

Taxi and Private Hire Newsletter

Winter 2023/2024

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Winter Edition 2023/24

**Message from Councillor Zee Russell, chair
of the Statutory Licensing Committee and
Regulatory Committee.**

Happy new year!

There is potential for big changes in 2024, with a review of almost all hackney carriage and private hire licensing policies, affecting every member of the trade.

This follows the Government's publication of 'Best Practice Guidance' by the Department for Transport. City of Wolverhampton Council and South Staffordshire Council have launched a joint consultation on the changes recommended in this guidance, believed to be first in the country to do so. You can read more about this overleaf.

The winter has seen an increase in bad weather and I would urge all drivers to please check their tyre tread regularly before each day you work. When braking, a few millimetres difference of rubber can mean a few metres difference on the road. This is especially so in wet or icy conditions.

You can also help protect yourself by staying up to date with the latest weather forecasts to help plan your journeys. The Met Office offer a free email subscription service which you can access [here](#).



Councillor Zee Russell



Taxi and private hire vehicle licensing consultation

The City of Wolverhampton Council and South Staffordshire Council have recently launched a twelve week consultation aimed at making significant changes to the hackney carriage and private hire licensing regime. The proposed changes are in response to the Best Practice Guidance issued by the Government.

This consultation is an important step in refining the Council's taxi licensing policies and procedures to align with the guidance published by the Government.

We understand the importance of keeping you informed and involved in the changes that may affect you. The consultation includes topics such as:

- Inclusive service plans
- Driver medical certification
- Private hire drivers working with multiple operators
- Removal of signage on private hire vehicles
- Certificates of Good Conduct
- Daily walkaround checks of vehicles
- Removing age limits in place of an emissions limit
- Driver training every licence renewal
- Defining assistance dogs
- Allowing MOT certificates from any testing station
- Private hire vehicle operators as agent/principle

We are particularly keen to hear from people with disabilities, about how they are affected when using this type of transport, so that we can inform an inclusive service plan.

The closing date is Friday 8 March 2024. To complete the survey, please click [here](#).

Carrying children safely in licensed vehicles

As a private hire and hackney carriage drivers you have a duty of care to ensure all passengers you are carrying are safe – this includes passengers that are children.

It is not a requirement by law to provide child car seats in your vehicle, however, child passengers must use them if they are provided.

If child car seats are not available - children must wear the seat belts.

The seat belts in your vehicle are checked during your vehicle inspection and also form part of the MOT testing regime. However, you need to ensure all of the seat belts in your vehicle are checked on a regular basis and are safe for passengers, including children.

For more information relating to carrying children safely in your private hire and hackney carriage vehicle, please click [here](#).

Staying safe

The Department for Transport has recently published guidance for the private hire vehicle trade and taxi drivers and how to remain safe whilst you are working.

Private hire vehicle drivers deal with strangers, often in isolated places and carrying cash. If they work at night, they are likely to have to deal with people who have drunk too much alcohol. All this means they may be at increased risk of violence.

This guide is to help operators and drivers to think of things that can be done to stay safe.

It also contains guidance on what to do if you are concerned that a person may be at risk of harm.

For more information and guidance, please click [here](#). This can be read in conjunction with

the safety guide produced by the Council in partnership with the trade, located [here](#).

Know your traffic signs!

As professional drivers, you are required to know and understand the Highway Code and any traffic signs that are visible during your journey.

You may travel in unfamiliar areas or use newly built roads and you have a duty of care to all passengers that you know and understand all traffic signs.

New traffic signs are introduced from time to time, so you need to keep up to date or run the risk of failing to understand or comply with recently introduced signs.

A few examples of new signs you may have seen whilst working:



Clean Air Zone



Route for trams

Traffic signs can also be used on the road surface:



You need to be aware of the recent changes to the Highway Code. Give way when:

- Pedestrians are crossing or waiting to cross a road at a junction
- Pedestrian are crossing the road and you are turning into it at a junction

- Pedestrians are on a zebra crossing
- Pedestrians or cyclists are on a parallel crossing (a zebra crossing with a cycle route alongside)

Please go to [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) for the full guidance.

Expand your knowledge – learn British Sign Language

Private hire drivers come into contact with many of different people, some of these people may be deaf or partially deaf.

Drivers might be interested in expanding their knowledge and providing an additional service to your passengers by communicating with them using British Sign Language.

An online course available which can be downloaded to your mobile. You could learn whilst you are between jobs or on a break.

Visit [British Sign](#) for more information.

The importance of wearing your badge

A private hire or hackney carriage driver's badge is a sign of approval. It states the local authority feels the holder is fit and proper and suitable to drive passengers safely and gives the travelling public reassurance that all relevant checks have been carried out.

You must wear your badge whenever you are working as a driver, including when you are waiting to receive a passenger or travelling to pick up a passenger. This is a legal requirement and a condition of licence.

When you wear it, you must make sure that it is in a position and manner as to be plainly and distinctly visible at all times whilst acting as a driver (e.g. on the upper part of the body).

It is an offence not to wear your driver's badge.

The badge is for you to use only. You must not allow any other person to use it to carry out journeys.

Medical certificates

A new medical certificate template has been added to our website. It can be used from today until 31 December 2024.

The medical certificate now contains a section that the practitioner acknowledges and signs to confirm that your full medical records have been seen on the day of the examination. If you get your medical certificate completed by a medical practitioner other than your GP, you should request your full medical records from your GP to take to the practitioner.

You are able to download a copy of the new certificate via our website or by clicking [here](#).

Drivers contacting licensing services

All Wolverhampton licensed drivers are kindly asked to register to use the "My Licence Portal". You can use the portal to maintain your licence details and notify us of any amendments and changes you may have.

The email address you use to register with the portal **must** be the same email address on your driver/vehicle records. Register your email address here: [Signup](#).

You must verify the email address before you can log in - check your junk/spam folder for a verification email from "IAPPLY"
Once you have verified your email address you can log in [here](#) - if you are having issues on your mobile device, try a laptop/PC.
If you have forgotten the password that you have used and verified previously then use the "Forgot Password" – again, please check your junk/spam folder for password reset as this email will be from "IAPPLY"

If you are notifying us of a change address, please ensure you include a copy of your

driving licence showing your new address. A replacement paper licence cannot be issued showing your new address until we have received a copy of your driving licence showing your new address.

When sending emails to the licensing team, please ensure you include your badge and/or plate number. This will allow us to locate your records and respond to your enquiry quickly and efficiently.

DBS Update Service

It is a requirement for all drivers with enhanced DBS certificates to remain registered with the Update Service for the period of their licence. Drivers with enhanced DBS certificates have 30 days to subscribe to the DBS Update Service at the cost of £13 a year.

The subscription will automatically be cancelled if your bankcard has either expired or been replaced due to the previous card being lost or stolen.

It should be noted that manual certificates cannot be registered on the Update Service, if you have a manual certificate then a new certificate would be required by Licensing Services every 6 months.

Licensing Services are notified when drivers come off the Update Service – drivers will receive an email from Licensing Services.

To purchase a new DBS certificate, please visit: [TaxiPlus](#)

Drivers must ensure their most up to date card is registered with the Update Service – failure to register or remain on the DBS Update Service is a breach of the licensing conditions and can result in a licence being reviewed and can subsequently mean that a licence could be revoked or suspended or a renewal being refused.

To subscribe to the Update Service please click here. [DBS CRSC \(crbonline.gov.uk\)](#)

Any queries regarding the Update Service is can be sent to

Driver.Lic@wolverhampton.gov.uk

How to register on the Driver Portal

If you hold a current driver or vehicle licence with City of Wolverhampton Council, please register to use the My Licence Portal. You can use the portal to keep your licence details up to date and notify us of any amendments and changes you may have.

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 your email address, you will need to check your email account, including junk folders, for the verification email. Once you have clicked this link, your account will be activated. Follow the instructions to log in.

Once you have logged in, you can update details such as your address, operator and even report an accident.

Your FAQs answered

How do I renew my driver licence?

In order to renew your current private hire/hackney carriage driver licence you will require a personal reference number that will be issued to you at least 4 weeks prior to expiry via email in the form of a renewal letter.

The letter will detail the documents that are required in order to renew along with the personal reference number. It is important to ensure Licensing Services have your current email address on file.

If you haven't received your renewal letter with less than 4 weeks to expiry please

email driver.lic@wolverhampton.gov.uk with your current badge number and current email address.

Can you plate a gas/electric/hybrid car?

Yes. We require the LPG certificate on the submission of the application and the log book must state the vehicle is LPG

Can someone else drive my vehicle for private use?

Only if they hold a private hire drivers licence with City of Wolverhampton Council and have the appropriate insurance. If you are unsure, please email us using our [web form](#)

The Halls

Members of the trade have asked how they can stay updated with events taking place at The Halls in Wolverhampton, to know when there will be greater transport requirements. You can find a list of upcoming events taking place at

www.thehallswolverhampton.co.uk/events

On this webpage, you can also subscribe to their newsletter, which will send information directly to your mailbox.

How to 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 Hickman Avenue, Wolverhampton, WV1 2HS. All operations are now at Chapel Street, Bilston WV14 0PH.