

ENHANCED CRB CHECKS SET TO GO FOR TAXI AND MINICAB DRIVERS

The Coalition Government looks set to relax the way taxi and private hire drivers are vetted across the country. In her review of the Criminal Records regime in England and Wales, Sunita Mason (an Independent Advisor for Criminality Information Management) has said, "I recommend that eligibility for criminal records checks is scaled back".

The issue was first 'flagged up' in the spring of this year, by a Criminal Records Bureau newsletter sent out to Local Councils stating; 'that Enhanced CRB Checks should only be required for drivers who transport children and vulnerable adults to or from schools or hospitals or similar establishments under a contract (which constitutes 'regulated activity')'.

Councillor Mehboob Khan Chair of the LG Group Safer and Stronger Communities Programme Board for Equalities and Criminal Information, along with UNITE, other national taxi trade bodies, police,



licensing authorities and private hire groups has written to Lynne Featherstone Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Equalities and Criminal Information, arguing that, "During the last 10 years approximately, the vast majority of councils and TfL have required taxi and private hire drivers to be

subject to Enhanced CRB Checks. Historically, the CRB has permitted this practice but from its newsletter referred to above, is now changing its stance. The LG Group and TfL strongly believe that Enhanced CRB Checks for **all** taxi and private hire vehicle (PHV) drivers is absolutely essential to minimise any threat to the public and to help secure public safety".

"An Enhanced CRB Check contains additional information held by a local police authority, relating to suspected or alleged criminal activity which is important in determining whether an applicant may be considered a 'fit and proper' person to transport vulnerable persons. This includes, for example, information on alleged serious sexual assaults, rapes, terrorist activities, kidnapping, organised crime and drug dealing.

Often there are instances where an individual has not been convicted of any offence but there may be multiple accusations which are of sufficient concern to justify further investigation. There may be drivers

Continued on Page 5

LIVINGSTONE:

"We need to look at allowing taxis access to the Olympic Road Network wherever possible".

Read the full Open Letter to the Mayor of London on Page 2



KEN LIVINGSTONE'S OPEN LETTER TO THE MAYOR OF LONDON

Dear Boris,
We need to use the next twelve months to make sure that in every way the Olympics go even better for London than is planned. That approach ought to be beyond party boundaries.

The Olympic and Paralympic Games will be a fantastic moment for London. They will be an extraordinary global showcase and a catalyst for improvements for the next generation – such as the extension and upgrade of the East London Line rail service that is already benefiting commuters. That's why I wanted London to bid.

Now that the Games are impending we need to dot the i's and cross the t's to make it go as well as possible.

One area where there is room for improvement is plans for the lanes that will ferry athletes and IOC members – and others – around London. It is a condition of bidding that we have lanes that enable the smooth flow of key people to and from the games but we must make sure it is not balanced too far against ordinary Londoners.

I believe there are five ways we can look at this again to make things better.

Firstly, there must be better information provided about the Olympic Route Network plans and their impact on Londoners and businesses. I have had many complaints – from the Regents Park area of Camden to Greenwich – about problems with what is proposed.

As both Mayor and chair of Transport for London you will have a role to ensure smooth transport arrangements. A clearer picture must be given of all the proposed traffic changes and how the agencies involved will give a commitment to real consultation.

On the Olympic Route Network itself businesses will not be able to get deliveries in normal hours; postal and refuse collection services for residents will be disrupted; taxi and private hire drivers may face long delays and loss of custom. There's too little information about the likely changes to traffic signals, the congestion impacts these will cause throughout London and how these will be managed. The agencies involved including our city authorities should make all this public without further delay.

I have not met many cab drivers who think this is going to be great news for their trade, as it's currently set out.

Secondly, we need more details in the public domain of who will have access to the Olympic lanes. Londoners will understand and accept inconvenience for those who need it. The problem is not the athletes or the one-hundred or so IOC

delegates' cars but the next tiers down of people who will also have passes.

We need to know who, and how many, and be sure that only those who need it are getting this privilege. Otherwise it will convey a sense of an elite enjoying the luxury of zooming past whilst others experience disruption. The Mayor and TfL should encourage as many of those beyond the athletes, IOC members and key officials to voluntarily use public transport wherever possible which in most cases should be a quicker way of making journeys.

Thirdly, I simply do not believe pedestrian crossings should be removed, given the priority for road safety. The latest projections are that over 60 pedestrian crossings will be closed by TfL for months on some of the busiest roads in London.

I don't want to see chunks of London divided in half for months with motorways where Londoners cannot even cross the road.

Fourthly, we need look at letting taxis use the Olympic road network wherever possible. We will be able to do so if the official use of the lanes is allocated intelligently.

And finally I believe the lane restrictions should be in place for the shortest possible time.

The current proposals would have elements of the restrictions in place for one hundred days during the summer of 2012. The Games last from July 27th to August 12th and from August 29th to September 9th, yet the Mayor's own transport officials show considerable changes in force from June 2012 throughout the whole period.

We should aim to ensure that the lanes are in force for a more discreet period of time. The combination of lanes with dignitaries hurtling past and at the same time many road crossings removed, with London's taxis not permitted to use key roads, and with some roads closed to Londoners for more than just the Games period, has the potential to create a sense of alienation. This must be avoided.

Traffic changes are essential to the running of the Games. They will cause some inconvenience. We need to ensure that plans for the road network do not go beyond this.

Some may fear that under the current plans many parts of London life will go into shutdown mode.

The best way to avoid this is to take a tighter grip of the transport plans. The Olympic and Paralympic Games will be great: We need to make them even better.

Yours, Ken Livingstone

PUBLIC EXPECTS COUNCILS TO DO THOROUGH POLICE CHECKS ON ALL TAXI DRIVERS

People expect councils to take all sensible steps and checks on individuals before issuing licences for all taxi and private hire vehicles, a ComRes opinion poll has found.

Conducted on behalf of the Local Government Group, the poll revealed:

- 93% of people expect councils to check whether a potential driver had been banned from working with children;
- 92% expect the same checks to be carried out to see if they had been banned from working with vulnerable adults;
- 85% expect local police records to be checked to highlight other relevant information, where further action is likely to be taken; and
- 53% feel that local police records should also be checked to highlight cases where no further action was likely to be taken.

The Criminal Records Bureau, which carries out all checks of this kind, recently informed councils that in their view enhanced CRB disclosure could only be required for drivers who transport children and vulnerable adults as part of a contract to or from schools or hospitals.

However, the Local Government Group believes that public safety is a council's number one priority when issuing all taxi and PHV licences.

Cllr Mehboob Khan (*below left*), Chair of the Local Government Association's Safer and Stronger Communities Programme Board, said: "Given the clear public expectation that taxi and private hire vehicles should be subject to enhanced CRB checks the Local Government Group is urging the Home Office as it considers the Sunita Mason (*below right*) Review of the criminal records regime to make a commonsense decision and allow councils to continue to protect the public and request enhanced checks before granting a licence."

An enhanced CRB check allows councils access to intelligence on alleged sexual assaults, rapes, terrorist activity, kidnapping, drug dealing and organised crime. A standard CRB check only highlights where somebody has been convicted of a crime. It is unable to raise the alarm if there have been multiple accusations of a sufficient concern to investigate further.

Therefore, licensing officers must be given access to all information to enable

the council to determine whether an applicant can be considered 'fit and proper' to transport anyone.

Cllr Mehboob Khan continued: "The overwhelming majority of licensed taxi and private hire drivers are reputable and honest individuals, who provide a valuable service to the public and generate significant revenue for the areas in which they work."

"However, the recent cases of John Worboys, Derrick Bird and Christopher Halliwell highlight the position of trust that people put in taxi drivers and the potential vulnerability of some passengers. In our view, councils should have been allowed to fully check applicants applying for taxi and private vehicle hire licences. This is not an additional burden for councils in terms of cost since the taxi applicants pay for CRB checks and taxi trades are in support.

"Anyone getting into a taxi or private hire vehicle should be able to do so, safe in the knowledge that their council has only issued the driver a licence after fully checking their background first."

Examples of where previous applications have not been permitted because of evidence found in enhanced CRB checks include:

- One applicant's enhanced check revealed that he had been arrested for "grooming" a 14-year-old girl with learning difficulties over a two year period. He had sent her nude photographs of himself and a police check of his laptop showed that he was in possession of child pornography and that he regularly visited such websites. This matter never reached court so would not have been available to the council using a standard CRB check.
- An individual was arrested as part of a group rape of a young girl in a vehicle. Despite a used condom with his DNA profile being found at the scene, he was discharged on grounds of insufficient ID evidence. The findings of the enhanced check warranted enough concern by the council to refuse a licence.
- Licensing received about a potential driver who was being investigated for a series of indecent assaults and where he had acted as a photographer for a model agency, taking girls back to his studio and raping them was flagged up during enhanced checks. He was refused a licence and later that year, was convicted of rape.



Councillor Mehboob Khan



Sunita Mason

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THE ROAD TO REFORM

By FRANK HULL

The Select Transport Committee has released its long awaited report "Taxis and private-hire vehicles: the road to reform". The focus of the report, regulation, agrees with the views of us who are involved in the taxi trade in this country. That is that the present laws are seriously out of date and in need of urgent wholesale reform.

The report states that the most effective approach on the road to that reform would be for the government to work with the trade to achieve this reform. We agree with this sentiment. However, the government wants to refer the matter to the law commission.

If the government goes ahead and leaves this important piece of legislative reform to the commission, for what could only be the sake of expedience, we know the very needs of those who work the trade will be ignored. We know this from the bureaucratic treatment experienced by various and different local taxi trades across the country when their conditions of licence have been amended to suit various, usually political, motives.

We don't have far to look to see the effects of government interference in a taxi trade.

Across the Irish Sea where the taxi trade in Eire has been marmalised by government interference that has brought serious financial problems to many taxi drivers and left much bitterness in a trade that once enjoyed much harmony.

We can also look north to Ulster where we can see chaos arising in the workings of the taxi trade being brought about by the changes to the taxi trade that the government there is introducing. One of these changes will allow PHV's to ply for hire.

The report makes mention of that phenomenon "cross border hiring" but we sense the Committee recognise that it is a very difficult problem, the solving of which will not be simple.

However; cross border piracy is an offence and it can be dealt with by using to-day's legislation. We can see from a recent incident in Sefton where a licensed Liverpool taxi driver was charged for illegally picking up there. He had to pay some £900 in fines and costs and given twelve penalty points on his licence and was lucky not to have had it revoked. For in illegally picking up fares outside of his Liverpool licensing area and in Sefton an area for which he is not licensed meant that his insurance was invalid. If other licensing authorities were to repeat this action then it would not take long for the message to be heard by all cross border pirates across the country!

It is clear that legislative change for the taxi trade is on the way and there will be many forces at work trying to steer this change to whatever way will suit their purpose. This is why we must make sure that these changes should be made with respect not only for the taxi user or those who administer the trade but also for those

decent law-abiding men and women, who work in this taxi trade.

If you want to journey with us on this difficult road to reform just fill in the application form on page 11.

Frank Hull is a UNITE Cab Trade Committee Member.

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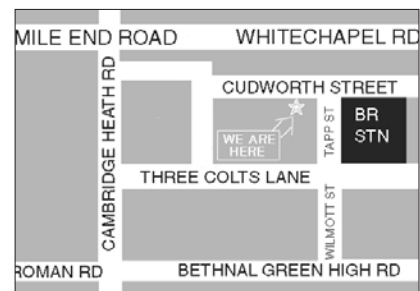
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RANKS REPORT

By **JIM KELLY**

Olympic Routes

The proposals by The Mayors Office are unworkable not just for Taxis but most Londoners working or living in London during the Olympics/Paralympics in 2012. The trade has formulated a joint response, both to the practical difficulties raised and also the political issues. A meeting has been requested by The Mayor, which will occur in later in the summer. Unite is pleased that the Labour candidate for Mayor, Ken Livingstone supports our position.

Paddington Taxi Deck

The new taxi deck at Paddington was purpose built for taxis. New proposals to allow private coaches into the area will create practical problems and cut down the amount of taxis able to access the Deck. The London Cab Ranks Committee (LCRC) has voiced its objections.

Victoria Coach Station Rank

The LCRC has had a site meeting and supports the drivers wishing to reverse the rank and utilise the south side of the rank as a feeder.

Meridien Hotel

The proposed site of the new rank is unacceptable. The LCRC is in talks with TfL to site the new rank closer to the Hotel exit.

Russell Square / Russell Hotel Rank

The rank on the north side of the square is still in situ, despite no road markings on the road surface.

Piccadilly 2-way working

The jury is out on this expensive scheme. It may well be an enormous White Elephant and if this was funded by a Labour

Council would no doubt make the front page of the Tory tabloids (Minus the News of The World)

Stratford



I am chasing up TfL to find out their reasons for not creating a feeder rank in Station Street South. Nicole Harris, TfL's ranks person, has only come back from holiday on Monday and Luke Howard has been moved to another section of TfL, MAKING MATTERS longer than usual. I have visited the station and the road works are making a busy transport interchange even worse, especially for cab drivers. I can see no reason for a site meeting until we have discussed this further with TfL.

Most all of the Ranks Committee are of the opinion that the extra 5 spaces being used at the moment in the main portion of the rank makes up for the loss of the original feeder. The widely held opinion is that there is no suitable site available for a new feeder. I have contacted Nicole to see if TfL views have changed

Corporation of London

The Corp. has now agreed to engage with the LCRC and wants to sit down and review the lack of rank spaces in the City. This is a welcome development after a time when they ignored the concerns of the taxi trade.

Continued from Page 1

on bail or facing charges relating to offences that have not notified councils when applying or holding a current taxi or PHV licence.

Without this information which is presented as part of an Enhanced CRB Disclosure, the local licensing authority would not discover any subsequent convictions until the Standard CRB Check is renewed (potentially 3 years later).

Some drivers may not be performing 'regulated activity' at the point they are originally licensed but become involved during the currency of their licence, or change operators. Determining which drivers are carrying out 'regulated activity' can be difficult to monitor and labour intensive.

A two tier licensing system is confusing, with some drivers unclear, as to what work they can or cannot undertake".



Lynne Featherstone Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Equalities and Criminal Information.

See also... **PUBLIC EXPECTS COUNCILS TO DO THOROUGH POLICE CHECKS ON ALL TAXI DRIVERS**

... on page 2.



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YELLOW AND GREEN BADGE IDENTIFIERS INTRODUCED

TfL – Press Office

Following a positive response to last year's Taxi consultation, London Taxi and Private Hire (LTPH) has announced that taxi badge identifiers are to be introduced in the next few months.

Taxi badge identifiers, which will be affixed to the front and rear windscreens, will show which type of licence the taxi driver holds – green for an "All London" driver and yellow for a "Suburban" driver. In the case of Suburban drivers it will also list the areas in which they are licensed for.

The identifiers, which will also contain the driver's badge number, are being introduced primarily as a deterrent to drivers plying for hire outside their licensed area. However, they will also assist TPH Compliance Officers and the police with on street enforcement and compliance activities.

Drivers should be aware that there are a number of reasons why Suburban drivers may be in central London or another suburban sector. These reasons include:

- Dropping off fares that started in their sector but ended outside it;
- Picking up fares that were pre-booked when the driver was in their sector;
- The driver is licensed for one of the two extension areas;
- The driver is plying for hire at a designated 'island rank'.

This is not a scheme for other taxi drivers to enforce and LTPH expects drivers to act in a professional manner at all times and will not tolerate drivers confronting one another. Any driver found confronting another driver for any reason risks having their suitability to be licensed reviewed which may ultimately lead to their licence being suspended or revoked.

Every licensed taxi driver will be issued with two identifiers, one for the front windscreen and one for the rear. These should be displayed in their vehicle at all times.

The identifiers will be supplied with adhesive wallets that can be affixed to the vehicle. This will enable the identifiers to be removed by those drivers who lease vehicles. The identifiers will be introduced in two phases with the All London version introduced first and then the Suburban version. Full guidance on the use of the identifiers will be provided at the same time as the identifiers are issued to taxi drivers.

Helen Chapman, Deputy Director for London Taxi & Private Hire, said: "These identifiers will bring London into line with many other Licensing Authorities by providing information on where a driver is licensed to ply for hire.

"Following a public consultation in 2009 it became clear that there is strong support from the taxi trade to introduce these identifiers and we are pleased that we will shortly be in a position to start providing these to taxi drivers.

"We have spent considerable time over the past year listening to the views of the trade, whether strongly for or against the scheme which has enabled us to develop clear guidelines around use. Further details will be announced before the identifiers are supplied to drivers."

Since Transport for London started licensing Taxis there has always been a distinction between the All London licence, which allows drivers to ply for hire anywhere in the Greater London area, and the Suburban licence where drivers can ply for hire only within the sector(s) for which they are licensed.

KINGSTON RAPE – POLICE APPEAL FOR INFORMATION



Detectives are re-iterating appeals for three people, who may hold information vital to a rape inquiry in Kingston-Upon-Thames, to contact police.

The rape occurred in a car park behind residential premises in Albert Road which is entered via Church Road, at between 0045hrs and 0100hrs on Sunday 3 July.

The victim, who was wearing a distinctive bright pink skirt, was on her way home when a man approached her and started chatting to her. As they passed the car park entrance he dragged her into the secluded area and raped her, before stealing her mobile phone and leaving the scene.

The suspect is described as a white man, approximately 6ft tall, with a foreign accent.

After the offence took place it is known that the victim, who was in a visibly distressed state, spoke to a man with a skateboard in Church Road at approximately 01.00hrs.

The victim then walked into Cambridge Road and flagged down a vehicle, possibly a Ford KA, and spoke to the woman driver.

She then got a black cab from Cambridge Road, near a parade of shops at Hawks Road, for a short journey which only lasted a matter of minutes.

The victim made her way home where her family contacted police.

Detective Inspector Michael Murfin from Sapphire said: "The three members of the public who have seen the victim after the offence occurred may hold information which could assist in the investigation into this attack. We would like to speak to the skateboarder and the driver of both the flagged down vehicle and the black cab and I ask them to contact the inquiry team as a matter of urgency.

"Any information they may have will be treated in the strictest of confidence by specially trained officers."

Anyone with information is asked to call the Sapphire Unit on 020 8247 4923 or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111

CAMERAS IN CABS TO CURB ABUSE



Cameras have been fitted into taxis and private hire vehicles in Bolton in a bid to reduce hate crime.

Six vehicles have each been fitted with two mini-domed shaped cameras and a microphone system. The scheme aims to prevent drivers becoming victims of violent crime or hate crime and to encourage reporting of such incidents.

A digital CCTV system will record images and audio on to a secure removable hard drive. If a driver in one of the vehicles experiences an incident they can report it to Bolton Council's community safety team or the police and the images can then be downloaded.

Stickers will also be on display in the windows to inform people that they are being recorded. The pilot has been organised by the Be Safe Partnership, which is made up of Bolton Council, Greater Manchester Police and other partners.

Bolton Council's Executive Member for Licensing, Councillor Ismail Ibrahim, said: "We believe this scheme will improve safety for both drivers and passengers. It gives the drivers peace of mind and the passenger more confidence in using taxis.

"Taxi drivers are often subject to abuse and the cameras should act as a deterrent and help identify perpetrators.

"Any criminal behaviour will be caught on camera and can be used to assist police investigations. We will be monitoring and evaluating the pilot to see what effect it's had on the number of attacks on taxi drivers."



Chief Inspector Shane O'Neill of GMP's Bolton Division, added: "CCTV is an invaluable tool for everyday policing. It is used extensively to monitor public order offences, theft and assault and images are often used to identify offenders and witnesses as evidence in trails.

"The CCTV positioned in taxis across the borough will not only provide vital reassurance to drivers but also enable officers to thoroughly investigate reported crimes.

"I want to reassure all taxi drivers that we take any report from them seriously and will robustly investigate any offence to trace and arrest the offenders. I would urge them to report all incidents to us on 0161 872 5050 or anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111, no matter how minor or trivial they may seem. If we don't know about an incident then we can't do anything about it."

Two hackney and four private hire vehicles are benefitting from the one-year pilot. The firms were chosen following consultation with representatives from the taxi industry.

The cost for the scheme is £6K, funded through a central government grant.

The New York Times

Cuomo, Under Pressure, Is Still Silent on Intentions for Bill to Expand Taxi Service

Published: July 17, 2011

By **CHRISTINE HAUGHNEY**



Andrew Cuomo
66th Governor of New York

Nearly a month after the State Legislature passed a bill drastically expanding access to taxi service in New York City, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo has yet to signal whether he will sign the measure — providing hope to the city's larger taxi fleet operators who oppose it.

The fleet owners have stepped up efforts to persuade the governor to veto the legislation, arguing that the measure could jeopardize one of the city's most vital industries.

David Pollack, executive director of the Committee for Taxi Safety, a group that handles leasing operations for yellow medallions, said taxi drivers continue to send letters and call the governor's office to oppose a plan that "would devastate 50,000 hard-working taxi drivers by flooding the market with new taxis."

Michael Woloz, a spokesman for the Metropolitan Taxicab Board of Trade, echoed Mr. Pollack's fears, adding that these cars would limit yellow taxi service.

"We are currently educating the governor's office on the many policy, economic, procedural, legal, operational and logistical problems with this bill," Mr. Woloz said.

The bill would allow the issuance of up to 30,000 permits, for \$1,500 apiece, for a new type of livery cab (private hire). These cabs, while painted a different color, would have many of the features of yellow taxis, like meters, rate cards and credit card machines. But they would be restricted to picking up street hails in often underserved parts of Manhattan and in the city's

other four boroughs except for airports.

The bill has not yet been submitted to the governor; the Legislature plans to first pass an amendment that would require these new types of taxis, like yellow cabs, to impose a 50-cent surcharge per fare for the Metropolitan Transportation Authority.

The legislation was pushed by Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, whose aides said he was aware that the bill still faced opposition.

Micah C. Lasher, Mr. Bloomberg's chief lobbyist in Albany, said the mayor would continue to talk with the governor about how "this represents important and very positive public policy for the residents of New York City."

At the same time, Mr. Lasher said, "we plan to be responsive to the concerns of medallion owners in implementing the plan."

Mr. Cuomo remains quiet on his plans. At a news conference last week, he noted that he had not received the bill. "When we get it, we'll review it," he said.

Mr. Cuomo's father, the former governor Mario M. Cuomo, serves on the board of Medallion Financial, which has a major stake in many of the city's taxis and has opposed the bill. Medallion also has been a generous donor to Andrew Cuomo's campaigns. Josh Vlasto, a spokesman for the governor, said previously that these relationships had "no bearing on the governor's decision."

Though the legislation is not scheduled to become valid until at least Jan. 15, David S. Yassky, chairman of the city's Taxi and Limousine Commission, said New Yorkers had already indicated that they were pleased with the prospect of better access to taxi service.

"We've gotten tremendous reaction from people in Brooklyn and Queens and the Bronx," he said. "Not a day goes by when I don't hear people say, 'That's such a great idea.'"






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By MARK EDWARD TAYLOR

DEMENTIA



Some London taxi-drivers may have noticed this advertising billboard as they drive around the capital's streets. Many will just ignore the advert. Others, like me, with a mother diagnosed with dementia, will have identified with the message. I try to remember the person my mum was before she slipped into a dependent, almost child-like, existence.

The UK has a rapidly ageing population. Unions are striving to protect their member's pensions while the government strives to balance the nation's books knowing life expectancy is increasing thus placing pressure on pensions. We are all living longer. A cause for celebration... or is it... If you don't know someone with dementia at the moment... you soon will...

German psychiatrist and neuropathologist Alois Alzheimer first described the condition in 1906. Alzheimer's disease, dementia or senile dementia is generally diagnosed in people over 65 years of age.

As the condition advances, symptoms include confusion, irritability and aggression, mood swings, language breakdown, long-term memory loss, and the general withdrawal of the sufferer as their senses decline. That is how Wikipedia, the free on-line encyclopaedia, describe things. My experiences of my mother's behaviour are pretty much the same.

Her life requires prompting just to get through the day. There are good and bad days, but I would describe it as dementia, albeit, high functioning, with dementia. She resides in a good care home administered by a housing association. Living alone would not be an option unless the neighbours were constantly on hand and...the gas was cut off for safety purposes.

People with little knowledge of dementia often talk about keeping the brain active as a way of fending off the

condition. Could this be true?...read on....

Well cab drivers could be good examples to analyse. Studies of the brain have shown London cabbies' to have a famously enlarged hippocampus due to the nature of their employment.

Each job requires the driver to work out a route due to the varying aspect of the work. Much of a day's work can be the same but drivers are occasionally bowled googlies to give some variety. This causes the hippocampus to grow in driver's brains. Classing the brain as a muscle; then the taxi-driver's brain is well exercised. Constantly retaining and retrieving points and places.

Cab Trade News would welcome any anecdotal stories from drivers who have found working after retirement age has had a beneficial effect. Does the mechanism of keeping the brain going by working in a job that is not repetitive boost one's chance of avoiding Alzheimer's?

It could be argued reduced employment hours into old age in any job may be a good thing; however, the neurological studies into cabbies' bigger brains present a different dynamic. I am also aware that in the vast army of London taxi drivers mostly display a courteous and civil demeanour when working, although a minority may appear stressed-out leading the public to think they may be demented!

In 2006, there were 26.6 million sufferers of Alzheimer's worldwide. That's the equivalent of half the population of England being confused & discom-bobulated. By 2050 this is predicted to affect one in 85 of the world's population. A few months ago I remember having a conversation with a woman in my local. She was a pleasant Turkish lass working at the Homerton Hospital doing research into dementia. As the conversation flowed I discovered she was a psychiatrist. My ears pricked up! (Have you ever really seen anyone's ear's prick up? It is not physically possible). Having recently visited Turkey, I asked how the Turk's were coping with the ticking time bomb of dementia. The reply was predictable... it is not so much of a problem in Turkey as life expectancy is shorter... but it will be a problem in the future, she stated.

One often asked question is; *"What is the difference between dementia and Alzheimer's disease?"*

Dementia can be defined as an impairment of thinking that interferes with a person's ability to do things which he or she previously was able to do.

Alzheimer's disease is the common cause of dementia. It is particularly common in older people caused by microscopic brain abnormalities.

Are you any the wiser?... it can be very difficult to distinguish one from the other.



Street Legal

By VICTORIA PHILLIPS

VULNERABLE PEOPLE'S ACCESS TO JUSTICE!

You couldn't tell from the title or from the furore that focussed on Ken Clarke's dropped plans for criminals who plead guilty to have their prison sentence halved, but alongside swingeing cuts to Legal Aid there is, hidden in the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Bill that the Justice Secretary put before Parliament last month, a potentially devastating attack on vulnerable people's access to justice.

Ken Clarke's plans for reform of civil litigation funding and costs in England and Wales will have a huge impact on the ability of people injured through no fault of their own to seek compensation.

Knocking "no win no fee" is easy meat for politicians and the press who love to refer to a compensation culture even though all government studies say we aren't in the grip of one. Love it or loathe it, the system is the only way that someone injured in a workplace accident, caused by the negligence of their employer, can currently pursue justice.

The law says that the injured party has to prove who was to blame and show that their injury was down to that negligence. All the defendants – usually the employer's insurer – have to do is deny everything.

At the moment a successful claimant receives their compensation in full. That seems right. After all, they didn't want to get hurt.

Ken Clarke wants to stop the losing party having to pay premiums for insurance taken out to cover the costs of outlays in a case, such as for a medical reports.

A lawyer for injured people doesn't get paid for their time if they lose a case or if they investigate a case but then have to drop it. To recognise the risk they won't get paid, claimant lawyers get a "success fee" from the guilty party in successful cases. All sides of litigation agreed to and fixed the success fees. Clarke says they can continue but instead of being paid by the guilty party they will come out of injured people's compensation – up to 25% of it.

People who didn't want to get hurt or lose money due to an accident face losing a significant chunk of their damages. And they will be the lucky ones.

A large proportion of cases that would be run today won't be run tomorrow. Injured people with anything but straightforward cases will find that lawyers won't be prepared to take on their case because if they eventually have to turn it down or they lose, they won't get paid. Lawyers won't take on anything that looks risky if they don't have a fund from success fees that they can fall back on.

It won't matter how seriously injured they may be. Under the government's plans a person may be unable to get justice unless their case is clear cut, or they can afford to pay upfront fees.

These changes will do nothing about referral fees (a nice little scam for insurers and claims farmers) and they won't stop claims companies advertising because they will just screen all cases looking only to take on easy wins.

The plans won't save any money for the government either – indeed we will just see more injured people reliant on the NHS and benefits when compensation for their accident would have helped pay for their care and kept them out of poverty.

Who saves money from these changes? Insurance companies. Does that mean reduced insurance premiums or just more profit for the shareholders? What do you think?



Women's life expectancy is around four years more than men. Typically there are more women in care homes than men.

Whatever the difference, as we all get older, our families have to live with the consequences. It can be very tough watching a friend or relative regressing. It is a bit like childcare in reverse looking after an elderly person who won't develop and only cause more anguish. Aside from the emotions there are financial implications to be considered. Dementia is not classed as an illness by the NHS. It

is a condition which requires costly care. This can cause great worry for families.

Governments have constantly focused on elder provision with talk of reviews and changes in the law. However, at present when a person goes into care should they have savings of any more than £23,000 they have to pay the whole cost. If they own a home this may have to be sold to fund the care too. Obviously it pays to save for your old age... but not too much otherwise the local authority and government will take most of it.

Holding a taxi licence past retirement age is good way to enjoy a good life style by earning a few quid on top of any private and state pensions. Your income will be taxable but allowances increase as one ages. Plus a couple of days a week in the cab could be doing you much more than financial benefit... **Remember the person!**

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VERIFONE JOINS EFFORT TO TURN LONDON'S BLACK TAXIS 'GREEN'



Works with The London Taxi Company and Black Horse Taxi Finance to Offer Incentives for Drivers to Comply with City Push for Reduced Emission Vehicles

VeriFone Systems and Black Horse Taxi Finance today announced they are offering drivers of London's famed, but high-emission, black taxis with a £3,000 financial incentive to trade in their old models for newer vehicles that comply with age limits announced as part of the mayor of London's air quality strategy.

In December 2010, the mayor of London launched an air quality strategy that outlined a range of measures to improve air quality and reduce transport related emissions, including a 15-year age limit for licensed London taxis. VeriFone and Black Horse Taxi Finance are offering the incentive to reduce the financial impact for drivers who trade up to newer, less polluting vehicles through the Islington retail outlet of The London Taxi Company, the UK's top retailer of London's iconic black taxi and an agent and installer of VeriFone's card payment solution.

"VeriFone has been working closely with The London Taxi Company to make advanced electronic payments systems freely available to London's licensed taxi trade," said Mark Roberts, vice president and general manager, VeriFone Taxi and Media Solutions. "With this new initiative, we want to encourage affected drivers to modernise their vehicles. By doing so we can help London's taxis evolve into a greener world class fleet."

Mark Brown, general manager, The

www.verifone.com/uk-taxi

ILLEGAL MINICAB DRIVER IS JAILED

An illegal cab driver who was arrested twice in subsequent weekends has been jailed for a total of 18 weeks.

The sentence follows arrests made by the MPS Cab Enforcement Unit, part of the Transport for London (TfL) funded Safer Transport Command (STC).

Nahim Gaffer-Doud, 37 years of Rectory Lane SW17 appeared at West London Magistrates Court on 15 June and pleaded guilty to two counts of touting for hire, using a motor vehicle without third party insurance and driving whilst disqualified.

Plain clothed police officers were carrying out roadside and compliance checks on minicabs in Regent Street W1, in the early hours on Friday 27 May, when Gaffer-Doud approached the officers in his vehicle and asked them if they wanted a cab. He was arrested for touting for hire and further checks revealed that he was disqualified from driving and uninsured. He was charged and bailed to appear at West London Magistrates Court at a later date.

But just over a week later, in the early hours of Saturday 4 June, Gaffer-Doud again approached plain clothed police officers, this time in Clapham High Street SW4 and asked them if they wanted a cab. He was arrested

London Taxi Company (London), said: "VeriFone and Black Horse Taxi Finance have come up with a fantastic offer to help owners trade up. We're keen to get these older vehicles off the road to help make London cleaner, as well as provide passengers with a more enjoyable taxi experience."

As part of this offer, owners will receive a VeriFone-branded livery on their new vehicle and a pre-installed VeriFone card payment system. The VeriFone system accepts all types of card payments, including credit, debit, Chip & PIN, magnetic stripe and contactless. Drivers must also successfully apply for financing via Black Horse Taxi Finance.

John Mason, director, London Taxi and Private Hire, with Transport for London (TfL) said: "The age limits announced by the Mayor in December last year are absolutely vital to improve air quality in London. Since this announcement we have been in constant dialogue with the taxi manufacturers about what they can do to ease the burden on those cabbies impacted by the limits and we are very pleased to see VeriFone, Black Horse Taxi Finance and The London Taxi Company working together to come up with this deal."

On a first come, first serviced basis, drivers will be able to secure a £3,000 finance allowance on the first 200 sales of new Euro 4 – TX4 Style or Elegance London Taxis, when a Fairway, TX1 or Metrocab is offered in part exchange that is "S-reg" or older. The older models will be scrapped.

and appeared at Camberwell Green Magistrates Court later that day where he pleaded guilty to touting for hire, using a motor vehicle without third party insurance and driving whilst disqualified.

Both cases were transferred to West London Magistrates Court and on 15 June, he was sentenced to a total of 18 weeks imprisonment.

Chief Superintendent Sultan Taylor, MPS Safer Transport Command, said: "The Cabs Enforcement Unit is dedicated to improving the safety and security of cabs and dealing with unbooked 'minicabs', which put the public at risk. This case should serve as a reminder that our officers are out on the streets of the capital targeting unbooked minicabs and bringing offenders to justice."

Steve Burton, Director of Community Safety Enforcement and Policing at TfL, said: "This is a fantastic result for the Safer Transport Command, who work tirelessly to minimise the threat posed by unbooked minicabs. The severity of the sentence given to Mr. Gaffer-Doud should serve as a warning to anyone who thinks about touting in London. We will always push for the harshest punishment possible for those who engage in this criminal activity."

THEATRE

By TRUDI-JOY LEVY

DANGER: MEMORY at the Jermyn Street Theatre



We are what our memories make us. Anyone with experience of senile dementia knows that when somebody's memory fails, all that is left is an empty shell of the person we used to know. Arthur Miller's two one-act plays "Danger: Memory!" deals with memory loss. It was last performed in London over twenty years ago and has been reprised at the intimate little Jermyn Street Theatre, which suits it perfectly.

In the first act, "I Can't Remember Anything", Leonora (*Anna Calder-Marshall*) visits her friend and neighbour, Leo (*David Burke*). She reproaches him for his preoccupation with death – "When I die, don't call the mortician; he used to have a Nixon sticker." Although his memory is failing, Leonora cannot recall anything of the past and consoles herself with alcohol. The interplay between Anna Calder-Marshall and David Burke (married in real life) is touching and poignant.



In the second play "Clara", Detective Lieutenant Fine (*Roger Sloman*), questions Clara's father, Albert (*Albert Kroll*), as he investigates the young woman's murder. He seems to recall nothing of her past life but gradually, piece by piece, the detective extracts the vital evidence needed. Has he repressed these memories through feelings of guilt at his failure to protect her? Clara (*Laura Pyppe*) appears in flashbacks in his mind and a young officer is played convincingly by *Adrian Grove*. A very satisfying evening from one of our greatest playwrights.

CHICKEN SOUP WITH BARLEY at the Royal Court

The play opens in a flat in the East End of London in 1936, as the fascist black shirts, led by Oswald Mosley, are gathering to march. It ends, two decades later as the Soviet Union invades Hungary. In the intervening period we watch as the Kahn family, led by indomitable matriarch, Sarah, see their idealistic faith in communism tested to the point of disintegration.

Samantha Spiro's performance as Sarah is a tour de force. Her character is totally believable, offering endless cups of tea to visitors, while caring for her two children, Ada (Jenna Augen), and Ronnie, (Tom Rosenthal) and her wastrel husband, Harry (Danny Webb). When Harry suffers the second of two strokes, Sarah realises that she is trapped looking after a husband for whom she has no respect. The children, disillusioned with politics, have left home and she alone is left clinging to her beliefs.

Everything about Dominic Cooke's superb production rings true. Danny Webb's Harry shrinks before our eyes as Sarah constantly berates him, until she finally softens her voice and shows compassion for the sad invalid he has become. The two sets are remarkably accurate and every prop and costume, down to the tablecloth and teapot which my grandmother owned, is spot-on. I loved this play - and Arnold Wesker's writing - and hope it won't be long before we see a revival of "Roots", and "I'm Talking about Jerusalem".

ROSENCRANTZ AND GULDENSTERN ARE DEAD at the Haymarket Theatre

This appears to be Tom Stoppard's homage to Samuel Becket; opening with just the heads of Jamie Parker and Samuel Barnett bathed in light, and there are many similarities to "Waiting for Godot" in his writing.

This is one of the first plays I saw at the National Theatre in the 1960s, and, at the time, I thought it very clever. Now I am of the opinion that it is a little too clever, as is Stoppard. He touches on the chaos theory, which he is to revisit in his later work "Arcadia", and the dichotomy of free will and determinism. There are some jokes but the play is not as witty as some of his later work. Samuel Barnett and Jamie Parker seem very comfortable in their relationship with each other, no doubt helped by their both being in "The History Boys" previously. Chris Andrew Mellon is convincing as the Player, considering he had to step in when Tim Curry was forced to relinquish the role through ill-health.

Tim Mitchell's lighting design is superb and adds a great deal to the production but, when in the final scene, Rosencrantz says "I don't care, I've had enough", I muttered "me too".

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Taxis being prepared at Charlton football ground for a fun day out at Hastings.



NORTH WEST TAXI DRIVERS' AID

Tuesday 14th June, brought a rare bright sunny summer's day for the annual Outing of the North West Taxi Drivers' Aid as they assembled at the Harrow Masonic Centre on their way to Chessington World of Adventures.

57 taxis and a minibus from 4 schools in Brent and Barnet carried around 110 children with a range of special needs along with 108 teachers, carers and other helpers.

After leaving the Harrow Centre, they were escorted for part of the journey by two police outriders and the AA, as usual, provided back-up facilities for the entire day.



National monthly paper of the licensed taxi trade

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