

Taxi and Private Hire Newsletter

Spring 2022

issue 6

Taxi and Private Hire Newsletter Spring Edition 2021

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

“This Spring edition of the newsletter contains important information regarding key changes for 2022, including the introduction of tax conditionality checks, changes to the highway code and fee reductions for DBS check certificates.

Please take the time to familiarise yourself with these upcoming changes.

This is an exciting year for the service, with Wolverhampton beginning to undertake the licensing function for South Staffordshire Council.

Wolverhampton has been at the forefront of private hire licensing for the last five years and continues to provide an exemplary model for other local authorities to adopt. I feel immense pride at the role we have played in helping raise the standards for professional drivers and I am adamant that some of the best drivers across the country are those licensed by City of Wolverhampton Council.

Finally, I would like to personally thank our dedicated staff who have worked extremely hard to ensure that this transition goes as smoothly as possible”.

Councillor Phil Page



Tax Conditionality

From 4 April 2022, all applicants renewing their licence will be required to carry out a tax check with HMRC. **You will not be able to renew your licence without this check.**

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

Highway Code Changes

Drivers are reminded that rules for all types of road users have been updated in The Highway Code to help improve the safety of people walking, cycling, and riding horses.

In total, 10 sections of The Highway Code have been updated, with 50 rules being added or updated.

Drivers can find a summary of all the changes in [The Highway Code updates list](#) on GOV.UK.



Figure 1 – Social graphic for changes to The Highway Code provided by the Department for Transport.

Compliance Operation

On 20 January 2022, our compliance officers undertook a 'mystery shopper' exercise with a local volunteer, who is registered blind, and her assistance dog at the Fort Shopping centre in Birmingham.

During the operation, our volunteer approached four private hire drivers licensed by the City of Wolverhampton Council and rated the level of service she received.

All four drivers that were approached were rated as being good or excellent, with one of the drivers being described as 'one of the best drivers we've ever had'.

This exercise was one of a series of 'protected characteristic' operations undertaken by the Council to ensure that all users are treated fairly and not discriminated against.

Councillor Phil Page, chair of the council's regulatory committee, said: "I am extremely pleased with the results of our mystery shopper exercise, which show that Wolverhampton trained drivers are equalities aware."

All licensed drivers must provide a service for everyone and must not discriminate. This exercise shows that our standards are rigorous and that the training we require drivers to undertake is first-class".

Prom Advice

City of Wolverhampton Council have created the following informative webinar which explains which prom vehicles need to be licensed for private hire, as well as distinguishing licensed vehicles.

You can view our webinar for the transport trade by clicking [here](#). Please click [here](#) to view the webinar for parents.

Court Success

City of Wolverhampton Council have been awarded £550 in costs after a driver withdrew their appeal at Walsall Magistrates, just 30 minutes before their hearing.

The ex-driver withdrew his appeal against Wolverhampton's decision to immediately revoke his licence following reports of an inappropriate conversation with a passenger.

My Licence Portal

If you hold a current Driver or Vehicle Licence with City of Wolverhampton Council, please register to use our 'My Licence Portal' to help manage your application and make the renewal process easier.

The portal is 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.

You need to register with your email address that is held on file. If you have amended your email address you must notify Licensing Services by emailing

driver.lic@wolverhampton.gov.uk

Once you have registered and verified your email address, you can log in by clicking [here](#).

DBS Fee Reduction

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) have announced that they will reduce their pricing for Enhanced, Standard and Basic DBS Checks from 6 April 2022.

Under the new proposed fees, an enhanced DBS check will now cost drivers £38 as opposed to the current fee of £40. The cost of subscribing to the DBS Update Service will remain at the current rate of £13 per year.

All driver licence applicants purchasing an enhanced DBS certificate are reminded that they must subscribe to the DBS Update Service.

Existing drivers will not be required to subscribe to the update service until their current DBS certificate expires, three years after its issue date.

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

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

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

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. Six monthly DBS checks are now required by the [Department for Transport](#).

Good News Story

A compliance officer from City of Wolverhampton Council has been thanked for his hard-working and honest nature, after donating a £10 note he was given after helping members of the public.

Mark Keenan, a District Officer working in the Compliance team, was approached by a distressed elderly couple whilst working on a compliance operation on 12 February at New Street Station, Birmingham.

The elderly couple believed Mark worked at the station due to his council ID and lanyard, so asked for his help in locating their daughter who had missed their return train home.

After successfully reuniting the family, the mother threw a £10 note out of the vehicle she was driving and told Mark to have a coffee on their behalf as a thank you for his help. Instead, Mark has chosen to donate the money to charity.

Mark Keenan said: “Whilst I am aware officers in Licensing Services are not allowed to accept gratuities, this was quite literally thrown at me out of the car window, therefore I am happy it is going to good causes through The Mayor of Wolverhampton’s Charitable Fund”.

Councillor Phil Page, Chair of the Council’s Regulatory Committee, said: “Mark’s actions show the calibre of people we have working within the Licensing service. Not only did he go above and beyond to help members of the public in distress, but his honest actions will help support good causes through The Mayor of Wolverhampton’s Charitable Fund”.



Figure 2 – Mark Keenan, District Officer for Compliance.

Licence revocation for guide dog refusal

A Wolverhampton Private Hire driver who cancelled a trip because the customers had an assistance dog has had his licence revoked with immediate effect by the Council.

At a review hearing in November 2021, officers heard how the ex-driver had left two customers, one who is registered blind and the other who is totally blind, at the roadside and drove away after spotting their assistance dog.

Under the 2010 Equality Act, a driver will have committed an offence if they refuse to carry a disabled person's dog and allow it to remain with that person. It is also an offence if they make any additional charge for letting the dog remain with the owner.

Councillor Phil Page, chair of the Council’s Regulatory Committee, said: “Leaving vulnerable people at the side of the road is inexcusable and City of Wolverhampton Council continue to take a ‘zero tolerance’ approach to drivers who refuse carriage to assistance dogs”.

Covid-19 Information

You can book your 1st, 2nd, 3rd or booster dose of the Covid-19 vaccine by clicking [here](#). You can also evidence that you are vaccinated using the [NHS app](#).

Contactless Payments

The Council's Regulatory Committee met on 19 January and approved a requirement that contactless payment facilities must be available in all Hackney Carriages.

Whilst customers may still pay via cash, Hackney Carriage proprietors must ensure that customers can pay via contactless, should they wish to do so.

This requirement will be in effect following the next metered mile, due in April 2022, where contactless devices will be checked.

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](#).

When should I renew my licence?

Renewal letters are sent out via email one month prior to the expiry of your licence. We are currently very busy with a high number of applications. Therefore, drivers are advised to submit their renewal application at the earliest possible opportunity to avoid any delays.

If you are due to renew but have not received your renewal letter, please email Driver.Lic@wolverhampton.gov.uk with your badge number and a member of the team will assist you.

How do I change the address on my DVLA Driving Licence?

You can change the address on your DVLA Driving Licence by clicking [here](#). You can be fined up to £1,000 if you do not tell DVLA when your address changes.

Can I continue driving if my driver licence photocard has expired?

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

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.

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.

Please note, we no longer operate from out of the Civic Centre, St Peters Square.

All operations are now at Hickman Avenue, Wolverhampton, WV1 2HS.