

Taxi and Private Hire Newsletter

July 2021

issue **3**

Taxi and Private Hire Newsletter Summer Edition 2021

Message from Councillor Philip Page, Chair of the Statutory Licensing Committee and Regulatory Committee.

“I am pleased to introduce myself as the new chair of the Regulatory Committee.

The Regulatory Committee was previously known as the Non-Statutory Licensing Committee and was renamed to reflect its function.

I have served on licensing committees for many years previously and I look forward to continuing to drive forward our current high standards and business friendly approach.

We have lots of important upcoming changes such as our voluntary CCTV scheme which was recently approved by members of our Regulatory Committee.

We will continue to develop our DVLA and DBS update checking service to help reduce costs for our drivers, whilst working in line with new standards set by the Department for Transport.

I understand what a difficult year the trade has experienced due to Covid and national restrictions, but you have continued to provide a vital service for key workers and the public. I would personally like to thank our entire driver fleet for their continued hard work during the emergency period. Please continue to keep yourselves and the public safe.”

Councillor Philip Page



Covid-19 Information

Around one in three people with Covid-19 do not have symptoms but could still infect others. Getting tested is the only way to know if you have the virus, so regular testing is recommended.

Anyone who does not have symptoms can now get free regular rapid flow tests to check for Covid-19. Wolverhampton residents can click [here](#) to access information regarding home test kits and rapid testing sites across the city.

For those based outside of Wolverhampton, we encourage you to make use of the Rapid Testing sites available within your local authority. To locate your local rapid testing site or to order rapid lateral flow test kits online, please click [here](#).

If you are experiencing symptoms of Covid-19, click [here](#) to access your free PCR home test kit.

You can book your coronavirus vaccination online by clicking [here](#). You can evidence that you are vaccinated using the [NHS app](#).

To help control the spread of COVID-19, drivers should download and use the [NHS COVID-19 app](#).

Queen's Birthday Honours 2021

We would like to congratulate Rowhi Nemer, owner of CamCab's, for being honoured in the Queen's Birthday Honours List 2021.

Rowhi was awarded the prestigious accolade 'For services to Frontline NHS Workers and the community during the Covid-19 Pandemic'.

During the height of the pandemic, Rowhi began offering free lifts to and from work for NHS workers. At one point, this service was being used over 100 times a day. Rowhi also offered the elderly and vulnerable free lifts to the hospital, as well as overseeing the delivery of thousands of free bottles of water to front-line staff in the area.

Rowhi said "I'm very honoured to be receiving this award on behalf of myself, everyone at CamCab and the community we have supported for the past 15 years".



Rowhi Nemer, owner of CamCabs based in Cambridge.



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

DBS Update Service

From 1 April 2021, all driver licence applicants purchasing an enhanced DBS certificate will be required to subscribe to the DBS Update Service at a cost of £13 per year. Existing drivers will not be required to subscribe to the update service until their current DBS certificate expires, three years after its issue date.

Six monthly DBS checks are now required by the Department for Transport. If you do not subscribe to the Update Service and your licence is granted or renewed after 1 April 2021, you will be required to purchase a new DBS certificate every six months.

Applicants have 30 days from the issue date on the DBS certificate to apply for the Update Service.

The DBS certificate must be for an enhanced check for the position of 'Other Workforce - Taxi Licensing' or 'Other Workforce - Taxi Driver'.

If you are already subscribed to the Update Service and want to provide your details, you can do so [here](#). Alternatively, you can subscribe to the DBS update service by clicking [here](#).

Basic DBS checks for vehicle proprietors

In line with new government guidance on 'Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards', all vehicle proprietors without a Private Hire Driver Licence must undertake a [basic DBS check](#) as part of their vehicle licence application. If the applicant is a company or partnership, each director and partner must provide a basic DBS certificate. Certificates must be dated within the 12 months prior to application.

As of 31 May 2021, the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) will no longer be able to amend applicant's personal information once an application form has been submitted. This means that there will be a cost to resubmitting a DBS check request. Further information is available [here](#).

CCTV Consultation

Taxi and Private Hire Drivers licensed by City of Wolverhampton Council are now permitted to install CCTV cameras in their vehicles. Members of the Regulatory Committee recently approved the voluntary scheme.

Vehicle licence holders who choose to install CCTV must comply with the [Taxi CCTV Policy](#) and any relevant guidance issued by the Surveillance Camera Commissioner (SCC) and ICO.

Vehicle licence holders must register their CCTV system with the [Information Commissioners Office \(ICO\)](#) and be able to evidence continuous registration throughout the lifetime of their licence.

Vehicles must display signage advising that CCTV will be in use with the Data Controller's contact details and ICO registration number. Signage is available from our offices at Hickman Avenue. Data must be stored securely and only shared when lawful.

Drivers may wish to disable recording when the vehicle is being used for personal use. Drivers who are not the vehicle proprietor are reminded to check with the vehicle licence holder as to the circumstances in which they can disable recording. Audio recording is prohibited at all times.

Drivers are also obligated to provide extra support to those with sensory impairments, to ensure they can identify that CCTV recording is in place. Breaches of the Taxi CCTV Policy by a licence holder may result in their licence being reviewed for misconduct.

Compliance Operation

We recently joined forces with West Midlands Police (WMP) and the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) to carry out one of our regular safety operations on Taxi and Private Hire vehicles.

Councillors who sit on the council's Regulatory committee also came out to see the hard work that takes place to keep our vehicles safe.

The multi-agency operation was organised to ensure that vehicles were well maintained and continued to meet our high standards.

As part of the successful operation, the majority of vehicles checked were found to be well-maintained and in good condition. However, one licence was suspended for having unrepaired accident damage and another licence was suspended for having an illegally worn tyre.



Compliance Update

We are increasing our compliance operations across the Midlands and Northwest, working with officers from other local authorities and local police forces to ensure that our drivers and their vehicles are complying with licence conditions. Please take this opportunity to remind yourself of the conditions.

City of Wolverhampton Council expects their licensed vehicles to be maintained to a high standard and display the correct operator signage, which is fixed permanently to vehicle and not with magnets. Drivers should always act in a courteous and professional manner, display their private hire badge within the vehicle and wear their provided driver badge whilst working.

Drivers must not smoke or use vape machines in the vehicle. Vehicles should also be kept clean, tidy and free from any damage which would affect the safety of the vehicle or its cosmetic appearance. Drivers are reminded that they must report any accidents to City of Wolverhampton Council within 72 hours via the [council website](#).

Remember that a private hire licence is a badge of approval; it states the Local Authority feels the holder is fit and proper and suitable in every way. When drivers are operating outside of Wolverhampton, they are expected to co-operate with reasonable requests from compliance staff authorised in other areas.



Councillors from City of Wolverhampton Council's Regulatory Committee working closely with officers from West Midlands Police and the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency.

Guide Dog Revocations

City of Wolverhampton Council take a 'zero-tolerance' approach to drivers who refuse carriage to assistance dogs, with two drivers being stripped of their licences by the council.

Dudley Magistrates dismissed Ahmad Khan's appeal against City of Wolverhampton Council's decision to revoke his private hire driver licence. The court heard how Khan had left Paul Hopkins, who is registered blind, stranded after refusing carriage to his guide dog Usher.

Paul Hopkins, pictured below with guide dog Usher, said: "Being left at the side of the road is reckless of any driver and leaves us in a very unsafe and vulnerable position. I always try to convince drivers intent on service denial to reconsider their decision and I always remind them of the Equality Act 2010."

Taking a driver to court is always a last resort as we know a guilty verdict can often lead to a driver's licence being revoked, which is what happened in this case."



In a separate incident, Shamal Hussein Majid also had his licence revoked after his appeal against the council was dismissed. Majid had refused carriage to an assistance dog, leaving the owner stranded and attempted to charge an additional cleaning fee in exchange for having the dog in his vehicle. For the full story, click [here](#).

Officers from the council resolved to revoke both licences with immediate effect in the interests of public safety and both parties have been ordered to pay towards the council's legal costs.

Do you have a story for us? Email jessica.rowley@wolverhampton.gov.uk.

Brand new, low-emission vehicles are now eligible for a plug-in car grant. The maximum grant available for cars is £2,500. For further information, please click [here](#).

Your FAQs answered

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

You can change your address online by completing our [change of address form](#). If you have registered for 'My Licence Portal', you can also change address via this.

Contact Us

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

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

Please make sure to include your name and badge/plate number in all correspondence. If you are a new applicant, please include your WTP reference number in all enquiries.