



PRESS RELEASE

“WE DON’T NEED A PARTNERSHIP WITH UBER,” SAYS LONDON TAXI TRADE

London’s licensed taxi trade has condemned Uber’s announcement that it will ‘partner’ with iconic black cabs. Taxi trade representatives report having had no discussions with the minicab app in advance of the announcement and suggest it is unlikely that London’s black cab drivers will align themselves with the company, given its history in London.

Steve McNamara, General Secretary of the Licensed Taxi Drivers Association (LTDA), which represents the majority of London’s self-employed licensed taxi drivers said:

“There is no demand for this partnership from the London licensed taxi drivers we represent or our passengers. Neither the LTDA nor any other taxi trade groups were consulted in advance of this unilateral announcement. We are not aware of any drivers having been recruited and don’t believe our members will even consider joining the app, given its well-documented, poor record on everything from passenger safety to workers’ rights in London.

“Our passengers can already access our world-class service through a range of apps like Gett, TaxiApp, FRENOW and ComCab, which share our values and pride themselves on providing a high-quality, safe and reliable form of accessible public transport.

“We have no interest in sullyng the name of London’s iconic, world-renowned black cab trade by aligning it with Uber, it’s poor safety record and everything else that comes with it.”

Uber first attempted to launch a London black cab option in 2014, shortly after entering the market. The platform was only able to recruit a handful of drivers on the promise of reduced commissions, who later realised their mistake. The ill-judged endeavour was abandoned shortly after.

There had been suggestions that the company was looking to try to enter the black cab market again for some time. Today’s announcement confirms that the app is looking to recruit drivers, with a view to launching a black cab option in early 2024.

London licensed taxi driver, Howard Taylor said:

“I would never consider joining Uber. Cabbies work hard to do the Knowledge and we take great pride in what we do. London black cabs are the gold standard. We go the extra mile to help our passengers and are committed to providing a safe, accessible and efficient service. From everything I’ve seen, I don’t believe Uber shares these commitments.”

London licensed taxi drivers used apps long before Uber entered the market, with the likes of Hailo and Gett, launching in 2011. Today, taxi apps have gone from strength to strength, reporting significant growth post-pandemic, which it seems Uber is now looking to benefit from.

Across 2022/23, London’s taxi trade has also seen a record number of movements through the Heathrow Airport Taxi Feeder Park – which is effectively London’s largest taxi rank. The highest ever number of movements since records began in 2010, was recorded in September 2023, highlighting the growing demand for licensed taxis, which is replicated across London.



Steve McNamara, General Secretary of the Licensed Taxi Drivers Association commented:

“Uber is no longer a concern for our members. Our business is thriving – in part because many of the ride-hailing app’s former customers have realised that black cabs offer a far superior service, at a fair and reasonable price. We are seeing younger demographics now choosing to travel by taxi and our members are experiencing record demand for their services across London.”

Discussing the motivation behind the announcement, McNamara said:

“I can only assume that this latest effort represents a last ditched attempt to reinvigorate their ailing business model. London’s black cab drivers pride themselves on providing a high-quality, accessible and increasingly sustainable service that Londoners and visitors can rely on. That’s why black cabs and the service we provide are famous the world over and why our customers love us.

“Despite challenges, our trade has seen significant growth since the pandemic, with record demand for cabs, more work through taxi apps and huge levels of investment being made in new electric taxis, which now make up 53% of the fleet in London. We have a bright future ahead of us and we do not need a company with a questionable record in London and which doesn’t share our values, trying to capitalise on our success.”

ENDS

Notes to editors

About the Licensed Taxi Drivers Association (LTDA)

The LTDA is the largest taxi trade organisation representing London’s licensed taxi drivers (black cab drivers). With over 10,000 members, the LTDA has been the professional and authoritative voice of London taxi drivers for more than 60 years. The organisation is dedicated to supporting our members, maintaining the high professional standards London’s black cab drivers are known for and ensuring regulation governing the taxi trade nationally is effective.

Steve McNamara, General Secretary of the LTDA and Licensed London Taxi Driver, Howard Taylor can be made available for comment.