

LORD YOUNG VISITS LTI VEHICLES

Minister for Skills and Apprenticeships, Lord Tony Young, visited LTI Vehicles on 11 February. The Minister met some of the staff who have benefited from Government funded apprenticeships and Train to Gain. Lord Young was met by John Russell, CEO of LTI's parent company, Manganese Bronze Holdings, and the company's Managing Director, Peter Shillcock, before he took a tour of the plant. The Minister was also met by Sophia Lock, who in 2008 won the EEF (West Midlands) Final Year, Engineering Apprentice of the Year Award and Training & Development Officer, Adam Wright.

Lord Young spent time talking to staff at the Coventry based company, who participated in apprenticeship schemes. Department Innovation, Universities and Skills Minister, Lord Young, was shown around the plant by Dave Lancaster who completed his 4 year advanced apprenticeship in 2008 and Simmeon Joseph who is in his final year of an advanced apprenticeship.

Lord Young said "It has been great to meet some of LTI Vehicles' apprentices today and to hear first-hand about their experiences. We want more people to



do an apprenticeship. They offer a fantastic start to a career with the added benefit of earning while you learn. We want to see many more employers following LTI Vehicles' example by offering apprenticeships. They provide businesses with the highly skilled people they need to help them when the upturn comes.

"That's why we're providing over £1bn of investment for apprenticeships next year, so that many more people and companies can benefit from the opportunities apprenticeships offer."

Managing Director of LTI Vehicles, Peter Shillcock, said "We are delighted that Lord Young visited us. Lord

Young has a clear passion for vocational training and spent time finding out how current and former apprentices had benefited from Train to Gain. He also explained the Government's commitment to skills training and his personal commitment to develop more opportunities for apprentices. The Government's Train to Gain programme and apprenticeship schemes have provided our staff with valuable skills in the work place."

CRACKDOWN ON ILLEGAL MINICABS

Following a high visibility operation in The Strand and Haymarket area on 20th and 21st February, Mayor Boris Johnson said: "The safety and security of people travelling around London is a top priority, and during the election I promised to crack down on the illegal touts that put the lives of Londoners and visitors in danger. I want everyone to be able to enjoy a good night out without being preyed upon by these illegal touts as not only can they be dangerous individuals, but their cars can also be uninsured death-traps. We are doing all we can to stop them, and partygoers can make themselves safer by using our fantastic Cabwise text service, which quickly provides the numbers for safe licensed taxi and minicab companies in the area."



club managers whose venues attract high numbers of illegal minicabs were also advised on the danger these vehicles pose to their customers. During this Operation 50 bars and clubs were visited and Safer Travel at Night leaflets were distributed to help raise awareness.

Chief Superintendent Joe Royle, Transport Operational Command Unit, said: "We are working together to keep London moving safely and committed to driving down crime and the fear of crime even further. Illegal cabs and touting undermine the legitimate cab trade and pose a serious threat to the travelling public. The Transport Operational Command Unit regularly targets policing activity on illegal cabs, and carries out major operations targeting offenders who pose as cab drivers. The safety of the public is paramount and I would advise everyone not to get into any vehicle that they have not booked and always book a cab through a reputable PCO licensed operator."

TOCU has made over 300 arrests since August 2008 with almost 50 licensed minicab drivers have had their PHV drivers licence revoked following the introduction of the 'one strike and you're out policy' for licensed minicab drivers convicted of touting. Steve Burton, TfL's Director of Community Safety Enforcement and Policing, said: "We are determined to crack down on touting, which can be a cover for more serious crimes like robbery or sexual assault. No one should ever take a minicab without a booking - they are illegal, unsafe and uninsured, and it is just not worth the risk. To get home safely, take a black cab or book a minicab through a licensed operator." Inspector David Brown said: "This operation was extremely successful. The cab enforcement unit made its presence felt and I believe we sent out a message that if you commit these offences you will be arrested and prosecuted."

TACKLING ILLEGAL MINICABS

TfL say that, together with The Metropolitan Police Service, they continue to tackle illegal minicabs and touting. During this exercise, named Operation Helvellyn, twenty-five arrests were made. Uniformed Police Officers and Police Community Support Officers patrolled hotspots to tackle touting and other cab related issues. They were also offering advice to members of the public warning them that any minicab journey that is not booked through a licensed minicab operator is illegal, uninsured and unsafe. Bar and

ARRESTS FOR TOUTING

The Cab Enforcement Unit has made over 4,500 arrests for touting and other cab-related offences and dealt with another 2,000 offences by way of summons since 2003. During Operation Helvellyn operation the PCO were checking on the activities of licensed drivers and operators, and the Vehicle & Operator Services Agency (VOSA) which carried out roadside safety checks of both licensed taxis and private hire vehicles.

THE ARRESTS

During the operation, 247 vehicles were Stopped and Checked.

A total of 25 drivers were arrested. Of these five arrests were made for illegal touting. None of these were licensed cab drivers.

48 sets of Private Hire Licence discs were removed.

Other arrests were made for drink driving, immigration offences and assault.

Nine cars were seized because they were un-roadworthy.

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