

TfL remain silent on policy changes threatening livelihoods of London Cabbies

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In July this year, after a five-year project, Transport for London (TfL) finally approved the HJS emission upgrade for Euro 5 TX4 taxi's to be converted to Euro 6 emission standards for use in London. The project was a welcome step forward for drivers helping them to comply with ULEZ and environmental regulations.

However, five months after receiving system approval, the taxi industry is still waiting for TfL's decision on policy changes allowing age extensions for diesel taxi's equipped with the approved emissions retrofit system. Currently, even retrofitted Euro 5 taxis that meet Euro 6 standards are only eligible to remain licensed for up to 12 years, rather than the 15 years permitted for factory Euro 6 models. London taxi drivers say that continued silence from Transport for London (TfL) over the age limits is causing financial uncertainty and threatening livelihoods for London taxi drivers, forcing many drivers to leave the trade.

Drivers argue that the Euro 6 exhaust upgrade offers a practical solution that provides the same benefit as the LPG conversion upgrading older Euro 5 taxi's to Euro 6-equivalent emissions, offering drivers an alternative option to meeting TfL's environmental standards without having to replace the entire vehicle. Taxi operators expected the emission upgrade to have the same maximum operating age to a Euro 5 TX4 taxi converted from diesel to LPG, that since 2019 has been increased from 12 to 15 years maximum operating age.

With a grant support provided by TfL, minibuses and vans in London are already using the HJS emission upgrade to reduce emissions. Other cities throughout the UK are also already using the technology, with more than 100 TX4 taxi's successfully upgraded with grant support in Scotland, so why is London any different?

With no decision on the age limit policy from Transport for London (TfL) , London cabbies are facing financial hardship, forced vehicle changes and, in some cases, drivers are being forced to leave the trade altogether. The uncertainty comes against a backdrop of rising operating costs and long-standing pressure on the black cab trade.

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