

Project Name:

Doncaster TAXI SAFE Scheme

Location:

Doncaster Town, South Yorkshire

Summary:

Doncaster town is growing rapidly, with vast migration into the town centre and an international airport. Police attended a specifically convened meeting with taxi drivers within the area, who communicated the difficulties they were subjected to in their working conditions and in particular, high levels of racially aggravated crime. These incidents were not always reported, due to lack of evidence and little faith in partnership response. Police recording systems showed five offences detected, with 17 total incidents in a one-year period, figures supporting the view that many offences went unreported. Local, national and international research suggested that the installation of CCTV, if properly supported by statutory agencies could help to increase taxi driver safety. The project team (Police, Local Authority Licensing and Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership) set objectives to improve safety, improve detection rates, reduce fear of crime, improve confidence and satisfaction in partners and improve working relationships between partners. Analysis revealed peak times, days and locations, and taxi drivers reported, through questionnaires, the incidents occurring. On consultation with taxi drivers, partners progressed with using a CCTV system, sourcing funding through New Deal for Communities on the condition of a full evaluation of the project. The installation covered sound governance principles to ensure that cameras were under warrantee, officially registered with the Data Commissioner and that taxi drivers would be trained, by an independent group, in familiarising themselves with the equipment. The project ensured that data protection legislation was fully complied with. 30 taxis were initially equipped with the kit. An exit strategy was planned to ensure that,

once the intensive project support was withdrawn, the scheme was able to successfully continue. Taxi drivers completed a second set of questionnaires after the CCTV installation – this data showed a decrease from 40 racist incidents to four. Police statistics showed an increase in detected crimes, and a reduction in incidents at key times and dates identified in analysis. Feedback from the taxi drivers has evidenced increased confidence in partnership response to incidents.

Word Count 330

Scanning

This application outlines how, by following the SARA process, partners in Doncaster reduced the number of incidents committed against taxi drivers.

Doncaster is a town in South Yorkshire. It is approximately 20 miles from Sheffield. It has an international airport and in recent years the city has undergone a large amount of regeneration.

Doncaster has a population of approximately 286,866. The borough had expanded dramatically in population due to the coal mining industry. However, the closure of mines in the 1970's and 1980's caused some economic difficulties, which many people still refer to today. In recent times, Doncaster has been named as one of the fastest growing towns in the UK, with the town's economy growing at an average rate of approximately 16% annually.

Due to the extensive communication links in Doncaster, it has seen vast migration into its centre. (Source: Wikipedia)

In Autumn 2008, a number of taxi drivers from the Doncaster area petitioned South Yorkshire Police at a specifically convened meeting to highlight the injustices they were suffering through their vulnerable working conditions. Their presentations outlined that:

They were subject to disproportionate levels of racial abuse and crime.

This was under reported due to lack of evidence and a belief that the police would do little in response.

A perception that the authorities did not treat the safe working conditions of their members seriously. This was therefore affecting confidence in the police and partners.

It was also affecting them economically, as many drivers indicated they would not work at key times of the week. For example, during the night time economy when they perceived public disorder increased. This reduced their potential income.

Present at the meeting were representatives from South Yorkshire Police, the Local Authority Licensing Department and taxi drivers themselves. The level of concern was evident from the number of taxi drivers in attendance, 16 in total.

The taxi drivers submitted allegations of significant racial abuse and a widespread under reporting of minor assaults. They provided numerous examples of incidents they had been victim to. Some are outlined below:

'In one night I was called a P*ki B**tard, an Iraqi terrorist, a robbing black b**tard and was told to go home where I belong by four separate fares. I only took eight fares that night.'

'I had a fare dispute but they paid when I said I would drive them to the police station. When they left the cab they kicked my wing mirror off.'

'I took a nice lad to Maltby. The meter said £16.20, he said you can have f**king £12 you P*ki B**tard, open the f**king doors or I will punch you.'

Following the meeting, South Yorkshire Police interrogated their data systems to determine the extent of the problem. The crime figures below are taken from April 08 to March 09 showing only 17 incidents, supporting the view that many incidents went unreported. The

figures also show that only 5 offences were detected, supporting the perception that the lack of evidence meant the police could do little to detect crimes.

Statistics were taken over 12 months to ensure validity. (See Appendix 1)

The Local Authority provided figures on the number of taxi drivers licensed to work in Doncaster, broken down by the type of license they hold (see Appendix 2).

In addition to consulting with the taxi drivers; the local community; local businesses and specifically those working in the night-time economy were contacted to provide information on the effect this problem was having on them.

This research showed that taxi drivers were experiencing a variety of different crimes that ranged from racial abuse, theft and violence. No further criminal consequences were resulting from these incidents.

Following this initial realisation, South Yorkshire Police established a project team consisting of taxi drivers, South Yorkshire Police, Local Authority Licensing Department and the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) to review the situation and start researching potential responses.

Initially the project team researched best practice from within South Yorkshire, only finding one project tackling this concern in Sheffield. After further research, this proved to have some successful elements that could be utilised, for example, the use of CCTV, but had not been a complete success. This was due to the fact that it had not been adopted throughout an entire area (less than 10 vehicles participating in the project) meaning success had been limited. Research was also conducted in other boroughs across the UK, identifying several small-scale taxi schemes in Blackpool and Blackburn, which also had limited success in combating the problem.

Research conducted further a field showed that in other areas, specifically some states in the USA and in Canada, CCTV was installed in taxis, making it a mandatory part of the licence.

Other forces had also implemented 'Taxi Marshall Schemes' as a way of controlling rowdy behaviour and ensuring passengers had funds to pay for taxi fares. However, this only reduced incidents in the town centre or at collection points, not when disagreements arose, normally during the journey. This has been tried in Watford, Surrey, Croydon and Jersey.

When looking into this problem, it also became apparent to the project team that there appeared to be a lack of interest at Local Authority level, locally and nationally in improving security for taxi drivers. Although a 'Best Practice Guidance' had been set nationally to inform Local Authorities, it would appear that there was no real agenda for improving taxi driver safety. Even after local and national lobbying, interest remained minimal.

As a result, of this research, the following objectives were set:

1. Improve safety in taxis by reducing the number of incidents
2. Improve detection rates of crimes committed in taxis or involving taxi drivers
3. Reduce the fear of crime for taxi drivers
4. Improve confidence and satisfaction in the police and partners with the taxi driving community
5. Improve working with partners to highlight the need for local and national recognition of the issues faced by taxi drivers

Analysis

Further analysis of police crime statistics over 12 months (those detailed in Scanning) showed low detection rates, as there was often insufficient evidenced to trace a suspect. This analysis also showed peak times and days for offences to occur and 'hot spot areas'. The chart in Appendix 3 shows that the most offences occurred on a Friday, Saturday and Sunday, after 6pm. The map in Appendix 4 shows where the offences occurred.

As the police statistics were limited, in order to provide the project team with an improved understanding of the problem, further analysis was undertaken. To ascertain the extent of the current problem, taxi drivers were asked to complete a survey in live time whilst working for a period of 1 month. This information provided the project team with a baseline against which to measure future interventions. A copy of the survey can be found in Appendix 5, the results are shown in Appendix 6.

The results show that:

- There were **7.6%** incidents per fare
- **71.68%** of incidents per fare were committed after 6pm
- **11.8%** of fares were classed as 'Racist Incidents'
- When 10 drivers were asked whether they felt safe working at night, 6 said they **did not**.

The Local Authority were asked to provide more detailed information on taxi drivers, in order to determine a clear picture of the victim, however they were unable to provide the required data. There were no other gaps in the data.

Qualitative information was gathered from police officers, who also reported there were regular incidents of taxi drivers attending the police station alleging disputes with fares and further criminal incidents. Frequently, in these cases the only solution was to offer advice to both parties, as evidence was insufficient to proceed with crime reporting.

The Problem Analysis Triangle was used to define the Victim, Location and Offender.

Victim

Enquiries within the taxi trade revealed that the victims were taxi drivers aged between 20-40, predominantly male and predominantly Asian (80% were from a BME community, mainly Muslim and Seek). They worked long hours (within the regulations), but avoided what can be classed as some of the most lucrative working hours e.g. weekends as they feared for their safety.

Location

Analysis showed most incidents occur when the taxi driver collects a fare within the town centre area, mostly on a Friday or Saturday night during the late evening. The destination is usually an area surrounding the town centre, within a 15-20 mile radius. Incidents take place in or around the taxi.

Offender

Analysis of crime reports showed that offenders are typically male aged between 17 and 30. Often, but not always intoxicated and more often than not collected from the town centre.

Taxi drivers explained that in their opinion the problem occurred as a result of:

- a) Working alone
- b) Driving into isolated areas

- c) Working with intoxicated fares
- d) Underlying race hate issues, still prevalent in some elements of the community

'Badly lit streets make us more vulnerable'

'I have never felt safe working at night but me and my family have to eat'

I feel isolated, and driving into certain areas makes me feel worse about this'

'I don't feel safe at night and to make it worse the police never back us up when they should.

9 out of 10 times they don't help.'

'After 11pm, I spend most of the time in fear'

Research was conducted into whether any attempts had been made to solve this problem previously and to critically assess any interventions, however this was the first time that the problem in Doncaster had reached a threshold at which a solution or solutions had to be sought to restore confidence.

Response

The project team was extended and formalised to include New Deal for Communities (NDC), and a local community interest group - the Hyde Park Partnership.

Having seen the successful elements of the existing projects (mentioned in the Scanning), it was decided that utilising a CCTV scheme would be the most appropriate response to the problem. Not only would this provide the taxi drivers with the ability to evidence the issues they were facing, it would assist the police in prosecuting. It was hoped that it would also act as a deterrent (research taken from www.cctvandsurveillance.com shows that CCTV can

deter crime rather than displace it), reducing the number of offences committed against taxi drivers.

Taxi drivers were consulted with. Their responses to the potential CCTV equipment are below:

'Hopefully having a camera fitted will make people think twice about abuse towards me and my cab'

'It will be a good deterrent'

'I hope this helps with my personal safety'

'The cameras should help but we need the police to take any incident no matter how small seriously and make a public case out of those who abuse us and our cabs. To be honest I have stopped asking the police for help as they are not normally interested.'

Following this decision, a bid was submitted to NDC for £35,000, which would be used to provide subsidised CCTV equipment to taxi drivers on the condition that they participated in an evaluation of the project. This enabled an ongoing review of the interventions and would enable for a full evaluation. NDC is a government regeneration programme designed to improve some of the most deprived areas in the UK.

A tendering exercise took place in order to establish a contractor for the equipment. The contract to supply the equipment was awarded to Verifeye, who proved they could meet all the specifications. For example, the CCTV equipment had to provide court standard images and audio, be completely tamper proof / encrypted, and be robust to last long term. This

process also took into account how each company vying for the contract had experience of valuing diversity issues.

The funding enabled the cost of the equipment to each driver to be heavily discounted, at a price of £188, compared to actual cost of £980.

The images in Appendices 7 and 8 demonstrate the equipment:

The project took into account sound governance principles including:

- Being overseen by the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership.
- Establishing a suitable warranty for the equipment.
- The scheme being officially registered with the Data Commissioner (the UK independent authority set up to uphold information rights in the public interest, promoting openness by public bodies and data privacy for individuals).
- The development of an Asset Ownership Register (a register of all equipment, who owns it, who is using it etc). This was a formalised agreement that the taxi drivers owned the equipment and the police owned the software to de-encrypt the imagery / audio.
- Training workshops delivered for taxi drivers to familiarise themselves with the equipment.
- The equipment being checked every 3 months by the Local Authority Taxi Inspection regime, which forms part of the taxi MOT.

The flow chart in Appendix 9 shows the process which the partnership and taxi drivers followed.

The following is a breakdown of who did what:

New Deal for Communities – Provided the funding.

Hyde Park Partnership – Administration of the project and funding, the tendering exercise and provided training to taxi drivers and ensured community involvement by consulting with the taxi drivers.

The Local Authority – Conducted checks on the CCTV equipment as part of the 3 monthly taxi checks.

South Yorkshire Police – Downloaded data from CCTV in taxis to be used in investigations.

All parties were involved in the tendering and interview process.

District staff and partners were made aware of the scheme through partnership theme groups. Police patrol officers were made aware of the scheme and how to utilise the products to assist with investigations through tasking procedures.

A total of 30 taxis were initially equipped with the kit. All were Hackney Carriage type vehicles. This was due to the fact that the Hackney Carriage allows for the type of CCTV equipment that has two CCTV cameras, one facing the driver and one facing the passenger. This sent out a double edged message in terms of protecting both parties.

Below is a quote from Hyde Park Partnership to a taxi driver:

‘As I am sure you will agree this is a great opportunity to make the Hackney Carriage communities in Doncaster a much safer place to work and travel within. It is also envisaged

that the longer-term benefits of the scheme will enable businesses such as yours to reduce essential costs and become more profitable.'

Appendix 10 is an example of the images taken from the CCTV equipment.

The project encountered difficulties with the Local Authority Legal Services Department and South Yorkshire Police Data Protection Unit as they were concerned that this project broke data protection legislation, however by ensuring that the scheme was fully compatible with all relevant legislation and clearly demonstrating this to the relevant departments, these difficulties were overcome.

The South Yorkshire Police CCTV room also had to be provided with specific training in the de-encryption of any footage.

An exit strategy was put in place to ensure the project continued, after the withdrawal of support and funds. The partnership entered into talks with suppliers in order to secure finance schemes to make it easier for taxi drivers to purchase the equipment.

The partnership also highlighted the benefits of the scheme to the local MP, who had a specific interest in town centre safety and began lobbying for additional funding and interest in a full evaluation with the intention that a similar scheme be given consideration nationally.

Assessment

The assessment was undertaken by the Project Team. Data was provided through police crime statistics and through consultation with drivers and the Taxi Drivers Association as the Local Authority were unable to provide any further data.

The initial questionnaire completed by the taxi drivers showed that 7.6% of journeys involved some sort of aggravation towards the driver. After the installation of the CCTV equipment, this fell to 1.3% of journeys.

The initial questionnaire also showed that there were 40 incidents with perceived racist undertones in 1 month. After the installation of the CCTV equipment, this fell to just 4 incidents in a month. The figures can be found in Appendix 11.

To ensure the validity of the data, the consultation period was the same before and after the project was implemented.

Appendix 12 shows the results of questionnaires completed by 30 drivers for 1 month after the installation of CCTV.

Using police crime statistics, the table in Appendix 13 shows the number of crimes against taxi drivers **detected** since the installation of equipment.

Appendix 14 is a sample of the information downloaded from the CCTV and the detection / conviction results. Police crime statistics obtained for the 12 months following the project are shown in Appendix 15.

Although the statistics do not show a huge reduction in the number of incidents reported, they do show an increase in detections. They also show a reduction in incidents at the key times / days.

Some of the feedback from taxi drivers who had the equipment installed and feedback from the Taxi Drivers Association demonstrated an improved confidence in the police to respond to concerns.

'I worked on Saturday night for the first time in 5 years, which helped my earning potential.'

'I feel safer with the camera, now I have proof'.

'I had a fare dispute on Monday, this was quickly resolved by explaining the camera and its functions.'

Anecdotally, there has been a significant reduction in policing time in dealing with incidents involving taxi drivers. Before the project there would be 2-3 occasions on an evening where a taxi driver would attend an enquiry desk with a fare dispute or an alleged racist incident. This has decreased massively to the very occasional incident. The project has prompted taxi drivers to go through the correct channels to report crimes. Minor incidents are less likely to be reported as they can be resolved between the driver and the customer. The project has also had a positive impact on confidence in the police and partners, demonstrated by the taxi driver's belief that if a crime is now reported it will be investigated.

The partnership identified the following as working particularly well:

1. Consideration of the problem by a multi agency group. Having a variety of different partners on board helped with engaging the taxi driver community.
2. Using the SARA process to understand and combat the problem.
3. Using an independent community group (Hyde Park Partnership) as a body with expertise for training and administration.
4. This also meant that in the eyes of the taxi driver the project wasn't owned by the police, but by a community group which represented them.

They also identified a number of things that didn't work well:

1. The project had limited success with private hire type vehicles. Further research is currently being conducted into how the partnership can better engage this group and encourage take up of the scheme, along with enquires as to the type of equipment needed. Initial findings show that Hackney Carriage license holders are more likely to participate as they are more used to working under very specific rules and regulations. The private hire license holders are more wary of the project as they believe it will enforce unnecessary rules and regulations.

The partnership learnt a number of key lessons from the project:

1. Listen carefully to the concerns of traders.
2. Provide each party with the opportunity to raise their concerns.
3. By demonstrating a willingness to do something proactive confidence in the authorities can be recovered.

This project has been seen as good practice, by developing a response that has a real impact. Other organisations such as bus companies have now started looking at installing CCTV as a way of reducing crime and reassuring their drivers.

State number of words: 3.296

Key Project Team Members

- Chief Inspector Nick Whitehouse
- Kev Burrows, South Yorkshire Police
- Cheryl Fletcher – CCTV Manager
- Jill Wyld – Hyde Park Partnership

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Appendices 1-15

Appendix 1

Offence	Detected	Date	Day	Time
MAKING OFF WITHOUT PAYMENT	UNDETECTED	21-Sep-08	SUN	00:50
THEFT FROM MOTOR VEHICLE	DETECTED	30-Jan-09	FRI	21:00
CRIMINAL DAMAGE - TO VEHICLES	DETECTED		SAT	03:10
THEFT FROM THE PERSON OF ANOTHER	UNDETECTED	04-Feb-09	WED	18:40
THEFT FROM MOTOR VEHICLE	UNDETECTED		FRI	00:00
OTHER MISCELLANEOUS THEFTS NOT CLASSIFIED ELSEWHERE	UNDETECTED		TUES	19:00
COMMON ASSAULT	UNDETECTED	08-Feb-09	SAT	22:45
MAKING OFF WITHOUT PAYMENT	UNDETECTED	03-Jan-09	SAT	05:00
OTHER MISCELLANEOUS THEFTS NOT CLASSIFIED ELSEWHERE	UNDETECTED	05-May-08	SUN	23:30
THEFT FROM MOTOR VEHICLE	UNDETECTED		THURS	07:15
ASSAULT OCCASIONING ACTUAL BODILY HARM (OAPA SECTION 47)	DETECTED	24-May-08	SAT	20:15
OTHER MISCELLANEOUS THEFTS NOT CLASSIFIED ELSEWHERE	UNDETECTED		FRI	00:40
SEXUAL ASSAULT ON A FEMALE	UNDETECTED	29-Jun-08	SUN	05:00
RACIALLY AGGRAVATED CRIMINAL DAMAGE-VEHICLE (C&D ACT 1998 S30(1)(2))	DETECTED	06-Jul-08	SUN	22:15
MAKING OFF WITHOUT PAYMENT	UNDETECTED	27-Jul-08	SUN	01:15
ASSAULT OCCASIONING ACTUAL BODILY HARM (OAPA SECTION 47)	UNDETECTED	27-Jul-08	SUN	02:00
OBTAINING SERVICES DISHONESTLY	DETECTED		SAT	00:30

Appendix 2

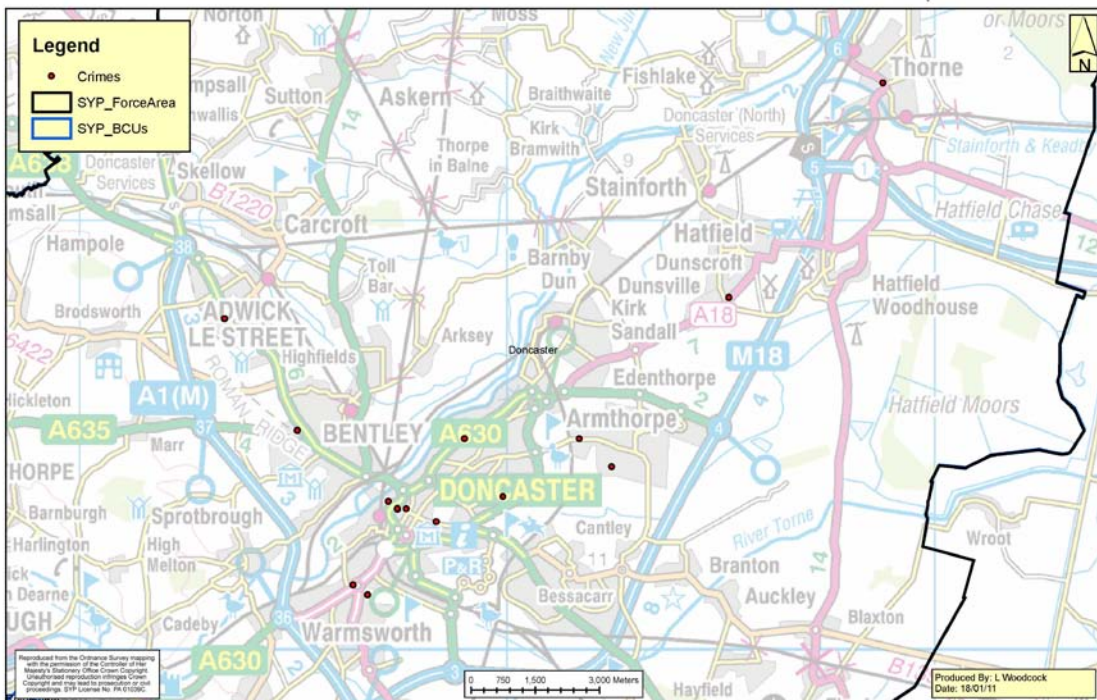
Type of license	Numbers registered
Hackney carriage	69
Private hire	496
Dual license	334

Appendix 3

HOUR	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	Grand Total
01							1	1
02							1	1
03						1		1
04								
05						1	1	2
06								
07				1				1
08								
09								
10								
11								
12								
13								
14								
15								
16								
17								
18			1					1
19		1						1
20						1		1
21					1			1
22						1	1	2
23							1	1
24					2	1	1	4
Grand Total		1	1	1	3	5	6	17

Appendix 4

Taxi Crime 08-09 in Doncaster



Appendix 6

Results of questionnaires completed by 30 drivers for 1 month

(Earliest recording date 24.05.09. Last recording date 05.07.09)

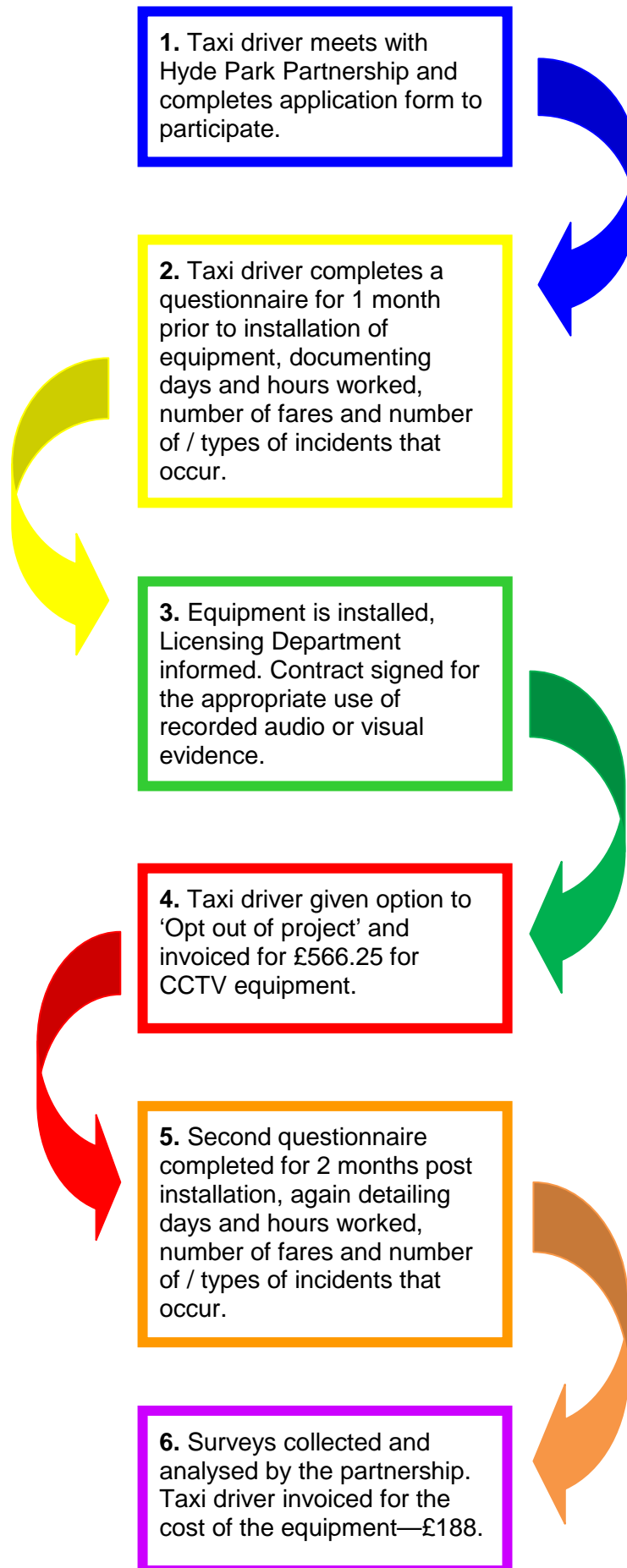
Day	No Hours	No Fares	Types of incident							Incidents Pre 6pm	Incidents Post 6pm	Racist Under-tones
			Verbal Abuse	Threats	Assaults	Fare Dispute	Run Off	Damage	Other			
Sun	331.8	303	7	0	0	16	1	0	1	7	18	2
Mon	438.5	428	4	3	0	14	0	2	0	12	11	0
Tue	570.0	578	20	5	0	13	6	0	0	13	31	4
Wed	361.5	372	10	2	0	5	5	0	0	7	15	2
Thu	504.3	517	10	0	0	6	4	1	1	9	13	2
Fri	724.5	1,053	31	11	3	27	17	2	2	27	66	11
Sat	726.3	1,166	49	14	3	27	13	2	2	21	89	18
Total	3,656.3	4,417	131	35	6	108	46	7	6	96	243	40

Appendix 7



Appendix 8

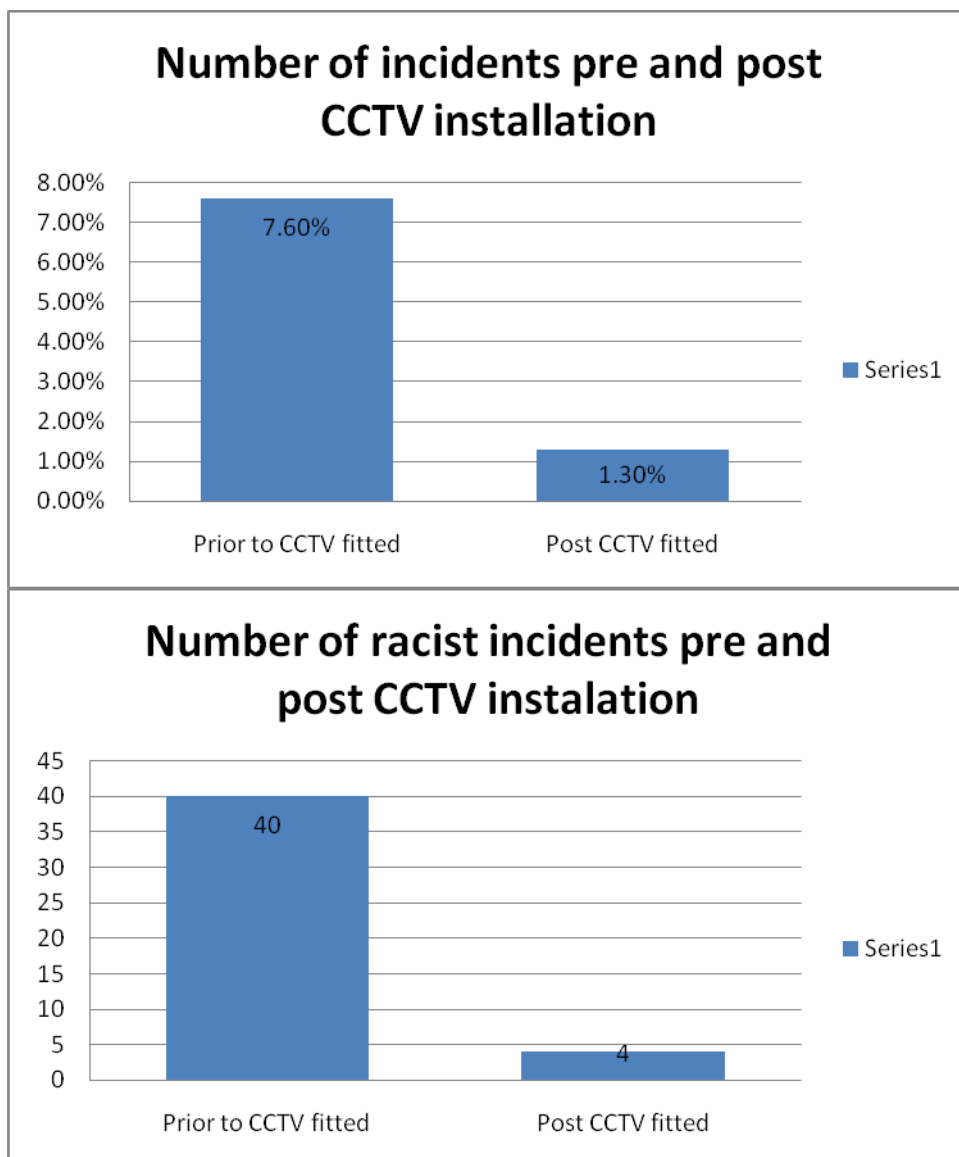




Appendix 10



Appendix 11



Appendix 12

Day	No Hours	No Fares	Types of incident							Incidents Pre 6pm	Incidents Post 6pm	Racist Under-tones
			Verbal Abuse	Threats	Assaults	Fare Dispute	Run Off	Damage	Other			
Sun	330.5	306	1	0	1	5	3	0	0	3	7	1
Mon	530.75	465	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	0	0
Tue	811.75	725	2	0	0	5	0	0	0	3	4	0
Wed	569.75	502	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	3	0	0
Thu	856.75	801	1	0	0	0	2	1	0	5	0	1
Fri	1,085.5	1,361	5	0	0	9	1	0	0	2	13	0
Sat	1,294.75	1,752	8	2	0	22	1	0	0	5	28	2
Total	5,480	5,912	18	2	1	45	8	1	0	23	52	4

Appendix 13

Crime Type	Pre Installation	Post Installation
Making off without payment	1	7
Criminal damage to taxi	1	3
Theft from motor vehicle	1	2
Theft from person	0	1
Assault on taxi driver	1	1
Racially aggravated criminal damage	1	1
Rape	0	1

Appendix 14

Date of Incident	Vehicle Reg. No.	Offence	Disposal
06.08.2009	WX52 SXO	Making off without payment (also shoplifting and failing to surrender)	Guilty Plea at Court. 20 weeks imprisonment.
10.08.2009	WX52 SXO	Making off without payment	Image circulated in Doncaster Free Press and Retford Gazette. No gain as yet.
23.08.2009	N230 PYE	Making off without payment	Guilty Plea at Court. 12 week curfew, costs of £50 and compensation of £30.83 awarded.
30.01.2010	DU05 LKV	Theft from motor vehicle (sat nav)	14 weeks imprisonment.
07.03.2010	M425 LYM	Assault of driver and Criminal Damage	Ongoing through court.
10.04.2010	M425 LYM	Racially or religiously aggravated criminal damage	4 months suspended sentence. 100 hours unpaid work.

Appendix 15

HOUR	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN	GRAND TOTAL
1				1		1		2
2					1		2	3
3			1			1		2
4								0
5							1	1
6								0
7								0
8								0
9								0
10								0
11						1		1
12								0
13								0
14								0
15								0
16								0
17								0
18								0
19								0
20								0
21			1					1
22								0
23							1	1
24			1					1
GRAND TOTAL	0	0	3	1	1	3	4	12

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