Speaker:** Yes. It meant the air had gone out and you were not to move the bus. If you took the handbrake off it would just go out of control.
221. **Guest Speaker:** No one would say, "Is it safe to move?" It was taken. It was absolute.
222. **Guest Speaker:** Comfort and safety of the passengers was the most important thing. Nothing else mattered.
223. **Guest Speaker:** How many people work in your garage?

224. **Guest Speaker:** Four hundred.
225. **Guest Speaker:** How many people have done that advanced driving test?
226. **Guest Speaker:** I would say about 30 now.
227. **Guest Speaker:** Right. Not even 10% have. This is the drivers' training. When you start as an employee, with or without a licence, you will be put through the training school and released into the garage. The only training you get aside from that is the CPC or whatever name it goes by this week. There is no driver refreshing. There is monitoring because we live in a world of blame rather than prevention. There is no ongoing training. What you are talking about is a voluntary thing that was open to them. What you will find in the quite near future, like they did, "It costs a few bob. We are not doing it." They are not doing it to improve the service. Do not make the mistake of thinking that. They are doing that to cut the insurance costs.
228. **Caroline Russell AM:** Thank you. That is a useful point.
229. **Guest Speaker:** When they put you through the training school they train you to pass a test. That is all they are doing. They are not training you to be a bus driver. The reality is that on day one you are driving a ten and a half tonne bus. All of a sudden you have 90 passengers on that bus and that bus now weighs 25 tonnes. The braking for a bus full of people is completely different from braking for an empty bus. I am not being cheeky or anything but the first time you put the brakes on with a full bus you think, "Oh, is this going to stop?" If you have a cyclist or car in front of you, or a pedestrian suddenly steps in front of you, it is bloody frightening.
230. question.
231. **Guest Speaker:** Very quickly about training and safety, basically every company trains their drivers differently. Certain companies have company standards and put people through tests with independent standards. There is not one standardised training anymore. I joined in 1996. I was 18 when I joined. We all went through. At the end of the day it is non-standard training. I can work at my company. If I go to a different company they could have more or less training than us. They do not care. It is only bums on seats. One company, represented in this room, takes its drivers out to teach them to drive on the proper side of the road. They come over from Poland or Romania and they have two weeks to teach them to drive on the UK-side of the road.
232. **Caroline Russell AM:** Thank you. Something else about training that I am picking up is the business of bus routes going from one company to another, TUPE-ing over so you are working for one company on the same route but then for another company. This business of having no consistent training for London bus drivers is something that is happening to a lot of people a lot of the time, in that you are moving from one company to another. How many people here, with a show of hands, have worked for more than one company in the last two years? Only one. What about in the last five years? Not so many. What about in the last ten years? OK. The different company thing is not such a big issue?

233. **Guest Speaker:** It is such a big issue.
234. **Caroline Russell AM:** It is just everyone here happens to be very consistent in their jobs?
235. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** Been there a long time.
236. **Guest Speaker:** (Overspeaking) a relatively recent thing. It was unheard of when we started driving buses years ago. If you lost a route the company would absorb you into another route. It does not work quite like that now. Each route is tendered every five years, as you probably know. Potentially you could move company every five years for the whole of your career.
237. **Guest Speaker:** Every time it goes up for tender you are exposed to TUPE-ing. When these things are TUPE-ing - and this is important - bus companies do not invest as much time, and certainly not as much money, into route learning. In the olden days the route would come to your garage and you could have a day just driving up and down in a bus. Some companies do it. I am not saying it is *carte blanche*. Most companies in London that I deal with do not do route learning. In the old days you would go out and spend the day. You would be familiar with the route. You would learn where the tight corners where so you would know how to give a wide berth. You would not be running over people standing at crossings and stuff. You would learn where the curtailment points were which means you would not be driving into buildings, getting stuck under bridges and stuff like that. We have moved far away from the training. The responsibility for delivering the training is now off the company's shoulders and put firmly in the lap of the drivers. What the driver is told is, "If you want to drive that route go out and do it in your own time". The company has no scrutiny whatsoever over it.
238. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** At our least hearing Abellio came before and us and told us about a book it had developed for each route with drivers saying where there are difficult junctions and different things along it. If you were taking over that route you could look through it.
239. **Guest Speaker:** That is rubbish.
240. **Guest Speaker:** It is good for confident people but everyone is not the same. Some people need to feel a route as opposed to just looking at it.
241. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** Yes, I was not saying just to look at it but as an addition to learning the route (Overspeaking)
242. **Guest Speaker:** In addition to learning the route it is quite helpful but the majority of drivers from different countries are used to driving on the other side of the road. It is better for them to get a feel for it because some of the turnings are tight and stuff like that. It is better to get a feel for the actual journey.
243. **Caroline Russell AM:** You mean driving it with someone in the cab?

244. **Guest Speaker:** Yes.
245. **Guest Speaker:** A couple of years ago I was a mentor in the garage. I used to mentor drivers on the various routes. The reason I resigned as a mentor was I felt the whole thing was absolute rubbish. I had so many arguments with them because they were cutting the training short. They were mixing the drivers with different mentors all the time. They were mixing up whether they had even actually been out on routes. I met up with a driver who had an accident. He had not actually been mentored on that route because they forgot to do that one. He did not ask because he did not know. That is the way they are going. They are just not bothering to do certain routes and not bothering with training. It was cut down and down and down.
246. **Guest Speaker:** Books are a great idea. You can have all the route books in the world but it does not beat a mentor standing beside you. If you got on a bus and I suddenly get a book out, Caroline, you are not going to be too pleased.
247. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** No, I did not mean that.
248. **Guest Speaker:** That is what is wrong. I can get a book and off you go. That is what is happening with some of these companies.
249. **Guest Speaker:** Mentoring is what I do at the moment. My biggest issue is I turn up and they do not have a spare bus for me so we have to go around in a car. Unfortunately, at one part of our route there is a sub-breaker that cars cannot go over. We go to that part of the route and I say, "Obviously normally in a bus you go straight over". We have to reverse, back around the route, go to the other side of the sub-breaker and I say, "This is where it comes out".
250. **Guest Speaker:** You cannot drive down the bus lane?
251. **Guest Speaker:** No, it is a sub-breaker. I have to go around and stop, reverse, go back around and come this way. I am trying to get the book put in as well but (Overspeaking)
252. **Caroline Russell AM:** That is an awful amount detail for the picture we are building up here. One last question on training, for a show of hands, would anyone be interested in having first aid training?
253. **Guest Speaker:** I should say I had first aid because I used to be behind the counter, an administrator and allocator. Because I was in an internal position I was allowed to be a first aider and do first aid training. I do health and safety as part of my union representative thing at the garage but the company will not allow me to be a first aider because I am only a driver and cannot do that.
254. **Guest Speaker:** There is an insurance issue there as well. We were told that there is a first aid kit on buses but we are not allowed to use it for insurance purposes in case we get it wrong. Let us say a compression thing if there is a glass, we make the

wrong decision and could kill someone. We are told not to have anything to do with --

255. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** Quite a lot of you are interested.
256. **Guest Speaker:** You have a conflict as well because the driver is told, "Do not get out of your cab".
257. **Guest Speaker:** It depends on your company because our drivers can do first aid training. If you want to be a qualified first aider the company will pay for it and it is a two-day course. I was a qualified first aider as a driver before I went into control. It depends on the company as well.
258. **Guest Speaker:** We did have a driver at [REDACTED] who totally ignored that. Got out of his cab and saved a young choking child's life. He was a hero.
259. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** I am going to move on to another area now. If there are not many issues in this area - there might be - we can move on to the next one. The issue of maintenance, do you have concerns about bus maintenance issues causing safety problems? How equipped do you feel, as drivers, to be able to report or deal with ongoing maintenance issues? Is there anyone who has not spoken yet who would like to?
260. **Guest Speaker:** Talking about maintenance, I checked my bus one morning in the garage and as I pulled away out of the garage the nearside mirror went like that. I went back into the garage and reported it to the engineer. He came up to it and he went, "Oh, they all have that much play in them. Off you go." A new driver would have said, "OK then". I told him where to go. I said, "I want another bus or you need to change the arm on that". The kerfuffle he caused and the grief I got over that, because I wanted the mirror fixed, is the sort of thing we are putting up with.
261. They are saying about controllers being under pressure. The engineers are under pressure to keep everything right. We all understand that. It is written down on our VCR cards. If you have the same bus next week there will be the same complaint written on it.
262. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** What sorts of things? Give me flavour.
263. **Guest Speaker:** Things like that; loose mirrors --
264. **Guest Speaker:** CCTV screens not working is very common.
265. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM:** What about ramps for the disabled?
266. **Guest Speaker:** Ramps is a no-go. If it does not work it is not away we go.
267. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** Good. That is what I wanted to know.

268. **Guest Speaker:** Things to do with driving - mirrors and things like that - you could get on any bus in our garage and you could probably find at least three or four minor faults that they tend to pressure you to go out with on the bus.
269. **Guest Speaker:** The biggest thing I find with buses is that there is no heating. They will tell you do a 'rounder' and if it does not warm up they will substitute it. They just give it to the next driver, and the next driver, and the next driver. You spend all day with no heating.
270. **Guest Speaker:** The driver's screen is always scratched up so when the sun hits it, with the reflection, you cannot see out of it. The other day I was driving a bus and it was raining. The window wipers would not go to the end of the screen. I had to keep getting out and wiping the window. When I left to go on the journey it was not raining so I had missed it. I could not even see out of it. Every time I got to a stop I had to keep wiping the window.
271. **Guest Speaker:** There was a bus in our garage yesterday, the driver went to take it over. He did his pre-service check and there were no side lights and no headlights. The engineer said, "It is perfectly fine to go out as long as it comes back in off the road before it gets dark".
272. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** They are under pressure to turn these vehicles around.
273. **Guest Speaker:** They did not have any spare buses.
274. **Guest Speaker:** New buses come out all the time. We get common faults. You ask an engineer to go and fix it, "Sorry, cannot touch it. It is a warranty job. We are not allowed to touch that bus." CCTV monitors in buses are not the company's responsibility. You know why? They are subcontracted out. Air-conditioning is subcontracted out again. A lot of stuff in buses is all subcontracted. Bring it in-house.
275. **Keith Prince AM (Deputy Chairman):** What about the ticket machines?
276. **Guest Speaker:** I am in charge of all the electronic ticket machines (ETMs) in our garage and the Oyster readers. They are bringing out a new software at the moment to make all the garages modules by 1 July. We have the first garage going modules with [REDACTED]. The problem is that the new software they have put in the Oyster readers has crashed the main Oyster readers. There was a queue of vehicles (Several inaudible words) last week at a meeting and I have been reassured they are working on it at the moment.
277. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** I have noticed it a bit more.
278. **Guest Speaker:** They come out this Friday at 10.00am.
279. **Keith Prince AM (Deputy Chairman):** Does that mean you just whack in a different machine?

280. **Guest Speaker:** Everyone is going to have the same machines but the drivers will not have a module.
281. **Guest Speaker:** You sign on with a module with your personal details and it records your actions.
282. **Guest Speaker:** Basically someone in Japan rewrote the programme just before Christmas. They released it three weeks ago and it decided to crash the whole system.
283. **Keith Prince AM (Deputy Chairman):** If your module is knackered for the day you do not have to take any money, is that right?
284. **Guest Speaker:** I am genuinely not sure that anyone's been seriously injured or killed because a ticket machine has not been functioning.
285. **Guest Speaker:** The issue of buses per engineer has been going up and up and up. One engineer maybe used to look after five buses. Now the same engineer is looking after 12 buses in the same period of time that he had to look after five buses. The buses are working for longer. There are no spares. They do not keep an awful lot of spares. They might phone up Volvo to see if they can get a part to them.
286. **Guest Speaker:** Is not TfL under the Greater London Authority (GLA)?
287. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** Under the Mayor. We are the London Assembly alongside the Mayor. Our job is to hold the Mayor and all of the different bodies he looks after to account. We challenge TfL. We challenge and suggest things to the Mayor. Recently we suggested things he could do to tackle congestion in London. Some of the stuff we would like because it would get some vehicles off the road. Those are our recommendations to the Mayor and TfL and then they will respond.
288. **Keith Prince AM (Deputy Chairman):** TfL is a part of the GLA.
289. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** It is one of the groups; like the MPS (Metropolitan Police Service) and fire brigade. You have all these groups.
290. **Guest Speaker:** Are not buses the largest single part of the GLA?
291. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** More passengers use them, do they not?
292. **Guest Speaker:** If you look at the budget of the GLA, TfL is --
293. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** TfL as a whole is large.
294. **Guest Speaker:** If you consider the police as a whole it might be bigger.
295. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** The MPS is bigger as a whole but TfL is big, and the buses within it is huge.

296. **Guest Speaker:** TfL's budget is bigger than that for the MPS, is it not? Is not the largest part of TfL the buses? Just to get it straight.
297. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** Absolutely. Let us look at roads now, if we can. Caroline?
298. **Caroline Russell AM:** Some bus routes may have higher incident rates than others. TfL told the Transport Committee recently that the high rate of incidents of people being killed or seriously injured in central London may be due to the congestion and competition for space. I am going to come on to the cycling issue afterwards. For starters, are you aware of any particular collision hotspots or particular stretches of road that feel less safe than others? Do you think that has something to do with the actual design of the road itself, ie something TfL might be able to change going forward?
299. **Guest Speaker:** On route [REDACTED] and that bend is so tight that you usually are mounting the kerb. [REDACTED] is full of pedestrians. You could easily knock a pedestrian over there. That road is very tight. They need to change that bit.
300. **Guest Speaker:** [REDACTED]. The whole of the [REDACTED] one-way system is a nightmare with bends and you have three lanes and only two lanes go out. That needs to be redesigned. [REDACTED], an S-bend. It was about £10 million to redesign this junction to make it safer. There have been more collisions there since they made it safer. Also [REDACTED].
301. **Guest Speaker:** [REDACTED] as well. The new layout is horrendous.
302. **Caroline Russell AM:** What makes it difficult?
303. **Guest Speaker:** They made a bus lane here, then cycle lanes. When you are coming back from what we call the [REDACTED] you drive out, there is no filter light or anything, you bend wide and then there is someone in there trying to get through.
304. **Caroline Russell AM:** A lack of clarity, is it, for different road users?
305. **Guest Speaker:** Yes.
306. **Guest Speaker:** Somebody should have taken a tape measure and measured a bus. If you have two lanes of traffic and the two lanes, between them, measure 16 foot 5 and a bus is eight foot 2 and a half you are never going to get two buses around the corner. It happens all the time, does it not? There are bus lanes that are narrower than buses.
307. **Guest Speaker:** Picking up on that point, in central London they try to squeeze as many lanes out of roads as possible. The whole of [REDACTED], for instance. The lanes are not as wide as a bus so you have to try and take two. Everybody is trying to get around you, beeping and shouting at you because you are

taking up all this road space. However, you have trees that angle in like this and buses that are tall and angle like this because of the road camber. If you go along too close to the kerb you are going to whack the top of the bus off. These narrower-than-buses lanes happen all over London. They need to rethink the bus routes.

308. **Guest Speaker:** That is what happened with the bus that lost the roof last year in [REDACTED]. Trees lean over. The bus lane is narrower than the bus. The poor bus driver (Overspeaking) hit the tree and it just comes off.
309. **Guest Speaker:** Sorry to be a bit boring but this thing about equal pay and sector wide negotiations (SWN) is a bit unfashionable. A lot of drivers did not like it and did not like going on strike. When you have new pay rates that are so low - for the first two years they are not getting any sick pay and this kind of thing - there are new drivers going out there and it is like going through a sausage machine. They push these new drivers out on lower pay. It makes the older drivers nervous. You are always wondering. You have cameras on you and can be sacked for any tiny little infringement. The drivers on the road say, "That is a bus lane. I better stay in the bus lane." Bang, the roof comes off. It is lack of experience and the fact they sack experienced drivers - because they are more expensive - for a tiny infringement.
310. **Guest Speaker:** Under LT there was a crew that went around cutting trees. When they privatised buses that disappeared. We had an open top bus and there were tree surgeons. None of the private companies take responsibilities for that and so we hit them.
311. **Caroline Russell AM:** The next bit on maintenance is about the relationship with cyclists and cycling infrastructure. I must declare an interest, I cycle to City Hall every day. I have huge respect for buses. I do not undercut buses. I never go up the gap. I do get that there are a lot of cyclists who do not behave well when they are on a bike. At the same time there are a lot of people in cars who behave well and do not behave well, and probably people at the wheel of a bus as well who behave well and do not behave well. If we can stay away from blaming of any different modes and stick to the infrastructure issues around cycling.
312. Before I take answers, one piece of infrastructure that has recently come in is a floating bus stop. That means cyclists do not go out into the main flow of the traffic. They cut through the pavement. You have an island for people to stand on. It would be interesting to have your views on that. Also, while we are talking about those kinds of islands, whether any of you have ever had the experience of your nearside mirror coming very close to pedestrians on the kerb because we did not pick that up earlier.
313. **Guest Speaker:** A friend of mine nearly got killed. She is partially-sighted. She could see the bus but she could not see the cyclist and the guy nearly killed her.
314. **Caroline Russell AM:** Do you think it is because the cyclists think they have a right of way so they are not looking out for pedestrians? Maybe if there is a way to make that area past a bus stop --

315. **Guest Speaker:** It would be a generalisation to say a lot of cyclists are inexperienced. They just jump on a bike and start cycling around probably the busiest city in the world.
316. **Guest Speaker:** Yes, to the nearside mirror. That is quite common. It is a design problem that you have. I do not know how you would get around it because you need that mirror to see down the side of the bus. The only way you could perhaps deal with it is to have some sort of gate at the entrance but then it means a line in the buses and you might not be able to do because of traffic and stuff like that.
317. If we want to reduce the risk of cyclist versus bus incidents then maybe what we should think about doing is having audible indicators on buses such you do on lorries.
318. **Guest Speaker:** If you can approach a bus stop at a shallow angle the nearside mirror, for the most part, is not a problem. The problem only comes if you are in a bus lane with lined bays for cars to park at certain times along the route etc, then your yellow bus stop, and then another car. You have to come into that bus stop at a much steeper angle. TfL and mystery travellers expect you to park the bus parallel at a certain distance from the pavement. Obviously if you have to approach at a steep angle what tends to happen is that arm swings.
319. **Caroline Russell AM:** You are going to overhang the kerb.
320. **Guest Speaker:** As experienced drivers you know that, get used to it and give up on getting too close sometimes but it causes a problem.
321. **Caroline Russell AM:** Solving that could just be removing a little bit of parking revenue from having that parking near the bus stop.
322. **Guest Speaker:** If you allow buses enough room to approach a bus stop at a shallow angle you would eliminate most of the problem of nearside mirror hits.
323. **Caroline Russell AM:** I know I have been standing on the kerb and if a bus comes in fast you think, "Wow". It is quite scary".
324. **Guest Speaker:** There is a bus stop in [REDACTED] where cars are parked in front of it. The shelter has been knocked over, I think, six times. In the end TfL just took it away. The buses have to pull in so tight they are colliding with the bus shelter.
325. **Caroline Russell AM:** Do you think there should be some kind of regulation about how close parking can be to a bus stop in order to enable the --
326. **Guest Speaker:** It would certainly help so you do not have to do that sharp turn.
327. **Guest Speaker:** The loading bays and parking bays on the red routes are all situated before the bus stop. You have to come in at an angle. If they were situated a little bit further down you would be pulling in and out of traffic but you would not have the same problem.

328. The other thing is the buses come with a mirror fitted that is probably an adequate mirror to do the job. As soon as that mirror gets broken - because profit is the driving force - the companies replace the good mirror with a plastic 'shitty' thing.
329. **Guest Speaker:** They change the length of the arms as well sometimes. The factory fitted mirror have a 3 foot or 2 and a half foot long mirror arm. When they bust it off they then put a little arm on so visibility becomes less, or they might change the size of the actual mirror itself.
330. **Caroline Russell AM:** When you are driving a bus with a non-standard mirror, the one that has been fitted after the original one has been broken off, do you notice the difference?
331. **Guest Speaker:** Every day you drive at least two buses. They are probably the same type of bus on the same route, the same style of cab layout, everything is the same. You can get on one bus that has the short mirror. You have driven that around for four or five hours. You get on the second one and it has the longer mirror. What you did the first half you cannot do in the second half because it is not the same because the mirror is different.
332. **Caroline Russell AM:** You cannot gauge.
333. **Guest Speaker:** Is there not some kind of camera they could put there instead of having a mirror?
334. **Caroline Russell AM:** There might be. I think they have that kind of technology for cement mixers (Overspeaking)
335. **Guest Speaker:** You would not have a 'dozy' great big lump of plastic coming at pedestrians. You would just have a camera.
336. **Guest Speaker:** That would not work because while you are looking at that mirror there you have one eye out there - this is the life of the professional driver - so you can see forward all the time. The rule says you should never look back while you are driving. You are meant to have your eyes on there. If you are looking down at that camera you are not seeing what is in front of you.
337. **Guest Speaker:** You could have the actual screen where the mirror is or near it.
338. **Guest Speaker:** The problem is the bus shelters now are built too close to the kerb. When the bus is coming in, if you are not careful and do not get it right, you will still clip that shelter. I think the bus shelters should be moved slightly back if they want that shelter to cover the passengers. That is how I see it.
339. **Guest Speaker:** I totally agree. We used to have head stops and tail stops. The shelter was set back from the bus stop. You have the bus stop here but the shelter up here in a safer place. You would pull the bus in front of the bus stop and you did not need to swing in and never had a problem. I have hit someone on the back of the head with a wing mirror pulling into a bus stop. I swung into the bus stop, the person

- was standing too close to the kerb and, bang, I've hit the back of their head. The person was OK. It gave them a headache for a couple of days. I have seen them since.
340. Going back to cyclists, yes, you should have more advertisement on television. Advertise to inform cyclists. Also advertise for car drivers, as we said earlier.
341. You said about looking at left-hand mirrors. We have heli-view on some of our buses. When you indicate left it shows the nearside on the screen, right above your head, so you can see the whole of the nearside and the back of the bus. It is a trial for TfL. We have not had one single nearside hit on the buses with the heli-view.
342. **Guest Speaker:** How many people (Overspeaking)
343. **Guest Speaker:** When you are driving along it comes straight in your eye on the side. When you indicate left you can see anything on your left-hand side. We have not had one hit.
344. **Guest Speaker:** We have Hail and Ride and that is where most of our things happen. A passenger rings a bell. You are, "I cannot pull in here; it is a red route. I cannot pull in here; it is double yellow, parked cars." "I want to get off. You have gone past my house." You have to stop where it is safe to do so. You are trying to cram your bus in between two cars with trees and lampposts.
345. **Guest Speaker:** Most of the problems you are talking about could be corrected before the bus is built in Ireland. The people who run the company are a bunch of people sitting in an office who design something they do not have knowledge about. They come up with an arm which creates all these sorts of problems. It would be easier if we had the right design from the beginning. By consulting with the drivers, who are on the road and driving the bus, we would be able to come up with a solution that would avoid all these issues. Right now they created the problem and we are trying to find the solution to it. It would be effective to talk to the drivers and the people who have actual knowledge of driving a bus and then take that to the people who design those buses.
346. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** Can we move on to looking at incidents now. I am really conscious of time.
347. **Keith Prince AM (Deputy Chairman):** Having looked at some of the areas where problems occur, we do not learn from issues that are happening unless that is communicated. Do you think the processes for reporting incidents could be improved? Do you feel well informed about what to do if you have an incident? What are the barriers to reporting near-misses?
348. **Guest Speaker:** Fear culture. Drivers are scared to report near-misses because then CCTV gets downloaded. It could be the hottest day of the year. He has had a near-miss but he has been sat at the traffic lights with the handbrake on and has a sip of water, or he could be driving with one hand. Some companies are very, very strict on

it. When he has the near-miss he thinks, “Lucky there. I am not going to report that to anybody” because of the fear of discipline.

349. **Guest Speaker:** We tend to live in a blame rather than prevention culture.
350. **Guest Speaker:** The other problem is the police. You have an incident on your bus and do a code red. The other day one of our drivers had a fight on his bus. How long do you think he waited for the bus to turn up?
351. **Guest Speaker:** A couple of hours.
352. **Guest Speaker:** Near enough correct, 48 minutes after he had done the code red the police decided to turn up to the bus. The police sit next to each controls up Leicester in CentreComm. They sit on opposite sides of the room. If you have ever been in CentreComm on your left you have controls and on the right you have the police. I was on the phone to CentreComm trying to get them to hurry the police up. In the end I had to instruct my driver to phone 999 on his mobile phone to get the police down. That was the only time the police responded. The problem is - I mean no disrespect to central London drivers - central London drivers are more protected than the suburb drivers.
353. **Guest Speaker:** That is so wrong. In the centre of London I had to wait 45 minutes as well.
354. **Guest Speaker:** When we speak to drivers from other garages they say, “We had this and we had the police”. When it changes from the MPS to the [REDACTED] Police there is no communication from TfL to [REDACTED]. It is the same even with the ambulance. We had a lady who fell off one of our buses outside our garage. I went out there with the garage manager. She fell out of her wheelchair onto the floor. The driver had done the right thing, all by the book with a code red, blah-blah-blah. Not a problem, “Ambulance en route”. The ambulance took an hour and 15 minutes to turn up. You want to know why? TfL do not link with other services outside the TfL and MPS remit. That is the biggest problem if you drive outside [central London]. It is the response time for the police. The bus now has its own police force with the Safer Transport Team. Where we are the Safer Transport Team finishes at 9.00pm. It is disgusting.
355. **Guest Speaker:** A lot of people do not trust Confidential Incident Reporting and Analysis System (CIRAS). You try to tell members how it works but because they know it is partly funded by the operating companies they always feel there is going to be come-back. Everybody is scared of losing their job over these things. As was said, they download the CCTV and - because you complained - they find anything they can to get rid of you and then you are out. Why would you bother?
356. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** How many people know about CIRAS? Has anyone used it?
357. **Guest Speaker:** Not me personally but one of my drivers.

358. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** You know people who have used it?
359. **Guest Speaker:** That is with the (Inaudible). He was the only guy who reported that incident on that particular bus. When it went back to the company - he had already reported it to the company because that is what you have to do before you report it to CIRAS - they did not have to be Sherlock Holmes [fictional detective] to work out (Overspeaking)
360. **Keith Prince AM (Deputy Chairman):** You have to report it to the bus company before you use CIRAS?
361. **Guest Speaker:** Yes. You must report it to the company and give them a chance to fix it. If they do not fix it then you report it to CIRAS. If you reported it to the company, it did not get fixed and then you reported it to CIRAS it gets sent back to the company and then they know who it was.
362. **Guest Speaker:** The companies are particularly promoting CIRAS.
363. **Guest Speaker:** Picking up on what we are all saying here about the blame culture within the bus operators, I do not know if you have ever heard of something called “pedal confusion”. There have been a few big cases about it recently. On the Boris [Johnson MP, former Mayor of London] buses there have been some incidents. Our company’s response is, “We will put a CCTV camera by the pedals so we can prove it actually is your fault and not the machine” or whatever the case may be. Every one of us here is under that sort of pressure. Even my colleague there who is a supervisor, he is under pressure from his managers. The phrase is the shit keeps falling down (Overspeaking)
364. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** Have any of you been involved in an incident and it was handled either really well with your employer or really badly? Has anyone got anything they are happy to share around that?
365. **Guest Speaker:** As a convenor I have had to get involved in incidents. I had a driver who in Mitcham Lane was sitting at the traffic lights and a lorry turning left, opposite him, took a cyclist out and the guy went underneath the bus. The driver was in shock. They were trying to get him to back in and drive the second half of his duty and were a bit loathe to give him a couple of days off. I had to then push for counselling because this guy had literally seen somebody under the wheels of a (Overspeaking)
366. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** Does anyone have any good practice examples?
367. **Guest Speaker:** Two years ago I watched a guy get run over by a Merton bus down at Morden. His head got splattered. This was a Saturday. I had to give a full statement to the police and that but my company wrote me straight off my shifts Sunday, Monday and Tuesday. I had to go in on the Tuesday to see my management because Monday was a bank holiday. I was not allowed to go back out on the road until I spoke to a counsellor the company organised for me. The driver - who worked for a different company, [REDACTED], at [REDACTED] - got the sack because he took a

week off sick. We go to court in about six weeks about that. The driver - who had done nothing wrong - is trying to sue [REDACTED] and I have to go to court for that. I witnessed it and at my company had a week and a half off basically.

368. **Guest Speaker:** What company?

369. **Guest Speaker:** [REDACTED].

370. **Guest Speaker:** [REDACTED] [REDACTED] It does not recognise the union, is that right.

371. **Guest Speaker:** Yes, that is why we have a staff association.

372. **Guest Speaker:** To put it in context I was sitting in my bus in a traffic jam, not moving and with the handbrake on at [REDACTED] You know what it is like. There were two lanes. There was a truck beside me. The truck decides to change to the outside lane, swings like this and goes crunch into the back end of my bus, takes my mirror off, smashes my window in and I dive this way. Accidents happen. A week later I am sitting in the accident prevention manager's office - I love the term "prevention", they only swing into action afterwards - and he said, "I do not really think it is anything to do with you. I think you are blameless here. However, if you had been a bit over to the left the back of the bus ..." What can you say to that? That is the way they do it. If you have a non-fault accident it is on your record. All of them. If somebody rams into your bus while you are at a bus stop picking up passengers it is on your record.

373. **Guest Speaker:** You have to report it to your insurance company as well even if it is a non-fault accident.

374. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** I realise we are starting to lose people. This is a slightly random question but we pick up lots of rumour and stuff on Twitter about this and I have no idea whether it is true. Can you indicate if any of you have another job as well as being a bus driver?

375. **Guest Speaker:** No.

376. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** I did not think it could be possible.

377. **Guest Speaker:** It is not legal.

378. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** No, not legal, exactly, because of the driving. We had picked that up.

379. **Guest Speaker:** I know people with two jobs.

380. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** What sort? Do they do mini-cabbing as well?

381. **Guest Speaker:** No, not driving. As long as they keep within the working time directive and the law and have their minimum breaks they can have two jobs.

382. **Guest Speaker:** Some contracts do say you are not allowed to work (Overspeaking)
383. **Guest Speaker:** In our case once you go and see your duty manager and your duty manager signs your (Overspeaking)
384. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** It could be you have a family business and you want to help out in the café or something on your days off.
385. **Guest Speaker:** Some part-time drivers do that, yes.
386. **Guest Speaker:** We have a lot of drivers who go to the college. They want to work specific shifts that will allow them to go to college to try to better themselves. If they are working in college all day and driving a bus all night it is not really --
387. **Guest Speaker:** Then, again, why are they having two jobs? Because the pay is rubbish.
388. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** Are there any other points about bus safety and how we can improve it you wanted to make this afternoon that you have not had the opportunity to?
389. **Guest Speaker:** I really want to get over the stress of this. Just imagine that, for yourself, you come into work, push on your computer and have to stay focused on that. Meanwhile you have everybody on the road - in our case - who does not want to let you off a stop. You have people badgering you from the right. You have passengers that shout at you and who are asking questions whilst you are driving the bus. The radio is going constantly. You have the potential for two people to be sitting on the bus monitoring you. You have the DMI, the official guy who is looking for problems, and you have the secret shopper sitting there marking you up for everything you are doing wrong. You have all of this and a five and a half hour shift where you have to concentrate fully on what is going on. This is the stress of the job it drives you absolutely nuts now.
390. **Guest Speaker:** The CCTV gets abused. In my case I reported a bus break down. I said, "There is a red light on my dash. It has never happened before." It is quite a new bus. The controller said, "Isolate the bus. Carry on and let me know if it is still going." It was on a Hail and Ride route in [REDACTED]. I carried on. Immediately, after I reset it, the warning light came on again. I could not find anywhere to park. Waited an hour for the engineer to turn up. Two months later I get called upstairs. They said, "We have looked at the CCTV and you are sacked because you looked at a mobile phone while you were in the cab". I got my job back because I went to court. A lot of people do not bother. I went back to the same garage just to poke them in the eye. They have not sacked me again yet. That cannot be right.
391. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** Yes. It is not being used for passenger service. It is being used to catch you out.
392. **Guest Speaker:** I do not know how they manage to get away with it.

393. **Guest Speaker:** The company solution to what [Guest Speaker] was saying is they stuck a poster up in the garage saying, "Do not multitask". You cannot help but multitask. You are driving the bus. You are listening to passengers and listening to controllers. You are multitasking.
394. **Guest Speaker:** The poster I would like to see is, "Are you getting enough sleep?"
395. **Guest Speaker:** I understand we do consultation and roll it out through the internet. That is not effective enough because a lot of people cannot do that and cannot write in. We could do that in community centres.
396. **Caroline Russell AM:** Do you mean consultation for roads?
397. **Guest Speaker:** Roads, route changes, cycle lanes anything like that. We, as bus drivers, were not aware a bus driver representative was involved when cycle lanes were being planned. This is why we have this conflict now. We believe we should be at risk assessments. Drivers or representatives of drivers - people who actually hold on to the steering wheel - should be informed in all forms of risk assessment. What currently happens now - and this is by and large the map for London - is that a health and safety officer, who has never held a steering wheel in his life, goes out and says what is safe for a bus driver to be driving. That is totally stupid. I do not think it is even in line with what health and safety dictates because it should be a relevant person.
398. **Guest Speaker:** We have about 18 CCTV cameras on the new buses now. Not even one CCTV is to help the driver improve the way we drive the bus or communicate with the passengers. For instance, if a passenger comes down from the upper deck there is no way we can even see him. If we move that person could end up on the floor and then we get disciplined. Instead of having 18 CCTV cameras for the companies, in order for them to discipline drivers, it would be effective to use that CCTV to help the drivers improve the way we drive the bus and the way we are able to do our job. That would be one way we could improve.
399. **Guest Speaker:** The passengers do not understand about headway. You are getting called by your controller, "lose two minutes, lose three minutes". You get, "Driver, what is happening? Driver, Driver." They do not understand.
400. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** My favourite was being on one of the old long bendy buses and it said, "Seats available on the upper deck".
401. **Guest Speaker:** There are a lot of safety issues that need looking at. Bus design was brought up earlier. There need to be forums such as this where people like us, who do this job, are involved with regard to bus design, road layouts and education of other people. In today's society everyone is so focused on what they are doing they are not interested in anybody else. The consequence of that is people stepping out in front of us on mobile phones and cyclists doing their best to do 30 miles per hour. Down the [REDACTED] they can do it. There needs to be better education coming out from TfL and more ways of getting these messages across. Some of us here will

remember when we used to have cycle proficiency courses at school. That is long gone.

402. **Guest Speaker:** They did that at our garage. As part of our CPC course drivers had to cycle so we would know what it was like.
403. **Guest Speaker:** One of our drivers nearly got run over by a bus.
404. **Guest Speaker:** The whole tendering process is the immediate problem because as long as European companies buy the mile all they are interested in is wheel-turning time. When I say that I mean we have schedules that have been changed. They have taken five minutes off the check-in time at the beginning of the shift so you can get more time driving the bus. The beginning of the shift is the critical safety part because you are checking that bus is fit to go out into service. It is fine them saying, "We are not taking money. We are taking five minutes off the end" but you cannot take it off at the beginning.
405. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** A couple more really quickly and then we will conclude.
406. **Guest Speaker:** On the last point around scheduling and running time on routes, they are ridiculous. Sometimes you think they have used a milk float to do the timing because you have so long to get to the other end of the road, and at night they have definitely done it on a motorbike because you never make the time from one end of the route to the other.
407. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** That needs reviewing, particularly with current levels of traffic.
408. **Guest Speaker:** Getting back to safety, I drive [REDACTED]. When the theatres fill up around 7.00pm [REDACTED] virtually comes to a standstill. I brought this point up when we had the control manager in our officer. I am sitting in my [REDACTED] I can see my leader and my leader's leader down [REDACTED] because you can see right down from [REDACTED]. Between us we probably had less than 20 people on the three buses but they ran us all through to [REDACTED]. When I brought it up he said, "We are providing a service". I said, "No, you are not. You are fulfilling a mileage quota. You are not providing a service because there were 30 passengers waiting at [REDACTED] and in the 20 minutes it took the three of us to get there not one bus came down the other way from [REDACTED]. That is not providing a service, you are just fulfilling a mileage quota." That is the problem. They are using our stand time and into our meal relief as a target for them to get the buses backwards and forwards, not to get the service running properly.
409. **Guest Speaker:** The speed limit on the road is 20 miles per hour. They have shortened the schedules. How on earth are we supposed to get from one end to the other driving at that speed? They need to review that.
410. **Guest Speaker:** They schedule for 30 miles per hour, do they not?

411. **Guest Speaker:** They are scheduled for 30 miles per hour but we have to drive at 20.
412. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** Yes, that needs to be reviewed. Brilliant. Thank you all so much for your time. It has given us a huge amount of food for thought. Thank you for doing a really difficult job. We do appreciate - and from the evidence we had at our hearing - that it is a very difficult job you do but it is really important for London. Thank you for that and for your contributions this afternoon and taking the time out to come and contribute. Thank you so much. Really nice to see you.
413. **Caroline Russell AM:** Caroline, what is the process for the review of the transcript?
414. **Georgina Wells (Assistant Scrutiny Manager, Greater London Authority):** In a couple of weeks' time we will get the audio transcribed and we will send it out to everyone. If you have any comments on it you can let us have them before we publish it. It will not be published for a few months on the website.
415. **Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM (Chair):** Thank you. We will let you see our final output as well. Thank you very much.