

# TfL COMMUNICATIONS WITH BUS DRIVERS: Research findings and recommendations

June 2016

ORC International and MHP Communications

# Background and introduction to the research

## The context and objectives surrounding the research

The TfL Bus Division has recently developed a clear vision and ambition for the service, for customers to feel welcomed every day. Customer research has suggested that in order to achieve this, one of the key actions needed is a shift in the behaviours of Bus Drivers. This represents a need for culture change across the Service and has been one of the driving factors behind the launch of the TfL Hello London bus driver development programme.

In order to drive and embed any cultural change within the Bus service, TfL recognise there is a need to collaborate closely with Operators and communicate effectively with Bus Drivers. TfL therefore wanted to understand the extent to which their current communications to Bus Drivers were effective, and gather feedback and ideas about what could be improved to create the kind of transformational communications that are needed to create behaviour change.



## Overview and methodology of the research

TfL partnered with research specialists ORC International and communications experts MHP Communications to deliver the research and create strategic recommendations for improvements. ORC International and MHP Communications are part of the Engine Group.

The research was delivered across 5 phases (see next page), all of which centred around qualitative research methodologies. Qualitative research was identified as being the most appropriate way of gathering the rich feedback and ideas required to achieve the project objectives. In the 5<sup>th</sup> phase, involving Bus Drivers, ORC International utilised a mix of qualitative and quantitative questioning to provide some insights into channel usage and preference, and recognition of existing communications examples.

A selection of 8 Operators provided valuable contributions to the research;



# Research fieldwork and audience summary

<p>PHASE 1.</p> <h2>2 WORKSHOPS</h2> <p><i>Scoping sessions with TfL stakeholders and Operator Communications Managers</i></p> <p><b>What we wanted to know...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Identify a shared vision between TfL and Operators for how we communicate with Bus Drivers</li><li>What makes transformational/effective communications?</li><li>Communications mapping exercise</li><li>Project success factors</li><li>Initial ideas/recommendations</li></ul>	<p>Phase 2.</p> <h2>8 TfL STAKEHOLDERS</h2> <p><i>Depth interviews with TfL Bus Directorate stakeholders</i></p> <p><b>What we wanted to know...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Understanding of the role they play in communicating to Bus Drivers</li><li>Exploring different types of communications designed for Bus Drivers</li><li>Operator engagement and relationship</li><li>Bus driver experience of TfL and communications</li><li>Ideas/opportunities</li></ul>	<p>Phase 3.</p> <h2>17 COMMS MANAGERS</h2> <p><i>Depth interviews with Operator Communications Managers</i></p> <p><b>What we wanted to know...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>An understanding of their role and approach to communications</li><li>Channel overview by Operator</li><li>Explore perceptions of effective communications for bus driver audience</li><li>Draw out examples of best practise</li><li>Gather feedback on the relationship and ways of working with TfL</li></ul>	<p>Phase 4.</p> <h2>21 GARAGE MANAGERS</h2> <p><i>Depth interviews with Garage Managers</i></p> <p><b>What we wanted to know...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Similar yet simplified version of the discussion with Communications Managers</li><li>Understand the role of the Garage Manager in communicating with Bus Drivers</li><li>Explore key challenges/opportunities of communicating at a local level</li><li>Identify what they believe works well in communicating with Bus Drivers</li></ul>	<p>Phase 5.</p> <h2>243 BUS DRIVERS</h2> <p><i>Semi-structured interviews with Bus Drivers</i></p> <p><b>What we wanted to know...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Channel analysis to understand what channels Bus Drivers currently receive information through, and channel preferences</li><li>Gather an overview of their experience of communications</li><li>Explore their reaction to and feedback on current TfL communications</li><li>Gather ideas and suggestions for improvement</li></ul>
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# THE TfL PERSPECTIVE: The TfL need in communications with Bus Drivers

# The TfL perspective: A summary of stakeholder feedback



## Key views and feedback from this audience:

### Operational focus

Majority of discussions with TfL stakeholders focussed on “operational communications”, with CentreComm and NoEs seen as the most significant and direct TfL communication channels to Bus Drivers.

### Inconsistent approach in distributing communications

Through discussions we identified a varied approach to communicating is used by different parts of the Bus Directorate in terms of distribution (i.e. format, channel and audience).

### ‘Blind spot’ of communications

There was a consistent perceived lack of clarity of how communications these audience send are utilised and cascaded to Bus Drivers within Operators/garages.

### Implications of contractual relationship

This audience were conscious of implications of the nature of competitive contractual relationships with Operators, and the KPIs that TfL sets as part of this, on the opportunity to engage with Bus Drivers.



## Opportunities for improvements identified from this audience:

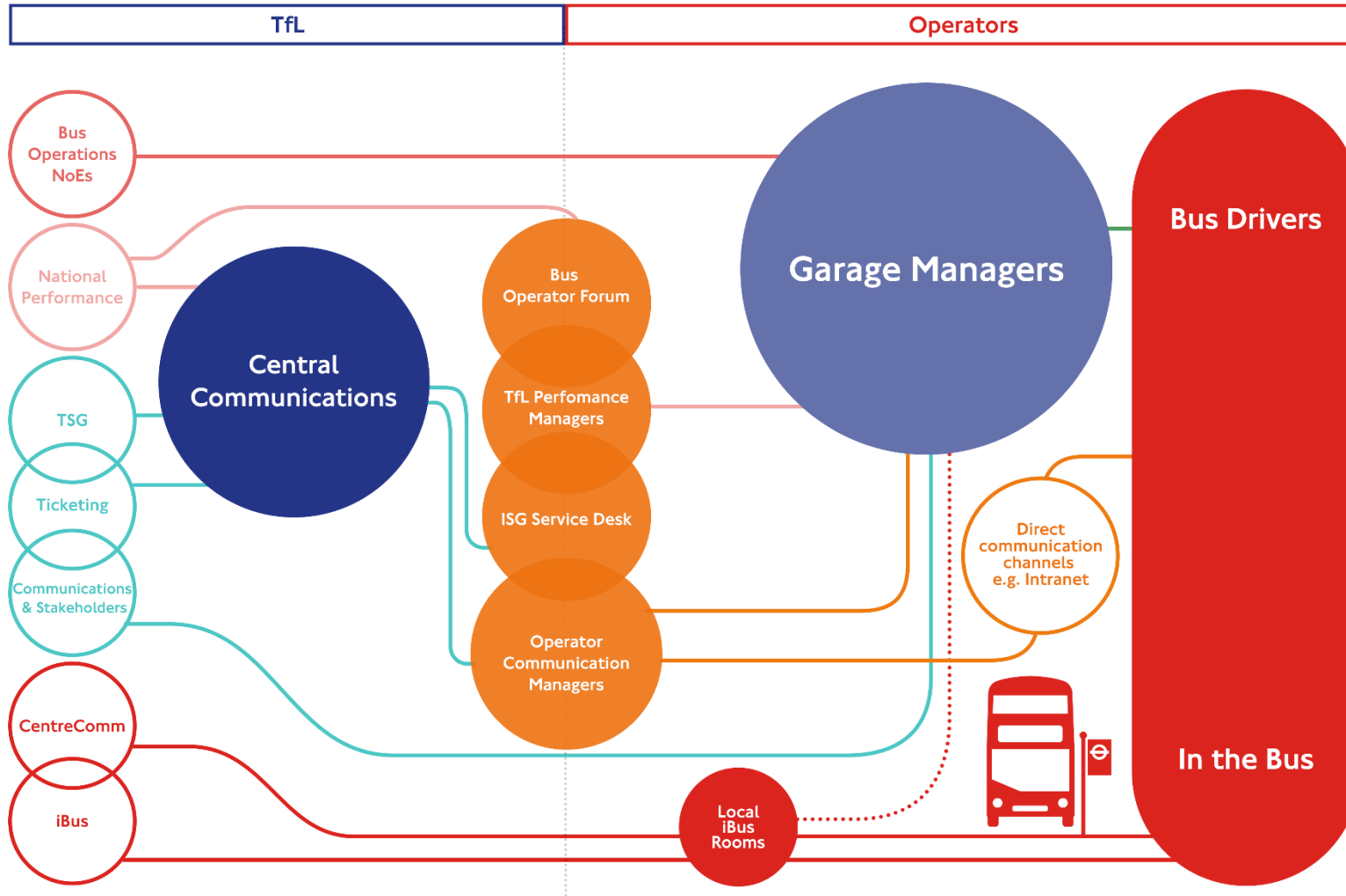
### Opportunities within the current organisational context

- Building a greater connection between TfL and Bus Drivers, and building engagement
  - Communicating what TfL are there to do/not do
  - Greater opportunities for Bus Drivers to meet with TfL, e.g. roadshows, encouraging drivers to visit CentreComm
- Identify/clarify opportunities of working together across TfL to communicate to Bus Drivers
- Spotlight on the role of TfL Bus Operations in communicating with Bus Drivers (Bus Station Controllers, Network Traffic Controllers, Revenue Protection Inspectors, Network Operations Managers etc.)

### Operational and Environmental Opportunities

- Improved communication across TfL directorate stakeholders
- Review Communications KPIs for Operator contracts
- Introduce a business partner model across the TfL/Operator interface
- In collaboration with Bus Drivers, pilot communications technology improvements as part of the development of the new ticketing system (2020)
- Develop communications aspect of Bus Station Controller role
- Develop further bus driver training on the use of/confidence in the on-bus PA system (part of Hello London)
- Explore opportunities to align with the MTS process

# TfL stakeholder communications to Bus Drivers



## Mapping communications from TfL to Bus drivers

Through the interviews with TfL stakeholders, we were able to identify the cascade and touchpoints in communicating with Bus Drivers. Some key observations were apparent;

### The role of the Garage Manager

The recipient of many communications from TfL is the garage management team, chiefly the Garage Manager. Many communications e.g. NoEs and Performance communications bypass the Central Communications team at TfL and the Operator Communications Managers

### Lack of visibility over communications to Bus Drivers

This approach means that there may be a lack of visibility/control across the Bus Directorate about what is being sent for Bus Drivers.

# THE Tfl/OPERATOR INTERFACE: Ways of working now and in the future

# The Central Communications team at TfL: Key feedback and ideas



Key views and feedback from this audience:

## Communications implementation and planning

In terms of prioritising communications to send to Bus Drivers, Central Communications prioritises based on the following criteria:

- Operational significance/importance
- The status of the sender. E.g. the Mayor, Mike Weston
- Information need

There is sometimes input and direction from senior stakeholders in TfL regarding priority, approach and channel.

## Visibility of communications within Operators

Consistent with the TfL stakeholder audience, Central Communications felt that it can be difficult to tell what has gone into the garages/to Bus Drivers, and whether pre-warnings and follow-ups have happened. The Central Communications Manager has an inconsistent level of access to Garage Manager email addresses to enable direct contact/follow-up.

## Working with Operators

There was an acknowledgment that whilst the Communications Forum (with Operators) had the potential to be used to discuss planning and strategy, this can often be difficult to achieve as there may be overlap with discussions in the Bus Operator Forum. More widely, Central Communications has varied contact across the Operators, and will work with individual best practice Operators on sharing ideas and successes (e.g. RATP, Metroline, Tower Transit).



Current TfL channels and methods used to communicate with Bus Drivers:

The Central Communications team cited a range of TfL channels used to deliver communications to Bus Drivers;

- Heavy focus on posters as all-driver channel/call to action, with some warm up on plasma screens
- Roadshows; whilst felt to be effective, these are less frequent than they have been previously
- Leaflets produced for longer-term reference and to support changes
- E mails other information to Operator Communications Managers; including Press Releases and Ticketing updates
- Big Red Book; is seen as a key piece of communications and reference point



Ideas and opportunities for this project and the future of communicating with Bus Drivers:

## Increasing support to Operators/Garages in prioritising

Central Communications felt there could be an opportunity to provide greater support to Operators in ensuring there is a consistent way of prioritising messages and communications from TfL.

## Explore the use of “new media” with drivers

Having acknowledged the current reliance on posters as a key channel for communicating to Bus Drivers, Central Communications were interested in exploring the readiness and resources to utilise more digital channels in reaching this work



# Working together: Operator Communications Manager feedback



Key views and feedback from this audience:

## Alignment of messaging across TfL and Operators

It emerged that the organisational priorities and objectives of Operators were relatively consistent, and this directed their own internal communications initiatives. Despite this there has been a lack of integration of the planning and implementation of Operator internal communications, and TfL communications. As a result, there have been examples of where TfL have released a piece of communications that overlaps with/duplicates Operator communications, which was felt to be a duplication of effort and a missed opportunity to ensure the highest level of impact (e.g. the RATP stopping campaign – see page 14)

## Timing and planning of communications

TfL give notice of upcoming communications at the Communications Manager Forum. However sometimes communications can be sent out with little notice, which means Operators need to react quickly, especially if an important message (e.g. new legislation about falling asleep on buses). Due to varied Communications resource across the Operators, their ability to respond quickly to a communications request from TfL differed.

Reliance on group emails and the Communications Manager Forum as a way of distributing communications meant that where there was little resource/heavy workload in an Operator, important updates could be missed.

## An amicable relationship with opportunities to collaborate further

Many Operators spoke about the relationship they have with TfL having improved, and that they had a good and amicable relationship with the Central Communications team. Whilst this was seen to be a positive, many Operators felt the relationship was still in the main instructional/transactional in terms of communicating TfL messages to Bus Drivers. Some of the factors that contributed to this view was that when the Operators were asked for feedback on a campaign or piece of communications, often feedback isn't taken on board by TfL due to it being too late in the day to make changes to the direction and content. Many Operators cited that they therefore felt reluctantly that the cascade of TfL communications to Bus Drivers often feels like a 'tick box exercise', not necessarily reaching the potential that it could do in terms of having an impact on the bus driver audience.



Ideas and opportunities for working together in the future:

## Mapping of objectives and timescales for communications

Some of the Operators felt there was an opportunity to have more notice of TfL communications and priorities, so they could integrate them into their own internal communications planning. Having visibility over the TfL communications in advance was felt to reduce duplication and also increase the impact of the message landing through a more strategic and holistic approach.

## Role and format of the Communications Manager Forum

The Communications Manager Forum is seen to be a format for providing top level updates, but could be adapted to build a more collaborative approach with Operators on how to ensure TfL communications have maximum impact with Bus Drivers.

# THE OPERATOR PERSPECTIVE: How communication looks within their world

# Operator Communications Managers: their world

## Key views and themes from the audience

### Communications in a changing world

In terms of common challenges identified in communicating with Bus Drivers in this changing context, Operators spoke about;

- Drivers spending less time in the Garage and therefore becoming an increasingly remote workforce
- More KPIs/performance targets and competition amongst Operators, can make the balance of communications messaging a challenge against organisational priorities.

As a result, there was a significant desire to move to digital communications across all Operators. Where there has been the resources this is already being implemented, creating a very different communications environment both compared to the historical context and a variance across Operators.

### Common organisational and communications priorities for Operators

All Operators we spoke to have their own organisational priorities (there is a high level of overlap across Operators) and use these to direct their internal communications plans. Typical Operator priorities included;

- Safety; lower incident rates, less damage to buses, reducing fines
- Operational efficiency; raising driving standards, fuel efficiency, preventative approach to maintenance
- Customer service; achieving good MTS results, reducing complaints, greeting customers, disability/accessibility
- Employee engagement/organisational values; employee voice, employee surveys, leadership behaviours



## Understanding and experience of what creates effective communications for Bus Drivers

The Operator Communications Managers that we spoke to identified a number of success factors of effective communications for Bus Drivers, based on their experience and feedback received;

- **Multi-channel methodology** is the best way to reach the most drivers. Face to face still seen as the most effective (e.g. forums and roadshows), then re-enforced with leaflets/pocket guides.
- Taking a **campaign-based approach** is needed to achieve behaviour change, often with a long term timeline, e.g. 6 – 12 months
- **Incentives and competition** work well in creating a ‘buzz’ and encourage positive word of mouth
- The best way to have impact with bus driver communications (particularly landing a difficult message) is to **involve them in the design and testing** of communications materials and campaigns
- **Avoid instructional messaging**, drivers don’t respond well to this. Instead make them feel they have a voice and that you understand their situation – and use an adult tone and humour
- **People-oriented communications**, e.g. Sarah Hope video (TfL), Jean accessibility training (Tower Transit), ‘Thank you driver!’ Age UK campaign (Metroline)
- “Tangible” nudges and reminders, e.g. ‘Box Junction’ layout in canteen (Stagecoach), ‘Curbed tyre’ in reception (Tower Transit)
- **Simple payslip attachments work well** in terms of reaching members of drivers, where there is less digital direct access

# Operator Communications Managers: working with TfL communications

## Key views and feedback from this audience

### Distribution of TfL communications

Mirroring the feedback from TfL Central Communications, all Communications Managers spoke about receiving TfL communications via group email. Whilst it was understood why this was an efficient process for TfL, it was felt that the email groups can be sporadic, making accountability/follow-up more of a challenge. In some cases posters printed by TfL and sent directly to Garages, the Communications Managers would prefer to give warning to the garages but this isn't always possible. As mentioned previously, the Communications Manager Forum helps to provide Communications Managers with updates as to what is coming up, however if they were unable to attend it can be difficult to get updates/minutes from these sessions.

Communications Managers are not involved in the cascade of operational communications from TfL such as NoEs or diversions, these were managed and distributed to Garages by their Operations teams.

### Integrating TfL communications into wider Operator campaigns

If felt to be an important/relevant message, many Operators will take the TfL poster and create further communications around it to help increase impact, e.g. Big Red Book new edition Quiz (Metroline). It was felt that the format of the communications sent by TfL could better enable this, e.g. more digital formats, and multiple formats of each piece of communications to allow for more flexibility.



## Suggestions and ideas for improving the impact of TfL communications to Bus Drivers

- Providing a **stronger TfL story and narrative** as part of communicating with Bus Drivers would help with ongoing engagement and understanding of TfL priorities in this audience. It was felt that this could be underpinned by greater involvement of Bus Drivers in building key communication campaigns and programmes, by TfL.
- Linked with the TfL story, Communications Managers spoke about a real need for TfL to be seen to support their bus driver communications with equivalent and relevant customer communications about the same issue – an opportunity for TfL to play a strong role in **shifting customer behaviours and understanding of the Bus service**, similar to customer communications on the Underground.
- Many Operators asked for a more **campaign-based approach** to be developed by TfL to support a particular message (i.e. long term programme, multi-channel).
- Based on experience of success, it's important to make any communications **feel relevant to Bus Drivers**, not TfL, i.e. getting into the shoes of the bus driver.
- **Advanced planning to dovetail with Operator's own initiatives** to provide context and improve impact. Whilst this is the ambition for many Operators, in reality this doesn't always happen due to notice and timescales of other internal communications being prioritised.

# Operator communications channel and resource availability: One size does not fit all

## Key Operator differences in communications

### Multi-channel communications in all Operators

When mapping the communications channels cited by Communications Managers, the picture reinforces that many Operators have the ability to deliver multi-channel campaigns to Bus Drivers, many with a mix of traditional and digital channels.













### Piloting/embedding of digital channels

Many Operators are either in the process of piloting new digital communications, or are working hard to embed them (e.g. Go-Ahead). In essence, all Operators have the aspiration to achieve more digital communications, but their maturity along the journey of achieving that varies widely.

### Variability of resource and expertise across Operators

Another key observation was that the level of resource (time, financial investment) varied greatly across the Operators. For example communications in CT Plus and RATP are managed by one individual where communications is only a part of their wider role. This compares starkly to Operators such as Go-Ahead who have a dedicated communications team and set of expertise.

Summary of key communications channels utilised/in plan with Operators

	Notice boards	Plasma screens	Road-shows/ events	News-letter	Intranet	Bus driver emails	Social media	Online duty allocation app
	✓	✓		✓				✓
	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	
	✓	✓						
	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	✓	✓	✓	✓				
	✓	✓		✓				
	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓



Channel available/used



Channel in progress/plan

# Spotlight on Operator communications best practise examples



## RATP Stopping campaign

**Key theme: Overlap of objectives and messaging of Operator and TfL communications**  
RATP delivered a communications campaign designed to educate and influence drivers behaviour around the stopping policy. This was rolled out approx. 6 months prior to the TfL campaign that was designed to meet the same objectives.  
RATP produced a simple and visual poster and leaflet with clear guidance for Bus Drivers, and received positive feedback about the campaign.



## Abellio Ultimate Driving Championship pilot

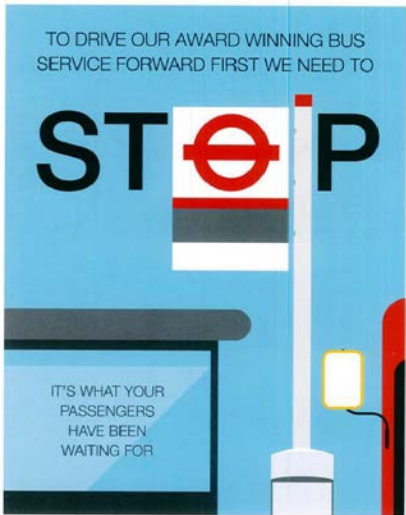
**Key theme: a multi-channel campaign designed to improve driving standards through behaviour change**  
One of the main organisational objectives at Abellio is to improve efficiency and performance. The Ultimate Driving Championship was being piloted at one of their main garages. It is based around a points system based on lots of things including operational, customer, personal performance. At the end of the year drivers received £10/every point earned and retained that year. The communications team used a range of channels including letters to home addresses, email banners, banners in garages, league table visuals, thank you cards for good points and reminder cards/leaflets.



## Tower Transit Curbed Tyre campaign

**Key theme: a simple yet impactful method of communicating to Bus Drivers**  
Tower Transit were reporting a high volume of curbed tyres on their buses, the cost of which was proving to be high. As a result, the communications team launched a campaign where they put physical curbed tyres in the Allocation/communal areas for Bus Drivers in garages. On the tyre they left a simple message about the impact of curbed tyres and how to avoid getting one. The simplicity and visual impact of this campaign received good feedback from Bus Drivers and many acknowledged the message.

# Spotlight on Operator communications best practise examples



RATP Dev LONDON



RATP Dev LONDON



abellio

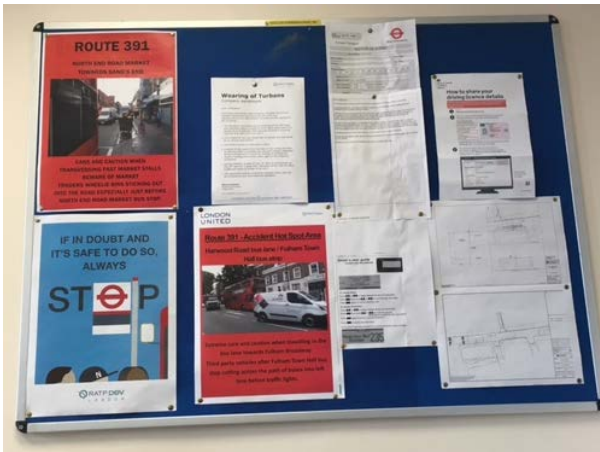
Abellio Ultimate Driving Championship pilot



Tower Transit Curbed Tyre campaign



RATP Stopping campaign



# COMMUNICATIONS AT LOCAL LEVEL: The bus garage environment



# Communications in the Garage environment; observations

## Noticeboards still dominate the communications within Garages

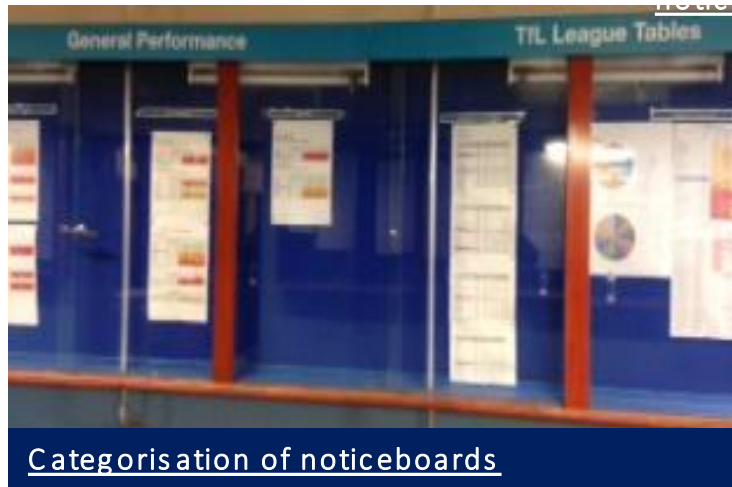
One of the most immediate and perhaps unsurprising observations at all garages that were visited was the large number of noticeboards. This is reflected in the conversations with Garage Managers and Bus Drivers about communication channels.

Key observations;

- Location of noticeboard could affect the impact
- Varying levels of categorisation of notices
- TfL bus driver communications were visible in all Garages (on



Stairwell/corridor location of noticeboards



Categorisation of noticeboards



High volume of notices/posters

## Evidence of digital and multi-channel approaches

Insights gathered from interviewing the Communications Managers around introducing digital/electronic communications for Bus Drivers were reflected in the garage environment.

Key observations;

- Plasma screens in every garage, but not always working
- Access to digital communications
- A multi-channel approach



Multi-channel communications in Allocation



Implementation of digital technology

# The Garage Manager: a key role in communications with Bus Drivers



Key views and feedback from this audience:

## The local management of communications to Bus Drivers

Garage Managers are the distribution point for many of the communications that come via the Operator communications teams, and directly from the TfL Bus Communications team (via email or printed posters). In terms of prioritisation, unless an operational director or the communications team have identified the prioritisation of a piece of communications, it is down to the Garage Manager to prioritise what they distribute within the garage. There wasn't a formal or standardised approach to prioritising messages, but typically Garage Managers spoke about the below being key messages that they would prioritise;

- Operational, e.g. large scale diversions or events
- Safety related messages
- Changes to policy
- Problems with performance
- Diversity and accessibility

## Interaction with TfL Communications

Garage Managers will distribute TfL communications in terms of putting the posters on noticeboards in the Garage. A notable proportion also spoke about how they tried to either adapt or create alternatives to the TfL materials to try and ensure Bus Drivers see/understand them. Garage Managers **would** adapt the communications to;

- Make the language simpler; to make it easier to understand, particularly for those drivers who don't have English as a first language.
- Make the notice more concise; some updates from TfL were felt to be lengthy and not all relevant to drivers. Garage Managers would create a notice with a bold headline and a few bullet points to get the key messages to Bus Drivers.

## Boosting the impact of TfL communications

Half of Garage Managers we spoke to said that they often create their own local communications to support what they see as the key objectives and messaging in the TfL communications they receive, e.g. posters or the Big Red Book. This can range from them creating their own simple printed notices to communicate content from the Big Red Book, through to creating leaflets or handouts for drivers, e.g. around how to achieve good MTS scores (MTS leaflet example – see page appendix).



## Reflections and considerations in the role of a Garage Manager in communications

### Greater involvement/support for this group to achieve consistency and best practise

The findings identify that this audience are responsible for the local prioritisation and management of communications to Bus Drivers. However currently, neither Operator Communications Managers or TfL Central Communications have a responsibility or reach in providing support and guidance to this group in how to ensure key messages are communicated effectively and consistently to Bus Drivers.

### Variability of Garage Manager communications capability

Of the Garages that were visited during this research, there was a high variability in Garage Manager's perceptions of their role/responsibility and approach to communicating with Bus Drivers. This was also reflected in variances in bus driver's feedback in terms of the Garage Manager being seen as a communication channel. Other roles in the Garage referenced as being communications touchpoints were: Staff Manager, Union Rep and Counter staff.

# Garage Manager feedback: Communications channels and effectiveness



## Communication channels used in Garages

### Noticeboards are used most widely

Despite concerns about there being too much information on noticeboards, they were the most widely used communication channel in garages. All Garage Managers said this was one of their main channels for communicating with drivers. However, when asked what works well when communicating with drivers, only 10% of Garage Managers cited noticeboards.

Garage Managers are responsible for managing the content on the noticeboards, and many had 'refresh' processes where they would change the notices every 1-2 weeks.

"Posters specifically for TfL communications, as that's usually how TfL want us to disperse information."

*Garage Manager*

### Face to Face is the most effective, but can be a challenge

Face to face was felt to be the most valued and impactful channel through allowing for two-way discussion and providing clarity for Bus Drivers, particularly around changes in policy, procedure and performance.

Two thirds of the Garage Managers we spoke to said they run regular Garage forums with drivers. On more than one occasion, word of mouth was cited as a powerful way of spreading the word, making it more important to invest in face to face communications and clarify messaging to avoid misinterpretation/rumour mill.

"You might only get 20 drivers at a forum out of 500, but don't underestimate word of mouth from those who did come."

*Garage Manager*

### Digital and multi-channel is the way forward

When asked for ideas on improving communications with Bus Drivers, 42% referenced digital channels such as email, social media and mobile apps.

There were mixed perceptions about plasma screens; many Garage Managers were unsure how long drivers spend engaging with them, but this may be a reflection of the nature of the published content.

When needing to share important messages, and therefore reach as many drivers as possible, Garage Managers spoke about using a multi-channel approach.

"Really important messages are something which will have an impact on ops, we use face to face briefing, ask managers to run out and ask to speak to every driver, put it on post it notes on duty card and ask for a signed copy to show they've read it."

*Garage Manager*

# Garage Manager feedback: What works in communicating to Bus Drivers



Key suggestions and ideas from this audience in effective communications with Bus Drivers

## Building a stronger connection with TfL

Garage Managers acknowledged that for many Bus Drivers, their primary contact or 'relationship' with TfL for most drivers is via CentreComm, Revenue and Controllers. They are also very aware of the KPIs and targets that TfL sets their Operator, which has a big impact on a bus driver's day to day experience. This can make it difficult in communicating with Bus Drivers about the wider role of TfL in the bigger picture of the Bus service.

Around ¼ of Garage Managers suggested more regular face to face contact with TfL, e.g. via forums, others suggested a TfL magazine or intranet where drivers could find out more information and have an online discussion/Q&A with TfL.

*"Driver's perceptions of TfL is predominantly based on cost, they link everything back to lost routes"*

*Garage Manager*

## Getting in the shoes of the bus driver

Garage Managers are responsible for communicating a large volume of operational messages and updates to Bus Drivers every day. Even communications about the simplest everyday processes and procedures can be a challenge for Garage Managers to communicate, due to the remote nature of the bus driver workforce in many Operators a lack of direct access. Therefore landing difficult or complex messages represents a real challenge at this level.

Consistently with the Operator Communications Managers, Garage Managers raised the need for TfL to appreciate the impact of customer behaviour on a bus driver, and how there is a perception that TfL are not addressing this.

*"the challenges come from specific sensitive issues, for example on the schoolchildren issue, drivers are unhappy that they are unable to chuck disruptive children off school buses. The reasons are explained i.e. they are vulnerable, but they are still unhappy with the outcome.."*

*Garage Manager*

## What works well when communicating with drivers

- Keep it simple; concise text, use of images and visuals works well
- Competition works well, e.g. league tables
- Local focus of content, e.g. garage newsletters
- If an important message, can we clear any space amongst other communications to engage them better
- Two-way discussion and making them feel their opinion counts
- Remove any ambiguity and create clear call to action; Poem campaign referenced as too ambiguous

*"Poems stopping at stops poster is a good example to its slightly contradictory message. Drivers need things in black and white, as when they break rules punishments are harsh. Therefore it would be unfair if their judgement was poor due to an incomplete understanding of the rules, and that poster may have caused unnecessary confusion."*

*Garage Manager*

# THE BUS DRIVER EXPERIENCE: Communications through their eyes

# Bus driver sample: overview of this audience

## Bus driver sample profile

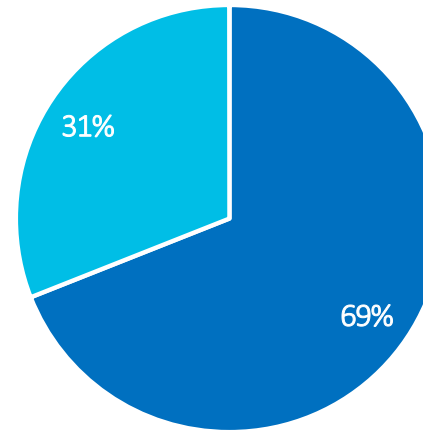
### A representative view across London

We spoke to 243 Bus Drivers, from 21 garages. The garages were a mix of both inner and outer London garages, and were selected by TfL in partnership with the Operator Communications Managers to achieve a balanced sample of good performing/best practise locations and garages where there have been challenges in communicating with and engaging Bus Drivers.

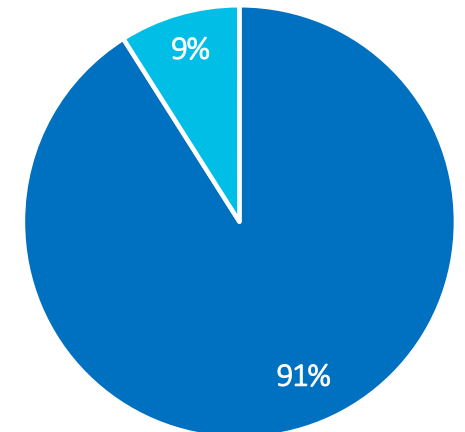
### Reflecting the views of Bus Drivers who spend time in garages

All Bus Drivers were interviewed in communal areas of the garage. It's therefore important to emphasise that our sample includes Bus Drivers who spend their time in bus garages (e.g. during breaks, before shifts). The feedback from Operators was that there is a proportion of Bus Drivers who do not spend any time in garages, and are often working completely remotely.

Is English your first language?



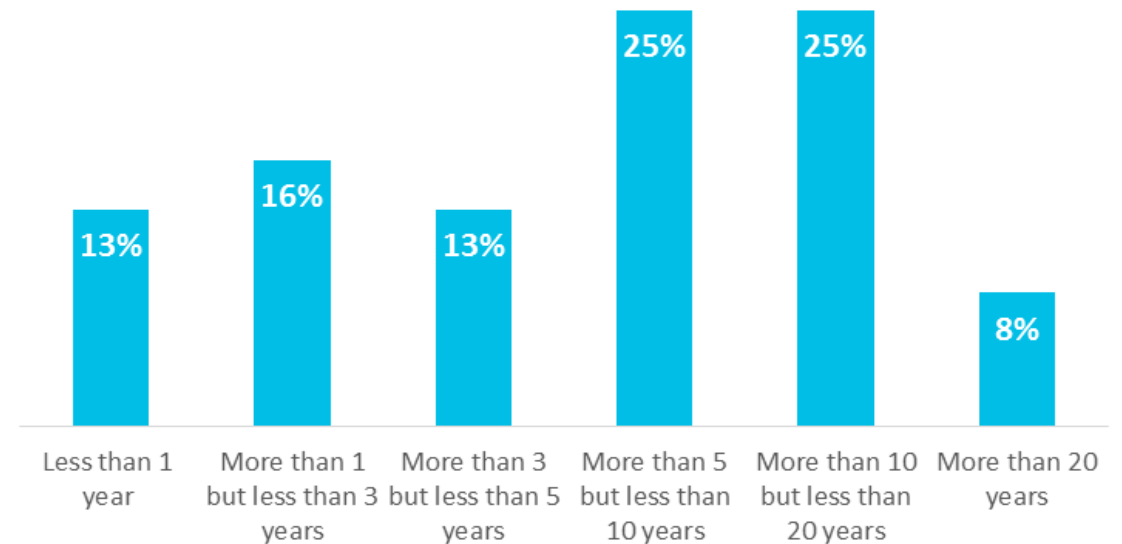
What is your gender?



■ Yes ■ No

■ Male ■ Female

How long have you worked at this company?



# Bus driver experience: Channels for receiving operational communications

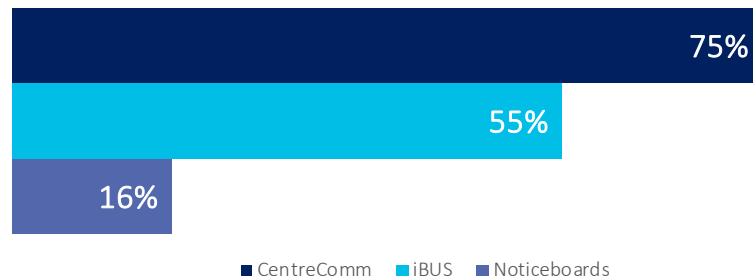


## Operational communications are cascaded via targeted and tried/tested channels

Channel analysis of operational communications revealed a heavy reliance on 'in the cab' communications for unplanned updates and notifications. In terms of NoEs, the majority of Bus Drivers cited noticeboards as a channel for receiving these communications compared with any other channels. The level of satisfaction with the current cascade of NoEs suggests there is a readiness for a different approach to sharing this information with Bus Drivers.

### Unplanned diversions

How you receive communications about this currently (multi-tick):

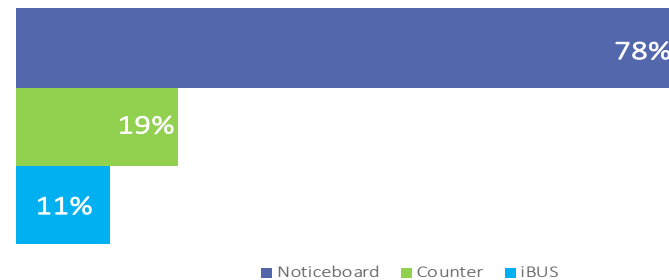


How would you prefer to receive communications about this? Feedback/suggestions\*

- 51% said 'it's okay as it is/there is no other way'
- Directions from CentreComm are difficult to follow/radio quality is poor
- Require further support and information in the case of diversions, such as;
  - Text message with directions
  - More controllers roadside to provide directions
  - Satnav system in the cab

### Planned diversions/NoEs

How you receive communications about this currently (multi-tick):

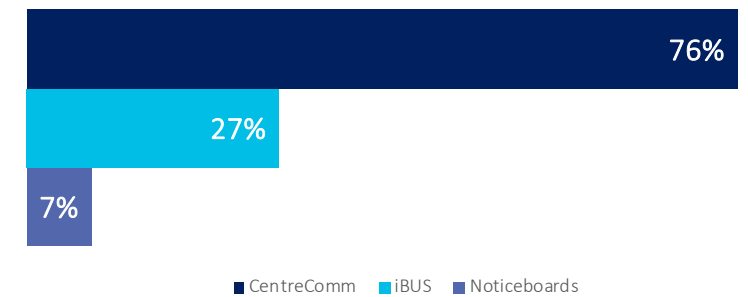


How would you prefer to receive communications about this? Feedback/suggestions\*

- 36% said 'its okay as it is'
- Should not rely solely on noticeboards, sometimes you can miss this
- Personalised notice: printed as an attachment to duty allocation card
- Reminders via other channels including email, intranet, text message and iBUS announcements

### Safety alerts

How you receive communications about this currently (multi-tick):



How would you prefer to receive communications about this? Feedback/suggestions\*

- 53% said 'it's okay as it is/there is no other way'
- Mixed experiences of CentreComm response for those who have experienced it
- Concern around customer reactions; suggested all radio alerts are coded

# Bus driver experience: Channels for receiving non-operational communications

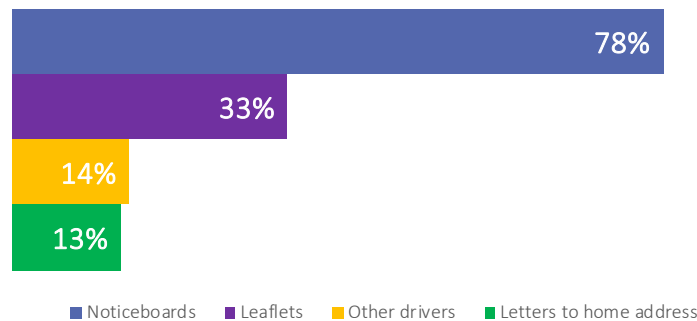


## Non-operational communications via noticeboards but there is a high level of readiness for a different approach

Channel analysis of non-operational communications reflects the findings so far and the heavy reliance on noticeboards/posters in delivering these types of communications. Despite this, there are low levels of satisfaction with this approach and Bus Drivers had some constructive ideas and feedback on how they would prefer to receive non-operational communications.

### Changes to policy

How you receive communications about this currently (multi-tick):

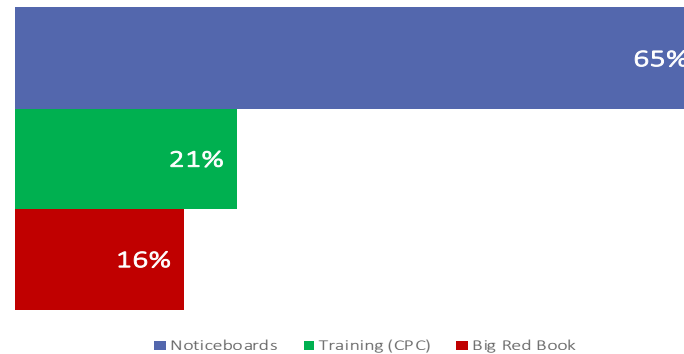


How would you prefer to receive communications about this? Feedback/suggestions\*

- 38% were satisfied with current approach
- Forums/face to face communications were suggested to allow Bus Drivers to ask questions and have two-way discussions about the changes
- Letters and/or locker drops were felt to be useful in ensuring everyone gets the message

### Reminders of policy

How you receive communications about this currently (multi-tick):

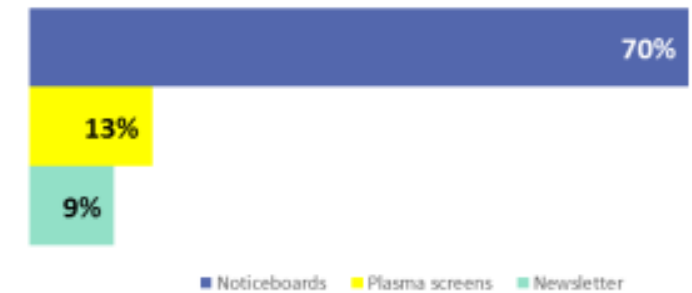


How would you prefer to receive communications about this? Feedback/suggestions\*

- 20% were satisfied with the current approach
- Drivers felt some of the communications in this category were patronising and dictatorial
- Drivers also felt these communications could be shared across multiple channels such as face to face, via email and noticeboard

### How my garage is doing

How you receive communications about this currently (multi-tick):



How would you prefer to receive communications about this? Feedback/suggestions\*

- 31% were satisfied with the current approach
- Drivers felt confused by the data and charts, therefore were keen to get clarity on what they mean via face to face communications, e.g. with Garage Manager
- Feeling that we should share more positive results and feedback, rather than focussing on the negative



# Impact of introducing digital channels on the bus driver experience



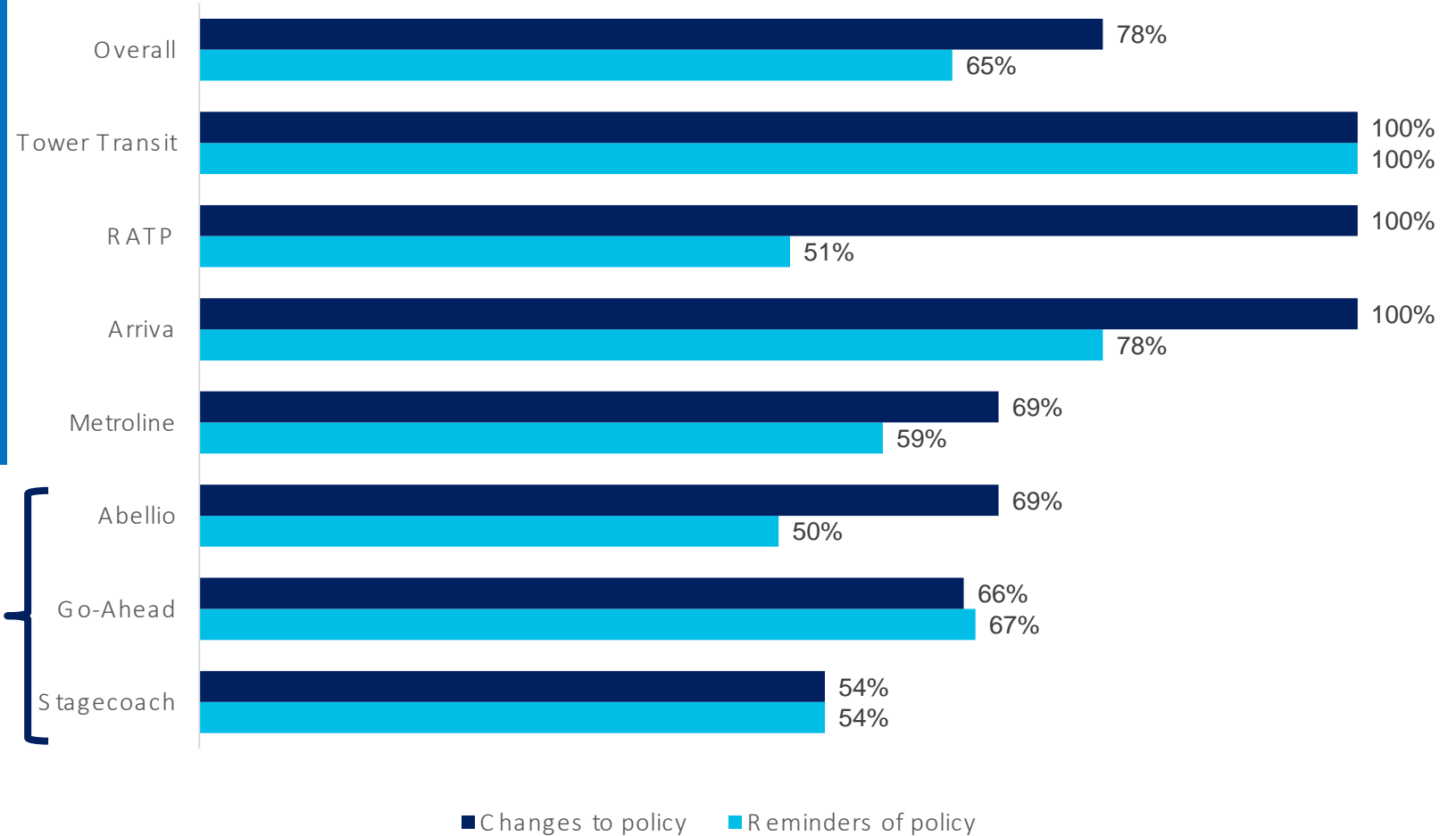
## Introducing digital channels reduces the reliance on noticeboards/posters

When mapping the channel analysis with bus driver's against the feedback gathered from Communications Managers about the channels they are utilising and investing in, there is a difference in Bus Drivers citing noticeboards/posters as a channel for receiving non-operational communications (changes and reminders of policy).

This is encouraging feedback in supporting many Operator's ambition to move away from the traditional approach of using noticeboards/posters as the primary channel for communication with Bus Drivers.

Operators who are piloting/embedding digital communications channels the most

Proportion of Bus Drivers citing noticeboards/posters as a channel for receiving non-operational communications



# Bus driver experience: Reactions and responses to specific TfL communications



Despite the majority of these communications were displayed on noticeboards in the Garages that we visited, only 48% of drivers interviewed said they had seen the example that we were testing.

We tested the below 6 examples of recent TfL communications that are aimed at Bus Drivers;



Of drivers who said they were aware of the example, when asked about how they responded to that piece of communication\*...

66 drivers said...

"I know it/it's common sense"

47 drivers said...

"It's a useful reminder"

40 drivers said...

"The look and feel/imagery is attractive"

15 drivers said...

"It made me change my behaviour"

\*Coded verbatim responses

# Bus driver experience: Reactions and responses to specific TfL communications



Do you recognise this poster?  
 Yes: 62%  
 No: 38%

If 'yes', key feedback (coded):

- I know it: 18
- Changed my behaviour: 5
- Useful reminder: 4



Do you recognise this poster?  
 Yes: 45%  
 No: 55%

If 'yes', key feedback (coded):

- Useful reminder: 10
- I know it: 9
- Can't change my behaviour: 7
- Changed my behaviour: 4



Do you recognise this poster?  
 Yes: 33%  
 No: 67%

If 'yes', key feedback (coded):

- I know it: 9
- Useful reminder: 5
- Format/imagery good: 5
- Changed my behaviour: 1



Do you recognise this poster?  
 Yes: 46%  
 No: 54%

If 'yes', key feedback (coded):

- I know it: 15
- Useful reminder: 6
- Changed my behaviour: 0



Do you recognise this poster?  
 Yes: 68%  
 No: 32%

If 'yes', key feedback (coded):

- Useful reminder: 14
- Format/imagery good: 11
- I know it: 7
- Changed my behaviour: 0



Do you recognise this poster?  
 Yes: 41%  
 No: 59%

If 'yes', key feedback (coded):

- I know it: 23
- Useful reminder: 13
- Changed my behaviour: 5

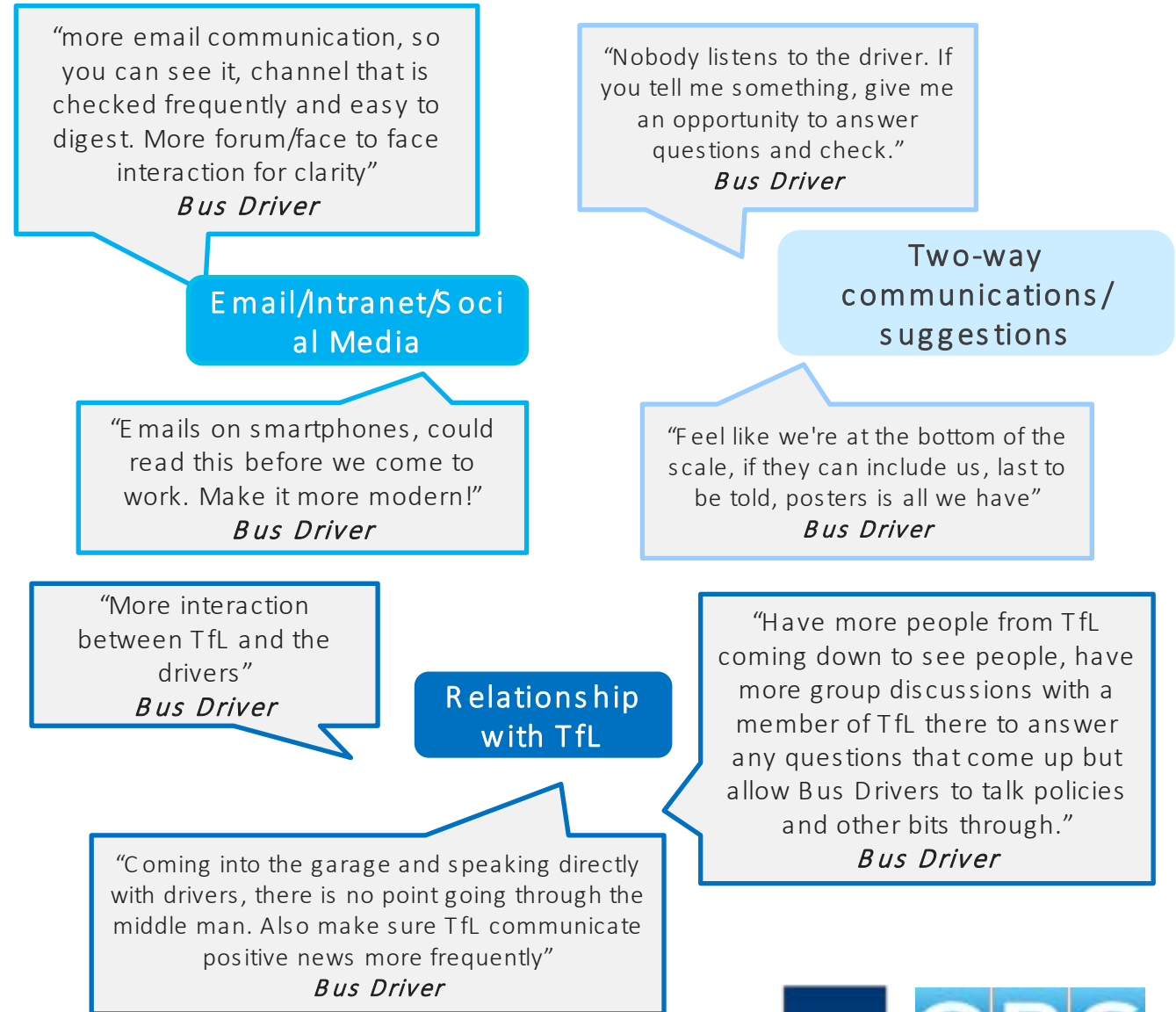
# Bus driver ideas and suggestions for more effective communications



Drivers show a readiness for more digital and two-way communications

When we asked Bus Drivers what they believe effective communications looks like, and what TfL could do to improve communications to them, we received a varied but rich source of feedback. Encouragingly, aligned with all other audiences involved in this research, Bus Drivers referenced a readiness and ambition to utilise digital channels.

Ideas and suggestions by theme*	Freq.
Email/Intranet/Social Media	38
Two-way communications/suggestions	34
Relationship with TfL – more contact	34
Map/Stratnav/GPS	31
Face to face – Manager, forums	25
Radio signal is bad	13
Multi-channel needed	12
Customer behaviours/education	12
Too much communications/info	10
Patronising messaging	10
Simplify things	8
Noticeboards/posters	8



# PROJECT SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS: Next steps for TfL

# Insights and implications

## TfL Role and Resources

- Develop TfL bus driver narrative and campaigns
- Map communications across Bus Directorate
- Build/utilise digital and planning skills at TfL for communications with Bus Drivers

## Ways of working with Operators

- Evolve Communications Managers Forum
- Develop TfL/Operator Bus Driver communications strategy and planning process
- Leverage opportunities provided by Operators' communications plans, campaigns and channels

## Content, Channels and Tools

- Support and encourage the rollout of Operator intranets
- Review TfL Roadshow programme feasibility
- Provide full campaign materials and tailored formats to support TfL communications to Operators

## Bus driver communications principles

- Multi-channel
- Campaign-based approach
- Driver voice and tone
- No 'one size fits all'
- Face to face is most effective
- Heightening of TfL context/narrative
- Create two-way engagement
- Tailored formats for different channels

# Recommendations: TfL role and resources

## **Develop TfL overarching narrative and prioritised key campaigns and messages**

Create a narrative for Bus Drivers that sets out TfL objectives, and is used as context for its priorities, and the communications campaigns that it sends out – and identify explicitly a number of campaigns that TfL will be focussing on throughout the year (e.g. use icons on TfL communications that link to each TfL objective).

## **Agree TfL relationship positioning with/for Bus Drivers (i.e. role TfL should play and what it “owns”)**

In conjunction with developing a bus driver narrative for TfL, explicitly agree the “relationship” that TfL wants to/needs to/should be having with Bus Drivers – policy deliverer, behaviour change, motivational and engagement role.

## **Develop an integrated communications map and communications plan at the Bus Directorate level**

Audit and create a detailed map of all “communications” (instructions, communications, engagement) that go from the whole Bus Directorate into the Operators and garages and to the Bus Drivers directly – and critically, to whom in each Operator (based on the TfL Communications Map in this report).

## **Leverage digital and planning skills (seconded) into the communications team in the short to medium term**

Review the opportunity to identify digital communications and communications planning expertise in the bus directorate and whether those resources can be used/seconded by the team (to help to deliver the following recommendations).

# Recommendations: Ways of working with Operators

## Create a Bus Driver Communications Plan

Develop a TfL/Operators bus driver communications strategy and planning process and tool

Agree future communications channel strategy to be digital based

## Understand Operator Opportunities

Identify the communications roles/map at the Operations Director level

Leverage opportunities provided by Operator plans, campaigns and channels

## Leverage TfL/Operator Forums

Relaunch the Communications Forum based on communications planning and consultation principles and ways of working between TfL and the Operators

Clarify and establish the role of the Bus Operators Forum and the relationship with Communications Forum

## Collaborate to develop materials

Standardise approaches to communications materials and distribution decisions and approaches



# Recommendations: Content, channels and tools

## Content

- Develop full campaign materials for each priority TfL campaign
- Leverage the “Hello London” training programme
- Leverage the “Mr Men” customer marketing programme, aligning bus driver and marketing communications, (based on f2f, pledge/competitions, personalised leaflets)
- Develop TfL content that can be syndicated across Operator communications platforms (e.g. “A day in the Life of..”), based on positive reward and recognition

## Channels

- Develop short-term existing channel improvements based on feedback
- Create TfL bus driver communications champions in alignment with “Hello London”
- Invest in a Bus Directorate roadshow programme, establishing engage Bus Drivers
- Review the opportunity to support Operators in developing Bus Driver intranets, with two-way engagement capability

## Tools

- Identify and agree formats for each operator – not “one size fits all”
- Develop an “action” code for all TfL materials (urgent, for action, for information)
- Test communications and ideas with engaged bus driver groups
- Review the Big Red Book against all feedback (no need to undertake any further research)

# A proposed improvement approach/timeline: assuming existing TfL resources

	Q3 2016	Q4 2016	Q1/Q2 2017
<b>TfL Role and Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop overarching TfL narrative (12-18 months) for Bus Driver Communications</li> <li>• Develop Directorate Communications map for CMF review</li> <li>• Scope Digital skills need for Central Communications</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set out TfL Bus Driver narrative at CMF</li> <li>• Second digital skills into Central Communications</li> <li>• Review Directorate Communications map at CMF</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review and update bus driver narrative against organisational and Operator priorities</li> </ul>
<b>Ways of working with Operators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Redesign Communications Managers Forum (CMF)– develop in collaboration with the Operators</li> <li>• Develop initial Bus Driver communications plan 2016/Q1 2017</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relaunch CMF</li> <li>• Design Bus Driver Communications strategy 2016/2017</li> <li>• Explore development of Bus Driver Communications planning tool</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launch Bus Driver communications planning tool</li> </ul>
<b>Content, channels and tools</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agree and implement short-term channel use improvements (see next slide)</li> <li>• Audit Operator format needs</li> <li>• Design Bus Driver roadshow programme (with CMF and bus driver input)</li> <li>• Design and leverage engagement communications campaign for “Hello London”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop brief and commission TfL Bus Drivers intranet (CMF working group)</li> <li>• Launch Bus Driver roadshow programme (with CMF and bus driver input)</li> <li>• Identify opportunities for TfL syndicated content use</li> <li>• Develop proposals for new Big Red Book</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launch TfL Bus Driver intranet</li> <li>• Launch new/digital Big Red Book on with new intranet</li> </ul>

# Existing TfL resources checklist: short-term/ 'quick wins'

Channel	Example comments/feedback	Short-term improvements
Posters	Use as a "call to action" Use as part of a multi-channel strategy Plan timing with Operators Clear, bold messaging Adult tone (e.g. humour)	Add expiry dates
Plasma screens	Visual, rather than narrative, content Use a teaser channel, not information	Design for all plasma screen sizes across the Operators
Leaflets	Very useful as ongoing reinforcement	Develop a single bus driver leaflet style
Newsletters	Leverage Operator and garage newsletters by providing syndicated content	(See recommendations)
Events and roadshows	Use as far as possible when engagement or behaviour change required	(See recommendations)
Competitions and awards	Use with care and in the context of Operator competitions and award schemes	
Intranet	Explore the development of a TfL Bus Driver intranet Leverage Operator intranets (where exist) by providing syndicated content	(See recommendations)
Emails to drivers	These should be Operator use only	-
Emails to Operators		Edit press releases and notices to highlight relevant content, and provide context and recommendations on next steps

# Appendix



# Big Red Book; summary of feedback



The Big Red Book (BRB) is one of the major pieces of communication from TfL to Bus Drivers, with every bus driver expected to have a copy of the book. Within this research, we tested the Big Red Book as a specific example of communications within the Operator Communications Managers interviews, and it was raised spontaneously in Garage Manager interviews and Bus Driver interviews. This page provides a summary of the feedback gathered to provide TfL with insights into the perceptions of the Big Red Book from our sample.

## A useful point of reference

All audiences spoke about the BRB being useful as a point of reference, for new drivers and as a resource for existing drivers to check something if they need to. However there was a sense from Operator Communications Managers and Garage Managers that Bus Drivers don't carry the BRB with them, due to its size and comprehensive content. This was reinforced by some Bus Drivers;

- "Drivers aren't going to have time to read the book, only carry it for show"
- "The red book is easy to use but very big and has lots of information."
- "You don't always feel like reading that book"

## A need for different formats

The majority of Operator Communications Managers spoke about the need for a 'condensed version' of the BRB with some of most commonly used content in there, which they felt would mean Bus Drivers are more likely to use the book. Several Garage Managers spoke about how they typically condense key messages from the BRB into short notices for Bus Drivers, which are then put on noticeboards.

All audiences spoke about the value of having the BRB available in electronic format, including Bus Drivers;

- "The red book is helpful - it could be put online - electronic version."

## Rethinking the launch of new versions

Many Operators spoke about how they develop their own launch campaigns for new versions of the BRB. Metroline have used the 'Big Red Book quiz' which was referenced by a bus driver, and other Operator Communications Managers and Garage Managers spoke about launching new versions through a wider multi-channel campaign, typically involving face to face methods such as forums.

Both Operators Communications Managers and Garage Managers suggested that when new versions are released, that TfL summarises what has changed, to enable them to communicate this effectively internally and encourage Bus Drivers to read the new version.

# Further examples of Operator communications examples; highlighting best practise examples and the 'no one size fits all' principle for collaborating with Operators



## Metroline

Metroline involved Bus Drivers and other employees in the design and communication of their new values. They trialled new formats such as producing videos that were then distributed on DVDs for all drivers.

**Drivers Hours:**  
A professional driver should be aware of the regulations concerning driver's hours and you should keep yourself up to date with any changes in legislation that may affect you.

**Driving Time:**  
Limit of 10 hours per day total (relates only to actual driving not stand time, recovery time, signing on, travel time, etc).

**Continuous Driving:**  
A limit of 5½ hours at one stretch then a break of at least 30 minutes or a limit of 8½ hours at one stretch provided that within the 8½ hours are non-driving breaks totalling 45 minutes (these must not all be at the end of the spell) and after 8½ hours either work finishes or a break of at least 30 minutes is taken.

**Maximum Spreadover:**  
Limit of 16 hours daily.

**Minimum Daily Rest:**  
10 hours between days.

**Minimum Weekly Rest:**  
An unbroken spell of 24 hours per fortnight. The maximum number of days worked before weekly rest is 13.

TOWER TRANSIT



Tower Transit developed laminated card leaflets about drivers hours. The cards are pocket-sized to encourage drivers to carry them with them on the bus.

LONDON UNITED  
DRIVEN BY PEOPLE

### NOTICE OF EVENT

Affecting Route(s): 33 65 372  
Event Type(s): Bus Stop Suspension  
Main Location(s): Wakefield Rd  
From: 0830hrs Sunday 20 March 2016  
Junction(s): Church Terrace  
To: 1300hrs Sunday 20 March 2016  
NOE Number: 5016 1232  
Duration: CONTINUOUS

Truform working on behalf of Transport For London will be replacing the bus shelter at the above location, traffic management will be a partial lane closure. Bus stop 36762 (point letter) will be closed for the duration of the works. A temporary stop will be sited nearby if it is safe to do so.

RATP DEV



RATP are an example of an Operator who produce their own NoEs utilising the information they receive from TfL and integrating it into a more simple and visual format. Go-Ahead are another Operator who follow a similar process.



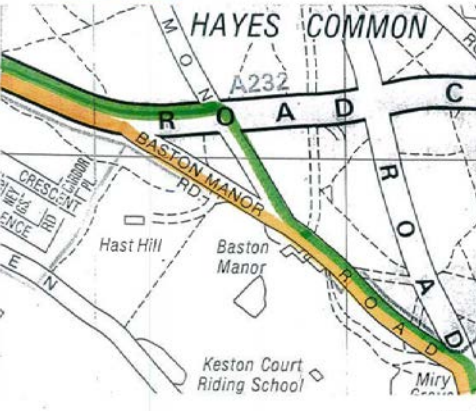
# Examples of communications created at garage level; highlighting the role of the garage management team and inconsistency of approach at a local level

## Route 246 at Keston

It has come to light that there is an error within the route guide for Route 246 which shows that Westerham bound journeys use Baston Manor Road.

This is not the case and buses **towards Westerham** must not use Baston Manor Road, but use the next turning on the right along Croydon Road into West Common Road.

Buses **towards Bromley** should still use Baston Manor Road.



The map shows a route starting from Hayes Common, passing through Baston Manor, and continuing along Croydon Road. Key locations marked include Hast Hill, Baston Manor, Keston Court Riding School, and Miry Grove.

Garage Managers typically highlight the important information in notices to make it feel easier for Bus Drivers to read and interpret quickly.

## Cricklewood Garage Newsletter

A news update for all Metroline Cricklewood Staff. Spring 2016

### Celebrating Our Success: Triple success for Metroline and Cricklewood Garage...

**Metroline Driver of the Year!**  
Congratulations, Mr Hirji Hirani (top right) who won the Driver of the Year Award at the recent Metroline Service Award held at the Hilton, London Wembley.

The Metroline Driver of the year award is sponsored by Alexander Dennis Limited and recognises that our drivers have a tough job coping with all of the pressures that driving in London throws at them. The recipients of this award therefore demonstrate their ability to deal with these pressures on a daily basis and using the Drive Assist score system as a main criteria. Mr. Hirani was selected for consistently providing a smooth drive, ensuring a safe and comfortable journey for his passengers at all times. You made us very proud at Cricklewood Garage. Well done and Congratulations from us all.



**Metroline win Bus Operator of the Year Award at the 2016 London Transport Awards.**

To celebrate this wonderful achievement, a special celebratory BBQ was held in the head office car park on Thursday 24th March 2016. The event was enjoyed by everyone present.

Commenting on the award, Metroline's Chief Executive Officer Mr. Jaspal Singh said, "We are absolutely delighted to be awarded Bus Operator of the Year, and very honoured to be recognised in this way. We are committed to providing the very best service to TfL and all of our customers and this is a wonderful endorsement of the hard work of everyone involved at Metroline who strive to keep London moving forward." Well done everyone at Cricklewood for your support.



**Driving Awards 2015**

The Cricklewood Garage Safe Driving Awards were held on 23rd January 2016 at Best Western Palm Hotel. The event was very successful with 200 guests joining us for the celebration. A great night was had by all that attended! Pictured right are Mahendra Patel & Bruce Springer collecting their retirement presents from Leroy Webley (Garage Manager) & Ian Dalby (Deputy Operations Director) after completing 88 Fantastic years service between them both with Metroline.



Continued over page...

In some cases, Garage Managers organise a garage newsletter. Those who did felt it was well received by Bus Drivers because they are predominantly interested in what's happening at local level, rather than company level.

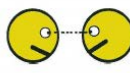
### Have open body language

You want people to feel your approachable and open to answering their queries, try having good posture instead of slouching.

### Lean towards people when listening to their queries.

### Eye Contact

You don't have to stare into a persons eyes 100% of the time but you should work on making as much eye contact as possible when you're listening to passengers, this is so they feel like you care about them, that they're actually worth your time and you do want to help them with their queries. even if you do not know the answer.




Page 4

These were just a few tips which we hope will help you towards gaining a high score on your MTS reports.

Whilst we do understand that the role of a bus driver can be stressful and demanding, we do appreciate all your efforts in maintaining a professional, safe drive for all passengers and great customer service.

Those drivers who do receive the highest score in their MTS reports will receive commendations for their efforts.




Page 5


## Go Ahead-London

# MTS

(Mystery Traveller Scoring)



A Guide on how you can earn top scores on your Mystery Traveller Reports.



One of the examples of communications created by Garage Managers or their management teams is this leaflet about MTS scores. This highlights the role that Garage Managers and their teams play in communications to Bus Drivers.