

## PENTON STREET COUNTER SERVICE CLOSES

Since January this year, there has been a limited counter service at Penton Street, but from Friday 30 April the taxi and private hire counter services will no longer be available. TfL has been working closely with the Post Office to develop and improve the existing 'Check and Send' service. As a result, a number of Post Offices across London will be able to check and accept both new and renewal taxi and private hire applications for a small fee. John Mason, TfL's Director of Taxi and Private Hire, said: "I know the counter service at Penton Street has been well used over the years, but with all the other available means of contacting us, it is no longer an efficient use of licensing staff's time. I am committed to improving the service provided to licensees and I believe this change, along with the others that have already been introduced, will deliver this. We will continue to improve online access to licensing services and believe that the Post Office's 'Check and Send' service will provide a valuable facility for those that want to use it."

Candidates doing the Knowledge will not be affected by this change and appointments will continue to be booked as normal. The remainder of the Taxi & Private Hire directorate will shortly be vacating Penton Street and relocating to offices at Southwark. This is part of a TfL-wide accommodation programme.

## HARD TIMES FAIL TO KNOCK CHARITY SUPPORT

Despite very challenging times, staff at LTI Vehicles have dug deep into their pockets to the benefit of two local charities. Throughout 2009, the staff at the Holyhead Road firm took part in a range of fundraising activities to raise £645 for the NSPCC and Myton Hospice. The money will be used to support abused young people at the NSPCC Boole House project and to let staff at Myton Hospice continue the care provision for patients and their families.

Peter Shillcock, managing director at LTI Vehicles, said: "This is a tremendous effort by our workforce and a huge thank you must go out to each and everyone of them. Times may be hard, but staff have parted with their money to help those less fortunate than themselves."



From left to right, Tina Hayes from NSPCC, Margaret Hitchens from LTI, Emma Weaver from LTI, Claire McDowell from Myton Hospice

## TAXI TESTING AND LICENSING FEES

The Transport for London (TfL) Board recently approved a number of changes to taxi and private hire licensing fees, the majority of which came into effect from 6 April 2010.

Fees are reviewed annually and all funds generated are used to cover licensing and administrative costs.

The current and revised Taxi and Private Hire licensing fees are provided in the table below:

Description	2009/10 Fee	2010/11 Fee
Taxi licence application / inspection	£111	£101
Taxi annual licence	£53	£53
Taxi Inspection re-test	n/a	£50
Taxi driver - replacement badge	£0.15	£15
Knowledge appearance - Suburban (yellow badge) taxi driver applicants	£150	£200

TfL will phase the implementation of the re-test fees to allow close monitoring of the effects that this change has on the trade. Therefore, with effect from 6 April, taxis that fail inspections for one or more of the following conditions (taken from the vehicle inspection manual) will be subject to the £50 re-test fee.

Category	Sub-category
Brakes	Service brake performance
	Performance of parking brake
	Condition of mechanical brake components
	Condition of brake pipes and hoses
	Condition of servos, exhausters and hydraulic components
Steering	Anti-lock braking system (ABS)
	Steering linkages
	Steering mechanism
	Power steering
Tyres / Wheels	Stub axles, king pin assemblies and wheel bearings
	Rear hub bearings
Underbody	Condition of chassis
	Underpanels, sills and body mountings
	Fuel tank and pipelines
	Front suspension
	Rear suspension

For the short term, all other reasons for failure will not be subject to a re-test fee, however additional reasons will be brought in throughout 2010. Updates to the list of chargeable items will be published on the TfL website - [www.tfl.gov.uk/tph](http://www.tfl.gov.uk/tph) and will also be available at SGS vehicle inspection centres.

John Mason, TfL's Director of Taxi and Private Hire, said: "We have taken into account the difficult economic conditions drivers are facing and, combined with the back office cost savings we are striving to make, have been able to freeze the majority of license fees this year. We hope the introduction of a re-test fee will encourage all drivers to maintain their vehicles and pass the inspection first time and will stop the subsidisation of those who continually fail."

In addition to these changes, the one-off Knowledge of London 'appearance' fee for Suburban (Yellow badge) taxi driver applicants will increase to £200 to be in line with the fee for All-London (Green badge) applicants.

## CZECH REPUBLIC HAILS THE ARRIVAL OF THE LONDON TAXI

The famous lines of the iconic London Taxi will soon be transporting passengers throughout the streets of the Czech Republic. Hotels, local companies and businesses are set to take advantage of the unique service as they extend the facility to their guests and international business travellers who will want to use the legendary vehicle for their visit. "We know the London Taxi is going to be a hit in Prague as we have received a large number of advanced enquiries," said Matthew Cheyne, International Market Development Director for The



London Taxi Company. "A search has now started to source a partner who will import the vehicle into the Czech Republic and provide sales and aftersales support. We believe this opportunity will give businesses a unique advantage over the competition and I'm sure that very soon we will start seeing the taxi being used on the streets of Prague." Drivers will be trained in customer care techniques and given lessons on sight seeing tours so they can point out places of interest to their passengers.