

Taxi and Private Hire Newsletter

December 2020

issue 1

Taxi and Private Hire Newsletter Winter Edition 2020

Message from Councillor Alan Bolshaw, Chair of the Statutory and Non-Statutory Licensing Committee.

“As we approach the Christmas period, I’d like to extend my thanks to you all for the work you have done during this incredibly difficult year. The pandemic has been one of the most testing times many of us have ever faced in our working lives and we recognise that the difficult and uneasy nature of the job has been heightened. We know that the Private Hire and Taxi trade has been hit particularly hard as a result of the Coronavirus, and I’d like to extend my deepest sympathies to those who have been adversely affected.

We know that many drivers and their families have experienced great hardship during national restrictions, despite providing a vital service for key workers and the public.

In response to the pandemic, we are doing everything that we can to help you during this difficult period, including reducing our licence fees.

Lastly, I’m sure you will join me in thanking our officers for doing their utmost, to maintain our reputation as a customer and business friendly authority that cares for its drivers. I am proud that our licensing service and driver training programme continues to attract and retain drivers from across the country due to our quality, speed and convenience.

I wish you all a merry Christmas and a prosperous new year. Please continue to keep yourselves and the public safe”.

Councillor Alan Bolshaw



COVID-19 Response

In response to the coronavirus pandemic, we have reduced our fees for black cab and private hire drivers to provide support to those badly affected within the trade.

The following changes to our renewal fees have been implemented with immediate effect:

- Hackney carriage/private hire 1-year driver renewal fee reduced from £59 to £40
- Hackney carriage/private hire 2-year driver renewal fee reduced from £110 to £75
- Hackney carriage/private hire 3-year driver renewal fee reduced from £140 to £100

Also with immediate effect, it has been agreed to reduce the annual cost to licence a vehicle (which must be less than 10 years old) from £185 to £135.

Are you eligible for financial support?

You may also be eligible for further support if you are self-employed and getting less or no work as a result of the pandemic. Further information can be found [here](#).

If you are told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace, you may be entitled to a payment of £500 under the [Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme](#).

TRAVEL SAFE

Coronavirus advice:
Using taxis and private hire vehicles

- ✓ **Wear a face covering** in taxis or private hire vehicles. You could be refused entry if you do not wear a face covering.
- ✓ **Maintain a 2 metre distance** if you are queuing for a taxi.
- ✓ **Follow the driver's advice.** You may be asked to sit in the back of the vehicle.
- ✓ **Open windows** for ventilation where possible.
- ✓ **Use contactless or online payment.**
- ✓ **Be aware** of the surfaces you touch and use a tissue when coughing or sneezing.
- ✓ **Sanitise or wash your hands** for 20 seconds after your journey.

PROTECT YOURSELF AND OTHERS

wolverhampton.gov.uk/travelsafe

CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL

Following specialist opinion from Public Health, drivers who are licensed with City of Wolverhampton Council are advised that they should wear a face-covering at all times when passengers are inside their vehicle. Passengers travelling within the vehicle must use a face-covering unless they are medically exempt.

City of Wolverhampton drivers are hereby authorised to refuse carriage to people who do not have a medical exemption and who refuse to wear a face covering.

Where a face covering cannot be worn for medical reasons, the passenger is expected to sit in the rear of the vehicle and as far away from the driver as possible. The windows should, where practicable, be open for the entire journey to provide adequate ventilation. On those occasions when a driver is asked to prove his identity, the face-covering may be temporarily removed.

Christmas Closures

Please take the time to familiarise yourself with our Christmas closure for 2020-21. Our offices will be closed from Thursday 24 December 2020 and will reopen on 4 January 2021.

It's important that you submit your renewal applications as soon as possible if you are due to expire during this time period. The following timescales currently apply to correct and complete applications:

- Badge Renewals (Hackney/Dual/Private Hire) - 10 working days
- Vehicle Applications (New/Renewal) - 5 working days
- New Badges (Hackney/Dual/Private Hire) - 15 working days



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gov.uk/eusettlementscheme**

Consultation

City of Wolverhampton Council's Licensing Services have commenced a consultation on proposed changes to taxi licensing recommended by the [Department for Transport's Statutory Taxi & Private Hire Vehicle Standards](#).

The consultation seeks your views on the DBS Update Service, surveillance cameras in vehicles (CCTV), basic DBS checks for vehicle licence holders, new licence conditions and more.

Please note, these are draft proposals; we are seeking the views of those working in the industry to help shape them. The consultation can be viewed and responses can be submitted by clicking [here](#).

Responses should be submitted by 8 January 2021.

EU Settlement Scheme

We would like to remind you that 30 June 2021 is the deadline for EEA and Swiss citizens to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme. We encourage EEA and Swiss citizens, and their family members, to apply now to protect their rights in the UK. Click [here](#) for more information.

You can receive regular taxi guidance updates by signing up to the local Government bulletin. Click [here](#) to subscribe.

My Licence Portal

City of Wolverhampton Council are launching a new portal for licence holders to manage and update their applications online. 'My Licence Portal' will be a one stop area where drivers and vehicle proprietors can easily upload documentation, report incidents and make any amendments to personal details. Applicants can also use this new portal to change operator, notify us of any convictions and complete vehicle hire or accident forms. Both vehicle and driver records will display all relevant information regarding the current licence such as DBS, medical and licence expiry dates.

We are undertaking a soft launch of the portal before making the facility available to all our licence holders. Our web forms will remain active for any changes to your applications during this trial period however, these will be removed in time for all enquiries to be guided towards using the new portal.

Our December and January renewal letters include the information you need to register and utilize this new facility.

Your FAQ'S answered

I have been issued a short term licence, how do I get this extended?

If you have been issued a short term licence due to your immigration documentation, you must provide your new immigration documentation **before your licence expires**. If you do not have the correct documentation ready, contact us via driver.lic@wolverhampton.gov.uk and a member of the team will assist you.

I've changed address. How can I report this?

You can change your address online by completing our [change of address form](#). This should be done within seven days of moving address.

What should I do if I have applied for a licence, or am licensed, and accept a caution, am issued a fixed penalty notice or am convicted?

You must provide full details in writing to Licensing Services within 14 days using our [notification of convictions, cautions and FPNs webform](#).

What is the maximum age of a vehicle that will be accepted?

The vehicle must be no older than 11 years 6 months. Vehicles are not plated past 12 years.

I'm renewing my vehicle plates do I need to renew my MOT?

Yes. An MOT certificate, no more than 10 working days old, from an approved garage, must be provided when submitting a vehicle application.

My Private Hire plate has been lost/stolen what do I do?

You can report this through filling in our [stolen/lost plate webform](#).

Contact us

For driver enquiries – driver.lic@wolverhampton.gov.uk

For vehicle enquiries – Vehicle.lic@wolverhampton.gov.uk