

# Taxi and Private Hire Newsletter

Autumn 2021

issue 4

## Taxi and Private Hire Newsletter Autumn Edition 2021

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

“I am pleased to announce the relaunch of our [‘Get Home Safe’](#) initiative last month, timed to coincide with the start of the new academic year. This campaign promotes the use of licensed hackney carriage and private hire vehicles as the safest way to get home, particularly as part of the nighttime economy.

The taxi trade has always played a crucial role in ensuring that people can travel safely from A to B; as eyes and ears up and down the country, you will see things where you can make a difference. If you do see someone in trouble, please call **999** to report an emergency, or call **101** in a non-emergency.

The Council has also been working hard to protect the reputation of the taxi trade; since the pandemic, we have successfully defended against 20 appeals to the Magistrates’ Court, after revoking licences and refusing applications. Average costs awarded to the Council were £858.97.

Finally, I’d like to encourage all drivers to subscribe to the DBS Update Service as soon as possible. This is a fantastic system that saves you money and means you might never need to buy a DBS certificate again!”



Councillor Philip Page



# COVID-19 Information

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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 out 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, you should stay home and book a test. 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 are also encouraged to download and use the [NHS COVID-19 app](#).

## DBS Update Service

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Since 1 April 2021, all driver licence applicants purchasing an enhanced DBS certificate are required to subscribe to the DBS Update Service at a cost of £13 per year.

The Update Service is an online subscription service that lets you keep your enhanced DBS certificates up to date. It also allows employers to check a certificate online, with your consent.

Existing drivers will not be required to subscribe to the update service until their

current DBS certificate expires, three years from its issue date.

Under the new Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards issued by the Department for Transport (DfT), licensing authorities must carry out criminal record checks every six months on drivers.

Drivers who do not subscribe to the update service when providing a new DBS certificate will be required to purchase a new certificate every six months. Unfortunately, this currently includes all those drivers who have been issued with a 'manual' DBS certificate; however the DBS are currently working to enable Update Service registration for those individuals.

Applicants have 30 days from the issue date on the DBS certificate to [subscribe to 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](#).

Drivers are reminded that all DBS certificates should be retained and not thrown away (as the authority can request a copy of this at any time). Renewal drivers are also encouraged to renew their DBS certificates that the earliest possible opportunity to avoid delays in their applications.

For further information, or for help in signing up to the update service, please see the following [Driver Guide](#).

## Tax Conditionality

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From 4 April 2022, all applicants renewing their licence will be required to undergo an tax registration check.

If you need help registering for tax, please contact HMRC via [email](#) or phone at **0300 200 3300**.

## Compliance Update

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We recently joined forces with West Midlands Police Central Motorway Patrol Group (CMPG) to carry out one of our regular safety operations to ensure that vehicles and drivers continue to meet the council's high standards.

Most vehicles examined were found to be well-maintained and compliant with our licence conditions. However, one vehicle was suspended for having illegal tyres and another four vehicles were reported for breaching licensing conditions, such as not displaying correct operator signage or using magnetic signage.

Private Hire Drivers are reminded that our licence conditions state that drivers can only be partnered with one Private Hire Vehicle Operator at a time. You can notify Licensing Services about the change in your operator by [clicking here](#).

If you have any information about drivers breaching their licence conditions, please report it by [clicking here](#).



Figure 1 - Members of our Compliance Team and Central Motorway Police Group (CMPG) during a Compliance Operation.

## Changes to the Highway Code

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On 14 September 2021, [The Highway Code](#) was updated to refer to guidance on smart motorways.

A total of 33 existing rules have been amended and two new rules introduced, with a number of amendments made to the additional information annexes.

These include:

- clearer advice on where to stop in an emergency
- the importance of not driving in a lane closed by a Red X, especially the hard shoulder
- the use of variable speed limits to manage congestion
- updated guidance on key factors that contribute to safety-related incidents, including unroadworthy vehicles, tailgating and driving in roadworks

The government website has been updated to include a full list of the [latest updates](#).

For more ways to stay up to date, you can [sign up for email alerts](#) whenever the Highway Code is updated, follow [@HighwayCodeGB](#) on Twitter, visit their [Facebook page](#) and download the official [Highway Code app](#).

## Get Home Safe

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We've recently relaunched our Get Home Safe taxi campaign to help educate the public on the risks involved in taking an unlicensed vehicle.

The campaign also looks to inform the public of the differences between hackney carriages and private hire vehicles and how to identify a legitimate taxi or private hire drivers.

For more information, please click [here](#).

# Taxi Knowledge and Practical Test

Our trainers have removed 47 applicants from our Driver Training Programme Test in the last 18 months, for attempting to cheat on the course.

Our dedicated team of trainers are highly trained in spotting potential rule-breakers and stringent security checks are in place during the course, including driving licence scans and multiple ID checks. The test section of the course is subject to video recording and every applicant sitting the course receives a different exam paper to ensure answers cannot be copied.

Any drivers who attempt to cheat during the Taxi Knowledge and Practical Test will be removed from the session and notice will be referred back to their application case officer.

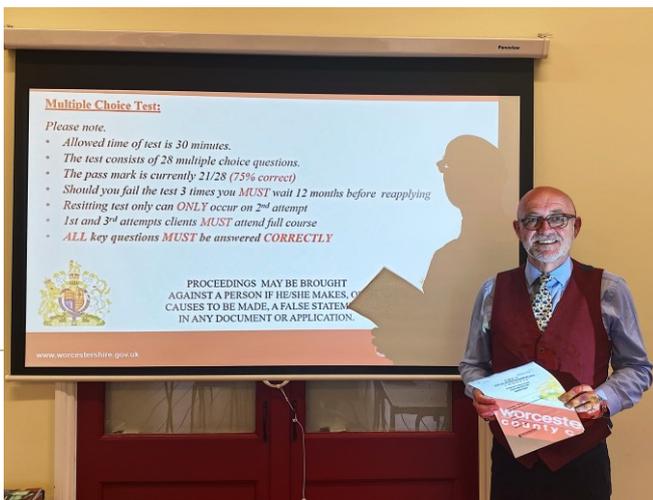


Figure 2 - Lead trainer of the Taxi Knowledge and Practical Test, Nigel Todd.

## Your FAQs answered

### How do I replace the vehicle on my existing licence?

For help on replacing vehicles on your existing licence, and to fill out our Vehicle replacement form, please click [here](#).

### What do I do if I haven't received my renewal letter?

Renewal letters are sent out via email one month prior to the expiry of your licence. If you are due to renew but have not received your renewal letter within this time frame, please email [Driver.Lic@wolverhampton.gov.uk](mailto:Driver.Lic@wolverhampton.gov.uk) with your badge number and a member of the team will assist.

### I haven't received my DBS yet. Can I still apply for my renewal?

DBS certificates should be applied for at the earliest opportunity. If you have not received your DBS certificate, you can still apply for your renewal by entering your e-reference number as part of your renewal application.

Your e-reference number is provided with the receipt given by the DBS when applications are submitted.

### Can I continue driving if my photocard had expired?

If you have submitted your renewal application, you may be able to continue driving if your photocard has expired. For more information, click [here](#).

## Contact Us

For driver enquiries –

[Driver.lic@wolverhampton.gov.uk](mailto:Driver.lic@wolverhampton.gov.uk)

For vehicle enquiries –

[Vehicle.lic@wolverhampton.gov.uk](mailto: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.

Please note, we no longer operate from the Civic Centre, St Peters Square. Our new offices are Hickman Avenue Building, Hickman Avenue, Wolverhampton WV1 2HE