

Evidence from body worn camera leads to conviction for assault against Transport for London staff

October 21, 2021



A woman has been sentenced by Uxbridge Magistrates Court to a 12 month community order and 35 rehabilitation activity requirement days following the physical assault of two Transport for London (TfL) Transport, Support and Enforcement Officers in December 2020, who had been deployed to enforce the then legal requirement to wear a face covering on public transport.

Violence and aggression towards TfL staff is never acceptable and will not be tolerated. TfL will always seek to bring offenders to justice and use evidence from body worn cameras where possible. Footage from body worn cameras was successfully used to help secure a conviction in this case.

Ms Keia Williamson was verbally abusive to staff after being asked to comply with face covering regulations. After TfL uniformed officers refused the individual travel, she proceeded to physically assault them. The officers removed her from the station where she was subsequently arrested by British Transport Police (BTP).

The defendant was found guilty of common assault by beating of two TfL enforcement officers and has been sentenced to a 12 month community order and 35 rehabilitation activity requirement days with court costs, victim surcharge and compensation payable to the victims for the total amount of £280. As a result, Ms Williamson now holds a criminal record.

Since the end of 2020, 4,500 body worn cameras for staff have been in operation across the TfL network to help reduce workplace violence. This conviction shows how the footage can be used effectively in prosecutions and the court was able to see for itself the professionalism TfL officers showed on the day, despite the aggression shown by the defendant. Body worn cameras have been shown to reduce the number of incidents of violence and aggression towards staff, as evidenced in a British Transport Police trial with Cambridge University, which saw a 47 per cent reduction in staff assaults.

Despite the Government removing the national requirement to wear a face covering on public transport, wearing a face covering on all TfL services and in TfL stations is still required under TfL's Condition of Carriage for anyone aged 11 and over, unless they are exempt. TfL's 500 uniformed enforcement officers continue to ask customers to comply with the rules of the network, and anybody who does not comply may be refused entry.

Mandy McGregor, Head of Transport Policing and Community Safety, said: "Our staff have the right to do their job without fear or intimidation and we do not tolerate any violence, aggression or threatening behaviour towards them. This was an appalling act of violence against two members of staff who were simply trying to do their jobs and we're pleased that the offender has been brought to justice. Body worn video footage continues to provide vital evidence to the police and serves as a powerful deterrent to those who intend on abusing our staff."

TfL funds around 3,000 police, PCSOs and TfL enforcement officers dedicated to policing the transport network in order to keep everyone safe. Activities include high visibility policing, covert patrols with plain clothed officers, targeted action against offenders and encouraging more people to report offences. TfL works closely with the police to tackle the common triggers of workplace violence and aggression, as well as ensuring that any assault on staff is fully investigated and perpetrators brought to justice as quickly as possible.

In 2020/21 there were 1,740 offences reported to the police, relating to violence and aggression against TfL employees and the employees of TfL's operators and contractors. Of these, 9 per cent were physical assaults leading to an injury; 41 per cent were assaults without injury; 50 per cent were public order offences including verbal assaults and threatening behaviour.

Photo credit: Transport for London