

TfL providing enhanced harassment training to deal with incidents

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Transport for London (TfL) staff are to get enhanced training to raise awareness and to help spot, reduce and tackle instances of harassment across its huge network. The training coincides with a public awareness campaign designed to highlight the organisation's no-tolerance approach to any instances of bullying and harassment at stations, stops and on board its services.

With a workforce of around 28,000 permanent employees, each and every team member plays an important role in supporting people and contributing towards delivering millions of passenger journeys across London each day.

TfL has said that the training will specifically centre on how to deal with any incident of verbal, physical and mental harassment on board its services and at pick up and drop off points across the Capital. This includes how to handle incidents sensitively and with compassion as well as understanding the exact protocols to follow whenever an incident is reported.

TfL told Rail Business Daily today that training is now underway.

Although the vast majority of Londoners and visitors to the city experience trouble-free journeys, there has been an increase in reports being made of harassment on public transport according to the British Transport Police (BTP). Figures released by BTP indicate that incidents of harassment have jumped 63 per cent over the summer (April to October) compared with before the pandemic.

Officers received 421 reports of harassment, up from 259 during the summer of 2019. The BTP believes that only a fraction of cases are reported.

The news also follows a high-profile report in the national media, in which Instagram influencer Georgie Clarke spoke of a sexual harassment incident where she was grabbed and intrusively photographed repeatedly by a fellow traveller — despite her asking him to stop and having moved seats away from him.

On reporting the incident to officials at TfL, Georgie said that she was simply handed a leaflet and told to call the British Transport Police (BTP). When she did speak to the BTP, she complimented police officers in how they dealt with the incident.

Siwan Hayward, director of compliance, policing, operations and security for TfL, said in a statement sent to Rail Business Daily: “We were shocked to hear about this distressing incident and we have been in contact with the woman who was harassed in this appalling way to apologise and discuss the incident.

“Our current campaign emphasises the zero tolerance approach that we and our policing partners, the British Transport Police and the Metropolitan Police Service, take to all forms of sexual harassment on London’s public transport network.

“Our messaging speaks directly to offenders, reminding them that we will not stand for such behaviour and reassuring anyone who experiences or witnesses it that we are committed to making travelling in London as safe as possible.”

Rail Business Daily is approved as a White Ribbon UK-accredited organisation – a signed commitment to support global efforts to change behaviours and cultures that lead to abuse or violence against women and girls. As the largest media business in UK rail, Rail Business Daily is calling for an end to male violence against women and girls across the UK rail network and in society as a whole. White Ribbon Day, which took place on 25 November, marked the beginning of 16 days of action to try to bring this unacceptable behaviour to an end – calling for everyone in communities, organisations and workplaces to come together and say “no”, unequivocally, to these criminal acts.