

## **Imperial College Union's Stance on the Regulation of Pedicabs**

*A paper by Becky Lane, Deputy President Welfare*

### **Background:**

The Mayor of London and TFL are seeking a ban on dangerous pedicabs. This step is based upon evidence that pedicabs pose a risk to passengers and contribute to congestion in the already congested West End.

The pedicab industry is the only form of public transport in London which is totally unregulated. Neither the 'drivers' or vehicles are licensed and there is no protocol in place ensuring the 'drivers' are CRB checked. Under current legislation, TFL does not have the legal power to regulate the industry. Between October 2011 and September 2012 Westminster Council saw 823 warning and 355 arrests for contraventions by pedicabs, including riding on the footway, obstructing traffic and riding dangerously. Worryingly TFL has revealed that over the past year there have been three cases of reported sexual abuse from pedicab drivers.

### **The current stance:**

In London, pedicabs can legally ply for fares under the Metropolitan Public Carriage Act 1869 without the need for a street trading licence. Consequently, TFL and the London Boroughs have no powers to regulate pedicabs. The police rely on the Metropolitan Police Act 1839 which allows issues such as riding on the footway, obstructing traffic and riding dangerously to be addressed. In response, TFL have recently enhanced the current enforcement programme, which is led by the Metropolitan Police Service Westminster Borough Operational Command Unit and supported by Westminster City Council. Primary legislation will be required to implement TFL's proposal to the Law Commission. In the meantime, TFL will continue to work with Westminster City Council and the Metropolitan Police on enforcement activity to tackle illegal and unsafe activity by pedicabs.

### **Key concerns regarding pedicabs:**

1. Congestion – The congestion they cause in the West End and often impact on bus service and taxi reliability in Central London.
2. Road safety risks – As currently pedicabs are only governed by the same rules as bikes, there is no minimum safety requirements e.g. seat belts.
3. Passenger safety – No CRB checks required, passengers are often vulnerable people (families with young children, young adults under the influence of alcohol, tourists and international students). There is often aggressive touting for business and no regulation or safeguards.
4. Grossly-inflated fares – There is no fare structure for pedicabs which means there are variable charges to passengers which can be extortionate.

**Beliefs:** Pedicabs can pose a risk to Imperial students, especially those new to the capital. They are also a nuisance to all students as residents of London.

**Resolves:** To support the TFL legislation to bring pedicabs under the same regulations as taxis.