

PARALLEL SESSION 1C

Safer clubs, safer streets

Taxi Safe: reducing anti-social behaviour problems in night time Manchester using a taxi rank marshalling scheme

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Over a number of years it became clear that problems associated with poor behaviour of some people waiting at late night taxi ranks in city centre Manchester were reducing the willingness of taxi drivers to pick up fares from these ranks. Queue jumping and aggressive behaviour could lead to frustration and sometimes damage to taxis waiting for customers. A lack of control and the often lengthy waits also increased the likelihood of passengers consuming food and drink while in the queue, leading to litter and damage to the inside of cabs when such items were taken in with the client. The levels of frustration and aggression could also spill over into the relationship between the driver and passengers once they were in the taxi. As the situation degenerated, black cab drivers became even less inclined to pick up from these ranks, exacerbating the situation further (Slide 2).

Taxi Safe aims to maintain order at Manchester city centre taxi ranks to improve safety for the general public, reduce actual and perceived crime at these ranks and to encourage more taxi drivers to use the ranks (Slide 3). The scheme uses pairs of wardens who were skilled at handling queues and crowds at four of the busiest city centre taxi ranks from 23.00 to 3.00 on Friday and Saturday nights. These wardens were responsible for maintaining orderly queues and enforcing the “no eating and drinking in cab” rule. Additional litter bins were placed at these ranks to help with the latter. Two pilot projects from December 2003 to March 2004 and December 2004 to March 2005 used wardens to marshal taxi ranks at Albert Square, Piccadilly Gardens, Printworks, and Deansgate Locks (Slide 4). Three wardens were used at the latter rank because of issues of traffic control peculiar to that location. Additional marshalling took place on Thursday nights over the Christmas period in 2004/5.

Staff from the Department of Environmental and Geographical Sciences at Manchester Metropolitan University and the School of Health at Liverpool John Moores University coordinated the evaluation of the scheme. The five methods used in this evaluation were a brief post card survey handed out in taxi queues to passengers and taxi drivers, a detailed questionnaire posted to all taxi drivers on the City Council Licensing Department’s list and an analysis of queue dynamics and crime

and disorder at ranks marshalled by wardens provided by the wardens using a standardised recording sheet. Finally, crime statistics were obtained from the police about reported incidents associated with the four taxi ranks involved, and the major stake holders were asked for their opinions of the scheme, to give their response to particular aspects of the process, and to comment on a draft version of the evaluation report (Slide 7).

The brief (card based) questionnaire demonstrated that both passengers (especially women) and taxi drivers were enthusiastic about the scheme (Slides 8-13). Passengers were more positive about potential safety aspects of the programme than were taxi drivers. Nearly half of the passengers who responded added comments, often reporting that they felt the scheme was user friendly and provided protection against crime and anti-social behaviour, especially for women.

The detailed questionnaire to taxi drivers elicited a response from around 20% of the fleet (Slides 14-17). Generally, taxi drivers were positive about the marshalling scheme and were more likely to use city centre ranks when warded. They considered that marshalled ranks were generally safer and more user friendly for both drivers and passengers. Those drivers regularly using city centre ranks were much more positive than those not currently using these ranks on Friday and Saturday nights. However, drivers did indicate that should the scheme be suspended, they would be less likely to use the ranks in future.

Analysis of behaviour at ranks demonstrated that at marshalled city centre ranks on a Friday and Saturday night the wardens were controlling incidents of crime and disorder (Slides 18-22). The number of incidents was also quite low when taking account of the fact that the reported figures covered the whole weekend and all four ranks. Interestingly the number of incidents appeared to be lower during the second pilot compared to the first. Data from Greater Manchester Police demonstrated that there was a 50% reduction in crime and a 41% drop in incidents over the December 2003 to March 2004 pilot at marshalled taxi ranks compared to a similar period the previous year when marshals were not present (Slide 23). The evaluation clearly showed that even though these incidents still occur at marshalled ranks, the presence of wardens makes people feel safer, encourages the increased use of taxi ranks and lowers the perception of taxi ranks being areas in which crimes are committed. The positive comments relating to the impact of wardens at ranks were further substantiated by feedback received from stakeholders including SHOWSEC (the firm employing the wardens) and the Taxi Owners & Drivers Association (Slide 24).

This study concludes that the Taxi Safe scheme has been a success in achieving the project's aims and was valued by drivers and passengers alike. The scheme has now been introduced on a permanent basis and is funded through an increase in taxi licence fee with an associated increase in taxi fares (especially at night). Further work is now needed to assess potential extensions to the scheme (such as increasing the number of ranks marshalled and whether an increase in the number days covered would be an advantage), and the most efficient use of the wardens employed at any time. It will also be interesting to see how such a scheme works once the change in licensing hours becomes more fully embedded in night life culture.



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Background

Long queues at night can lead to frustration at taxi ranks

Queue dynamics become strained as people jostle for position

Drunken behaviour can lead to intimidation or even violence

Long waiting times may also be associated with continued drinking and eating fast food leading to increased litter

Taxi drivers tend to avoid areas with problem queues



Taxi Safe Scheme aims to:

Maintain order at the ranks to make them safer for the public to use;

Reduce actual and perceived crime and disorder at city centre taxi ranks;

Encourage more taxi drivers to use these city centre ranks during problem periods.

Taxi Safe Pilot Scheme

A warden service operated from December 2003 until March 2004 and from December 2004 until March 2005 on Friday and Saturday nights.

2 wardens worked each of 4 city centre taxi ranks between 23:00 and 03:00.

Wardens follow a protocol designed by the Licensing Unit, Greater Manchester Police City Centre Safe Project and the hackney carriage trade.

Wardens wear high visibility tabards and have rapid access to the police and the CCTV Control Room via the NiteNet Radio System.

Extra bins placed at taxi ranks enable the wardens to ensure that customers do not enter a taxi while eating or drinking.

Publicity

Cards advertising the scheme were given out in black cabs



To make your night out in Manchester even safer, Greater Manchester Police is working with Manchester City Council to protect late night taxi ranks.

From Friday 12th December, 'Taxi Marshals' will be stationed at the following late night taxi ranks in Manchester every Friday and Saturday night for 8 weeks.

Outside The Printworks
Portland Street (Piccadilly Gardens)
Albert Square

Supported by the Police and monitored by CCTV, Taxi Marshals will be wearing bright yellow tabards and will manage taxi queues to help you get home safely.

You can let us know what you think of this scheme by e-mailing Manchester City Council at licensing@notes.manchester.gov.uk



THINK SAFE DRINK RESPONSIBLY SAFE
MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

Local newspapers also carried information about the scheme

Manchester Evening News

Saturday, 13th December 2003
Fare cops in taxi rank patrols

[David Ottewell](#)

TAXI wardens will patrol Manchester city centre to stop revellers brawling in the scrum for a Christmas cab.



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Deansgate Locks

Evaluation

Brief questionnaires (2004 and 2005)

Detailed questionnaire to taxi drivers (2004)

Monitoring of queue dynamics at ranks (2004 and 2005)

Analysis of crime statistics (2004)

Final feedback from the major stakeholders (2004 and 2005)



Brief questionnaires to taxi drivers and passengers

Distributed in both years to drivers and passengers via council staff (Licensing Inspectors)

Centrally collected and collated

170 in 2004
33 drivers
137 passengers

669 in 2005
43 drivers
626 passengers

340 comments



PLEASE TICK

41

- Are you a taxi driver? Yes No
- Are you a passenger? Yes No
- Do you find the Taxi Marshal service useful? Yes No
- Would you like to see this service continue? Yes No
- Did you feel safer as a result of this service? Yes No
- Would this service encourage you to use taxi ranks more often? Yes No

NO STAMP REQUIRED

Taxi Marshal Initiative,
Manchester City Council,
Licensing Unit,
FREEPOST MR 1514
Town Hall,
Manchester M2 8AA

Have you any comments or suggestions on this scheme?
It is very good it should be expanded.

Thank you for taking the time to fill in this survey. **614**
Postage has been paid, please put postcard in your nearest post box.



Responses 2004/5 Question	Percentage responding "Yes"	
	Taxi drivers n = 43	Passengers n = 626
Do you find the Taxi Marshal service useful?	95%	98%
Would you like to see the service continue?	95%	98%
Do you feel safer as a result of this service?	98%	98%
Would this service encourage you to use taxi ranks more often?	91%	97%

General positive responses

2004 survey

Excellent scheme, could it be extended
Brilliant idea, makes waiting for a taxi a pleasant experience
Good to know someone there
The taxi marshal was very good and I would like to see it continue
Very efficient and helpful
Thank you to taxi marshals at Portland St.
Keep up the good work
Excellent much needed
Very worthwhile service



2005 survey

I am a Dublin driver. Brilliant scheme, I will inform the Council in Dublin
Will deter false cabs
Staff were very friendly
Please expand and continue
Taxi marshals very confident and competent
Brilliant idea, makes waiting for a cab a pleasant experience
Great idea, taxi ranks can be very intimidating, especially at night
Marshall was superb and very helpful
It ensured that you got a taxi when it was your turn

Positive responses specifically from and regarding women

2004 survey

Being a female the important issue here is safety I hope this service continues
Very good for women waiting for taxi alone
Being a woman who was getting a taxi on my own I was very pleased to see
the Taxi Marshal at the rank and felt very safe. Thanks.

2005 survey

Great, as a girl on my own I usually find it difficult to beat the competition
Gives peace of mind and security
I feel much safer returning home alone
This service is very good for women

Comments on safety

2004 survey

I think it is a very good idea and a lot safer
Would like scheme to continue as we feel very safe
It's a lot safer to get a cab with the marshals around
Safer and more organised

2005 survey

Great scheme, should stop a lot of trouble at weekends
Safer and fairer for all
Feels much safe



Comments on queue control

2004 survey

Marshals do an excellent job controlling the queue
No queue jumping

2005 survey

Prevents arguments
Very good, stops queue jumping
At least people won't push in the queue like before
Avoids queue jumping and makes the whole process easier



Concerns/suggestions for improvement

2004 survey

Concerned about the cost of the service and the safety of the marshals
More in centre/ Oxford Rd-central library / Portland street
More marshals especially outside Printworks
Need more marshals on other ranks

2005 survey

Perhaps instant response for dealing with large groups
Increase number of ranks to reduce queue size
Should be city wide
Need some kind of shelter for marshals

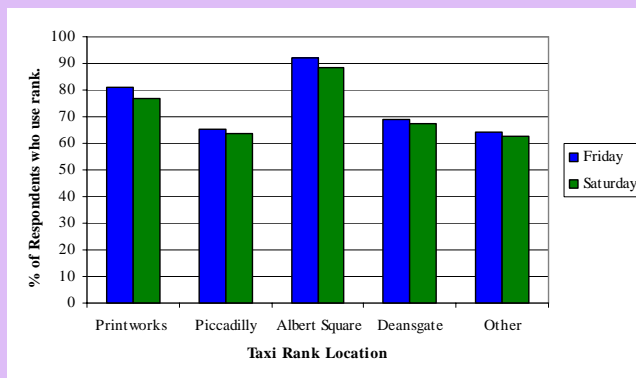
Detailed questionnaires to taxi drivers

The detailed questionnaire was posted to all 1740 black cab drivers licensed with Manchester City Council

352 responses were received (~20%)

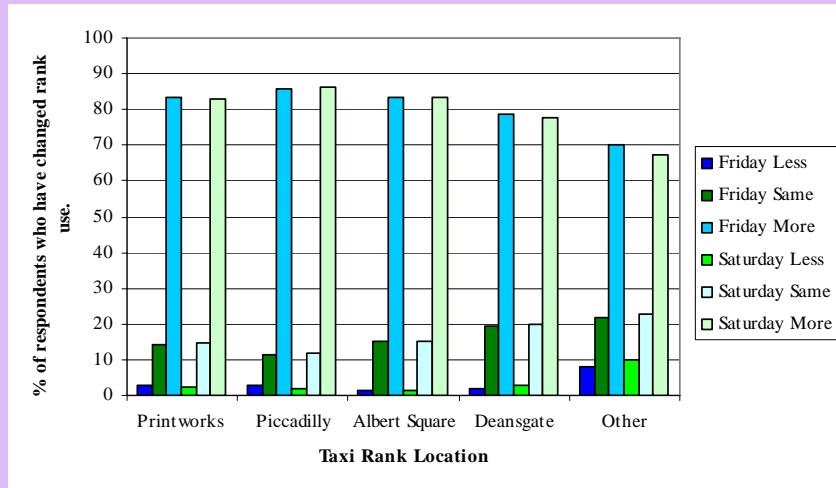
1. Do you use any of the marshalled taxi ranks in the city centre on a Friday or Saturday night?

If yes which taxi ranks do you use and when do you use them?



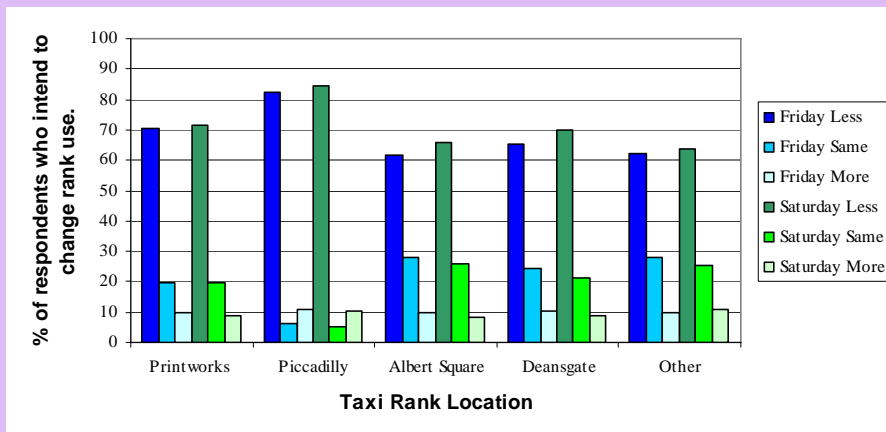
2. Has your use of these taxi ranks changed since the introduction of taxi wardens?

If yes do you use the taxi ranks more or less frequently than you did before the introduction of wardens?



3. Will your use of taxi ranks change if wardens were to stop marshalling ranks?

If yes will you use the taxi ranks more or less frequently than you do now?



Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	No Opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree
Taxi ranks with wardens are safer and more user-friendly for the general public than ranks without wardens.	1.2	1.5	1.2	14.8	81.3
Taxi ranks with wardens are less safe and user-friendly for taxi drivers compared to ranks without wardens.	46.1	35.4	4.7	5.0	8.8
The level of crime at taxi ranks is less when a warden is present compared to when wardens aren't present.	1.2	2.1	4.4	24.3	68.0
I am more likely to stop at taxi ranks where wardens are present than at those without wardens.	1.2	6.3	4.5	25.1	63.0
Wardens need to be present at all ranks in Manchester in order to make taxi ranks safer and more user-friendly.	1.2	8.8	7.7	26.0	56.3
Where wardens are already present more are needed to make the rank safer and more user friendly.	2.5	21.2	21.2	29.1	26.1
To ensure taxi ranks are safe and user-friendly, wardens should be present throughout the week.	6.3	38.9	18.7	19.6	16.6
Since the introduction of taxi wardens there has been less damage to my taxi compared to previously when wardens were not present	1.8	6.5	17.9	29.1	44.7
Since the introduction of taxi wardens I need to clean my taxi more compared to previously when wardens were not present.	21.5	39.1	24.2	9.0	6.3

Monitoring queue dynamics

Date:

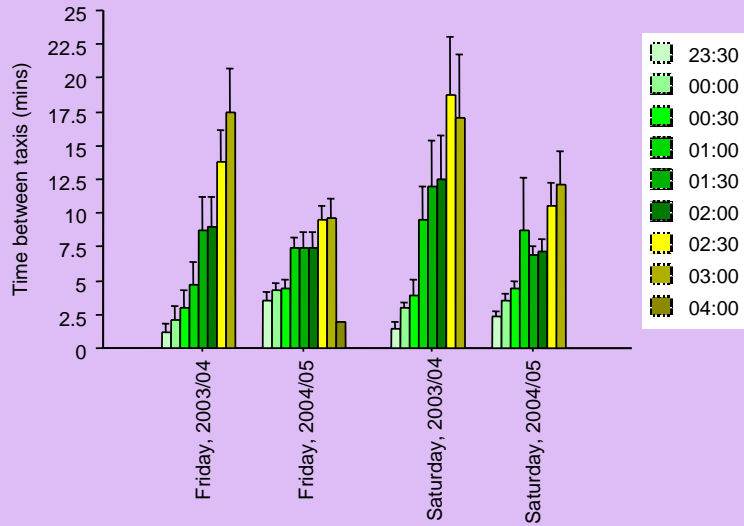
Taxi rank (please circle): Printworks, Piccadilly Gardens, Albert Square, Deansgate.

Time	Time between departure of last cab and arrival of next cab	Number of people in the queue	Number of male groups in the queue	Number of female groups in the queue	Number of mixed groups in the queue	Number of incidents involving food in last ½ hour	Number of incidents involving drink last ½ hour	Number of incidents involving queue disruption last ½ hour	Number of other incidents last ½ hour
23:30									
00:00									
00:30									
01:00									
01:30									
02:00									
02:30									
03:00									

Please add any other comments on the marshalling process tonight:

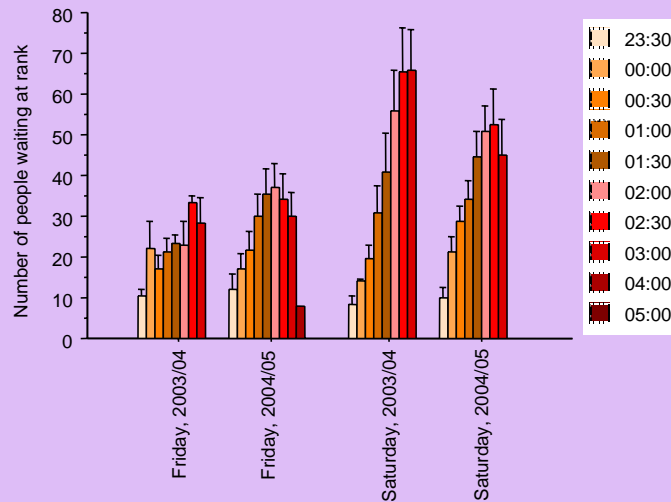
Time between taxis

Mean (S.E.) time between taxis on weekend nights at the Piccadilly Gardens taxi rank



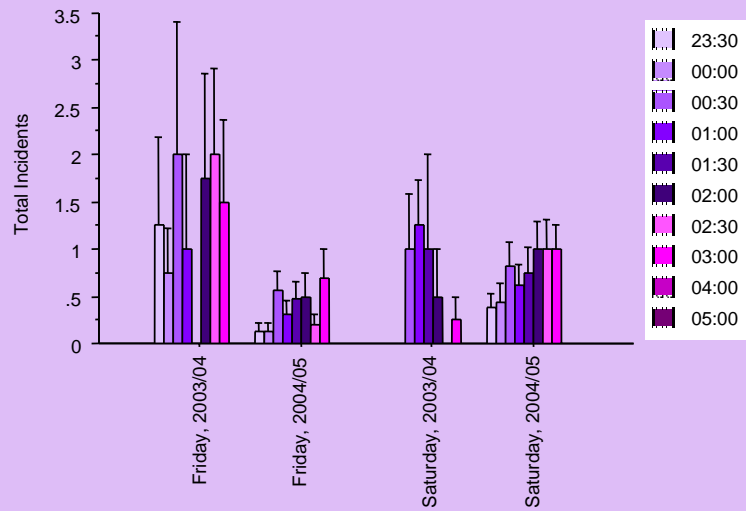
Queue size

Mean (S.E.) number of people waiting at the Piccadilly Gardens rank at different times of night on a Friday and Saturday night



Number of incidents

Mean (S.E.) number of incidents occurring at the Piccadilly Gardens rank on weekend nights



Analysis of incident statistics

	Number per week for each type of incident				
	Food	Drink	Queue dynamics	Others	Total
2003/4 (4 weeks)	15.0	12.8	33.5	8.5	69.8
2004/5 (17 weeks)	4.5	8.4	29.8	7.9	50.6
Total number of incidents	136	193	641	169	1139

Analysis of crime statistics

At the ranks being monitored, during the 2003/2004 pilot period, 13 incidents were recorded by police on a Friday, Saturday and Sunday, including 2 crimes.

This can be compared with the same period the previous year when marshals were not in place and 22 incidents were recorded by police on a Friday, Saturday and Sunday, including 4 crimes.

Consultation with stakeholders

	Comments from SHOWSEC	Comments from the Taxi Owners & Drivers Association.
Do you feel the scheme is useful?	Benefits passengers and drivers. Helps to promote city as safe area.	The scheme is useful drivers and passengers feel safer and drivers are more likely to stop at marshalled ranks.
Does the scope of the scheme need to be altered?	No more staff required but could be extended to other sites.	The pilot scheme should be continued unaltered.
Do you feel that the scheme has had any influence on crime and disorder?	Taxi Safe has reduced actual and perceived levels of crime and disorder.	Wardens will have an effect on crime and disorder in the surrounding area.
Are there any other issues that you feel should be taken on board regarding the work of taxi wardens / taxi drivers?	Wardens need as much protection as possible for example through CCTV and the police and greater training.	A continuation of the scheme will encourage more drivers to work at night.
Do you have any other comments?	The scheme has been a tremendous success	Should it be necessary to recoup some of the cost from the taxi trade, the fairest way is through the owner's and driver's license fee

Conclusions

The marshalling service does indeed appear to:

Maintain order at the ranks to make them safer for the public to use (Aim 1)

Reduce actual and perceived crime and disorder at city centre taxi ranks (Aim 2)

Encourage more taxi drivers to use these city centre ranks during problem periods (Aim 3)

The scheme has now been accepted as a permanent feature of weekend city centre behaviour management at the four ranks piloted