

Taxi and Private Hire Newsletter

Winter 2022

issue 8

Taxi and Private Hire Newsletter Winter Edition 2022

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

“As we approach the festive period, I would like to personally thank you all for your continued hard work throughout the year.

This winter edition of the newsletter contains important information including our Christmas Closures. Please take the time to familiarise yourself on these ahead of the Christmas shutdown period.

This has been an exciting month for the service with the opening of our brand-new Licensing hub ‘Loxdale’.

All our operations, including vehicle inspections, will resume here in the new year, replacing our previous offices in Hickman Avenue.

I’d like to thank all our staff for working hard to get the site operational and for their continued dedication to the service. I am proud that our efficient service and customer friendly authority continues to attract and retain drivers across the country.

Lastly, I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Please continue to keep yourselves and the public safe.



Councillor Philip Page



Christmas Closures

Please take the time to familiarise yourself with our Christmas closures for 2022-23. The last working day for driver applications and vehicle inspections will be on Friday 23 December.

Driver applications will resume processing on Tuesday 3 January 2023.

From Wednesday 4 January 2023, vehicle inspections will resume at our new licensing hub, located on Chapel Street, Bilston (WV14 0PH).

It's important that you submit your renewal applications as soon as possible, if you are due to expire during this time.

Seatbelt exemption

Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Drivers are reminded that they have an exemption from wearing seatbelts under the following circumstances (reg. 6 The Motor Vehicles (Wearing of Seat Belts) Regulations 1993):

1. a licensed hackney carriage vehicle while it is being used for seeking hire, or answering a call for hire, or carrying a passenger for hire, or
2. a private hire vehicle while it is being used to carry a passenger for hire.

The exemption does not apply to passengers, who are required to wear seatbelts at all times.

DBS Contact Centre Strikes

Contact centre staff at the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) are taking industrial action until Friday 23 December.

Workers from Hinduja Global Solutions (HGS) are contracted by the DBS to manage their contact centre services, including phone, email and webchat.

These workers are taking strike action which will cause some disruption to the DBS' contact centre opening hours.

During the industrial action, the times of the customer contact centre will be reduced to:

- Monday 19 December to Friday 23 December - 9am - 5pm
- Saturday 24 December to Tuesday 27 December – CLOSED
- Wednesday 28 December to Friday 30 December – 9am to 5pm
- Saturday 31 December - CLOSED
- Sunday 1 January – Monday 2 January – CLOSED

Customers contacting the DBS will face longer wait times during these periods. The above opening hours also include the DBS' reduced hours over Christmas.

The strike action will not affect the turnaround time for DBS Checks. Those requiring further information can get in touch by email at hello@taxiplus.co.uk.

Licensing's brand-new hub opened

A former school in Bilston has become the new hub for the City of Wolverhampton Council's Taxi Licensing and Compliance team.

The old Loxdale Primary School building in Chapel Street, Bilston, was officially opened as the new base for the service on Monday 21 November 2022.

The site, which has sat empty for more than two years, will now be utilised to process Private Hire and Hackney Carriage applications and provide office space for over 60 employees.

As well as processing new and renewal driver applications, the office will also carry out vehicle inspections and checks from Wednesday 4 January 2023.

The move has ensured that more vehicles can be inspected per day thanks to a new, extended canopy on site.



Councillor Philip Page, chair of the Council's Regulatory Committee, said, "I'm thrilled to open our new Licensing hub, and it's great to see this vacant building bought back to life.

"Wolverhampton have always been at the forefront of licensing thanks to our efficient and effective processes, but we are continuously looking for ways to further improve the service for its users.

"This move will ensure that our teams can work closely together and that more vehicles can be inspected daily, helping us to ensure both public and passenger safety".

Compliance Update

Private Hire Drivers are reminded that taxi ranks are for authorised hackney carriages only and that it is a criminal offence to park or stop in a designated taxi rank, as well as a breach of Wolverhampton's licensing conditions.

Private Hire Drivers must not stop on taxi ranks, even when picking up or setting down customers. Drivers found to be using these ranks may be subject to fines or enforcement action for breaching licensing conditions.

Highway Code update

Drivers are reminded that The Highway Code has now been updated, following a change in the law that affects the sentences for some driving offences. The updates are to the penalties for:

- causing death by dangerous driving
- causing death by careless driving under the influence of drink or drugs

The maximum sentence for both offences has increased from 14 years' imprisonment to life imprisonment. The obligatory disqualification period for both offences has increased from a minimum of 2 years to a minimum of 5 years.

The changes have been updated in annex 5 (penalties) of The Highway Code.
New driving offence

A new offence has also been created for causing serious injury by dangerous driving. This carries a maximum penalty of 2 years' imprisonment, an unlimited fine and an obligatory driving disqualification.

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



Tyre Safety Advice

Over the last few months, Compliance Officers from City of Wolverhampton Council have suspended several private hire vehicles for defective tyres.

Drivers are reminded that it is their responsibility to check the road worthiness of the vehicle before driving it, regardless of who owns the vehicle.

By law, tyre treads must not be below 1.6mm. If stopped by the police, drivers could face a £2,500 fine and three penalty points per tyre.

Current UK law states that tyre tread on cars must be at a minimum of 1.6mm across the central three quarters of the tread, around its entire circumference. This can easily be checked with the use of a 20p coin.

To check your tyre tread, simply place a 20p coin into the main tread grooves of your tyre. If the outer band of the 20p coin is obscured when it is inserted, then your tread is above the legal limit.

If the outer band of the coin is visible, then your tyres may be illegal and should be checked immediately by a qualified tyre professional.

Drivers may also consider investing in a tyre tread gauge. We recommend checking your tyres at least once each week to keep your vehicle safe for use, making sure to check the tread across the whole width of the tyre.

Electric Vehicles

Thinking of getting an electric vehicle? Click [here](#) for an up-to-date database of all electric vehicles.

Driver Safety

Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Drivers are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the below 'Driver Safety' tips to help ensure they remain safe over the holidays

Lead trainer of the Taxi Knowledge and Practical test Nigel Todd has provided the following information to help protect drivers over the festive period, should you find yourself in a difficult situation: -

- Remember to keep your cool.
- Maintain a calm professional tone of voice.
- Make and maintain eye contact.
- Act in a non-confrontational manner.
- Do not try to fight back if threatened.

Should you ever find yourself in a situation where you are threatened with a weapon, experts advise that you try to remain calm, behave in a co-operative manner and look for opportunities to get help.

DBS Update Service

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.

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 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](#).

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 was 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.

Please click [here](#) to watch our step-by step guide on how to register with the DBS update service.

Frequently Asked Questions

Do City of Wolverhampton Council allow CCTV?

Yes, provided the conditions outlined in the Taxi CCTV Policy (available [here](#)) are met.

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](#).

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.