

Date: 15 November 2023

Item: Work-related Violence and Aggression

This paper will be considered in public

1 Summary

- 1.1 This paper provides an overview of work-related violence and aggression (WVA) and an update on delivery of the WVA strategy and priorities for 2023/24.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 The Panel is asked to note the paper.

3 Background

- 3.1 In February 2020, the Panel endorsed our first pan-TfL WVA strategy. We provide quarterly updates to the Panel on the volume and nature of incidents and progress on our annual action plan.
- 3.2 Our vision is to eradicate WVA. The strategy committed us to a new organisation-wide approach to WVA. It places a strong emphasis on preventing incidents from occurring in the first place, improving the support we give to our people when they are a victim and continually learning and improving our approach to keeping our people safe. Our commitment to tackling WVA was reaffirmed in our Business Plan.
- 3.3 The strategy covers all our people, including those who work directly for TfL, those who work for our operators, those who work for our contractors and those we regulate to provide transport services.
- 3.4 The strategy builds on our strong partnership working with the British Transport Police (BTP), City of London Police and the Metropolitan Police Roads and Transport Policing Command. Tackling WVA against all colleagues is a police priority and involves prevention, reassurance and investigative activity.
- 3.5 It has been three and a half years since the launch of the strategy, recognising a pause on implementation during the coronavirus pandemic. Significant progress is being made in many important areas. However, our colleagues continue to be subjected to unacceptable levels of violence and aggression while doing their jobs.

- 3.6 The latest quarterly statistics are included in the Safety, Health and Environment Report – Quarter 2 2023/24 elsewhere on the agenda for this meeting. In the first six periods of this year, there have been around 5,000 reported incidents of WVA to our colleagues or other frontline colleagues working on our public transport networks. Almost one fifth of reported incidents involved some physical contact with the staff victim and several colleagues have received serious injuries including a colleague at Harrow-on-the-Hill who was left with life threatening head injuries by a violent fare evader. Fare evasion and ticket disputes are the main contributor, accounting for almost half of all reported incidents.
- 3.7 This issue is not specific to us or to the transport industry. Many sectors including health, hospitality, retail and emergency services are also reporting increased levels of WVA towards their staff. We are working closely with partners and stakeholders to share learning and resources. As always we will also continue to work with our trade unions to ensure we have workforce input and offer reassurance that our staff's safety and security remains of paramount importance.

4 Progress on delivering our strategy

- 4.1 Since the launch of the strategy in 2020, we have made positive progress against the 23 high level commitments. Key deliverables include:
- (a) created a single and expanded pan-TfL WVA team to lead on prevention, investigation and victim support activity;
 - (b) recruited and trained over 100 Transport Support and Enforcement Officers (TSEOs) to provide visible support to our frontline colleagues and deal with the triggers of WVA, across all our public transport networks;
 - (c) completed phases 1 and 2 of our body worn video (BWV) programme, rolling out almost 4,500 body worn cameras across 330 of our sites, available to over 8,000 users;
 - (d) rolled out nearly 250 emergency communication devices with Global Positioning System functionality for colleagues to connect quickly with emergency services if they feel threatened;
 - (e) improved our customer-facing communications campaign on the consequences of assaulting our people as well as our employee communications to raise the profile of WVA and encourage reporting;
 - (f) updated our conflict management and de-escalation safety advice and introduced a new e-learning module for colleagues who did not have access to classroom training;
 - (g) renewed our focus on fare evasion, the main contributor to WVA, through the development of our revenue protection strategy and

programme which includes revenue enforcement and improved use of technology;

- (h) implemented hotspot action and problem-solving plans in areas with higher levels of WVA incidents;
- (i) improved the collection and reporting of WVA data which has improved our understanding of the nature and volume of incidents and is providing a strong evidence base for WVA measures; and
- (j) introduced WVA as a shadow indicator on our scorecard while we create a reliable baseline for target setting, performance monitoring and driving accountability.

5 Priorities and progress on the 2023/24 workplan

- 5.1 The annual delivery plan includes the following priorities for 2023/24. Six months in, delivery is on track, with significant progress being made in some key areas including BWV.

BWV Phase 3

- 5.2 We have made it a requirement for our directly employed operational, customer-facing colleagues to wear BWV as part of their essential kit while on duty. We made this decision in response to the increasing levels of WVA including several very serious incidents, inconsistent use and compelling evidence that BWV works in reducing WVA.
- 5.3 New research from University of Cambridge (2023), commissioned by the Rail Delivery Group, shows that BWV is an effective preventative measure against staff assaults and increases the likelihood of positive outcomes against offenders.
- 5.4 Since 27 September 2023, our colleagues have been required to wear a BWV camera when on shift in a customer facing environment, where a camera is available. This is an embedding period while we complete the essential preparatory work, including 24/7 support for when this requirement is incorporated into local performance standards on 31 January 2024.
- 5.5 Other technical improvements are also underway, including the facility for colleagues to be able to tag their own footage for retention replacing the current manual process), battery refresh and alternative methods for signing out cameras.

Conflict Management Training

- 5.6 A review of conflict management and de-escalation training provision across Operations has identified inconsistencies in approach (content and delivery model) and areas for improvement. Our Operations team has recently agreed some short, medium and longer-term continuous improvement actions.

- 5.7 Colleagues from business areas without an established conflict management training programme have been trained as a priority. Enhanced training is currently being provided to London Underground revenue control colleagues.
- 5.8 Other short-term actions include the provision of conflict management guidance and briefing notes accessible to all operational staff. Engagement sessions including WVA workshops, British Transport Police-led sessions and WVA team visits to stations and operational bases continues.
- 5.9 We are in the process of planning a 12-month training programme where we will prioritise training for staff working at the top 25 WVA hotspot locations which includes London Underground and bus stations, before rolling it out more widely based on risk/harm data. We are engaging with our Trade Unions.
- 5.10 In parallel, we will be developing our longer-term training offer including scope, requirements and delivery plan. We will work with our operators as part of this.

Other priority areas

- 5.11 TSEOs – we have strengthened the working arrangements for TSEOs across all modes including the coordination and joint working with other enforcement teams and being able to routinely deploy to beyond the ticket barriers of London Underground stations where they can better support colleagues. A TSEO night team of 15 will be introduced, in January 2024, to provide more support to staff on night transport services. Deployments will be coordinated with our policing partners.
- 5.12 Dealing with emerging contributors – we have established a new process for monitoring and responding to emerging issues that are resulting in increased risk for our colleagues or making them feel unsafe. This includes an enhanced focus on repeat offenders and a new school engagement and escalation process. We will be funding the London Transport Museum to provide support with school intervention measures. We continue to run Operation Scholar with our policing partners at the beginning of a new academic year to help prevent incidents occurring.
- 5.13 Incident reporting – we are continuing our work to streamline and make it easier for colleagues to report WVA and improve their confidence to do so, knowing that action will be taken. A key element of this is our engagement activity with bus operators, drivers and other frontline bus colleagues.
- 5.14 Enhancing victim support – we will ensure every victim of WVA is contacted and offered high quality victim support, enabled by our new WVA support team structure and processes and delivery of a new WVA case management system.
- 5.15 Improving investigation and criminal justice outcomes – we are closely monitoring WVA criminal case outcomes and work with policing partners to take action to improve these where we can. This includes BTP expanding the

remit of its dedicated London Underground colleague assaults team to include all our rail operators.

- 5.16 Problem-solving and hotspot action plans – we are focussing our WVA and enforcement activity on persistent WVA hotspots to improve staff safety. We have implemented a new process for prioritising locations and coordinating and tracking actions. Examples include Turnpike Lane, Seven Sisters, Camden Town, Harrow-on-the-Hill and Whitechapel. We will produce a WVA hotspot toolkit for managers.
- 5.17 Communications – we are raising awareness of our stance, vision and strategy towards eliminating WVA; our colleagues believe we take it seriously and are taking action. This involves a full schedule of frontline WVA engagement visits and refreshing our customer-facing communications.
- 5.18 On 16 October, we hosted a taxi and private hire (TPH) driver safety forum with trade bodies, operators and Safety, Health and Environment (SHE) experts to hear first-hand TPH drivers' experiences of violence and aggression while at work. The session was very well attended and concluded with a commitment to work together on topics such as CCTV in cabs/vehicles; passenger charter and standards; awareness raising to improve reporting; and training. Action will be taken forward by our Licensing and Regulation team, SHE and Security, Policing and Enforcement colleagues working with trade associations, operators and the wider industry.

List of appendices to this report:

None

List of Background Papers:

None

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