

AGENDA

LICENSING SUB COMMITTEE

TUESDAY, 26 AUGUST 2025

4.00 PM

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, FENLAND HALL,
COUNTY ROAD**

Committee Officer: Linda Albon
Tel: 01354 622424
e-mail: memberservices@fenland.gov.uk

- 1 To receive apologies for absence.
- 2 Members to declare any personal and prejudicial interests under the Local Code of Conduct in respect of any item to be discussed at the meeting.

CONFIDENTIAL - ITEMS COMPRISING EXEMPT INFORMATION

To exclude the public (including the press) from a meeting of a committee it is necessary for the following proposition to be moved and adopted: "that the public be excluded from the meeting for Items which involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 4 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) as indicated."

3 DETERMINATION OF AN APPLICATION FOR A NEW PRIVATE HIRE DRIVER'S LICENCE (Pages 3 - 168)

To enable members to determine an application for a New Private Hire Driver's Licence who has convictions on their DVLA Licence.

Friday, 15 August 2025

Members: Councillor D Oliver (Chairman), Councillor N Meekins, Councillor A Miscandlon and Councillor A Woollard

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PROCEDURE TO BE FOLLOWED TO DETERMINE AN APPLICATION FOR A NEW PRIVATE HIRE DRIVER'S LICENCE

1 The Licensing Sub-committee arrive into the room where the meeting is to be held, all other parties will be in the room awaiting the arrival of the Licensing sub-committee. The members of the Licensing Sub –Committee will have received a report about the matter and will have it before them.

INTRODUCTION

2 The Licensing Chairman introduces the members and officers of the Licensing Sub Committee. This will involve the Solicitor, the Member Services Officer, the Licensing Officer and any other officers who may be present. The applicant, other members and officers will state their name and position.

3 The Licensing Chairman confirms with the Applicant/Licence holder that they have received the hearing report.

4 If it should occur that the Applicant/Licence Holder does not accept that they have received the report or that their convictions are as stated in the report, then such matter will be addressed at this stage. Depending on what emerges, the Licensing Sub Committee may resolve to adjourn the matter in order that the query may be addressed. If it involves the report not having been received or read by the applicant the matter may be stood down for a while in order to enable him to read the report. It maybe that if the report is more complex it would be necessary to defer the matter to another day. If the problem relates to a dispute as to the convictions stated in the report it is likely that the matter will be adjourned in order that the Applicant/Licence Holder, and the Licensing Manager as appropriate, may investigate the matter.

5 If the Applicant/ Licence holder is unaccompanied, the Licensing Chairman confirms whether or not they are aware that they could be accompanied by a legal or other representative.

BODY

6 The Licensing Chairman will then invite the Licensing Manager/Officer to present the facts of the case by taking the Licensing Sub- Committee through the report.

7 If relevant, the Licensing Manager will then invite any witnesses including the Licensing Compliance Officer to put forward their evidence/findings.

8 The Licensing Chairman will then invite the Applicant/Licence holder the opportunity to put relevant questions to the Licensing Manager and any third party including the Licensing Compliance Officer who has submitted evidence or made a statement to the Licensing Sub Committee.

9 The Licensing Chairman will then invite Members of the Licensing Sub Committee the opportunity to put relevant questions to the Licensing Manager and, on matters of law and

licensing procedure as appropriate to the Legal Officer. They may also ask questions of any third party including the Licensing Compliance Officer who has submitted evidence or made a statement to the Licensing Sub Committee.

10 The Licensing Chairman will then invite the Applicant/Licence holder to present the matters which they wish to say in support of their case, including an explanation of the matters mentioned in the report. Witnesses may be called at this stage by the Applicant/ Licence holder in support of their case.

11 The Licensing Chairman will then invite the Licensing Manager/Officer the opportunity to put questions to the Applicant/Licence holder and to any witnesses that may have submitted evidence.

12 The Licensing Chairman will then invite Members of the Licensing Sub Committee the opportunity to put questions to the Applicant/ Licence holder and their witnesses.

CONCLUSION

13 The Licensing Chairman will then invite the Applicant/Licence Holder to sum up their case.

14 The Licensing Chairman will then thank all those who have spoken and invite the committee to retire in private to determine the application.

DETERMINATION

15 The Licensing sub-committee members will then debate the case presented to them at the hearing and seek to reach a determination. All other parties are asked to remain for a short period of time.

16 If the Licensing Sub-committee is unable to reach a determination on the day within what it considers to be a reasonable timeframe at that time, the Licensing Chairman will explain that all interested parties will be notified as soon as possible of their decision in writing (usually within 5 working days) of the determination and the reasons for such. All parties will be dismissed.

17 When the Licensing sub-committee has reached a proposed determination with reasons or has decided to defer a determination, it shall call in the Legal Adviser to clarify the proposed determination/decision.

18 If a determination/decision is reached, the Licensing sub-committee will return to the room and the Legal advisor will announce in public any legal advice that he/she has given in private.

19 The Licensing Chairman will then read out the determination and the reasons for such.

OTHER MATTERS

APPENDIX A

20 If the application is refused or there is a decision to suspend or revoke, the legal advisor will inform the Applicant/Licence holder of their right of appeal to the Magistrates' Court. (The decision letter will also include these details.)

21 If the decision is to grant a licence and the applicant is unsure of the next steps, they will be told that a member of the Licensing team will discuss the matter with them outside the room.

22 The Licensing Sub-Committee's decision is confirmed in writing by the Licensing Manager, with the reasons, to the Applicant/Licence holder as soon as possible. The letter will include details of the statutory rights of appeal.

23. The Licensing sub-committee will be entitled to seek legal assistance or advice at any time.

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Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy

2021 - 2026

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PART 1 - INTRODUCTION

1.1 Powers and Duties

Fenland District Council (the Council) is responsible for the licensing of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles (collectively referred to as taxis), their Drivers, Operators and Proprietors in the District.

This Policy sets out the standard that the Council will use to inform its decisions on applications for licenses, their renewal and consideration of their continuance. This Policy will also be useful for members of the hackney carriage and private hire trades, those seeking licenses, the travelling public and others in the community.

Licence holders and applicants for licenses will find guidance on the application processes in the Appendices to this Policy and on the Council website. If a member of the public has a concern or question about the taxi trade, they should get in touch with The Licensing team at the Council at: licensing@fenland.gov.uk

This Statement of Licensing Policy is written pursuant to the powers conferred by the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 and Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, as amended, which places on Fenland District Council ("the Council") the duty to carry out its licensing functions in respect of Taxis, Drivers, Operators and Proprietors in the District

This policy has also considered and will continue to refer to the following documents:

- a) Guidance on determining the suitability of applicants and licensees in the hackney and private hire trades issued by the Institute of Licensing IOL (dated April 2018)
- b) Statutory Taxi & Private Hire Vehicle Standards issued by the Department for Transport (dated July 2020)

1.2 Policy Objectives

Hackney carriages and private hire vehicles have a specific role to play in an integrated transport system. They can provide safe, secure and comfortable transport, providing an on-request door to door service in various circumstances, including where public transport may not be available or for those with mobility difficulties.

In setting out its policy, the Council seeks to promote the following objectives:

- (a) The protection of the environment;
- (b) Public Safety;
- (c) Ensuring an efficient and effective hackney carriage and private hire

- provision;
- (d) To provide and maintain a professional and respected hackney carriage and private hire trade by continued monitoring and improvement of standards of service.

The aim of the licensing process, in this context, is to regulate the hackney carriage and private hire trade in order to promote the above objectives. It is the Council's wish to facilitate professional and responsible businesses, which display sensitivity to the wishes and needs of the general public, whilst maintaining the current high standard of service provision.

When considering this Policy, the Council have tried to ensure that each requirement is properly justified by the risk it seeks to address, balancing the cost of the requirement against the benefit to the public.

Licenses issued by the Council

- (a) Hackney carriage driver's licence (HCD)
- (b) Hackney carriage vehicle licence (HCV)
- (c) Private hire driver's licence (PHD)
- (d) Private hire vehicle licence (PHV)
- (e) Private hire operator's licence (PHO)

Note that the licence the Council issues to individuals who wish to drive taxis or private hire vehicles are referred to as a **'driver's licence'**, and the licence issued to all motor road vehicle drivers by the DVLA is referred to as a **'driving licence'**.

The Council does not issue school transport permits, these are issued by Cambridgeshire County Council.

Any badge, licence or vehicle plate issued to any person remains the property of the Council.

1.2 Hackney carriages and private hire vehicles; what's the difference?

The licences, fares, insurance and working practices of the vehicles are different.

Only hackney carriages may use the word 'Taxi' or 'Cabs' in their name, advertising or signage.

Other differences are set out in this table:

	Private Hire	Hackney Carriage
Bookings		
Can be pre-booked	✓	✓
Can wait in a hackney carriage rank	✗	✓
Can be hailed	✗	✓
Fares		
Set by the council	✗	✓
Uses a taximeter	✗	✓
Set by Operator	✓	✗
Visual differences		
Illuminated roof sign	✗	✓
'Black cab' type allowed	✗	✓
Cab or Taxi in name	✗	✓
Licence plate position	Rear	Rear
Internal plate	✓	✓

1.3 Departure from the Policy

In exercising its discretion in carrying out its regulatory functions, the Council will have regard to this policy document and the objectives set out therein.

Notwithstanding the existence of this Policy, each application or enforcement measure will be considered on its own merits with regard to the licensing objectives. However, it is likely that departures from policy will be restricted to exceptional circumstances, not used to circumvent the reasonable requirements of the Policy.

Substantial departure from Policy

Where it is necessary for the Council to depart substantially from this Policy, clear and compelling reasons for doing so must be given. The Licensing Sub – Committee may authorise a departure from the Policy in accordance with this section if they consider it necessary in the specific circumstances.

Minor departure from Policy

Where an applicant is able to demonstrate that a minor departure from this Policy, based on the individual circumstances of that application, would

still ensure that the policy objectives are achieved, the Licensing Manager may authorise a licence to be issued. An example of this could be a short delay within the admin process whereby we are waiting for an updated insurance certificate to be sent.

1.4 Policy Duration

This Policy will take effect from 23 February 2021.

Administrative amendments to this Policy (required by virtue of legislative changes, revised statutory guidance, a Council restructure or administrative procedural changes) may be made by the Licensing Manager. Amendments under this section are restricted to those required to accurately reflect the current legal or administrative position rather than amendments that change the focus of local policy.

The Policy will be reviewed every five years in line with the requirements of the Statutory guidance that was introduced in July 2020, to ensure it remains fit-for-purpose and either amended where necessary or approved for continuation.

In the event of any significant amendment to the Policy, a full consultation will be undertaken prior to consideration by the Licensing Committee who will make a recommendation for consideration by Council.

For the purpose of this section, a significant amendment is defined as one that:

- a) will have significant financial impact on applicants, licence holders or the public,
- b) will have a significant procedural impact on applicants, licence holders or the public, or
- c) may not be perceived by the trade or the public to be consistent with the policy objectives.
- d) It does not relate to mandatory changes in legislation and/or statutory guidance

PART 2 - VEHICLES

2.1 Limitation of Numbers

The Council currently has no limit on the number of hackney carriages which may be licensed within the District and has no intention of introducing one unless evidence of 'no significant unmet demand' can be provided. The cost of any 'unmet demand' survey would need to be borne by the existing licence holders and re-evaluated every three (3) years to maintain a cap.

To assess the unmet demand for Hackney Carriage vehicles, this would be carried out through an independent survey, of which the results data would be analyzed, and a decision made if as a Council we had sufficient licensed vehicles to cope with the demand

No powers exist for licensing authorities to limit the number of private hire vehicles that they licence.

2.2 Specifications and Conditions

Licensing authorities have a wide range of discretion over the types of vehicle that they can licence as hackney carriages or private hire vehicles and The Best Practice Guidance suggests that local licensing authorities should adopt the principle of specifying as many different types of vehicle as possible.

The Council is empowered to impose such conditions, as it considers reasonably necessary, in relation to the grant of a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle licence. Hackney carriage and private hire vehicles provide a necessary service to the public; however, it is appropriate to set standards for the external and internal condition of the vehicle, provided that the standards are reasonable and proportionate.

Part 2 of this Policy sets out the Council's minimum standards of vehicle specification, which apply in respect of all licensed vehicle applications. This specification will need to be met prior to licensing and maintained throughout the duration of the licence. This will be achieved by attaching the following licence condition to all hackney carriage and private hire vehicle licenses:

"This licence is granted subject to compliance with the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy vehicle specification requirements (Part 2 of the Policy) throughout the duration of the licence period."

2.3 Accessibility

In regulating the hackney carriage and private hire trade the Council aim to meet the diverse needs of all accessibility requirements in the district. This includes wheelchair users, the visually impaired, the elderly and other groups that may be disabled or otherwise have accessibility requirements. The Council do not place any restrictions on PHV types. However, if the vehicle is to be wheelchair accessible, to ensure public safety, PHV applicants will be required to provide the V5 document that shows that the vehicle has been defined as wheelchair accessible or the certificate of conformance

The Council is committed to social inclusion and ensuring a wide variety of opportunities is available to those with mobility difficulties in order to enjoy a high quality of life. It fully supports the view of the Equality and Human Rights Commission that,

“Making successful journeys is critical to the social inclusion of disabled people. Without the ability to travel, disabled people are denied access to life opportunities. Their access to education, shopping, employment, healthcare, as well as social and family life is significantly improved when journeys become accessible.”

It is defensible that different accessibility considerations should apply between hackney carriages and private hire vehicles in that hackney carriages can be hired in the street or at a rank, by the customer dealing directly with a driver whereas private hire vehicles can only be booked through an operator.

2.4 List of Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAV's)

Section 167 of the Equality Act 2010 allows the Council to designate accessible vehicles as subject to the requirements of the Act making it a criminal offence to refuse a passenger with a wheelchair or charge an additional fare. In support of the Council's desire to provide accessible transport for those with disabilities, all wheelchair accessible hackney carriages and private hire vehicles will be designated for this purpose.

Section 165 – 167 of the Equalities Act 2010 (the 2010 Act) came into force 7th April 2017 and allows local authorities to create a list of designated wheelchair accessible vehicles (a S167 List).

The Council will publish a S167 List of wheelchair accessible vehicles. This means that any vehicle that meets the Council's definition of a wheelchair accessible vehicle will be designated on the list.

By the Council creating the S167 List, this brings into effect the duties placed on drivers under section 165 of the 2010 Act, making it a criminal offence if the driver of a designated vehicle fails to comply with the duties specified

under section 165

Drivers who, for medical reasons, are unable to accept wheelchair passengers or assistance dogs can apply to the Council for an exemption certificate.

Such a certificate will only be issued on production of appropriate medical evidence. Exemption certificates, which show the photograph of the driver, must be displayed in the vehicle at all times whilst licensed as a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle.

In the absence of a medical exemption certificate from the Council, it would be a criminal offence for any hackney carriage or private hire driver to refuse to carry an assistance dog or a passenger with a wheelchair, to refuse to allow the assistance dog to remain with the passenger throughout the journey, or to make any additional charge for the carriage of the assistance dog or wheelchair.

2.5 Environmental Considerations

The Council have given careful consideration to the recommendation in the Guidance that, in the interests of the environment, tougher emissions standards should be introduced for all licensed vehicles and considers its responsibility in protecting the environment to be a strong factor within the licensing policy.

This flexible approach is allowed in conjunction with its six- monthly testing requirements for all vehicles over five (5) years old to offset the need not to require tougher emission standards for licensed vehicles

2.6 Vehicle Idling

Clearly emissions from hackney carriages and private hire vehicles could be further reduced through education and raised awareness of environmental issues. Simple measures such as:

- (a) better and more frequent vehicle maintenance and servicing; or
- (b) switching off engines when stationary or idling, particularly at hackney carriage ranks and schools can make a significant environmental impact considering the number of licensed vehicles.

The Hackney Carriage and Private Hire trade members have an important role to play in raising awareness of environmental issues.

The Council encourages the use of cleaner, low emission vehicles as hackney carriages or private hire vehicles and will offer a subsidised licence fee for electric or hybrid vehicles from April 2022.

2.7 Maximum Age of Vehicles

The Best Practice Guidance reminds licensing authorities that it is perfectly possible for an older vehicle to be in good condition and that the setting of an age limit beyond which they will not licence vehicles may be arbitrary and disproportionate.

Therefore, at this time we do not intend to implement an upper age limit on the vehicles we licence.

2.8 Vehicle Testing

In order to comply with the Council's vehicle testing requirements a vehicle must obtain a current MOT pass certificate and a current Compliance pass certificate from the Council's nominated testing facility, both of which must be dated no earlier than one calendar (1) month prior to the licence commencement date.

Vehicles that are less than one (1) year old will be exempt from producing a current MOT pass certificate but will be required to obtain a Compliance pass certificate.

All vehicles will be subject to annual testing requirements (MOT and Compliance Test) until they reach five (5) years old. Each application for a grant or renewal of a vehicle licence must be accompanied with proof of Compliance pass Certificate.

Once a vehicle reaches five (5) years old it will be subject to six-monthly testing requirement of a Compliance Test.

For the avoidance of doubt, any vehicle renewal application that would take the licence beyond the age of five (5) years. This will facilitate the vehicle being tested at six-monthly intervals as required.

The Council's nominated testing facility is:

- a) MOT
Any testing facility currently registered with the Department for Transport to undertake MOT testing.
- b) Compliance Certificate
Undertaken by approved premises in Fenland District

Vehicle Failures

The licence of any vehicle which fails its testing requirements will be subject to either an automatic suspension or a time limited period for the vehicle failure to be rectified and re-examined. Until such time as the vehicle has been re-examined and the necessary pass certificates obtained, the Council, or its nominated testing facility, may retain the

vehicle licence plate until such time as the inspection requirements are met.

All vehicles that fail a compliance test must pay the re-inspection fee before this can be re-booked.

MOT advisories

With public safety being a significant objective of this Policy, the Council expects licensed vehicles to be of the highest possible standard. Accordingly, any MOT advisory relating to tyres or brakes must be rectified before a licence is granted. The Council also reserve the right to extend this requirement to other MOT advisories where they deem it necessary for the protection of the public.

Vehicles involved in an Accident

With the safety of the public being a predominate factor of this Policy, all vehicles involved in an accident, however minor, will be required to obtain a compliance test approval to continue operating. Upon inspection following an accident, any vehicle that would fail to meet the vehicle testing requirements will be automatically suspended until such time as the vehicle has been re-examined and the necessary approval given.

In the case of only cosmetic damage, a timescale for repair will be set by the Council at the end of which the vehicle must be presented to the Council's nominated inspection facility. If the vehicle would not pass a Certificate of Compliance examination, that vehicle cannot continue to operate as a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle until such time as the vehicle would meet the testing requirements.

2.9 Officer Inspections

In addition to the above testing requirements, the Council will undertake its own program of inspections. These tests will be undertaken at any other location within the District as advised by a Council Officer and will ensure that vehicles maintain the high standard of testing throughout its licence period.

In the event of any concern in relation to mechanical vehicle safety, the vehicle will be referred to the Council's nominated testing facility for a formal assessment. Where the testing requirements would not be met, the Officer may either agree a period of time for rectification and re-inspection or suspend the vehicle until such time as the testing requirements would be met.

2.10 Vehicle Type

Left-hand drive vehicles will not be considered suitable for licensing, save for stretched limousines which will be subject to the specification

requirements detailed in **Appendix E**. This is to ensure that passengers travelling in the front passenger seat can exit the vehicle directly onto the footway rather than directly into the carriageway.

2.11 New Vehicles

Hackney carriages

All vehicle applications for a new hackney carriage licence, must be either:

- a) a 'London' type hackney carriage, or
- b) a suitable wheelchair accessible vehicle, approved by the Council, this will take effect from when we have issued with an active licence for One hundred and ten (110) hackney carriages

For the avoidance of doubt, this does not mean plate number HCV110 this is the total number of hackney carriage licenses in a status of issued.

Private hire vehicles

All vehicles for new private hire licence applications must be either:

- a) a saloon, estate, MPV or hatchback vehicle with a least four (4) side doors, or
- b) a purpose-built minibus designed to carry not less than (4) nor more than eight (8) passengers.

Renewal applications

Any hackney carriage or private hire vehicle with a valid licence as at 1 April 2021 may be renewed or transferred to a new vehicle without having to meet the new vehicle requirements

2.12 Vehicle Types & Category write-off's

Vehicle Types

Licensed vehicles shall ordinarily have European Community Whole Vehicle Type Approval (see <http://www.dft.gov.uk/vca/vehicletype/index.asp>) and be compliant with the relevant Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations in effect at the time of application

In the absence of European Community Whole Vehicle Type Approval, or if a vehicle has been modified in any way since manufacture, vehicles can be considered for licensing that have:

- a) National Small Series Type Approval (see <http://www.dft.gov.uk/vca/vehicletype/index.asp>), or
- b) Individual Vehicle Approval (see <http://www.dft.gov.uk/vca/vehicletype/index.asp>)

However, Individual Type Approval will not be accepted:

- a) where the seatbelts fitted to the vehicle are not those fitted by the manufacturer and tested in accordance with the vehicle's original type approval, or
- b) where the vehicle has been fitted with seating/wheelchair tracking which may invalidate the original type approval for any seats fitted to the vehicle except where suitable evidence is provided by the applicant(s) that this is not the case.

Category write – off's

An application for a vehicle licence will not be accepted if the category is showing as S. This means the vehicle has been previously written off with structural damage and is deemed to be not suitable to be a licensed vehicle.

2.13 Vehicle Specification

All hackney carriage and private hire vehicles must:

- a) be capable of carrying not less than four (4) nor more than eight (8) passengers,
- b) have no damage affecting the structural safety of the vehicle,
- c) not have been written off for insurance purposes at any time,
- d) have sufficient means by which any passenger in the vehicle may communicate directly with the driver,
- e) be maintained in sound and roadworthy condition at all times,
- f) serviced in accordance with manufacturers' recommendations.

2.14 Vehicle Roof Sign and PH Door Signage

Hackney Carriage Vehicles

All Hackney carriage vehicles must be fitted with an illuminated external sign mounted on or above the roof of the vehicle or have a built-in illuminated roof sign.

Roof signs fitted upon a Hackney Carriage Vehicle must be white in colour and shall be securely fitted to the vehicle. Roof signs must be of a design and shape approved by the District Council.

All Hackney Carriage Vehicle roof signs shall display the wording 'taxi' on the front and the words 'Fenland District Council' together with the carriage licence number on the back (except in the case of a London Style cab).

The sign shall be capable of being illuminated internally in such a manner that the word 'TAXI', Fenland District Council and the carriage licence number, is always illuminated when the vehicle is plying for hire, but not otherwise.

All wording shall be black in colour and the word 'TAXI' must not be less

than 90mm in height. Wording on the rear of the roof light must not be less than 25mm in height

Private hire vehicles

A private hire vehicle must not carry a roof sign of any description, mounted or built-in, or any markings that may give the impression that it is a hackney carriage.

A private hire vehicle must display Council-approved signage on both front doors of the vehicle. Signage will be displayed in oval shape and on a yellow background with the Fenland Logo, Wording stating Pre-Booked Only, Telephone number and text stating – Insurance invalid unless booked with the operator.

Once you have been issued your new Operator/Vehicle licence we will supply you with a PDF document which will allow you to have the signage printed and affixed by your chosen sign writer.

2.15 Vehicle Livery

The Council believes that the requirements of this policy ensure that hackney carriages and private hire vehicles are easily distinguishable and that there is no current requirement for specific vehicle livery

However, the Council will keep the issue of livery under review and if it believes that livery would be of benefit to the public, either in terms of specific vehicle colors and/or a Council logo, then a public consultation will be undertaken prior to any livery being introduced.

2.16 Licence plates

At all times when a vehicle is licensed as a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle, unless an exemption has been granted, the vehicle must display the licence plate provided by the Council, securely fixed externally in a prominent position on or above the rear bumper of the vehicle.

At all times when a vehicle is licensed as a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle, the vehicle must display the internal vehicle licence plate provided by the Council, securely fixed in a prominent position to the front windscreen or dashboard.

The licence plates must always be clearly identifiable and legible to the public.

Private Hire Plate and Door Sticker Exemptions

This may be given to private hire vehicles used for executive hire, corporate contracts, school contracts or work of a similar nature. In order

to qualify for an exemption, you must complete the template form stating why you are requesting this. Once you have received approval the following must take place;

- a) a written letter of exemption issued by the Council must always be carried in the vehicle,
- b) the licence plate must always be carried in the vehicle,
- c) the internal plate issued by the Council must be displayed on the front windscreen of the vehicle, and
- d) the vehicle must be undertaking the nature of work for which the exemption was granted. If any of these four criteria are not met, then an exception will not be granted.

For the avoidance of doubt, vehicles that are used for a combination of 'exempt' work and normal private hire work will always be required to display external licence plates when the exemption does not apply.

2.17 Third Party Advertising

Third Party advertising is only permitted with prior written approval of the Council.

The following advertising will not be permitted:

- a. Anything of a religious or political nature;
- b. Alcohol or tobacco products;
- c. Any matter of a sexual nature or likely to cause offence;
- d. Any matter which is insulting, offensive or abusive.

The content of any advertising on the vehicle shall be legal, decent and truthful. No words, letters or graphics may be displayed on any windows of the vehicle.

No advertisement will be permitted which impedes the vision of the driver. The Council reserves the right to require the licensee to remove the advertisement from display on the vehicle if the content of the advertisement changes without written permission of the Council or for any reason affecting the appearance of the advertisement.

All materials used and affixed for advertising purposes on Hackney Carriage Vehicles must comply with current legislation which includes the Motor Vehicle (Construction and Use) Regulations and must not provide any risk of injury to drivers /passengers or pedestrians.

No secondary advertising of any kind will be permitted including the name of the company preparing the vehicle or the name of the advertising agency.

All advertisements must comply with the UK Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) Codes and it is the responsibility of the vehicle proprietor to ensure that they do so.

Advertising to do with crime and disorder or public safety issues such as advertising "Crime Stoppers" or Crime Prevention Matters will be permitted.

Exterior Advertising

The following surfaces are permitted for the use of exterior advertising on licensed Hackney Carriages, subject to the requirements above:

Doors only - advertising material covering the exterior lower panels of rear doors on both sides of the vehicle

Boot lid - advertising on the boot lid is permitted other than where it in any way obscures the licence plate.

Interior Advertising

Interior advertisements are permitted on the rear window but must be:

- a) no more than ten (10) centimetres in height,
- b) positioned so that they do not obstruct the driver's view in any way, and
- iii) be restricted to the name, logo or insignia, telephone number, or other contact details of the owner or operator of the vehicle.

For the purpose of this section, the display of 'no smoking' signage as required by legislation or signage indicating that the vehicle is able to convey passengers in wheelchairs (provided that the vehicle has been manufactured or properly adapted for that purpose) is not considered to be advertising.

Any advertising or signage on a private hire vehicle must not include the words "taxi", "cab", "hackney carriage" or "for hire", save for the word "taxi" being part of the company name.

2.18 Seating in Multi-Passenger Vehicles

The Council will licence vehicles for seating arrangements of up to eight (8) passengers where all licensing requirements are satisfied.

All vehicles licensed to carry in excess of four (4) passengers will only be licensed in accordance with the seating layouts detailed in **Appendix G**, unless the Original Manufacturer's Specification provides an alternative arrangement. Any seating arrangements not illustrated in **Appendix G** will be considered by the Council in relation to safety requirements however it should not be assumed that permission will automatically be granted.

2.19 Doors

All licensed hackney carriages or private hire vehicles must have at least three side-opening passenger doors, which must be easily opened from the inside and the outside.

All vehicles must have sufficient, safe and suitable access and egress from the vehicle for the driver and all passengers, excluding the rear exit and the driver's front door (with the exemption of WAV vehicles).

2.20 Tyres

The licensed vehicle must be fitted with either all radial or all cross-ply tyres, including the spare wheel. All tyres, including the spare wheel, must be suitable for use on the vehicle and conform to the requirements of the Original Manufacturers' Specification.

Run-flat tyres and 'space-saver' tyres are acceptable on licensed vehicles provided they conform to the Original Manufacturers' Specification.

If a 'space-saver' spare tyre is used on a licensed vehicle it must only be for completing the current fare and returning to a garage to obtain a suitable replacement. No further fares may be taken whilst the 'space-saver' spare tyre is being used on the vehicle.

Original Manufacturers' Specification 'tyre repair kits / compressor' are permitted within licensed vehicles provided they comply with the relevant British Standards. If a 'tyre repair kit / compressor' is used on a licensed vehicle in lieu of a spare tyre it must only be for the duration of completing the current fare and returning to a garage to obtain a suitable replacement. No further fares may be taken whilst the tyre repaired with the 'tyre repair kit / compressor' is being used on the vehicle.

2.21 Drivers' Vehicle Mirrors

External rear view mirrors must be fitted to both sides of all licensed vehicles.

All licensed vehicles must have an internal rear-view mirror appropriately fitted in accordance with appropriate legislation and/or manufacturers' specification.

2.22 Seats - Minimum Interior Dimensions

The following minimum dimensions are applicable to both Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicles.

Proprietors should bear in mind that the manufacturers' claimed seating capacity may not always be the same as the Council's licensed seating capacity scheme as detailed below.

Height - From the top of the seat cushions to the roof at the lowest part (inside) must not be less than 865 mm (34 inches approx.)

Seat Depth - fixed passenger seats (measured from the back of the seat to the front edge of the seat cushion) must be no less than 406 mm (16 inches approx.)

Seat Width - fixed passenger seats (measured along the front edge of the seat) must allow at least 406 mm (16 inches approx.) per person. There must also be a minimum of 1371mm (54 inches) between the inner door handles.

Legroom – each passenger seat shall provide sufficient legroom for passengers to be seated in comfort.

Facing seats - the distance between the seat backs measured in a horizontal plane along the top surface of the seating cushion must be not less than 1300 mm (51 inches approx.). The distance between the front edges of the seat cushions must be not less than 425 mm (16 ¾ inches approx.).

Access to every passenger seat must be unobstructed and be easily accessible to passengers without the need for seats to be folded or removed and without the need for more than one (1) passenger to move.

Unless the Original Manufacturers' Specification states otherwise, the front seat of the vehicle next to the driver will be regarded as a seat for one (1) passenger only.

2.23 Seat Belts

All vehicles must be fitted with fully operational seat belts, one for each passenger to be carried, fully compliant with the relevant British Standard, except where legislation specifically provides an exemption.

In relation to the carriage of all passengers, including children, the requirements of all relevant legislation must be complied with. As a guide a child over 12, or over 135 cm (approx. 4' 5") in height may ride in the front seat of a Licensed vehicle providing they wear the fitted seatbelt.

2.24 Fire Extinguishers

This council deems that it is not a necessary requirement for the vehicle to carry an extinguisher. The advice given is that in the event of a fire the driver and passengers leave the vehicle immediately and keep a safe distance.

2.25 First Aid Kits

In line with the Health & Safety legislation, all licensed vehicles must carry a first aid kit, this shall be used in an emergency to treat minor injuries and therefore must always be easily accessible.

The contents of the first aid kit must be in date and comply with health & safety requirements.
It must be marked with the vehicle registration number or licence plate number.

2.26 Ventilation

Windows must be provided to all passenger compartments along with adequate means of opening and closing, not less than one (1) window on either side of the vehicle, in both the front and rear passenger compartments.

Rear passenger windows must be capable of being opened by passengers when seated unless air conditioning is available, in which case the air conditioning must be operated by the driver upon request.

2.27 Luggage

Adequate storage for passenger luggage must be available and all luggage carried must be suitably secured in place without obstructing any emergency exits.

If the licensed vehicle is an estate, hatchback, or multi-passenger type vehicle, it must be fitted with a guard-rail or manufacturer's specification compartment cover to prevent luggage from entering the rear passenger compartments.

2.28 Maintenance and Condition of the Vehicle

The exterior of all licensed vehicles shall be maintained in a clean, safe and proper manner always. In particular, the exterior of the vehicle shall:

- a) be free of large and/or sharp-edged dents,
- b) be free of visible rust,
- c) be free of unrepaired accident damage,
- d) have uniform paintwork equivalent to that applied by the manufacturer, and
- e) be maintained in an acceptable state of cleanliness.

The interior of all licensed vehicles shall be maintained in a clean, safe and satisfactory manner always. In particular, the interior of the vehicle shall:

- f) be free of all stains to the upholstery or seat covers if fitted.
- g) be free of all splits and tears to the seats,
- h) be maintained in an acceptable state of cleanliness, and
- i) provide seats functioning in accordance with the Original Manufacturers' Specification.

2.29 Modifications

No material alteration or change in the specification, design, condition or appearance of any licensed vehicle may be made without compliance with road traffic legislation, insurance requirements, and written approval for the change(s) from the Council.

2.30 Communications Devices

All two-way radio equipment must be of a type currently approved by and must be fitted securely in accordance with guidelines published by, the Radio Communications Agency. They must not be fitted as to obscure the drivers view through the front window screen.

The use of radio scanning devices is prohibited, and such devices must not be fitted or carried in the vehicle.

2.31 Meters

Hackney carriages

An approved taximeter must be fitted in all hackney carriages and must be correctly calibrated, sealed and fully functional in accordance with the current Council approved fare structure. All taximeters must be appropriately stamped to ensure compliance with The Measuring Instruments (Taximeters) Regulations 2006, or any subsequent legislation.

The taximeter must not be capable of being manually overridden to ensure that the correct tariff is charged based on the actual date and time of the journey, and must be set at the correct date and time at all times throughout the period of the vehicle licence.

The taximeter shall be positioned so that the display on the face of the meter may always be clearly visible to any person being conveyed in the vehicle. The dial of the taximeter shall be kept properly illuminated throughout any part of the hiring including during the hours of darkness and at any time at the request of the hirer.

When the meter is operating there shall be recorded on the face of the meter in clearly legible figures a fare not exceeding the maximum fare that may be charged for a journey.

An official copy of the Council's fare tariff must be clearly displayed and legible in the vehicle to be plainly visible to passengers carried therein.

The vehicle taximeter must be brought into operation at the commencement of the journey and the fare demanded by the driver shall

not be greater than that fixed by this Council in connection with the fare tariff for the hire of hackney carriages. For the avoidance of doubt, the taximeter should not be started until the passenger is in the vehicle ready to commence the journey.

In the event of such a journey commencing in but ending outside the District, the customer may be charged for the journey of such fare as was agreed before the hiring was affected. If no such agreement was made, then the fare to be charged should be no greater than that fixed by the Council in connection with the fare tariff for the hire of hackney carriages.

On occasions, a journey will commence during one tariff period and end within another tariff period. For the avoidance of doubt, the tariff that is in operation at the time of the commencement of a journey must remain throughout that journey.

Private Hire

Private hire vehicles are not required to be fitted with a taximeter however where a taximeter or other device for recording fares is fitted, it must be of a type approved by the Council.

Private hire operators must agree the cost of the journey with the passenger(s) prior to undertaking the journey. At the conclusion of the journey, the fare charged should not exceed the amount previously agreed. If the operator intends to use the taximeter to calculate the fare, they must seek agreement from the passenger(s) at the time of accepting the booking, including the agreed point at which the meter would be engaged.

2.32 Trailers

Trailers may only be used with the prior approval of the Council and then subject to the following requirements:

- a) the driver's DVLA driving licence must cover the categories that allow the towing of trailers,
- b) the trailer must always comply with all requirements of road traffic legislation and the current Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations,
- c) the vehicle insurance must include cover for towing a trailer,
- d) trailers must not be left unattended anywhere on the highway,
- e) a suitable lid or other approved means of enclosure shall be fitted to secure and cover the contents of the trailer whenever in use;
- f) trailers must display an identical licence plate to the licensed vehicle,
- g) trailers cannot be used on a hackney carriage rank and should only be used for specific pre- booked journeys, not whilst plying for hire.

2.33 Disability Access

In the case of all licensed vehicles which are built or adapted for disabled passengers, the design of the vehicle must ensure that any wheelchair is loaded from the side or the rear of the vehicle.

Where a vehicle is utilised for the carriage of passengers in a wheelchair, the following conditions shall apply:

- a) access to and exit from the wheelchair position must not be obstructed in any manner at any time except by wheelchair loading apparatus,
- b) internal wheelchair anchorage must be of the manufacturer's design and construction and secured in such a position as not to obstruct any emergency exit,
- c) a suitable restraint must be available for the occupant of a wheelchair.
- d) access ramps or lifts to the vehicle must be securely fixed prior to use, and be able to support the wheelchair, occupant and helper,
- e) ramps and lifts must be securely stored in the vehicle before it may move off,
- f) access ramps and/or lifts must be maintained in full working order at all times when the vehicle is available for hire.

Any equipment fitted to the vehicle for the purpose of lifting a wheelchair into the vehicle must have been tested in accordance with the requirements of the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 (S.I. 1998/2307).

Where a vehicle is designed or adapted to carry a wheelchair, the proprietor shall ensure that the driver has received sufficient training to safely load and convey wheelchair bound passengers.

2.34 Vehicles Powered by Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG)

An applicant for a licence involving a vehicle that has been converted to run on LPG is required to produce, prior to a licence being issued, a certificate issued by a member of the LPG Association confirming satisfactory installation, examination and testing of the vehicle in accordance with the LPG Association Code of Practice.

If an LPG conversion involves installation of an LPG fuel tank in a vehicle's boot space (and possible relocation of the spare wheel) it shall be a requirement that a reasonable amount of space shall remain free for the stowage of passenger luggage and any spare wheel displaced as a result must be stowed in a location that does not impinge on the passenger carrying area of a vehicle.

2.35 Tinted Windows

The front windscreen, front driver's side window and front passenger's side window must ordinarily be clear glass. Exemption from this requirement may be given for original manufacturer's specification 'light tint' glass that does not prevent the identification of the driver and passengers from outside the vehicle.

The rear windscreen of any vehicle shall not have been treated so that less than 75% of light is transmitted through it, nor the rear passenger compartment side windows of any vehicle so that less than 70% of light is transmitted through them, unless the following criteria can be met:

- a) the vehicle is licensed as private hire vehicle only,
- b) the vehicle is a stretched limousine vehicle,
- c) the vehicle will not be engaged at any time for the carriage of school children,
- d) the private hire operator must, unless such a vehicle has been specifically requested, inform a hirer that such a vehicle will be supplied.

This section does not preclude or supersede any requirements provided for in any relevant legislation relating to road traffic vehicles.

2.36 Insurance

There shall be a policy of insurance, or such security as complies with the requirements of Part VI of the Road Traffic Act 1972, throughout the duration of the vehicle licence including appropriate cover for hackney carriage or private hire (as applicable).

Certificates of Insurance or cover notes that do not provide appropriate cover for a minimum of the first calendar month of a licence period will not be accepted by the Council. Failure to comply with this requirement will preclude a licence from being issued.

Where a cover note is provided as part of a licence application, a full Certificate for a twelve (12) month period of Insurance must be provided prior to the expiry of the cover note.

The registered owner of the licensed vehicle shall ensure that it is always adequately insured to the satisfaction of the Council and all relevant legislation that it is available for the carrying of passengers. In the absence of appropriate insurance, the licensed vehicle cannot be used for the carrying of passengers.

As case law has established that a vehicle licensed as a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle always remains a licensed vehicle until the licence expires or is surrendered, only appropriately licensed hackney carriage or private hire drivers may drive the vehicle. The

Council will not, therefore, accept any Certificate of Insurance that includes persons that do not hold a valid hackney carriage or private hire driver licence (as appropriate) for the vehicle.

2.37 Change of Ownership

Any change to the person(s) or company named on a vehicle licence must be notified to the Council within fourteen (14) days of such change.

When the holder of a vehicle licence wishes to transfer the licence to another person he must notify the Council, in writing, using the prescribed application form and paying the appropriate fee before such change takes place. Transfer of the licence will not be granted until such time as the prescribed procedure has been completed and a new vehicle licence has been issued.

2.38 Inspection

All hackney carriage and private hire vehicles must be available for inspection, at any location within the District, at all times when requested by an Authorised Officer of the Council or a Police Officer.

All vehicle documentation must be produced within twenty-four (24) hours, or such other time as specified, when requested by an Authorised Officer of the Council or a Police Officer.

2.39 Unauthorised Use

The proprietor of a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle shall not allow the vehicle to be driven and/or used for hire by any person who does not hold an appropriate current hackney carriage or private hire driver licence issued by the Council.

For the avoidance of doubt, case law has established that once licensed as a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle, the vehicle always remains a licensed vehicle until the licence expires, is surrendered, is suspended or is revoked. Even if a licensed vehicle is being used for private purposes, it must still meet all the requirements of a licensed vehicle, for example displaying a licence plate, complying with all requirements of this Policy and being driven by a licensed driver.

2.40 Accident Reporting

In accordance with Section 50(3) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, any accident to a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle causing damage materially affecting:

- a) the safety, performance or appearance of the vehicle, or

- b) the comfort or convenience of the passengers,

must be reported to the Council as soon as reasonably practicable, and in any case within seventy-two (72) hours of the occurrence thereof.

Following an accident or damage to a licensed vehicle, if it is the intention of the owner or operator to continue licensed use, the vehicle must immediately be inspected by an authorised council officer to determine its fitness for continued use.

On some occasions it may be required for a vehicle compliance test to be undertaken to ascertain any damage. If the Council's nominated testing facility determines that the vehicle is fit for continued use, the timescale for cosmetic repairs must be agreed with a Council Licensing Officer.

The Council may suspend the use of a licensed vehicle until it is suitably repaired and conforms to the Council's testing requirements.

A licensed vehicle which has suffered major accident damage or requires substantial mechanical repair may be temporarily replaced by a hire vehicle of a similar type, provided:

- a) the damage to, or defect in, the vehicle has been reported to the Council,
- b) an application is made in the prescribed manner for a temporary vehicle licence,
- c) the replacement vehicle meets the requirements of this Policy and is suitable to be used for hire purposes.

2.41 Miscellaneous

The proprietor of a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle shall not knowingly cause or permit the vehicle to be used for any illegal or immoral purpose.

2.42 Security/CCTV

The hackney carriage and private hire trade provide a valuable public service, especially late at night when other forms of public transport are no longer available. Security for drivers and passengers is of paramount importance and CCTV cameras can be a valuable deterrent. That said, mandatory CCTV is not a requirement as the Council considers this a matter best left to the judgement of the owners and drivers themselves.

If CCTV is installed in a vehicle, it will be the responsibility of the operator/proprietor to handle relevant data gathered in a secure manner and register with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). You will also be required to display the correct signage to notify

customers accordingly.

2.43 Stretched Limousines & Novelty Vehicles

Stretched limousines are generally used for all private hire work plus special occasions such as days at the races, stag/hen parties and children's birthday parties.

For the purposes of this Policy, a stretch limousine is defined as follows:
"A stretch limousine is a motor vehicle that has been lengthened by the insertion of an additional body section and modified by a coachbuilder to contain luxury facilities and fixtures that;

- a) can carry up to but not exceeding 8 passengers;*
- b) is not a decommissioned military or emergency service vehicle."*

Any stretched limousines capable of carrying eight (8) passengers or less which are offered for private hire does require a licence from the Council. In accordance with the Best Practice Guidance, all applications to licence stretched limousines as private hire vehicles will be treated on their own merits. Any stretched limousine capable of carrying more than eight (8) passengers requires licensing by the Traffic Commissioners as a public service vehicle.

Any stretched limousine approved for licensing as a private hire vehicle will be subject to specification set out in **Appendix E**, which will be attached as conditions to all limousines licensed as a private hire vehicle.

It would be an offence under the Licensing Act 2003 to provide facilities for the sale of alcohol within a limousine. If a limousine is to be provided whereby part of the booking includes "free alcohol", the premises which accepts the booking and supplies the alcohol within the vehicle would need an appropriate licence under the Licensing Act 2003, otherwise a criminal offence would be committed.

2.44 Funeral and Wedding Vehicles

There is no requirement for a vehicle to be licensed where it is being used in connection with a funeral or is being wholly or mainly used by a person carrying on the business of a Funeral Director for the purpose of funerals.

A vehicle does not need to be licensed whilst it is being used in connection with a wedding. For clarity, the exemption applies only to services directly relating to the wedding service itself, for example transporting the bride and/or groom to the wedding service, from the service to the reception and from the service/reception to home. Transporting the married couple to other locations such as the airport would be considered a licensable activity.

2.45 Voluntary Sector Transport

The Council will assess each individual organisation on its own merits to determine whether it will require licensing as a private hire business.

To make an initial enquiry and discuss your query please contact the licensing team.

2.46 Dual Plating

The Council will not grant a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle licence for any vehicle already licensed by another licensing authority.

3.1 Licenses

Due to similarity of a hackney carriage and private hire driver, this section will apply equally to private hire and hackney carriage drivers unless otherwise stated.

The Council requires that separate driver licenses be ordinarily held in respect of hackney carriage and private hire vehicles. However, with effect from the date of this policy we will no longer be issuing 'dual licenses'.

For the avoidance of doubt, if you are issued with a hackney carriage drivers licence then you will also receive private hire driver status. But if issued with a private hire drivers licence then you will only be able to operate as a private hire driver.

3.2 Age and Experience

A licence will not be granted to anyone who has not held a full driving licence, for a period of at least twelve (12) months immediately prior to the application.

An applicant who meets the licensing requirements by virtue of an acceptable non-UK driving licence must obtain a full UK driving licence within twelve (12) months of the issue of the hackney carriage or private hire driver licence. Where this requirement is not satisfied, the hackney carriage or private hire driver licence will be automatically suspended pending compliance.

3.3 Driver Knowledge Tests

Hackney carriage drivers clearly need a good working knowledge of the District for which they are licensed, because hackney carriages can be hired immediately, directly with the driver at ranks or on the street.

In order to determine fitness to hold a licence, applicants for a hackney carriage driver's licence are required to undertake a knowledge test based on local geography, places of interest, basic knowledge of English language & maths and the Council's Licensing Policy.

In addition, applicants are required to take a short verbal test to show their understanding and communication of the English language.

To hold a private hire drivers licence you will also be required to undertake the knowledge test, however we recognise that the same instant knowledge is not required as there would be an opportunity to research

the required route so this part will not be included.

A knowledge test pass is only valid for a period of six (6) months. If a driver licence has not been granted within a period of six (6) months following the successful knowledge test, a further knowledge test pass will be required prior to a licence being granted. The exception to this would be if a delay occurred during the administration process

The fee set for the knowledge test only includes the one (1) test, any subsequent re-tests will be charged at the set fee.

An applicant may only sit a maximum of four (4) knowledge tests during a twelve (12) month period. Failure to achieve a pass mark during this period will result in a drivers licence not being issued and the applicant will need to re-apply at a later stage.

Further details of the respective tests are set out in Part 5 of this Policy.

3.4 Driving Proficiency and Qualifications

The Council believes that as a profession, hackney carriage and private hire drivers have a special responsibility for the safe transportation of fare paying passengers and therefore they must complete an advanced driving assessment, details of this can be found on our website.

Whilst the Council has no current plans to make it a mandatory requirement for a driver to obtain a professional qualification, for example a BTEC Level 2 Award in Transporting Passengers by Taxi and Private Hire, the Council would encourage drivers to consider completing this.

3.5 Medical Examination including Eyesight Test

In order to promote the Council's public safety licensing objective, it will be a requirement to produce a medical assessment from a registered medical practitioner confirming the applicant/licence holder's fitness to drive. A new medical certificate will be required at the following intervals:

- a) The applicant is a new driver.
- b) The licence holder is aged forty-five (45) years of age and every subsequent five (5) years from then
- c) The licence holder is aged sixty-five (65) years of age and every subsequent twelve (12) months; or
- d) The applicant/licence holder has a health condition that may impact upon their ability to drive a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle

Applicants may still apply for a three-year licence, however, must produce further medical certification at the required age period or at a shorter

period where recommended by the medical practitioner.

The medical assessment required by this section must:

- a) be completed on the Council's prescribed medical form (available on the Council website),
- b) be completed by the applicant's GP or a GMC register doctor, having access to the applicant's summary medical history,
- c) less than six (6) month's old at the licence start date,
- d) contain an assessment of fitness to drive based on the DVLA Group 2 Medical Standards for Vocational Drivers.
- e) A separate Eye test examination maybe required if the GP is unable to complete this, the date of this must be less than six (6) months old at the licence start date.

If required to obtain a medical certificate, the applicant will be responsible for paying the fee for the examination to the relevant surgery. On completion of the examination, the confidential assessment must be submitted to the Council accompanied by any relevant supporting documentation.

Holders of current PSV and/or HGV Licenses, where the holder can produce proof of a current medical assessment, will not be required to undergo a further medical examination provided the requirements are met.

Licence holders must advise the Council of any deterioration in their health that may affect their driving capabilities. For the avoidance of doubt, the following medical conditions must be notified to the Council as soon as reasonably practicable however this list is not exhaustive:

- f) any heart-related condition
- g) any eyesight related condition
- h) diabetes (Type 1 or Type 2)
- i) epilepsy
- j) sudden attacks of giddiness or fainting
- k) conditions causing excessive daytime sleepiness such as sleep apnea
- l) alcohol or drug dependency
- m) mental or psychological disorders
- n) any other condition that may affect the ability to drive

Where there is any doubt as to the medical fitness of the applicant, the Council may require the applicant to undergo further medical assessment, at the applicant's own expense.

3.6 Medical Exemption Certificates

Carriage of wheelchairs: medical exemption certificates

Given that the main reasons for a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle driver to request a medical exemption are likely to be back or muscle-related injuries, which are not likely to be conducive to driving for long periods, the Council expect the number of drivers likely to be eligible for an exemption to be low.

Drivers will need to provide medical evidence to support their application. Most drivers with a medical condition severe enough to warrant an exemption are likely to be under a specialist / consultant medical practitioner and the Council will require evidence of the condition to be provided from them.

Carriage of assistance dogs: medical exemption certificates

The main reasons a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle driver may wish to apply for a medical exemption are:

- a) if they have a condition such as severe asthma, that is aggravated by contact with dogs.
- b) if they are allergic to dogs; or
- c) if they have an acute phobia to dogs.

The Council therefore expect the number of drivers likely to be eligible for an exemption to be very low.

Drivers will need to provide medical evidence to support their application. If a driver has severe asthma or a known allergy to dogs, they are likely to have a medical history and an appropriate medical specialist should hold relevant information about their condition. If a driver has a chronic phobia to dogs, the Council expects this to be supported by a report from a psychiatrist or clinical psychologist before a driver is granted an exemption. Most drivers with a medical condition severe enough to warrant an exemption are likely to be under a specialist / consultant medical practitioner and the Council will require evidence of the condition to be provided from them.

Suitable medical professionals: medical exemption certificates

Examples of suitable medical professionals include, but are not limited to:

- a) medical specialist / consultant.
- b) specialist nurse (for example, an asthma nurse);

In exceptional circumstances, where no other alternatives are available, the Council may consider evidence from the applicant's General Practitioner. The applicant will be responsible for all costs associated in the provision of the necessary medical evidence.

3.7 Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) Disclosures

A DBS check on a driver is seen as an essential safety measure in assessing whether an applicant is suitable to hold a licence, therefore an Enhanced Disclosure provided by the Disclosure & Barring Service is required by all applicants, whether new or renewal applications.

Before an application for a driver licence will be considered, the applicant must provide a current (less than three months old) Enhanced DBS Disclosure; the only exception would be where an applicant has registered with the DBS for the online checking service and the Council has seen the latest DBS to which the online check refers.

We will be carrying out DBS checks on licensed drivers at every six (6) month intervals. Therefore, to ensure this is completed in a timely manner it is a mandatory requirement that all licensed drivers sign up to the DBS online checking service. Failure to have this in place and an adequate check not being completed, will result in either a temporary suspension of the drivers licence or a delay in the renewal process.

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 does not apply to applicants for both hackney and private hire driving licenses; therefore, applicants are required to disclose all convictions, including those that would normally be regarded as spent.

The Council is not an accredited Disclosure & Barring Service body therefore any requirement for new checks are passed to a neighbouring authority to process on our behalf. The applicant will be responsible for the payment of the appropriate fee.

In the case of applicants with less than five (5) years residence in the UK, a Certificate of Good Conduct will be required from the relevant Embassy in addition to an Enhanced DBS Disclosure covering their time in the UK. All Certificates of Good Conduct must be translated into English by an accredited translator and accompanied by a declaration to that effect.

The Council is bound by rules of confidentiality and will not divulge information obtained to any third party. The applicant for a DBS certificate will be sent a certificate to their home address and will need to provide the certificate to the Council who do not receive a copy. Once the Council have obtained the necessary information from a DBS certificate, no information from the DBS will be retained by the Council.

3.8 Relevance of Convictions and Cautions

In relation to the consideration of convictions and cautions recorded against applicants, the Council will adopt the guidelines set out in

3.9 Convictions during period of licence

Where offences resulting in conviction are committed by licensed drivers in the course of their business or otherwise, it is important, in the interests of consistency and transparency that a procedure should be in place to consider what effect this should have on their hackney carriage or private hire driver's licence.

Driver's licence holders, who are convicted or cautioned for any criminal or motoring offence during the period covered by their existing licence, must disclose the conviction or caution and the penalty involved to the Council within seven (7) days of the conviction. In the case of a deferred sentence, the penalty must be disclosed to the Council within seven (7) days of sentencing. For these purposes, any offence resulting in the acceptance of a fixed penalty notice will be considered to be a conviction.

Should an applicant, applying as a new driver or renewal, have seven (7) or more points on the DVLA driving licence and or any previous convictions then their application will be referred to a Licensing Panel hearing to ascertain whether the applicant is a 'fit and proper person' to hold a licence.

3.10 Safeguarding & Disability Awareness Training

The Council acknowledges the importance of safeguarding and disability awareness training to all licensed drivers and operators, particularly about the prevention of child sexual exploitation, but additionally regarding vulnerable adults and children.

The Council are currently working on an inhouse training programme, which will be in place by April 2021, it will be a mandatory requirement for all new drivers and operators prior to the grant of a licence to complete this.

All existing drivers and operators will be given a period of twelve (12) months to complete this training; failure to do so will result in a licence not being renewed until such time as the training requirement has been fulfilled.

A renewal applicant will be expected to undertake this training.

- a) every six (6) years or soon if required
- b) if an officer or the Licensing Sub-Committee, feel it necessary for the driver to demonstrate they are safe & suitable to be a licensed driver.

3.11 Right to Work

All applicants will be required, prior to the grant of a licence, to demonstrate their right to work in the UK. Once this requirement has been satisfied, further proof will not be required unless the right to work is time-restricted, in which case further proof will be required to demonstrate continuity of right to work. Further information is available in **Appendix F**.

3.12 Conditions of Licence

The Council is not permitted to attach conditions to a hackney carriage driver's licence however it is empowered to attach such conditions to a private hire driver's licence as are considered necessary.

For consistency, conditions will not be attached to driver licenses however the Council consider continued compliance with this Policy as an essential requirement of the 'fit and proper' person test. Failure to comply with all policy requirements is likely to result in enforcement action being taken.

3.13 Driver Code of Conduct

Adopting a Driver Code of Conduct for hackney carriage and private hire licence holders serves to promote the Council's licensing objectives in respect of the hackney carriage and private hire trades; the standards expected of licence holders are detailed in **Appendix C**. This Code of Conduct is an integral part of the 'fit and proper' assessment.

3.14 DVLA Licence Checking

In order to ensure that the Council have a driver's complete driving history, thus enabling a fully informed decision to be made in respect of an application, the Council upon new and renewal application will request you to provide a DVLA share code.

By providing this code it will allow us to check your DVLA licence and history from the DVLA website. The application form declaration includes a section where the applicant signs to give their consent for this check.

Any anomalies between the DVLA record and the applicant's driving licence will be brought to the attention of the DVLA and the Police.

3.15 National Register - NR3 Checks

This Council has subscribed to the National Register of Hackney Carriage and PHV driver licence refusals and revocations, the 'national register of refusals and revocations' or NR3 as it is more commonly known. The

council will search the national database in all cases where an application is made for a new hackney carriage or private hire driver licence and when an application is made for the renewal of these licences.

Whilst completing these checks if any areas of concern are identified they will be addressed with the applicant immediately and may lead to a suspension or revocation of their licence.

PART 4 - PRIVATE HIRE OPERATORS

4.1 Requirements and Obligations

Any person who operates a private hire service utilising one or more private hire vehicles must apply to the Council for a Private Hire Operator Licence. A private hire vehicle may only be dispatched to a customer by a private hire operator who holds a private hire operator licence. Such a licence permits the operator to make provision for the invitation or acceptance of bookings for a private hire vehicle.

A private hire operator must ensure that every private hire vehicle has a current private hire vehicle licence and is driven by a person who holds a current private hire driver licence. All three licenses, private hire operator, private hire vehicle and private hire driver, must be issued by the same licensing authority.

It is for the Council to decide whether the applicant is a 'fit and proper person' to hold a private hire operator licence.

4.2 Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) Disclosures

Private hire operators cannot be required to produce an Enhanced DBS disclosure therefore a Basic Disclosure from the Disclosure & Barring Service, or a certificate of good conduct from the relevant embassy for overseas applicants, is considered appropriate in promoting the policy objectives. A reference covering the applicant's financial record and/or business history may also be considered appropriate in addition to these requirements in some instances.

Before an application for a private hire operator licence will be considered, the applicant must provide a current (less than 3 months old) Basic DBS Disclosure of Criminal Convictions, or a Certificate of Good Conduct from the relevant embassy in the case of an overseas applicant. Applicants that hold a current hackney carriage or private hire driver licence with the Council will be exempt from this requirement.

4.3 Conditions

The Council has power to impose such conditions on a private hire operator licence as it considers reasonable, necessary and proportionate. The following conditions will be attached to all private hire operator licenses issued by the Council:

- a) This licence is granted subject to compliance with the requirements of Part 4 of the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy throughout the duration of the licence period.

- b) All private hire booking records as per section 4.11 must be kept for a minimum of 12 months
- c) Any staff member working as a vehicle dispatcher on behalf of the licensed operator must have a valid Basic DBS Disclosure of Criminal Convictions check dated less than 3 months old from commencement of employment.

4.4 Public Liability Insurance

It is considered appropriate for a licensing authority to check that appropriate public liability insurance has been taken out for premises that are open to the public. Before an application for a private hire operator licence is granted, the applicant must either produce evidence that they have taken out appropriate public liability insurance for the premises to be licensed or sign a declaration that their premises is not open to the public.

4.5 Licence Duration

The Council will issue a successful applicant for a private hire operator licence with a one or five-year licence from the date of grant, although we do encourage applying for a five-year licence.

4.6 Address from which an Operator may Operate

Upon the grant of a private hire operator licence, the Council will specify on the licence the address from which the operator may accept bookings and dispatch vehicles. This address will ordinarily be the address stated on the application form.

The operator must notify the Council in writing of any proposed change of address during the period of the licence in order that the Council can consider its suitability. The operator may not change operating address until such time as the change has been approved in writing by the Council. The operator must also provide proof of public liability insurance for the new premises or sign a declaration that their new premises is not open to the public prior to the change being approved.

4.7 Operating Bases

A private hire operator licence issued by the Council will be required for any operator with an operating base that is inside the District of Fenland.

4.8 Right to Work

All applicants will be required, prior to the grant of a licence, to demonstrate their right to work in the UK. Once this requirement has been satisfied, further proof will not be required unless the right to work is time-restricted, in which case further proof will be required to demonstrate continuity of right to work. Further information is available in **Appendix F**.

4.9 Sub-contracting of Private Hire Bookings

Legislation now allows for a licensed private hire operator to sub-contract a booking to another licensed private hire operator, whether in the same district or not. Both operators must be licensed within the area in which their operating base is located and should record details of the booking in the normal way.

All three licenses (operator, driver and vehicle) must still be issued by the same local authority. For example, an operator licensed to operate in district A and district B cannot take a booking in district A and use a vehicle and driver licensed in district B. They can however sub-contract the booking to the operating base in district B using a vehicle and driver licensed in district B.

4.10 Standards of Service

The operator shall:

- a) provide a prompt, efficient and reliable service to members of the public,
- b) ensure that their office staff act in a civil and courteous manner at all times,
- c) ensure that booked vehicles arrive punctually at the appointed place,
- d) ensure that premises provided for the purpose of booking or waiting are kept clean and are adequately lit, heated and ventilated with adequate seating facilities,
- e) ensure compliance with legislation regarding the length of employee working hours.

4.11 Records

Booking records shall be kept in a non-erasable form in a suitable log or book, the pages of which are numbered consecutively, or in an appropriate electronic format.

Prior to each journey, the operator shall record the following particulars of every booking of a private hire vehicle accepted:

- a) date of the booking,
- b) name, address and contact number of the hirer,
- c) time of pick-up
- d) address of the point of pick-up,
- e) address of the destination drop off,
- f) licence number (or other identification) of the driver allocated to the booking,
- g) plate number (or other identification) of the vehicle allocated to the booking,
- h) fare agreed between the operator and hirer at the time of booking.

The operator shall keep the following records for all private hire vehicles operated by them:

- a) type, make, model, colour and engine size of vehicles,
- b) year when the vehicle was first licensed for private hire,
- c) vehicle registration numbers,
- d) number of seats for passengers,
- e) owner of the vehicles,
- f) insurance details of vehicles,
- g) method of charging, i.e. whether or not a meter is fitted,
- h) private hire vehicle plate number.

The operator shall keep the following records for all drivers of private hire vehicles operated by them:

- a) driver's name, address and contact number,
- b) driver's licence number issued by local authority,
- c) date employment commenced,
- d) date employment ceased,
- e) any change of address, including the date the address changed
- f) any illness, disability or condition which may affect the driver's ability to safely carry out his duties,
- g) expiry date of both the DVLA & driver licence issued.

All records maintained by the operator shall be kept for at least twelve (12) months after entry and shall be produced for inspection, on request, by any Authorised Officer of the Council or any Police Officer.

The operator shall be required to register your details with the Information Commission's Officer (ICO), this is a requirement under GDPR as you will be retaining personal data.

4.12 Complaints

The operator shall notify the Council in writing of any complaints concerning a contract for hire arising from their business that they feel prudent to do so, for example for their own protection against frivolous or vexatious complaints or allegations of misconduct against a driver. Such notification must include the action taken, or proposed, as a result of the complaint.

4.13 Disclosure of Convictions

The operator shall, within seven (7) days of conviction, notify the Council in writing of any conviction or fixed penalty imposed on them during the licence period of their operator licence. If the operator is a company or partnership, this requirement shall equally apply if any of the directors or partners receives a conviction or fixed penalty.

4.14 Private Hire Insurance

The operator shall ensure that a certificate of motor insurance covers every private hire vehicle operated by them under the operator licence.

4.15 Private Hire Driver Licenses

The operator shall ensure that every driver working under their operator licence has obtained a private hire driver licence from the same licensing authority which issued the private hire operator licence. The operator shall use their best endeavour to ensure that all drivers have a badge issued by the Council and that the drivers always wear the badge whilst available for hire.

4.16 Planning Consent

To operate a private hire business from home, planning permission may be required. A private hire operator licence will not be granted without evidence that either planning permission has been issued for the premises concerned, or planning permission is not required for the limited use proposed.

PART 5 – APPLICATION PROCEDURE

5.1 General

This Part of the Policy is intended to give an indication of the application process relating to all application types. In line with its commitment to smarter ways of working, the Council reserve the right to make changes to the administrative process provided that the focus of the policy objectives are maintained.

Where the administrative process is amended, the Licensing Manager may amend this Part of the Policy in accordance with the delegation set out in part 12

5.2 Vehicles

An application for a vehicle licence will only be considered complete when all the following documents have been received:

- a) prescribed application form, fully completed
- b) appropriate fee
- c) V5 registration document
 - ❖ which must show the vehicle as belonging to the applicant either wholly or jointly with any other person(s).
 - ❖ once the V5 has been provided for the grant of a new vehicle licence, it need not be re-submitted with subsequent renewal applications unless the details of the vehicle or registered keeper change.
- d) current valid insurance certificate or cover note
 - ❖ the certificate must include the appropriate usage as a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle.
 - ❖ the certificate must cover a minimum of one (1) calendar month from the start date of the licence.
 - ❖ the certificate must not contain the name(s) of any driver not licensed with the Council.
 - ❖ if a cover note is provided, a full certificate of insurance (a period of no less than twelve (12) months must be provided before the expiry date of the cover note.
- e) MOT certificate dated no more than thirty (30) days old at the date of the compliance test.
- f) Compliance Certificate
- g) Hackney Carriage Meter certificate (New Vehicle)

5.3 Drivers

An application for a driver licence will only be considered complete when all the following documents have been received:

- a) prescribed application form, fully completed
- b) appropriate fee
- c) a current valid full driving licence
- d) enhanced Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) certificate, unless registered with the online DBS checking service
- e) knowledge test passes (new applicants only)
- f) medical certificate (new applicants or renewals where the applicant has reached the prescribed age requiring a further check.
- g) proof of right to work in the UK (new applicants and where applicable)
- h) a passport-sized, clear and easily identifiable photograph of the applicant

All new applicants can submit the above documentation whilst waiting to take the knowledge test assessment.

5.4 Operators

An application for an operator licence will only be considered complete when all the following documents have been received:

- a) prescribed application form, fully completed
- b) appropriate fee
- c) inspection of the operating premises by a licensing officer
- d) basic Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) disclosure, unless licensed as a driver with the Council

5.5 Submitting Applications and Documentation

Renewal application forms, appropriate fees and all supporting documentation should be submitted at least fourteen (14) days prior to the expiry of the previous licence. Incomplete applications may be returned to the applicant for resubmission when complete. A licence will not be renewed without all supporting documentation and the correct fee being received and satisfying the requirements of this policy. It is the licence holder's sole responsibility for ensuring they make their application in accordance with this Policy.

When submitting renewal applications, applicants should be aware that it may take up to five (5) working days to process and issue a licence once all relevant information and the fee have been received. If a licence has not been issued at the point when an existing licence expires, the licence holder must cease operating until the new licence has been received.

Documentation must be emailed to the licensing department via email address licensing@fenland.gov.uk

Any original documentation for example right to work check, DBS certificate and DVLA licence can be verified during the knowledge test whilst visiting the council offices.

5.6 Issue of vehicle plates and driver badges

Once the application has been processed and the licence is issued, all Licence plates, licence badges and paper licenses will be posted out to the applicant's home address.

5.7 Return of vehicle plates and licence badges

All licence plates and licence badges remain the property of the Council and must be returned:

- a) upon written request within seven (7) days of such a request,
- b) within seven (7) days of expiry or surrender, or
- c) immediately upon suspension or revocation.

A licence plate and a licence badge signify the existence of a current valid licence but are not licenses in their own right therefore there is no reason why a renewed licence plate or licence badge cannot be displayed from the point of receipt.

Renewed licence plates and licence badges which are posted to the licence holder, the existing plate or badge must be returned within seven (7) days of receipt. Posted to the Council offices or placed in the post box situated at either The Base/Fenland Hall, March or The Boathouse, Wisbech.

5.8 New Driver Knowledge Tests

In order to maintain the high standards that the Council expects of its hackney carriage drivers operating within the District, all new drivers are required to pass a knowledge test consisting of both written and verbal questions. All parts must be passed to be considered for a hackney carriage or private hire driver licence. The written part is split into four (4) sections.

- 1) Legislation and policy knowledge
- 2) Landmarks
- 3) Basic Written literacy and numeracy
- 4) Routes (This section is for Hackney Carriage only)

Applicants will be tested on their knowledge of Fenland District and significant locations in the surrounding areas where they are likely to be required to travel to.

Questions for the knowledge test may include:

- a) the shortest route between locations based on the town where the applicant will predominately ply for hire.
- b) the shortest route between prominent locations based on the District as a whole
- c) the locations of prominent points of interest across the District such as hotels, surgeries, schools, etc;
- d) the highway code.

- e) the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy and relevant legislation.
- f) customer care; and
- g) basic numeracy, including the calculation of change for a given fare.

A maximum of two (2) hours will be allowed for this part of the knowledge test and a pass of 80% must be achieved in each section as follows:

- 1) Policy and Legislation
- 2) Landmarks
- 3) Basic Written literacy and numeracy
- 4) Routes (This section is for Hackney Carriage only)

Verbal Part - Test

Twenty (20) minutes is allowed for the fifteen (15) question verbal test and the pass mark is twelve (12) correct answers. In addition, all three (3) safeguarding questions contained within the test must be answered correctly.

In addition to scoring twelve (12) correct answers, a licensing officer must be satisfied that the applicant has sufficient communication skills for a licensed driver therefore the test may be recorded.

Driver Test Failure

Four (4) attempts are permitted at passing the knowledge test in a twelve (12) month period. In the event of a re-test taking place then each section must be taken as a whole test. The fee will include one test, any subsequent re-tests will be incurring a fee at the applicant's expense.

Booking Tests

Both written and verbal knowledge test are available on a monthly basis, save for exceptional circumstances. All bookings must be accompanied by the appropriate test fee paid at the time of booking; a cancellation fee will be charged for non-attendance without twenty-four (24) hours prior notice.

To book a knowledge test you can email licensing@fenland.gov.uk, please include a copy of your receipt as proof of payment. These tests only take place once a month and are normally held every third Tuesday

5.9 Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) Disclosures

No application for a hackney carriage or private hire driver licence will be considered without an enhanced DBS disclosure satisfying the requirements of this Policy.

If you need to apply for a new DBS, this can be arranged following the submission of your new/renewal application.

The Council requires applicants to register with the online DBS checking service. This will enable the Council to check an existing DBS every six (6) months during the term of the licence and upon each renewal.

5.10 The consideration of applications

Upon receipt of a completed application form, including the fee and all supporting documentation, the Council will consider the application. Where the application is incomplete, it will not be considered until all the missing details or documents are supplied.

For an application to be considered as a renewal application, the fully completed application form and correct fee must be received prior to the expiry date of the previous licence. Accompanying documentation can then follow as it becomes available.

Failure to comply with this requirement will ordinarily result in the applicant having to re-apply as a new applicant and meet all the requirements of this Policy in respect of new applications.

PART 6 – DISCIPLINARY AND ENFORCEMENT MEASURES

6.1 Enforcement

It is recognised that well-directed enforcement activity by the Council benefits not only the public but also the responsible members of the hackney carriage and private hire vehicle trade. In pursuing its objective to encourage responsible hackney carriage and private hire businesses, the Council will operate a proportionate disciplinary and enforcement regime. In order to balance the promotion of public safety with the need to prevent unnecessary interference in a licence holder's business, the Council will only intervene where it is necessary and proportionate to do so. Where defects are such that use of a vehicle needs to be immediately prohibited, livelihood interference is inevitable.

All enforcement action will be based upon the seriousness of the breach and the possible consequences arising from it.

Enforcement action must always be consistent, proportionate and reasonable whilst ensuring that the public receive adequate protection. Determination of enforcement action may consider, but will not be limited to, the following:

- a) seriousness of any offence(s).
- b) driver's or operator's past history.
- c) consequence of non-compliance.
- d) likely effectiveness of the various enforcement options.
- e) risk to the public.

The Council will ensure that its enforcement is in line with this Policy and also consider the Council's Enforcement Policy.

6.2 Penalty Points Scheme

In order to ensure compliance with the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy and to monitor licence holder's ability to fulfil the 'fit and proper' test, a penalty points system will be utilised as described in **Appendix D**. This will serve both as an early warning system to licence holders who fail to meet the Council's required standards and as a consistent and transparent method of enforcement,

The Penalty Points System will not, however, compromise the Council's ability to enforce breaches of statute or the Council's Licensing Policy in the Courts should an offence necessitate such action.

6.3 Referrals to the Licensing Sub-Committee

Whilst the day to day enforcement of hackney carriage and private hire licensing, including the issuing of penalty points, is a function carried out by licensing officers under the supervision of the licensing manager, serious disciplinary matters will be referred to the Licensing Sub-Committee.

Serious disciplinary matters will include, but are not limited to:

- a) an accumulation of twelve (12) or more penalty points as detailed in **Appendix D** during a rolling twelve (12) month period.
- b) refusal to carry a passenger without good reason.
- c) unlawful plying for hire.
- d) more than one offence of touting for business.
- e) insurance offences.
- (v) overcharging; and
- (vi) any conviction relevant to **Appendix B**.

The Licensing Sub-Committee will consider the impact of the breach, or an accumulation of penalty points, on the fitness of an individual to hold a hackney carriage or private hire licence and take appropriate action.

The individual or company will be entitled to attend a hearing with the Licensing Sub-Committee to answer allegations and/or provide any mitigating circumstances.

Prior to attending the hearing, the investigating officer will provide a written report containing all the information necessary to understand the allegation(s), the relevant sections of this Policy, the options available to the Licensing Sub-Committee and any other relevant information. The report will be provided to the individual or company at least five (5) days prior to the hearing.

The Licensing Sub-Committee may decide to take one or more of the following actions:

- a) no action.
- b) informal action (verbal or written warnings or penalty points).
- c) require the production of driving licenses or other specified documentation at the Council Offices.
- d) use statutory notices (s68 stop notices, etc.).
- e) suspend a licence.
- f) revoke a licence.
- g) other appropriate action as deemed necessary, including any combination of the above.

Alternative to enforcement action for first time smoking offences

To support the initiatives of Cambridgeshire & Peterborough tobacco alliance strategy, in addition to offering health benefits to offenders, first time smoking offenders may be offered a fixed period of time, at the Council's discretion, to attend an official 'stop smoking' course.

Alternative to enforcement action when there are driving standards concerns

Where concerns are raised in respect of a driver's standard of driving, the driver may be required to re-take an appropriate driving standard assessment at the discretion of the Council. Failure to achieve a pass within a specified period will result in the suspension of the driver until such time as a pass is achieved. Where necessary for public safety, a driver may be suspended immediately until such time as a pass is achieved.

6.4 Informal Action

Informal action to secure compliance includes offering advice, verbal or written warnings, and the issuing of penalty points.

Informal enforcement action may be appropriate in, but not limited to, the following scenarios:

- a) the act or omission is not serious enough to warrant formal action.
- b) it can reasonably be expected that informal action will achieve future compliance.
- c) confidence in the driver or operator is ordinarily high; or
- d) the consequences of non-compliance will not pose a significant risk to public safety.

6.5 Suspension

Vehicles

Hackney carriage and private hire vehicles must be kept in an efficient, safe, tidy and clean condition at all times. Compliance with the vehicle specification and conditions of this Policy is essential and will be enforced by periodic, random vehicle inspections by the Council. Where it is found that any vehicle is not being properly maintained, a defect(s) notice will be served on the licence holder setting out the defect(s) and the required action.

Where there is a risk to public safety the further use of the vehicle will be suspended until the defects have been remedied. The suspension will not then be lifted until the vehicle has undergone a further test at the Council's nominated testing facility, at the licence holder's expense, and meets the testing requirements of this Policy.

Drivers

The Council may exercise its discretion to suspend the operation of a driver's licence for a specified period at the discretion of the Licensing Manager. Following any temporary suspension issued, the Licensing Manager would then look to refer the licence holder to the Licensing Sub-Committee because they have been convicted of a serious criminal offence or have accumulated twelve or more penalty points under the

Council's penalty points system.

6.6 Section 68 (Stop) Notices

An Authorised Officer of the Council or a Police Officer may serve notice in writing for a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle, or the taximeter affixed to such a vehicle, to be examined at the Council's nominated testing facility at a time specified in the notice. This notice may only be served if there are concerns as to the condition of the vehicle or the accuracy of the taximeter.

In addition, the vehicle licence may be suspended until such time as the Council's testing requirements have been complied with if it is deemed necessary for public safety. The suspension notice will remain in force until the issuing officer has issued written confirmation that the Council's testing requirements have been met.

If the issuing officer is not satisfied that appropriate action has been taken to allow the suspension notice to be withdrawn within a period of two (2) months from date of issue, the vehicle licence will be deemed automatically revoked.

6.7 Revocation

Where a licence holder has been referred to the Licensing Sub-Committee because they have:

- a) committed a criminal offence.
 - b) have accumulated twelve (12) or more penalty points issued under **Appendix D**.
 - c) no longer meet the 'fit and proper' test set out in **Appendix A**; or
 - d) for any other reason whereby the policy objectives would not be met,
- the Licensing Sub-Committee may revoke the licence. Ordinarily, any revocation is held pending the period for appeal expiring or, in the case of an appeal, the appeal being determined. Where necessary for public safety, the Licensing Sub-Committee may determine that a revocation takes immediate effect and is not held pending an appeal.

6.8 Refusal to Renew

As an alternative to revocation, the Licensing Sub-Committee may decide that the appropriate action, in a situation where the licence is shortly to expire, is to order that the licence shall not be renewed. The Licensing Sub-Committee may suspend the existing licence for the remainder of its licence period depending on the individual merits of the case.

6.9 Simple Cautions

The purpose of a Simple Caution as an alternative to prosecution is to:

- a) deal quickly and efficiently with less serious offences.

- b) divert less serious offences away from the Courts; and
- c) reduce the likelihood of repeat offences.

In the interests of natural justice, the following criteria must be met before a Simple Caution is administered:

- d) there must be sufficient evidence of guilt to give a realistic prospect of a conviction.
- e) the offender must admit the offence; and
- f) the offender must understand the significance of the caution and give informed consent to be cautioned.

Where a person declines the offer of a Simple Caution, it will be necessary to consider taking alternative enforcement action; whilst this would ordinarily mean prosecution, this is not inevitable.

6.10 Prosecution

The decision to prosecute is significant as it may impact on the licence holder's future employability. Generally, the circumstances that may warrant a prosecution include, but are not limited to:

- a) blatant disregard for legislation and/or this Policy, particularly where the economic benefits are substantial and provide advantage of those licence holders who are law-abiding and compliant with this Policy.
- b) when there has been blatant and/or reckless disregard for the safety of passengers or other road users.
- c) where there have been repeated breaches of legislation or the requirements of this Policy.
- d) where an offence is prevalent, and a clear message needs to be sent; or
- e) where a contravention has caused serious public concern.

A decision on whether to prosecute may consider, but is not limited to, the following:

- a) the seriousness of the offence or contravention.
- b) the risk of harm to the public.
- c) identifiable victims (including the impact on the victims).
- d) failure to comply with statutory notices, warnings, or other enforcement sanctions.
- e) disregard of public safety for financial reward.
- f) the offender's previous history, in particular repeated offences or contraventions.
- g) the ability and willingness of witnesses to co-operate.
- h) the likelihood of future compliance.
- i) the probable public benefit of a prosecution and the importance of the case in establishing precedent or addressing public concern.
- j) whether other action, such as a Simple Caution, would be more appropriate or effective.

6.11 Complaints against Drivers

Complaints against hackney carriage and private hire drivers are relatively low in Fenland District, however, when received usually relate to overcharging or unprofessional behaviour. All complaints will be fully investigated, often involving the taking of statements from the complainant, driver and any witnesses.

The investigating officer will consider all evidence and mitigating circumstances arising from the investigation before making a recommendation to the Licensing Manager who will reach a decision in accordance with the Council Enforcement Policy and this Policy.

The outcome of any complaint will be advised to the complainant in the form of a written response.

7.1 Hackney Carriages

Hackney Carriage Fares, set by the Council, are a maximum and can be negotiated downwards by the hirer. The Council considers it good practice to review the fare scales at regular intervals, and will, therefore, consider the fare scales when a request is received by the trade.

When determining the level of fares, consideration will be given to what it is reasonable to expect the travelling public to pay as well as the need to give the drivers an incentive to provide a cost- effective service at the times it is needed.

The fare for any journey that starts and ends within the Fenland District cannot exceed the metered fare based on the Council's maximum fare tariff. The meter should only be started when the passenger(s) is/are in the vehicle and the journey commences.

The maximum fares currently prescribed by the Council are set out on the Council's website. A table of authorised fares will be provided to each hackney carriage licence holder, which must then be displayed in each vehicle so that it is easily visible to all hirers.

The Council will review the fares tariff when a request is received from a minimum of three (3) licensed drivers. The Council will consult with the trade and follow the appropriate procedures detailed in the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

A hackney carriage driver must, if requested by the passenger, provide a written receipt for the fare paid.

7.2 Private Hire Vehicles

The fare for a journey in a private hire vehicle must be agreed with the private hire operator at the time of booking. The driver should charge no more than the fare agreed with the operator at the time of booking.

The agreement between the hirer and the operator can either be for a fixed monetary sum, or an agreement that the fare will be calculated using the meter within the vehicle. In the case of a metered fare, the starting point for engaging the meter must be agreed at the time of booking.

A private hire driver must, if requested by the passenger, provide a written receipt for the fare paid.

PART 8 – LICENCE FEES

8.1 Fee Structure

The legislation and established case law provide that licence fees should be sufficient to cover the costs of inspecting the vehicles, providing hackney carriage stands, and administering the control and supervision of hackney carriages and private hire vehicles. In simple terms, the

Council can only set fees on a 'reasonable cost recovery' basis and cannot make a profit from licence fees when analysed over a typical three-year cycle.

Discretionary services that do not fall within the remit, such as pre-application advice, knowledge testing, Safeguarding Course, DBS appointments, etc. will be charged for separately utilising the same 'reasonable cost recovery' basis. This is to ensure that the cost of these applicant-specific services is not incorporated into the licence fees paid by existing licence holders.

The fees currently payable for the grant and renewal of hackney carriage and private hire licenses are set out on the Council's website. The fee structure is reviewed annually as part of the Council's budgetary process.

8.2 Payments

The Council can accept payment by debit or credit card, or BACS payments. The Council is unable to accept cash payments.

A payment can be made by accessing our website - <https://www.fenland.gov.uk/pay> or by contacting the customer service team on 01354 654321

8.3 Refunds and Duplicate Copies

In the case of any licence where the licence holder voluntarily surrenders their licence prior to the expiry date, the Council may make a refund in respect of the whole months of the unexpired portion of the licence fee.

Where the Council receives a request for a duplicate copy of any previously issued licence, an appropriate fee will be paid to cover the associated administrative costs.

In the case of a licence that has been suspended, revoked or otherwise ends early due to disciplinary matters, no refund will be made by the Council.

PART 9 – HACKNEY CARRIAGE RANKS (STANDS)

9.1 Taxi Ranks/Stands

The Council will periodically review the provision of hackney carriage ranks/stands within the District. If there is evidence of the need to amend the existing provisions, a full consultation would be undertaken prior to any amendments. Comments are welcomed from either the trade or the public regarding the suitability of existing provision.

9.2 Waiting on Stands

It is an offence for any person to cause or permit any vehicle other than a hackney carriage to wait on any stand for hackney carriages. Drivers of hackney carriages may only wait on a stand whilst plying for hire or waiting for a fare; drivers who park on a stand and leave their vehicle unattended are committing an offence.

Whilst the law states it is an offence to leave a vehicle unattended on a hackney stand, discretion will be allowed for drivers leaving their vehicles in acceptable circumstances, for example 'comfort breaks'. Leaving a hackney carriage unattended on a stand for any other circumstances, for example shopping, will be dealt with as an offence in accordance with this Policy.

9.3 Plying for Hire

For the avoidance of doubt, the Council does not have a by-law requiring hackney carriages to return to a taxi stand between fares. Hackney carriages can, therefore, park and be available for hire in any position where an ordinary member of the public can lawfully park. Hackney carriages are, however, subject to road traffic regulations and should not park in any position that obstructs the highway, the highway being both the road and the footway.

PART 10 – TRADE FORUM

10.1 Working Party

The Council wishes to encourage discussions between the trade and the licensing authority in order to promote a successful working relationship. To facilitate this, the Council has already set up a Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Working party to help facilitate the production of this policy.

We will continue to have meetings as required in order to maintain good communication and working relations between the trade and local authority. This is a combined mix of both Hackney Carriage and Private Hire drivers, and we would encourage this to continue to ensure a balanced view.

10.2 Apply to become a member

Membership, terms of reference and work plan will be determined in accordance with prevailing circumstances and further details will be contained within a Forum Page on the Council's website.

PART 11 – RIGHT OF APPEAL

11.1 Legislation

The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 Sections 48, 52 and 77 detail an applicant's right of appeal.

In general terms, where an applicant is aggrieved by the Council's decision to refuse to grant, refuse to renew, suspend or revoke a licence, or impose conditions on a licence the applicant has a right of appeal to the local Magistrates' Court. The only two exceptions are:

- a) in the case of a refusal to grant or renew a hackney carriage vehicle licence where the appeal lies directly to the Crown Court, and
- b) the decision to suspend a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle licence under s68 of the 1976 Act against which there is no right of appeal

12.2 Appeal process

Any appeal must be lodged at the Court within twenty-one days of the applicant receiving notification of the Council's decision. The appeal must state the grounds upon which the appeal is based.

A further right of appeal against the decision of the Magistrates' Court lies with the Crown Court.

PART 12 – DELEGATED POWERS

12.1 Authorised Officers

All Officers of the Council, duly authorised under the Council's Scheme of Delegation and supported by specific written delegations, are responsible for the day to day operation of the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy, save for any issues delegated to the Licensing sub-Committee

All Officers of the Council, duly authorised under the Council's Scheme of Delegation and supported by specific written delegations may issue penalty points in accordance with **Appendix D**.

12.2 Licensing Manager

The following powers are specifically reserved to the Licensing Manager (or, any officer delegated to act in association with the Licensing Manager):

- a) the authorisation of applications that are compliant with this Policy,
- b) minor departures from Policy
- c) any minor amendment with regards to administration procedures as set out in section 1.3.
- d) the issuing of Stop Notices under s68 of the 1976 Act,
- e) temporary suspension of licensed drivers pending a disciplinary hearing before the Licensing Sub-Committee,

12.3 Licensing Sub-Committee

The following powers are specifically reserved to the Licensing Sub – Committee

- a) suspension or revocation of existing licenses
- b) refusal to renew existing licenses,
- c) refusal of new applications,
- d) any major amendments to this Policy in accordance with section 1.3
- e) setting of hackney carriage and private hire licensing fees and charges,
- f) setting of hackney carriage fare tariffs

PART 13 – DEFINITIONS

List of Policy Definitions

All references in this policy document can be linked to the following definitions

Term	Definition
the 1976 Act	the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976
Authorised Council Officer	Any officer of the Council authorised under the Council's Scheme of Delegation as contained within the Constitution
Statutory Guidance	Statutory Taxi & Private Hire Vehicle Standards issued by the Department for Transport (dated July 2020)
IOL Guidance	Guidance on determining the suitability of applicants and licensees in the hackney and private hire trades issued by The Institute of Licensing (dated April 2018)
the Council or the Licensing Authority	Fenland District Council
the trade	any holder of a current driver, vehicle or operator licence issued by Fenland District Council
the District	The geographical region contained within the boundaries of Fenland District
the Licensing Manager	The current post-holder (or the manager of the service area following any subsequent restructure) or any nominated deputy authorised by the Council's Scheme of Delegation
the licence plate or the plate	The vehicle licence plate issued to all vehicles and required to be displayed externally at the rear of all licensed vehicles
this Policy	Fenland District Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy
proprietor licence	either a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle licence
Licensing Committee and Licensing Sub-Committee	The Elected Members Responsible Licensing and can act as a whole committee or can appoint members of the committee to form a sub-committee.

Registered Medical Practitioner	Any person with suitable qualifications in medicine and currently registered with the General Medical Council that is suitably qualified to perform the function of a General Practitioner (Doctor) or higher
driver Licence	Any reference to the term driver licence, unless prefixed by DVLA, refers to a hackney carriage or private hire driver's licence (within the context of the specific paragraph) issued by the Council
vehicle licence	Any reference to the term vehicle licence refers to a hackney carriage or private hire proprietor licence (within the context of the specific paragraph) issued by the Council

Hackney Carriage (as defined by s 38 of the Town Police Clauses Act 1847)

Every wheeled carriage, whatever may be its form or construction, used in standing or plying for hire in any street within the prescribed distance, and every carriage standing upon any street within the prescribed distance, having thereon any numbered plate required by this or the special Act to be fixed upon a hackney carriage, or having thereon any plate resembling or intended to resemble any such plate as aforesaid, shall be deemed to be a hackney carriage within the meaning of this Act; and in all proceedings at law or otherwise the term "hackney carriage" shall be sufficient to describe such carriage: Provided always, that no stage coach used for the purpose of standing or plying for passengers to be carried for hire at separate fares, and duly licensed for that purpose, and having thereon the proper numbered plates required by law to be placed on such stage coaches, shall be deemed to be a hackney carriage within the meaning of this Act.

Private Hire Vehicle (as defined by s 80 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976)

A motor vehicle constructed or adapted to seat fewer than nine passengers, other than a hackney carriage or public service vehicle, which is provided for hire with the services of a driver for the purpose of carrying passengers.

APPENDIX A

THE DEFINITION OF ‘FIT AND PROPER’

The legislation clearly states that the Council may grant a licence only if it is satisfied that the applicant is a ‘fit and proper’ person. We will also refer to the expression “safe and suitable” as another interpretation to the meaning “fit and proper”

At the time of an application, the onus is on the applicant to demonstrate that they meet this requirement, not on the Council to demonstrate that the applicant does not.

When considering disciplinary or enforcement action, **the onus is on the Council to demonstrate that the licence holder no longer meets this requirement.**

Definition of ‘Fit and Proper’

In the absence of a judicially approved definition of “fit and proper”, the Council use the test of:

“Would the Officer charged with the ability to grant a licence allow a person for whom they care or any other person, to get into a licensed vehicle with the applicant day or night?”

IOL Guidance

In deciding any applications as to a driver’s suitability to be licensed, we will have full regard to the guidance document issued by the Institute of Licensing – *Guidance on determining the suitability of applicants and licensees in the hackney and private hire trades.*

In order to further assist in understanding the interpretation of this definition, the Council will be considering issues that assist them in determining whether or not applicants are safe drivers with a good driving record, are mentally and physically fit, are honest, and that they are persons who would not take advantage of their position to abuse, assault or defraud members of the public.

It should be borne in mind that drivers may carry vulnerable members of the public such as elderly persons, unaccompanied children, disabled persons, persons who are incapacitated from alcohol, lone women and foreign visitors. Some examples of areas of concern that the Council will consider include, but are not limited to:

a) Honesty and trustworthiness

Drivers often have knowledge that a customer is leaving a property empty; they have opportunities to defraud drunken, vulnerable or foreign persons; or they have opportunities to abuse their position of trust. For example, all passengers would expect to be charged the correct fare for the journey and be given the correct change; they would expect any lost property to be handed over to the police; and they would expect confidentiality to be maintained between

themselves and the driver.

b) Professionalism

Drivers are often subject to unpleasant, abusive or dishonest behaviour, albeit from a small minority of passengers. Although this is clearly unacceptable behaviour, the Council expects drivers to remain professional at all times and unacceptable behaviour by passengers does not excuse in any way aggressive or abusive conduct by drivers.

Confrontation should be avoided, and all disputes should be resolved through the formal legal channels. Under no circumstances must drivers take the law into their own hands.

c) Good and safe driving ability

Passengers are paying for a service whereby they expect to reach their chosen destination promptly and safely. Drivers must be fully conversant with all road traffic legislation and this Policy and drive in a professional, lawful and safe manner at all times.

APPENDIX B

THE RELEVANCE OF CAUTIONS AND CONVICTIONS

General Principles

The over-riding consideration for the Council in its determination of applications is the promotion of the licensing objectives detailed within section 1.2 of this Policy, public safety.

Although regard will be taken of this Policy, each application will be determined on its own merits.

Where it is necessary for the Council to depart substantially from this policy, clear and compelling reasons will be given for doing so. The purpose of this Appendix is to formulate guidelines, consistent with national guidance, which detail the Council's current stance on the relevance of convictions and cautions in respect of applications for the grant of new licenses, and the renewal of existing licenses, for hackney carriage and private hire vehicle, driver and operator licenses.

If a court has found an applicant guilty of an offence, that person cannot subsequently claim to the Council that they did not commit the offence. If they seek to do so, their representation will not be considered as this is entirely a matter for the courts. The applicant can, however, offer any mitigating circumstances relating to the offence that they wish the Council to consider.

For the purpose of this Policy, the acceptance of a Fixed Penalty Notice will be treated as a conviction. A caution may be treated as a conviction depending on the individual merits and mitigating circumstances of each case.

Period free from conviction

Any reference to a period free from conviction relates to the period commencing from either:

- a) where a custodial sentence has been imposed, from the end of the custodial period; or
- b) in any other case, from the date of conviction.

History

The Council may take into account an applicant's history as a licence holder with this, or any other, Council. In considering whether a person is 'fit and proper' the Council may consider such matters as the applicant's complaint history, their compliance with this Policy, their co-operation with licensing officers' requests, and any other reasonable matters.

DVLA Penalty Points

Hackney carriage and private hire drivers should provide a professional service to the public and must always be aware of the safety of passengers and other road users. Any traffic offence shows a lack of responsibility whilst driving either in terms of vehicle maintenance or the level of driving standards.

Convictions or cautions for traffic offences will not automatically preclude an applicant from obtaining a licence, however, the number, nature and frequency of such offences will be considered. In some circumstances it may be appropriate to issue a licence together with a written warning as to future driving standards detailing the likely effect of further offences. Where there is a significant history of driving offences, an application is likely to be refused.

Six unspent penalty points or less on a current DVLA driving licence

In cases of six (6) unspent penalty points or less on an applicant's DVLA driving licence, an application will usually be granted. A licence granted under these circumstances is likely to be issued together with a verbal warning as to future driving standards detailing the likely effect of further offences.

Seven unspent penalty points on a current DVLA driving licence

In cases of seven (7) unspent penalty points on an applicant's DVLA driving licence, an application may be granted depending on the nature of the offences and the frequency. Although all applications received both new and renewal showing seven (7) or more points on the DVLA licence will be referred to the Licensing Sub-Committee for them to determine the application.

Major Traffic Offences

For the purposes of this section, major traffic offences include, but is not limited to:

- a) driving whilst disqualified,
- b) failure to stop after an accident,
- c) driving without valid insurance,
- d) careless driving, and
- e) driving a vehicle with mechanical defectives (such as brakes, steering, tyres, etc.)
- f) dangerous driving.

If the applicant has been convicted of one major traffic offence, then a licence application will be referred to the Licensing Sub-committee for them to determine.

“Totting Up” under section 35 of the Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988

Where an applicant/licence holder has been disqualified from driving by

the courts under the “totting up” procedure, the Council will normally refuse an application until there has been a period of twelve (12) months free of relevant convictions. If the applicant has demonstrated to the court “exceptional hardship” and avoided a driving disqualification, applications will still normally be refused until there has been a period of twelve (12) months free of relevant convictions. The Council believe that the risk to the public is sufficient to maintain this consistent stance.

Failure to Declare Motoring Offences

Where an applicant/licence holder fails to disclose motoring offences on their application form, even if they have been declared on previous applications or are spent, the Council will normally deal with this by way of the issuing of penalty points. If, however, the Council determines that there was a premeditated intention to deceive, the matter will be considered as an offence of dishonesty and dealt with in accordance with that section of this policy.

Major Traffic Offences resulting in Death

The driving offences of causing death by:

- a) dangerous driving,
- b) careless driving,
- c) driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or
- d) driving unlicensed, disqualified or uninsured,

due to their nature, will be considered by the Council to be an unacceptable risk to public safety and an application will normally be refused.

Drunkenness

Separate consideration will be given to convictions for drunkenness whilst in charge of a vehicle as opposed to drunkenness whilst not in charge of a vehicle due to the differing risk to the public.

In Charge of a Motor Vehicle

The Council considers driving or being in charge of a vehicle whilst under the influence of alcohol as a serious offence causing a high element of risk to the public; however, an isolated incident will not automatically preclude an application from being granted.

- a) A single conviction for any alcohol-related driving offence will normally preclude an application from being granted for a period of five (5) years from the restoration of the DVLA driving licence.
- b) More than one conviction for any alcohol-related driving offence represents an unacceptable risk to the public and an application will be refused.

Not in Charge of a Motor Vehicle

An isolated conviction for drunkenness not associated with driving or being in charge of a motor vehicle will not automatically preclude an application.

- a) Where there is an isolated conviction for disorder and/or drunkenness, a licence will normally be granted together with a verbal warning as to future driving standards detailing the likely effect of further offences.
- b) More than two (2) convictions for disorder and/or drunkenness will normally lead to refusal of an application until such time as a period of three (3) years free of convictions has elapsed.

Drug Offences

The Council considers all offences related to controlled substances as a serious risk to the public.

An applicant with one conviction for any Class A drug related offence, including supplying or trafficking, will be required to show a period of ten (10) years free of convictions before an application is considered.

An applicant with more than one conviction for any Class A drug related offence, including supplying or trafficking, will be considered an unacceptable risk to public safety and an application will be refused.

An applicant with a conviction for any Class B drug related offence, including supplying or trafficking, will be required to show a minimum period of five (5) years free of convictions before an application is considered. The length of period over and above the minimum five (5) years will be dependent on factors such as the nature and severity of the offence, and the length of any custodial sentence.

An applicant with a conviction for any Class C drug related offence will be required to show a period of at least three (3) years free of convictions before an application will be considered.

In all cases, where an applicant has been medically classed as an addict, an application will be precluded until such time as a period of five (5) years has elapsed since the completion of a recognised detoxification programme.

Sexual or Indecency Offences

As hackney carriage and private hire drivers often carry unaccompanied and/or vulnerable people, any applicant with a conviction or caution for any sexual or indecency offence (other than a major offence) will normally be refused a licence until such time as they have been free of convictions for a period of seven (7) to twelve (12) years. The length of period over and above the minimum seven (7) years will be dependent on factors such as the nature and severity of the offence, and the length of any custodial sentence.

Major Sexual or Indecency Offences

For the purpose of this Policy, the following offences will be considered as major sexual or indecency offences with the highest element of risk to the public:

- a) rape.
- b) indecent or sexual assault.
- c) assault by penetration.
- d) making, distributing or possession of child pornography.
- e) trafficking and/or preparatory offences (defined by the Sexual Offences Act 2003); or
- f) sexual offences involving children or vulnerable adults

Any applicant with a conviction for a major sexual or indecency offence will be considered an unacceptable risk to the public and any application will be refused.

Violent Offences

The Council considers all violence related offences as a serious risk to the public; offence of public order will be treated as a violent offence for the purposes of this Policy.

An application will be refused where the applicant has been convicted of:

- a) murder or attempted murder,
- b) manslaughter,
- c) any offence involving the possession of a firearm,
- d) any terrorism-related offence, or
- e) racially aggravated grievous bodily harm or malicious wounding.

An application will be refused where the applicant has been convicted of:

- f) arson,
- a) possession of a weapon (other than a firearm),
- b) any racially aggravated offence,
- c) any offence that may be categorised as domestic violence,
- d) violent disorder or riot.

unless there has been a period of ten (10) years free of conviction.

An application will normally be refused where the applicant has a conviction for a violent offence, other than those listed above, unless there has been a period of five (5) to ten (10) years free of convictions. The length of period over and above the minimum five (5) years will be dependent on factors such as the nature and severity of the offence, and the length of any custodial sentence.

Multiple Offences

Whilst an isolated conviction for a violent offence, other than those listed above, will not normally permanently exclude an application, the Council will have grave concern for public safety if an applicant has committed multiple violent offences.

An application will be refused in cases where an applicant has three (3) or

more separate convictions for violent offences.

Dishonesty

Hackney carriage and private hire drivers are expected to be persons of trust; it is comparatively easy for dishonest drivers to defraud the public, for example, by demanding more than the legal fare or giving incorrect change. Overseas visitors can be confused by the difference in currency and become vulnerable to an unscrupulous driver. Equally, any customer can be defrauded by a driver taking them by any other than the shortest route or by them retaining lost property left in the vehicle. As members of the public entrust themselves to the care of licensed drivers, the Council considers offences involving dishonesty as a serious risk to public safety.

An applicant that has been convicted of an offence related to dishonesty will normally be refused a licence until such time as they have been free of convictions for a period of five (5) to ten (10) years. The length of period over and above the minimum five years will be dependent on factors such as the nature and severity of the offence, and the length of any custodial sentence.

Other Offences and Special Circumstances

If the applicant has declared any other offences not specifically covered by this policy on the relevance of convictions, or the specific circumstances of the application justify it, the application may be referred to the Licensing Sub-Committee for determination in line with the principles of this policy.

In particular, if an applicant/licence holder is not precluded by any one section of this policy but has a series of convictions that in their totality cause concern as to their ability to meet the 'fit and proper' test, the application may be referred to the Licensing Sub-Committee for determination in line with the principles of this policy.

Summary

Except in the most serious of circumstances, an applicant having a previous or current conviction will not normally be permanently excluded from obtaining a hackney carriage or private hire driver's licence.

The Council believe that a person convicted of an offence, who is required to wait for the expiry of a rehabilitation period prior to their application being considered, is more likely to value their licence and ensure that future convictions are avoided.

The Council's over-riding policy objective is to safeguard the safety of the general public by ensuring that all licensed drivers are safe, competent, and are able to maintain their vehicles to an acceptable standard.

By producing clear and transparent guidelines on the relevance of convictions, the Council is seeking to maintain the high standard of hackney carriage and private hire drivers, proprietors and operators within Fenland.

Existing Licence Holders

Any existing licence holder convicted of an offence during the period of their current licence will be subject to the above policy relating to the relevance of convictions as though they were a new applicant

Existing licence holders should be aware that if the Council receives notification from the police that a driver is being investigated for an offence that would preclude the grant of a licence or is likely to result in the revocation of an existing licence, their licence will normally be revoked with immediate effect pending the outcome of the investigation.

- a) In the event that no charges are laid against the licence holder, the licence will ordinarily be reinstated for its original duration.
- b) In the event that the licence holder is found not guilty, the licence will ordinarily be reinstated for its original duration, save for any previous or ongoing concerns relating to the licence holder's ability to meet the 'fit and proper' test.

In this situation the licence holder would be suspended and referred to the Licensing Sub-committee for them to make a decision based on the principles of this policy.

Principles of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 ("the 1974 Act")

Under the 1974 Act, criminal convictions can become spent after a certain period of time, and once spent, for many purposes, can be disregarded completely. The possibility of rehabilitation, and the length of time before rehabilitation occurs, depends on the sentence imposed and not the offence committed. Where a person is sentenced to imprisonment for a period exceeding thirty months, the conviction can never be spent.

Despite the above general principles, the Act does not apply to applicants for hackney carriage and private hire drivers' licenses. This is because the driving of these vehicles is listed as a "regulated occupation" in relation to which questions may be asked as to the suitability of individuals to be granted a licence.

Although the 1974 Act does not prevent any judicial authority, including the Council acting as the licensing authority, from taking spent convictions into account, such convictions are only admissible in so far as they are relevant to the issue as to whether the applicant is a 'fit and proper person' to hold a licence. The determination as to whether certain

convictions are spent, therefore, may be a relevant exercise.

Mitigation and/or Exceptional Circumstances

Where the Licensing Sub-Committee are considering whether an applicant meets the 'fit and proper' person test, the applicant will be entitled to provide them with any written mitigating circumstances.

The applicant will be invited to attend a Licensing Hearing. Prior to attending the hearing, the applicant will be provided with a committee report containing all the information necessary for the Licensing Sub-Committee to review at the hearing. The report will be provided to the applicant at least five (5) days prior to the hearing.

APPENDIX C - DRIVER CODE OF CONDUCT

General Responsibilities of a Licensed Driver

Licensed drivers shall use their best endeavour to promote the image of the trade by:

- a) complying with all aspects of this Policy,
- b) maintaining their vehicles in a safe and satisfactory condition at all times,
- c) attending punctually when undertaking pre-booked hiring,
- d) assisting passengers entering into and alighting from the vehicle,
- e) offering passengers reasonable assistance with luggage, and
- f) behaving in a civil, orderly and responsible manner at all times.

To avoid nuisance to residents when picking up or waiting for a fare, a licensed driver shall:

- a) not sound the vehicle's horn illegally to attract the passenger's attention,
- b) keep the volume of all audio equipment to a reasonable level, and
- c) switch off the engine when required to wait.

Whilst waiting on hackney carriage ranks, a licensed driver shall:

- a) rank in an orderly manner and proceed promptly along the rank in accordance with rank protocol, and
- b) remain in the vehicle where possible,
- c) no vehicle idling.

Whilst waiting at private hire operator premises, a licensed driver shall:

- a) not undertake servicing or repair of vehicles on the highway,
- b) not undertake servicing or repair of vehicles on the premises unless appropriate planning permission has been obtained, and
- c) take whatever action is necessary to ensure that the business operation does not cause unnecessary disturbance to residents.

Driver Dress Code

The Council believes that licensed drivers have a responsibility to dress professionally and appropriately whilst undertaking hackney carriage or private hire work to promote confidence amongst members of the public, especially visitors to the District.

In order to raise the profile of the licensed trade, drivers should always operate in a professional manner and conform to minimum standard of dress and personal hygiene.

The following are deemed unacceptable: -

- a) Clothing not kept in a clean condition or which is torn or damaged;
- b) Words or graphics on any clothing that is of an offensive or suggestive nature or which might offend;

- c) Sportswear (e.g. football/rugby kits, track suits, beach wear etc.);
- d) Sandals with no heel straps, flip flops or any other form of footwear not secured around the heel;
- e) Drivers not having either the top or bottom half of their bodies suitably clothed;
- f) Shorts, other than tailored shorts;

Driver Conduct

The driver shall be respectably dressed, clean and tidy in appearance always whilst their vehicle is being made available for hire.

The driver shall always, when acting in accordance with the drivers licence granted to them, wear or display such badge as supplied by the Council in such position and manner as to be plainly and distinctly visible at all times.

The driver shall not lend the badge to any other person or cause or permit any other person to wear it.

On termination or surrender of a driver's licence, the driver shall return the badge to the Council immediately.

The driver shall behave in a civil, polite and orderly manner at all times and shall take all reasonable precautions to ensure the safety of persons conveyed in, or entering or alighting from, the vehicle.

The driver shall not willfully or negligently cause or permit the vehicle licence plate to be concealed from public view or allow the licence plate to be so defaced as to make any information illegible.

The driver who has agreed to, or has been hired to, be in attendance with the vehicle at an appointed time and place shall, unless delayed or prevented by enough cause, punctually attend with such vehicle at such appointed time and place.

The driver, when hired to drive to a destination, shall proceed to that destination by either the shortest available route, or the believed cheapest route considering all known factors such as roadworks, delays, etc.

The driver shall not convey, or permit to be conveyed, in such vehicle any greater number of persons than the number of persons specified on the Vehicle Licence.

The driver shall convey a reasonable amount of luggage and afford reasonable assistance in loading and unloading luggage.

The driver must not solicit, by calling out or otherwise beg any person to hire or be carried for hire.

The vehicle shall be presented in a clean and tidy condition for each journey.

The Health Act 2006 prohibits smoking in enclosed places, all licensed vehicles are designated as an enclosed public space and therefore it is unlawful for any person to smoke in a licensed vehicle at any time, including any time when it is not being used for hire. Therefore, the driver must not smoke or 'vape' in a licensed vehicle at any time.

The driver shall not drink or eat in the vehicle whilst conveying passengers.

The driver must ensure that the noise emitted from any sound equipment in the vehicle does not cause annoyance to any persons, whether inside or outside the vehicle.

The driver shall not operate the horn as a means of signaling that the vehicle has arrived.

Drivers must not use a mobile phone whilst driving unless it is designed for hands-free operation.

The driver must notify the Council within a period of seven (7) days of:

- a) any criminal conviction, caution, or fixed penalty notice,
- b) any driving endorsement,
- c) any change of medical condition that may impact on the ability to drive,

Lost Property

A licensed driver shall diligently search the vehicle after each passenger has left the vehicle for any property which may have been accidentally left therein.

In the event of lost property being found that is identifiable to a known passenger, the driver shall either return the property to the passenger forthwith or contact the passenger to arrange its return.

Any property found that is not identifiable to a passenger and not subsequently claimed within two (2) days should be taken to the nearest police station and/or left in the custody of a police officer after obtaining a receipt.

Carriage of Animals

A driver may not carry any animal not belonging to a passenger in a

licensed vehicle whilst available for hire or carrying passengers.

Animals, other than assistance dogs, in the custody of passengers may be carried at the driver's discretion, provided they are restrained in a safe manner.

Assistance Dogs

A driver must carry assistance dogs when requested to do so by a passenger unless they have been issued with a medical exemption certificate. Assistance dogs include guide dogs for blind or partially sighted persons, hearing dogs for the hard of hearing or deaf persons, and any other assistance dog which assist a disabled person with a physical or mental impairment.

Carriages of Passengers with Wheelchairs

Passengers with wheelchairs often prefer to travel in normal saloon, estate or multi-passenger vehicles rather than a specially adapted wheelchair accessible vehicle. In these circumstances, a driver **must** carry a passenger with a wheelchair unless the vehicle is unable to accommodate the wheelchair within the luggage compartment.

Drivers of wheelchair accessible vehicles must:

- a) not refuse to carry any passenger with a wheelchair,
- b) not charge any additional fare for passengers with wheelchairs,
- c) be fully conversant with the correct method of operating all ramps, lifts and wheelchair restraints fitted to the vehicle,
- d) ensure that all wheelchairs are firmly secured in the vehicle using an approved restraining system and that the wheelchair brakes have been applied prior to commencing the journey,
- e) ensure that all ramps, lifts and wheelchair restraints fitted to the vehicle are always available in full working order when the vehicle is available for hire.

APPENDIX D - PENALTY POINTS SCHEME

Guidance Notes

The Penalty Points Scheme will operate as follows:

The Council's Enforcement Policy will be fully considered by the enforcing officer when determining the way any breach of legislation or the requirements of this Policy are dealt with. Where it is decided that the use of the penalty points system is appropriate, the points will be issued in accordance with this Appendix. If this appendix allows a range of points for the incident, the enforcing officer will determine the appropriate number of points proportionate to the offence.

Before penalty points are issued, there must be sufficient evidence to prove, on the balance of probabilities, the offence or breach of licensing requirements. The issuing of penalty points is not a formal sanction in its own right; it is merely an open and transparent method of how a driver will be assessed in terms of the 'fit and proper person' test. The points system is predominately an internal management tool for ensuring that drivers who repeatedly contravene regulations and/or this Policy are assessed by the Licensing Manager.

Issuing Process

Points issued to either a proprietor or driver (includes both Hackney Carriage and Private Hire) will be confirmed in writing within ten (10) working days from the discovery of the contravention or the conclusion of an investigation into a complaint, whichever is the later.

When issued, the penalty points will remain "live" for a period of twelve (12) months from the date they are imposed so that only points accumulated in a rolling twelve (12) month period will be considered.

If a driver, proprietor or operator accumulates twelve (12) or more points within a period of one (1) year from the date they are imposed, they will be required to attend a Licensing hearing with the Licensing Sub-Committee, where the appropriate action to be taken in accordance with this Policy.

Once the matter has been dealt with, the points will be removed if a suspension or revocation is imposed. If the "live" period is extended or a written warning given, however, the points will remain "live" for the normal one-year period.

Even though penalty points have been issued by an Authorised Officer of the Council, if it is subsequently found that the driver has previously been issued with penalty points, or has been formally cautioned, for similar

offences, the Council reserve the right to cancel the penalty points and deal with the matter in accordance with the Enforcement Policy and the provisions of Part 6 of this Policy. The penalty points system will operate without prejudice to the Council's ability to take other action under appropriate legislation or as provided for by this Policy.

Appeal Process

There is no right of appeal against the award of penalty points by an Authorised Officer of the Council as this is not a formal sanction.

Table of Offences

The penalty points are issued in conjunction with the level of fine that could be issued by the courts should the applicant be prosecuted for the offence.

The following abbreviations are used.

TPCA – Town Police Clauses Act 1847

LGMPA – Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

EA – Equality Act 2010

TA – Transport Act 1980

HC – Hackney Carriage

PH – Private Hire

Levels of Fines.

Level 1 £250, Level 2 £500, Level 3 £1,000 Level 4 £2,500 Level 5 £5,000

HACKNEY CARRIAGE VEHICLE PROPRIETORS' PROVISIONS				
Legislation	Code	Offence	Maximum Penalty	Penalty Points
s.40 TPCA	H01	Giving false information on an application for HC proprietors licence	Level 1	2
s. 44 TPCA	H02	Failure to notify change of address of HC proprietor	Level 1	2
s. 45 TPCA	H03	Plying for hire without a HC proprietor's licence	Level 4	8
s.47 TPCA	H04	Driving a HC without a HC driver's licence	Level 3	6
s.47 TPCA	H05	Lending or parting with a HC driver's licence	Level 3	6
s.47 TPCA	H06	HC proprietor employing an unlicensed driver	Level 3	6
s.48 TPCA	H07	Failure by HC proprietor to hold a HC driver's licence	Level 1	2
s.48 TPCA	H08	Failure by HC proprietor to produce HC driver's licence	Level 1	2
s.52 TPCA	H09	Failure to display HC plate	Level 1	2

s.54 TPCA	H10	Demanding more than the agreed fare	Level 1	2
s.49 LGMPA	H11	Failure to notify transfer of HC proprietor's licence	Level 3	6
s.50(1) LGMPA	H12	Failure to present HC for inspection as required	Level 3	6
s.50(2) LGMPA	H13	Failure to inform local authority where HC is stored if requested	Level 3	6
s.50(3) LGMPA	H14	Failure to report an accident involving a HC to local authority within 72 hours	Level 3	6
s.50(4) LGMPA	H15	Failure to produce HC proprietors' licence or insurance certificate	Level 3	6
s.57 LGMPA	H16	Making false statement or withholding information to obtain HC vehicle's licence	Level 3	6
s.58(2) LGMPA	H17	Failure to return plate after notice given after expiry, revocation or suspension of HC proprietors licence	Level 3 plus daily fine of £10	6
s.71 LGMPA	H18	Interfering with a taximeter or allowing a vehicle to be used without an approved and tested taximeter	Level 3	6
s.73(1)(a) LGMPA	H19	Obstruction of authorised officer or constable	Level 3	6
s.73(1)(b) LGMPA	H20	Failure to comply with requirement of authorised officer or constable	Level 3	6
s.73(1)(c) LGMPA	H21	Failure to give information or assistance to authorised officer or constable	Level 3	6
s.73(2) LGMPA	H22	Making a false statement to authorised persons	Level 3	6

HACKNEY CARRIAGE DRIVERS' PROVISIONS				
Legislation	Code	Offence	Maximum Penalty	Penalty Points
s.47 TPCA	D01	Driving a HC without a HC driver's licence	Level 3	6
s.52 TPCA	D02	Driver refusing to carry the prescribed number	Level 1	2
s.53 TPCA	D03	Refusal (without reasonable excuse) to take a fare	Level 2	4
s.54 TPCA	D04	Charging more than the agreed fare	Level 1	2

s.55 TPCA	D05	Obtaining more than the legal fare	Level 3- and 1-months imprisonment until the excess is re-funded	6
s.56 TPCA	D06	Travelling less than the lawful distance for an agreed fare	Level 1	2
s.57 TPCA	D07	Failing to wait after a deposit to wait has been paid	Level 1	2
s.58 TPCA	D08	Charging more than the legal fare	Level 3	6
s.59 TPCA	D09	Carrying any other person than the hirer without consent	Level 1	2
s.60 TPCA	D10	Driving a HC without proprietors' consent	Level 1	2
s.60 TPCA	D11	Person allowing another to drive HC without proprietor's consent	Level 1	2
s.61 TPCA	D12	Drunken driving of a HC	Level 1	2
s.61 TPCA	D13	Wanton or furious driving or wilful misconduct leading to injury or danger	Level 1	2
s.62 TPCA	D14	Driver leaving HC unattended	Level 1	2
s.64 TPCA	D15	HC driver obstructing other HC drivers	Level 1	2
s.53(3) LGMPA	D16	Failure to produce HC driver's licence	Level 3	6
s.54 LGMPA	D17	Failing to wear driver's badge when acting in accordance with a hackney carriage driver's licence	Level 3	6
s.57 LGMPA	D18	Making false statement or withholding information to obtain HC driver's licence	Level 3	6
s.61(2) LGMPA	D19	Failure to surrender drivers' licence after suspension, revocation or refusal to renew	Level 3	6
s.66 LGMPA	D20	Charging more than the meter fare for a journey ending outside the district, without prior agreement	Level 3	6
s.67 LGMPA	D21	Charging more than the meter fare when HC used as a private hire vehicle	Level 3	6
s.69 LGMPA	D22	Unnecessarily prolonging a journey	Level 3	6
s.71 LGMPA	D23	Interfering with a taximeter.	Level 3	6
s.73(1)(a) LGMPA	D24	Obstruction of authorised officer or constable	Level 3	6
s.73(1)(b) LGMPA	D25	Failure to comply with requirement of authorised officer or constable	Level 3	6

s.73(1)(c) LGMP A	D26	Failure to give information or assistance to authorised officer or constable	Level 3	6
s.73(2) LGMPA	D27	Making a false statement to authorised persons	Level 3	6

PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE PROPRIETORS' PROVISIONS				
Legislation	Code	Offence	Maximum Penalty	Penalty Points
s.46(1)(a) LGMPA	P01	Using an unlicensed PH vehicle	Level 3	6
s.46(1)(c) LGMP A	P02	Proprietor of a PH vehicle using an unlicensed driver	Level 3	6
s.48(6) LGMPA	P03	Failure to display PH vehicle plate in prescribed manner	Level 3	6
s.49 LGMPA	P04	Failure to notify transfer of PH vehicle licence within 14 days	Level 3	6
s.50(1) LGMPA	P05	Failure to present PH vehicle for inspection as required	Level 3	6
s.50(2) LGMPA	P06	Failure to inform local authority where PH vehicle is stored if requested	Level 3	6
s.50(3) LGMPA	P07	Failure to report an accident involving a PH vehicle to local authority within 72 hours	Level 3	6
s.50(4) LGMPA	P08	Failure to produce PH vehicle licence and insurance certificate	Level 3	6
s.57 LGMPA	P09	Making false statement or withholding information to obtain private hire vehicle's licence	Level 3	6
s.58(2) LGMPA	P10	Failure to return plate after notice given after expiry, revocation or suspension of PH vehicle licence	Level 3 plus daily fine of £10 per day	6
s.71 LGMPA	P11	Interfering with a taximeter	Level 3	6
s.73(1)(a) LGMPA	P12	Obstruction of authorised officer or constable	Level 3	6
s.73(1)(b) LGMPA	P13	Failure to comply with requirement of authorised officer or constable	Level 3	6
s.73(1)(c)	P14	Failure to give information or assistance to authorised officer or constable	Level 3	6
s.73(2) LGMPA	P15	Making a false statement to authorised persons	Level 3	6

s.46(1)(b) LGMPA	D28	Driving a PH vehicle without a PH driver's licence	Level 3	6
s.48(6) LGMPA	D29	Failure to display PH vehicle plate in prescribed manner	Level 3	6
s.53(3) LGMPA	D30	Failure to produce PH driver's licence	Level 3	6
s.54(2) LGMPA	D31	Failure to wear PH driver's badge	Level 3	6
s.57 LGMPA	D32	Making a false statement or withholding information to obtain a PH driver's licence	Level 3	6
s.61(2) LGMPA	D33	Failure to surrender driver's licence after suspension, revocation or refusal to renew	Level 3	6
s.64 LGMPA	D34	Permitting any vehicle other than a HC to wait on a HC stand	Level 3	6
s.69 LGMPA	D35	Unnecessarily prolonging a journey	Level 3	6

s.71 LGMPA	D36	Interfering with a taximeter	Level 3	6
s.73(1)(a) LGMPA	D37	Obstruction of authorised officer or constable	Level 3	6
s.73(1)(b) LGMPA	D38	Failure to comply with requirement of authorised officer or constable	Level 3	6
s.73(1)(c)	D39	Failure to give information or assistance to authorised officer or constable	Level 3	6
s.73(2) LGMPA	D40	Making a false statement to authorised persons	Level 3	6

PRIVATE HIRE OPERATORS' PROVISIONS				
Legislation	Code	Offence	Maximum Penalty	Penalty Points
s.46(1)(d) LGMPA	O01	Operating a PH vehicle without a PH operator's licence	Level 3	6
s.46(1)(e) LGMPA	O02	Operating a vehicle as a PH vehicle when the vehicle or driver is not licensed as a PH vehicle or PH driver	Level 3	6
s.56(2) LGMPA	O03	Failure by PH operator to keep a record of bookings	Level 3	6
s.56(3) LGMPA	O04	Failure by PH operator to keep records of PH vehicles operated by him	Level 3	6
s.56(4) LGMPA	O05	Failure to produce PH operator's licence on request	Level 3	6
s.57 LGMPA	O06	Making a false statement or withholding information to obtain a PH operator's	Level 3	6

		licence		
s.73(1)(a) LGMPA	O07	Obstruction of authorised officer or constable	Level 3	6
s.73(1)(b) LGMPA	O08	Failure to comply with requirement of authorised officer or constable	Level 3	6
s.73(1)(c)	O09	Failure to give information or assistance to authorised officer or constable	Level 3	6
s.73(2) LGMPA	O10	Making a false statement to authorised persons	Level 3	6

EQUALITY ACT 2010				
Legislation	Code	Offence	Maximum Penalty	Penalty Points
s. 168 (2)(a) EA 2010	EA1	Refusal by HC driver to carry an assistance dog unless in possession of an exemption certificate	Level 3	6
s. 168 (2)(b) EA 2010	EA2	HC driver making an additional charge for carrying an assistance dog accompanying a disabled passenger	Level 3	6
s. 170 (1)(a) EA 2010	EA3	Refusal by PH operator to accept booking if the booking is requested by or on behalf of a disabled person or a person who wishes to be accompanied by a disabled person	Level 3	6
s. 170 (2) EA 2010	EA4	PH operator making an additional charge for carrying an assistance dog accompanying a disabled passenger	Level 3	6
s. 170 (3)(a) EA 2010	EA5	PH driver failing or refusing to carry out a booking accepted by the operator if the booking is made by or on behalf of a disabled person or a person who wishes to be accompanied by a disabled person,	Level 3	6
s. 170 (3)(b) EA 2010	EA6	PH driver failing or refusing to carry out a booking accepted by the operator if the booking is that the disabled person is accompanied by an assistance dog.	Level 3	6

Transport Act 1980				
Legislation	Code	Offence	Maximum Penalty	Penalty Points
s.64(2)(a) TA 1980	TR1	Driving a Private Hire vehicle with a roof sign that contravenes section 64(1) of the Act	Level 3	6
s.64(2)(a)	TR2	Causing or permitting a Private Hire vehicle to be driven with a roof sign that contravenes section 64(2)(b)	Level 3	6
Fenland District Council Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver Conditions				
Code	Offence		Max Penalty	Penalty Points
Fenland District Council Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver Conditions				
FDC01	Failure to comply with Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Vehicle Drivers Conditions of Licence			4
Fenland District Council Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Licence Conditions				
FDC02	Failure to comply with Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Vehicle Conditions of Licence			4
Fenland District Council Operator Licence Conditions				
FDC03	Failure to comply with Private Hire Vehicle Operator Conditions of Licence			4

APPENDIX E

CONDITIONS FOR LICENSING STRETCHED LIMOUSINES

Permitted Vehicle Types

Left-hand drive limousines will be permitted as private hire vehicles

Sideways facing seating will be permitted in limousines providing that it conforms to all relevant road traffic vehicle legislation.

All limousines licensed as private hire vehicles must hold a valid Individual Vehicle Approval Certificate and be fitted with tyres of appropriate size and grade for that Approval.

All limousines licensed as private hire vehicles must obtain six-monthly test certificates showing that the vehicle has satisfied the standards of the appropriate MOT Class. The vehicle licence holder is responsible for sourcing a garage approved to carry out such tests and providing documentation attesting to the garage's compliance with the Council's vehicle testing requirements.

All limousines licensed as private hire vehicles must:

- a) reduce their seating capacity to a maximum of eight (8) passengers,
- b) not carry more than eight (8) passengers, including children, at any time,
- c) not carry passengers in any seats in the driver's compartment,
- d) ensure that any advertising of the limousine states the maximum seating capacity.

Legislation

Seatbelts complying to all relevant legislation must be fitted to all forward and rear facing seats and must always be worn by passengers whilst the vehicle is in motion. There is no legal requirement for seatbelts to be fitted on sideways facing seats, however if they are fitted, they must always be worn by passengers whilst the vehicle is in motion.

If alcohol drinks are to be provided in the vehicle:

- a) an appropriate licence under the Licensing Act 2003 must be in effect,
- b) alcohol may only be sold whilst the vehicle is stationary,
- c) whilst the vehicle is in motion, all receptacles containing alcohol shall be securely stored,
- d) if any occupants of the vehicle are below the age of eighteen (18) years old, the vehicle must not contain any alcohol,
- e) all drinking receptacles used in the vehicle must be made of shatterproof glass, plastic or polycarbonate.

The driver shall not play or permit the performance of any media that,

given its age classification or content, is unsuitable for the age of the youngest passenger in the vehicle.

Limousines licensed as private hire vehicles are not permitted to carry luggage within the passenger compartment of the vehicle.

Limousines licensed as private hire vehicles must carry a safety hammer capable of being used to break the window glass of the vehicle. The hammer must be securely located within the driver's compartment.

Limousines that are licensed private hire vehicles may only be booked from and dispatched by a licensed private hire operator and driven by a licensed private hire driver; all three licenses must be issued by the same licensing authority.

APPENDIX F - RIGHT TO WORK

Guidance Notes

From 1 December 2016, the Council is under a new legal duty to ensure that both the driver and operator licenses are only issued to applicants who have lawful immigration status and the right to work in the UK. By law, the Council cannot issue a licence to any applicant that does not satisfy this requirement. This change of law applies to all applicants regardless of where they were born, how long they have lived in the UK and, if they already hold a driver or operator licence, how long they have held that licence.

All applicants will need to attend the Council Offices where a council officer will check your original valid documentation evidencing your right to work in the UK (this can be arranged at the same time as attending for a knowledge test or a DBS appointment). You must attend in person and bring evidence of your right to work in the UK. Only certain types of documentation are acceptable.

a) For applicants who are British Citizens

All you need to provide is a British passport confirming you are a British Citizen

If you do not have a British passport you can produce any of the other documents contained within **List A**.

b) For applicants who are not British Citizens but have no restrictions on their right to work in the UK

All you need to provide is any of the other documents contained within **List A**.

c) For applicants who have restrictions on their right to work in the UK

You will need to produce any of the documents contained within **List B**. If your documentation proves a right to work that expires prior to the normal licence expiry date, your licence will only be granted for the period we have proof of a right to work.

If you have a VISA that confirms your right to reside in the UK, but it is attached to an expired passport we cannot accept this as proof. You will need to apply to the Home Office to obtain acceptable proof, such as a biometric residence permit. Once a valid application to the Home Office has been confirmed, a six-month licence can be granted to allow time for the Home office to process the application.

You must bring original documentation (not a photocopy) and it is your responsibility to make sure you can provide acceptable forms of documentation.

The council officer will check that your documentation is acceptable based on either List A or List B (depending on your circumstances), check that the document is an original and relates to the person providing it, and

take a photocopy for Council records.

If the documentation you provide demonstrates that you have a permanent right to work in the UK (from **List A**) you will not be required to produce documentation for future applications.

In other cases, you will be required to provide your documentation when you next apply to renew your licence so that your right to work can be verified again at that point in time.

List A

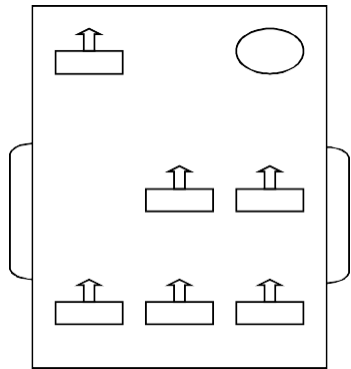
- a) A passport showing the holder, or a person named in the passport as the child of the holder, is a British Citizen or a citizen of the UK and Colonies having the right of abode in the UK.
- b) A passport or national identity card showing the holder, or a person named in the passport as the child of the holder, is a national of a European Economic Area country or Switzerland.
- c) A Registration Certificate or Document Certifying Permanent Residence issued by the Home Office to a national of a European Economic Area country or Switzerland.
- d) A Permanent Residence Card issued by the Home Office to the family member of a national of a European Economic Area country or Switzerland.
- e) A current Biometric Immigration Document (Biometric Residence Permit) issued by the Home Office to the holder indicating that the person named is allowed to stay indefinitely in the UK, or has no time limit on their stay in the UK.
- f) A current passport endorsed to show that the holder is exempt from immigration control, is allowed to stay indefinitely in the UK, has the right of abode in the UK, or has no time limit on their stay in the UK.
- g) A current Immigration Status Document issued by the Home Office to the holder with an endorsement indicating that the named person is allowed to stay indefinitely in the UK or has no time limit on their stay in the UK, together with an official document giving the person's permanent National Insurance number and their name issued by a Government agency or a previous employer.
- h) A full birth or adoption certificate issued in the UK which includes the name(s) of at least one of the holder's parents or adoptive parents, together with an official document giving the person's permanent National Insurance number and their name issued by a Government agency or a previous employer.
- i) A birth or adoption certificate issued in the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man or Ireland, together with an official document giving the person's permanent National Insurance number and their name issued by a Government agency or a previous employer.
- j) A certificate of registration or naturalisation as a British Citizen, together with an official document giving the person's permanent National Insurance number and their name issued by a Government agency or a previous employer.

List B

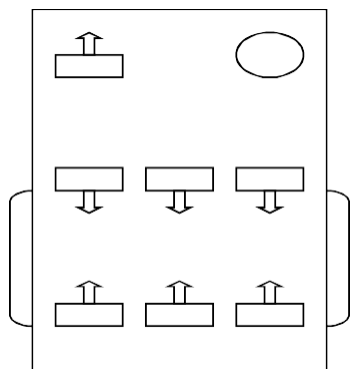
- a) A current passport endorsed to show that the holder is allowed to stay in the UK and is currently allowed to do the type of work in question.
- b) A current Biometric Immigration Document (Biometric Residence Permit) issued by the Home Office to the holder which indicates that the named person can currently stay in the UK and is allowed to do the work in question.
- c) A current Residence Card (including an Accession Residence Card or a Derivative Residence Card) issued by the Home Office to a non-European Economic Area national who is a family member of a national of a European Economic Area country or Switzerland or who has a derivative right of residence.
- d) A current Immigration Status Document containing a photograph issued by the Home Office to the holder with a valid endorsement indicating that the named person may stay in the UK, and is allowed to do the type of work in question, together with an official document giving the person's permanent National Insurance number and their name issued by a Government agency or a previous employer.
- e) A Certificate of Application issued by the Home Office under regulation 17(3) or 18A(2) of the Immigration (European Economic Area) Regulations 2006, to a family member of a national of a European Economic Area country or Switzerland stating that the holder is permitted to take employment which is less than 6 months old together with Verification from the Home Office Evidence and Enquiry Unit. *This licence may be granted for six months from the date of the Certificate of Application.*
- f) A Verification issued by the Home Office Evidence and Enquiry Unit to you, which indicates that the named person may stay in the UK because they have an in-time application, appeal or administrative review and which is outstanding. *This licence may be issued for six months from the date of the licence decision.*

APPENDIX G

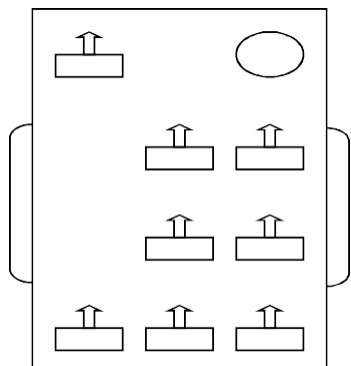
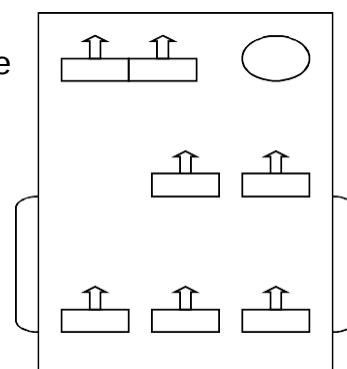
APPROVED SEATING CONFIGURATIONS IN MULTI-PASSENGER



Six-seater vehicle



Seven-seater vehicle



Eight-seater vehicle

 Driver

 Passenger Seat  Passenger facing

 Door

APPENDIX H

VEHICLE COMPLIANCE STANDARDS

Guidance

Standards of vehicle test to be applied in addition to the statutory requirements of the MOT test.

This document is intended to provide practical guidance to the Council's vehicle testers charged with assessing vehicles being issued with a Certificate of Compliance.

It will also give a general insight into the type of examination the vehicle will be subjected to before it can be issued with a Certificate of Compliance.

It is the responsibility of owners, operators and drivers to ensure that their vehicles always comply with the current rules and regulations of the appropriate Road Traffic Act and current Construction and Use Regulations.

Where a vehicle is found not to conform to the requirements of an MOT test and/or the compliance test standards, that vehicle may have its licence suspended until the Council's authorised officers are satisfied that the vehicle is fit to be licensed.

No adaptations, alterations, modifications, additional equipment, optional extras except for tow bars fitted to a professional standard, are to be fitted to the vehicles without the prior approval of the Council.

Any owner wishing to alter or modify the vehicle, including the fitting of extras or alternative parts to those supplied by the manufacturer must seek prior permission from the Council.

Certain modifications may require special inspection by the Council's Authorised Officer or his/her nominee before approval is given. (A fee may be applicable).

When a vehicle presented for compliance test fails that vehicle will have to be re-submitted for a full compliance test and the fee charged will be the re-test fee.

All compliance failure items must be resolved before a vehicle licence plate can be issued.

APPENDIX I – FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL BYELAWS

These Byelaws were made under Section 68 of the Town Police Clauses Act, 1847, and Section 171 of the Public Health Act, 1875, by the Fenland District Council with respect to hackney carriages in Fenland District.

Interpretation

1) Throughout these byelaws “the Council” means the District Council of Fenland and “the District” means Fenland District.

Provisions regulating the manner in which the number of each hackney carriage corresponding with the number of its licence shall be displayed.

- 2) a) The proprietor of a hackney carriage shall cause the number of the licence granted to him in respect of the carriage to be legibly painted or marked on the outside and inside of the carriage, or on plates affixed thereto.
b) A proprietor or driver of a hackney carriage shall.
 - i. I not willfully or negligently cause or suffer any such number to be concealed from public view while the carriage is standing or plying for hire.
 - ii. not cause or permit the carriage to stand or ply for hire with any such painting, marking or plate so defaced that any figure or material particular is illegible.

Provisions regulating how hackney carriages are to be furnished or provided

3) The proprietor of a hackney carriage shall.

- a) provide sufficient means by which any person in the carriage may communicate with the driver.
- b) cause the roof or covering to be kept water tight.
- c) provide any necessary windows and means of opening and closing not less than one window on each side.
- d) cause the seats to be properly cushioned or covered.
- e) cause the floor to be provided with a proper carpet, mat, or other suitable covering.
- f) cause the fittings and furniture generally to be kept in a clean condition, well maintained and in every way fit for public service.
- g) provide means for securing luggage if the carriage is so constructed as to carry luggage.
- h) provide an efficient fire extinguisher which shall be carried in such a position as to be readily available for use.
- i) provide at least two doors for the use of persons conveyed in such a separate means of ingress and egress for the driver.

- 4) (a) The proprietor of a hackney carriage shall cause any taximeter, with which the carriage is provided to be so constructed, attached, and maintained as to comply with the following requirements, that is to say:
- b) the taximeter shall be fitted with a key, flag, or other device the operation of which will bring the machinery of the taximeter into action and cause the word "HIRED" to appear on the face of the taximeter.
 - c) such key, flag or other device shall be capable of being locked in such a position that the machinery of the taximeter is not in action and that no fare is recorded on the face of the taximeter.
 - d) when the machinery of the taximeter is in action there shall be recorded on the face of the taximeter in clearly legible figures a fare not exceeding the rate or fare which the proprietor or driver is entitled to demand and take for the hire of the carriage by distance in pursuance of the tariff fixed by the Council in that behalf;
 - e) the word "FARE" shall be printed on the face of the taximeter in plain letters so as clearly to apply to the fare recorded thereon.
 - f) the taximeter shall be so placed that all letters and figures on the face thereof are at all times plainly visible to any person being conveyed in the carriage, and for that purpose the letters and figures shall be capable of being suitably illuminated during any period of hiring;
 - g) the taximeter and all the fittings thereof shall be so affixed to the carriage with seals or other appliances that it shall not be practicable for any person to tamper with them except by breaking, damaging or permanently displacing the seals or other appliances.

Provisions regulating the conduct of the proprietors and drivers of hackney carriages plying within the district in their several employments and determining whether such drivers shall wear any and what badges.

- a) when standing or plying for hire, keep the key, flag or other device fitted in pursuance of the byelaw in that behalf locked in the position in which no fare is recorded on the face of the taximeter.
- b) before beginning a journey for which a fare is charged for distance and time, bring the machinery of the taximeter into action by moving the said key, flag or other device, so that the word "HIRED" is legible on the face of the taximeter and keep the machinery of the taximeter in action until the termination of the hiring;
- c) cause the dial of the taximeter to be kept properly illuminated throughout any part of the hiring which is during the hours of darkness; this being the time between half-an-hour after sunset to half-an-hour before sunrise, and also at any other time at the request of the hirer.

- 6) A proprietor or driver of a hackney carriage shall not tamper with or permit any person to tamper with any taximeter with which the carriage is provided, with the fittings thereof or with the seals affixed thereto.
- 7) Every proprietor of a hackney carriage not provided with a taximeter fitted with a flag or other device bearing the words "for hire" shall cause the carriage to be provided with a sign so constructed as to comply with the following requirements, that is to say:
 - a) the sign shall bear the words "For Hire" in plain letters at least one and a half inches in height and
 - b) the sign shall be capable of being so operated that it indicates clearly and conveniently to persons outside the carriage whether or not the vehicle is for hire.
- 8) The driver of a hackney carriage provided with a sign in pursuance of Byelaw 7 shall
 - a) when standing, or plying for hire, operate the sign so that the words "For Hire" is clearly and conveniently legible by persons outside the carriage.
 - b) as soon as the carriage is hired, whether by distance or by time, operate the said sign so that the words "For Hire" are not conveniently legible to persons outside the carriage.
- 9) the driver of a hackney carriage shall, when plying for hire in any street and not actually hired,
 - a) where appropriate proceed with reasonable speed to one of the stands fixed by the Council, where appropriate, in that behalf except that in March the driver shall not station the carriage in the stand if the other two places in the stand are occupied by carriages owned by his firm or by the firm for which he is driving;
 - b) on arriving at a stand in Wisbech not already occupied by the full number of carriages authorised to occupy it, station the carriage immediately behind the carriage or carriages on the stand and so as to face in the same direction.
 - c) in respect of b) above from time to time when any other carriage immediately in front is driven off or moved forward cause his carriage to be moved forward so as to fill the place previously occupied by the carriage driven off or moved forward.
- 10) a proprietor or driver of a hackney carriage, when standing or plying for hire, shall not, by calling out or otherwise, importune any person to hire such

carriage and shall not make use of the services of any other person for the purpose.

- 11) The driver of a hackney carriage shall behave in a civil and orderly manner and shall take all reasonable precautions to ensure the safety of persons conveyed in or entering or alighting from the vehicle.
- 12) The proprietor or driver of a hackney carriage who has agreed or has been hired to be in attendance with the carriage at an appointed time and place shall, unless delayed or prevented by some sufficient cause, punctually attend with such carriage at such appointed time and place.
- 13) A proprietor or driver of a hackney carriage shall not convey or permit to be conveyed in such carriage any greater number of persons than the number of persons specified on the plate affixed to the outside of the carriage.
- 14) If a badge has been provided by the Council and delivered to the driver of a hackney carriage he shall, when standing or plying for hire, and when, hired, wear that badge in such position and manner as to be plainly visible.
- 15) The driver of a hackney carriage so constructed as to carry luggage shall, when requested by any person hiring or seeking to hire the carriage,
 - a. conveys a reasonable quantity of luggage.
 - b. affords reasonable assistance in loading and unloading;
 - c. affords reasonable assistance in removing it to or from the entrance of any building, station, or place at which he may take up or set down such person.

Provisions fixing the rates or fares to be paid for hackney carriages within the district, and securing the due publication of such fares

- 16) The proprietor or driver of a hackney carriage shall be entitled to demand and take for the hire of the carriage the rate or fare prescribed by the Council the rate or fare being calculated by distance unless the hirer express at the commencement of the hiring his desire to engage by time.

Provided always that where a hackney carriage furnished with a taximeter shall be hired by distance the proprietor or driver thereof shall not be entitled to demand and take a fare greater than that recorded on the face of the taximeter, save for any extra charges authorised by the Council which it may not be possible to record on the face of the taximeter.

- 17) a. The proprietor of a hackney carriage shall cause a statement of the fares fixed by the Council in that behalf to be exhibited inside the carriage, in clearly distinguishable letters and figures.
 - b. The proprietor or driver of a hackney carriage bearing a statement of fares in accordance with this byelaw shall not wilfully or negligently cause or suffer the letters or figures in the statement to be concealed or rendered illegible at any time while the carriage is plying or being used for hire.

Provisions securing the safe custody and re-delivery of any property accidentally left in hackney carriages, and fixing the charges to be made in respect thereof

- 18) The proprietor or driver of a hackney carriage shall immediately after the termination of any hiring or as soon as practicable thereafter carefully search the carriage for any property which may have been accidentally left therein.
- 19) The proprietor or driver of a hackney carriage shall, if any property accidentally left therein by any person who may have been conveyed in the carriage be found by or handed to him,
 - a. carries it as soon as possible and in any event within 48 hours, if not sooner claimed by or on behalf of its owner, to the office of the Council, and leave it in the custody of the officer in charge of the office on his giving a receipt for it.
 - b. is entitled to receive from any person to whom the property shall be re-delivered an amount equal to five pence in the pound of its estimated value (or the fare for the distance from the place of finding to the office of the Council, whichever be the greater) but not more than five pounds.

Suitability Guidance

Guidance on determining the suitability of applicants and licensees in the taxi and private hire industry.

2024

Print version 2025



Produced by the Institute of Licensing in partnership with:

Foreword

Taxi licensing began in 1635, when King Charles I limited the numbers of hired coaches in London. Charles II seemed disinclined to abandon regulation. He issued more licences, set fees and standards.

The present licensing system has its roots in the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 which declared “Hackney carriages to be licensed”. Although the requirement for licensing was national, standards and enforcement were local, through Commissioners, and taxi licensing has been determinedly local ever since.

The first – and most recent - edition of this Guidance was published in April 2018. It noted that there had been “no recent Statutory or Ministerial Guidance as to how decisions should be approached or what matters are relevant or material to such a decision”.

In my work as Chair of the Independent Inquiry into Telford Child Sexual Exploitation, I heard lacerating accounts from children sexually exploited by taxi drivers. I further heard that it was essentially impossible for the Borough to enforce local standards as over the years different – even neighbouring - authorities had maintained different approaches to drivers’ characters and behaviours, as to required driver training and even as to vehicle condition.

The first edition of this Guidance contained advice as to each of those elements, and detailed consideration of the effect of particular types of offending on suitability, all of which plainly **influenced the Department for Transport’s subsequent Statutory Guidance. Since then, the Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Safeguarding and Road Safety) Act 2022** has mandated the use of the NR3S database by English local authorities.

The progress is plainly welcome, and this thoughtful and comprehensive second edition of the Guidance will no doubt influence the debate as its predecessor did. But while this Guidance sets a goal of consistency, as long as the system allows drivers to choose their licensing authority by price, rather than by the area in which they operate, it is the low-cost, lighter touch regulators that will thrive and those (like Telford) who have put in place thoughtful suitability criteria, including high quality training, that will struggle for custom. It seems to me that is not only an odd result of something deemed “localism”, but also one profoundly not in the public interest.

In 2018 a government report¹ recommended legislation for national minimum standards for taxi and PHV licensing; the Government agreed², and said that it would take forward legislation “when time allows”. Perhaps, after almost 400 years, an Act in the reign of Charles III might finish the job his predecessors began.

TOM CROWTHER KC
23ES CHAMBERS

¹ <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/60085e35e90e073ecce20064/taxi-and-phv-working-group-report-document.pdf>

² <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5f76f9308fa8f55e36671b26/taxi-task-and-finish-gov-response.pdf>

Stephen Turner 1953 - 2025

The “Guidance on determining the suitability of applicants and licensees in the hackney carriage and private hire industry” owes its existence to Stephen Turner.

He chaired the Suitability Working Group that drafted the first edition of this guidance. That work commenced in 2015 and culminated in the publication of the guidance in 2018.

It had always been intended to keep the guidance under review and with that in mind, the Group reconvened in 2022 following the publication of the statutory taxi and private standards by the Department for Transport in 2020 (and delayed by the pandemic).

Once again Stephen rose to the challenge of chairing that Group, and the current document was published in November 2024. It is a testament to the work of the group and Stephen’s skill as a chairman that to date there has been no criticism of the revised guidance from any quarter.

On both occasions it was his drive, determination, ability and humour that enabled a varied group of professionals to work together to create such a useful and important document. He overcame any problems, setbacks or obstacles with aplomb and kept the group focused and effective.

This document stands as a tribute to all that Stephen contributed to the field of licensing, and it was a privilege, and above all a pleasure, to work with him.

James T H Button

President, Institute of Licensing

Acknowledgements

The IoL originally published its *Guidance on determining the suitability of applicants and licensees in the hackney and private hire trades* in April 2018. The original Guidance was the result of many months of work by a dedicated group of individuals who formed the Suitability Working Group.

The April 2018 publication was formally endorsed by the Local Government Association, Lawyers in Local Government, and the National Association of Licensing and Enforcement Officers. It was gratifying when Chapter 4 of the original guidance was closely mirrored in the annex at s 10 of the [Department of Transport's Statutory taxi and private hire vehicle standards](#), published in 2020.

The Guidance was and is intended to assist local licensing authorities in considering their own local licensing policies on determining the suitability of applicants and licence holders for taxi and private hire licensing. It was well received among such authorities generally, with many updating or reviewing their policies by incorporating the guidance in part or in whole, ahead of or subsequent to the publication of the DfT standards. The Guidance has been successfully cited in courts where it has been so incorporated by authorities and as a stand-alone reference.

The Suitability Working Group had an informal review planned for 2021. Work started in 2022 (delayed from 2021 due to the pandemic), with an initial consultation (round 1) in 2022 on the effectiveness and level of adoption of the guidance. The Working Group assessed the round 1 consultation responses but opted to pause the work pending the then anticipated imminent publication of the DfT's *Best Practice Guidance* which eventually followed in November 2023.

The draft revised Guidance was subject to a further consultation (round 2), which closed on 30 September 2024, following which all the consultation responses were carefully reviewed in producing this revised Guidance.

With sincere thanks to the Suitability Working Group:

- Stephen Turner, Solicitor at Hull City Council (Working Group Chair)
- Phil Bates, Licensing Manager, Southampton City Council
- Ellie Birch, IoL Executive Assistant
- James Button, James Button & Co Solicitors
- Linda Cannon, former Licensing Manager, Basingstoke Council
- Yvonne Lewis, Licensing Manager, City & County of Swansea
- John Miley, former Licensing Manager (Broxtowe Council) and National Chair for NALEO
- Sue Nelson, IoL Director of Policy and Stakeholder Engagement
- Professor James Treadwell, Professor of Criminology, Staffordshire University

Suitability Guidance Preface

Chapter 1: Introduction is an introduction to the Suitability Guidance. It refers to the importance of the licensing regime in protecting public safety and sets out the legislative position that a licensing authority must be satisfied has been met by an applicant before deciding if they are a fit and proper person to hold a licence.

Chapter 1 refers to policies having a “bright line approach” and explains the position in this regard. Finally, Chapter 1 sets out some of the approaches taken in later chapters of the Suitability Guidance, which will be looked at in turn.

Chapter 2: Offenders, Offending, Re-offending and Risk of Harm - An Overview, has been extensively reviewed. It looks at patterns of behaviour for offenders, and aims to assist licensing authorities in considering previous convictions and non-conviction information (complaints etc) alongside time factors (time elapsed), trends and the nature of behaviours in order to make a reasoned judgement of suitability when there are matters of concern.

While considering all criminal behaviour, this chapter looks in detail at sexual offences, which are naturally of key concern when considering an individual's suitability to hold a licence. It underlines the role of licensing as a form of safeguarding and risk management of activities, recognising that licensees are in positions of trust, and have the opportunity to take advantage of potentially vulnerable passengers on a daily basis.

Chapter 3: Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Overview provides an overview of taxi and private hire licensing law, including the legislative framework, and the principal objective of the licensing regime (to protect the public).

The chapter looks at the licence types under the regime, and considers the application and decision-making processes and key considerations in each case, including the legal thresholds which apply (for example the need for the local authority to be satisfied that an individual is a fit and proper person before granting a licence). It emphasises the need for reasoned decisions and clear records of decisions to be maintained. There are references to relevant parts of the [DfT's Statutory taxi and private hire standards](#) and the system of recording refusals, suspensions and revocations on the NR3S database (mandated in England and wholly adopted in Wales).

Chapter 3 acknowledges that the vast majority of applicants and licence holders are decent, law-abiding people who work hard to provide a good service to their customers and the local community. They are an essential part of our communities, and many local residents rely heavily on them. The licensing regime, when working correctly, should exclude those who are not safe and suitable from the profession, protect licensees as a whole by increasing public confidence, and uphold the professionalism of the industry.

Chapter 4: Guidance on Determination has been subject to much discussion and review. The overriding principle of listing categories of offending rather than listing specific offences has been maintained. This is essential as consideration is not confined to conviction information - non-conviction information is relevant and must be considered alongside convictions. In addition, a list of specific offences would be too narrow, and become superseded by new offences, or arguments that a particular offence was “different” from a listed one.

Some categories have been expanded. For example, “exploitation” now includes “criminal harassment”; “offences involving violence” includes fear of violence and violence against property, animals and the State; and “sex and indecency offences” includes a reference to the “Sex Offenders’ Register” and “barred” lists.

Additional categories have been included: “alcohol misuse or dependency”, in addition to “drugs misuse” (which now includes “dependency”), and a further category of “discrimination”. There is also a section on behaviours which looks at non-criminal behaviours which would be a potential cause for concern.

Motoring offences have been an area which has been subject to intense discussion. This was the main area of feedback on the original Guidance, in particular the reference to minor traffic or vehicle related offences. The “motoring offences” section sets out the guidelines in relation to motoring offences and the reasoning behind them.

Chapter 4 maintains the view set out in the original guidance, that the considerations under each category should be applied when considering applicants and licensees for driver, operator and vehicle proprietor licences.

Version history

- 28th October 2024 – Formally approved
- 13th November 2024 – First published
- 20th November 2024 – [WLGA endorsement added](#) (Chapter 1, para 1.1)
- 4th August 2025 – Tribute to Stephen Turner added, cover title amended to replace 'hackney carriage' with 'taxi', and IoL logo updated to include current version which represents the merged IoL /NALEO organisation (effective April 2025)

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Terminology

This Guidance follows the approach to terminology used by the Department for Transport (DfT) in its Best Practice Guidance:

Vehicles licensed under section 37 of the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 and section 6 of the Metropolitan Carriage Act 1869 are referred to in that legislation as ‘hackney carriages’. This term is also used in older regulations. In more recent legislation the term ‘taxi’ is used.

In this document ‘taxi’ means a hackney carriage. It does not include private hire vehicles (PHVs).

When referring to both types, the term “taxi and private hire” is used.

Chapter 1: Introduction

- 1.1 This document was originally published by the Institute of Licensing in April 2018 and this revised edition follows extensive consultation and review. As previously, it has been produced by the Institute working in partnership with the Lawyers in Local Government (LLG) and the National Association of Licensing and Enforcement Officers (NALEO). We are grateful to all those organisations for their contributions and endorsement. The Guidance has also been endorsed by the National Anti-Fraud Network (NAFN) and the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA).
- 1.2 The overriding aim of any Licensing Authority when carrying out its functions relating to the licensing of Taxi or Private Hire Drivers, Vehicle Proprietors and Operators, must be the protection of the public and others who use (or can be affected by) Taxi and Private Hire services. It is a regulated activity, and the purpose of regulation is to ensure, so far as possible, that those engaging in this activity are suitable persons to do so. Entry requirements are necessarily high to ensure the safety of the public, and the reputation of those who are themselves licensed.³
- 1.3 The relevant legislation provides that any person must satisfy the authority that they are a fit and proper person to hold a licence and that is a test to be applied after any applicant has gained any reasonably required qualifications.⁴ The onus lies with the applicant or licensee to satisfy the licensing authority that they are or remain a fit and proper person.⁵ It is a key part of the process of an application when the decision is made, whether by a committee, sub-committee or an officer under a Scheme of Delegation. It involves a detailed examination of their entire character in order to make a judgement as to their fitness and propriety.
- 1.4 If a licensee falls short of the fit and proper standard at any time after grant, the licence should be revoked or not renewed on application to do so.
- 1.5 There is some Statutory and non-statutory guidance as to how such decisions should be approached or what matters are relevant or material to a decision contained in the DfT *“Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards”*, *“Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing best practice guidance for licensing authorities in England”* and the Welsh Government’s *“Taxi and private hire vehicles: licensing guidance”*, but it is not comprehensive. This document complements that guidance as does the LGA’s Taxi and Private Hire

³ See paras 3.2 of *“Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards”* Department for Transport 2020 (available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-taxi-and-private-hire-vehicle-standards> and 3 of *“Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing best practice guidance for licensing authorities in England”* Department for Transport revised in 2023 (available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/taxi-and-private-hire-vehicle-licensing-best-practice-guidance>) and the Welsh Government Guidance Document *“Taxi and Private Hire Vehicles: licensing guidance”* revised in September 2024’ (available at <https://www.gov.wales/taxi-and-private-hire-vehicles-licensing-guidance-html>)

⁴ Except vehicle proprietors. In those cases, there is no “fit and proper” requirement, but the authority has an absolute discretion over granting a licence.

⁵ This was confirmed by the High Court in *R v Maidstone Crown Court, ex p Olson* [1992] COD 496 QBD

Licensing Councillor's Handbook and any further Government guidance. It is gratifying and seen as an endorsement of the previous edition of this document that the DfT accepted the suggested convictions guidance in Chapter 4, almost in its entirety.

- 1.6 Local authorities in England should be complying with the requirements of the Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Safeguarding and Road Safety) Act 2022 which requires use of the NR3S database hosted by the National Anti-Fraud Network. Such use is currently advisory in Wales.
- 1.7 Chapter 4 of this document provides licensing authorities and their decision makers with guidance on determining suitability, taking into account the character of the applicant or licensee. Licensing authorities are encouraged to adopt this guidance within their own Taxi and Private Hire policies. In particular it considers how regard should be had to the antecedent history of the applicant or licence holder and its relevance to their 'fitness and propriety' or 'character'. As with any guidance it should not be slavishly followed but it provides a starting or reference point from which decisions can be made taking into account the particular merits of each case. Any departure from the adopted policy should be the exception, rather than the rule.
- 1.8 A licensing authority can say "never" in a policy, known as taking a 'bright line approach', but it remains a policy, and as such does not amount to any fetter on the discretion of the authority. This approach was endorsed by the High Court in *R (on the application of Nicholds)*.⁶ Each case will always be considered on its merits having regard to the policy, and the licensing authority can depart from the policy where it considers it appropriate to do so. This will only happen where the licensing authority considers that there are exceptional circumstances which warrant a different decision. Full and detailed reasons must be provided to the applicant or licensee for every decision, including the reasons for any departure from the Council's policy.
- 1.9 In Chapter 2 this document explores the current academic thinking behind an individual's tendencies to reoffend. It is clear that this is not an exact science and that there is no meaningful and precise statistical evidence that can assist in the setting of policy. Given the important function of licensing to protect the public, any bar should be set at the highest level which is reasonable, albeit subject to the exercise of discretion as is set out in paragraphs 1.7 and 1.8 and Chapters 3 and 4.
- 1.10 Chapter 3 of this document sets out in overview form the Institute's view of the current law, practice and procedure relating to Taxi and Private Hire licensing. Neither Chapter 3 nor any other part of this document constitutes formal legal advice which licensing authorities should obtain for themselves where required.
- 1.11 The guidance in Chapter 4 contains no detailed list of offences. All offences are allocated to a general category such as 'dishonesty' or 'drugs'. This prevents it being argued that a specific offence is not covered by a licensing authority's policy or guidance as it 'is not on the list' and also prevents arguments that a firearm is more serious than a knife and should

⁶ [2006] WHC (Admin), [2007] 1 WLR Admin Crt

lead to differentiation. In each case, appropriate weight should be given to the evidence provided.

- 1.12 The guidance in Chapter 4 cannot have the force of legislation, new or amended; the need for which is both abundantly clear to, and fully supported by the Institute and the other organisations working with it. It is intended to help local authorities achieve greater consistency so that applicants are less able to shop between authorities. It is acknowledged that this cannot be fully achieved without the imposition of national standards.
- 1.13 In preparing this document the Institute's Working Party has consulted with and considered the issues from all perspectives including, Councillors, Licensing Officers, Lawyers, the Taxi and Private Hire Trades, Academics, the Probation Service, NAFN, National and Local Governments, interested Charities and the Police.

Chapter 2: Offenders, Offending, Re-offending and Risk of Harm - An Overview

- 2.1 The aim of local authority licensing of the taxi and PHV trades is to protect the public.⁷ With this in mind, Public Protection must be at the forefront of the decision maker's mind when determining whether an individual is considered a "fit and proper person" to hold a licence.
- 2.2 This section aims to provide a brief overview of public protection, how to determine risk and factors to be considered when an applicant seeks to demonstrate a change in their offending behaviour. While all offending behaviour can be considered when it comes to fitness and propriety, the unique position that licensed taxi and private hire drivers occupy in terms of their occupation and the opportunities and risks that come with such employment mean that some focus and understanding of the nature and character of violent and sexual offences is valuable. Such offences are often important as indicators that an individual might present a risk of serious harm to other people.
- 2.3 The licensing process places a duty on the local authority to protect the public. Given the nature of the role, it is paramount that those seeking a living in the trades meet the required standards. As the previous offending behaviour can be considered as a predictor in determining potential future behaviour as well as culpability, it is essential that the decision maker(s) considers all relevant factors including previous convictions, cautions and complaints and the time elapsed since these were committed. The wider and broader the evidence base that can be considered, the better the judgement is likely to be.
- 2.4 Crime tends to emerge in teen years, and many people commit offences but do not find themselves persistently involved in crime and criminality. Those who do become more frequent offenders tend to share several risk factors: associations with delinquent peers; school/employment problems; family problems; certain types of mental health problems; and alcohol/substance abuse are the most important predictors of persistence in crime. The predictors of persistence in crime highlight the multiple causes of persistent antisocial behaviour, and how antisocial behaviour and attitudes can be quite deep rooted. While people who commit crime can and do change and reform, there is also useful predictive value in previous conduct, as past behaviour is often a good indicator of underlying attitudes and potential future conduct.
- 2.5 There has been extensive research into the reasons behind why some individuals commit crimes, why some learn from their mistakes and stop offending whilst others find themselves in a cycle of repeat offending. Several theories have evolved over many years, offering insight into the reasons behind offending behaviour. One common theme is that no two crimes are the same and that risk cannot be eliminated, or the future predicted. While this is true, such points should not be used to downplay the vital role that disbarring people of bad character from roles and occupations which provide heightened opportunity for them to harm plays. What can be done, is to examine each case on its

⁷ DfT 'Taxi and Private Hire Licensing – Best Practice Guidance, Section 3

individual merits, and look at the risks involved along with any change in circumstances since any offences were committed to assist in making the decision.

- 2.6 A key factor when considering an application from an individual with any convictions, cautions or complaints recorded is public protection. This includes assessing the risk of re-offending and the risk and scale of harm.⁸ Risk assessment tools are regularly employed by those who are responsible for managing individuals who have committed offences in the criminal justice system. Local Authorities are not always privy to this information, so it is important when they are making decisions around suitability that they have an understanding of offending behaviour and risk of re-offending in generic terms.
- 2.7 Flaud⁹ noted that risk is in principle, a matter of fact, but danger is a matter of judgment and opinion. He goes on to note that risk may be said to be the likelihood of an event occurring; danger may be the degree of damage (harm) caused should that event take place.¹⁰
- 2.8 In the Criminal Justice system, His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service refers to risk in two dimensions. That being the likelihood that an offence will occur, and the impact / harm of the offence should it happen. Generally, when making a decision around probability and likelihood of re-offending, consideration is needed towards both static and dynamic factors. While no risk assessment can be infallible, there has been a growing recognition for the need to make justifiable and defensible decisions based on public protection.
- 2.9 Understanding the person, their history (including any offending) and their patterns of behaviour and establishing both risk factors related to future offending and protective factors which reduce the risk of future offending is at the centre of managing risk. Risk Factors are aspects of an individual offender's life that have inclined them towards harmful behaviour. Protective factors are the features of an individual's life that may incline them away from harmful behaviour.
- 2.10 Static factors are historical and do not change such as age, and previous convictions. These can be used as a basis for actuarial assessments and are core in considering an individual's potential to reoffend in future.¹¹ For example, about half imprisoned adults are reconvicted within two years of release from custody. It is also widely accepted that persons with a large number of previous offences have a higher rate of proven reoffending than those with fewer previous convictions.¹² In 2022 adults

⁸ Kemshall, H. (2008). Understanding the Management of High Risk Offenders (Crime and Justice). Open University Press

⁹ Flaud, R. (1982). Cited in, Gendreau, P., Little, T. and Goggin, C. (1996). A meta-analysis of the predictors of adult offender recidivism: what works! Criminology, 34, 557-607.

¹⁰ Gendreau, P., Little, T. and Goggin, C. (1996). A meta-analysis of the predictors of adult offender recidivism: what works! Criminology, 34, 557-607.

¹¹ Craig, L. A. and Browne, K. B (2008). Assessing Risk in Sex Offenders: A Practitioner's Guide Paperback.

¹² Ministry of Justice (2015): Transforming Rehabilitation: a summary of evidence on reducing reoffending. London: Ministry of Justice.

released from custody or starting a court order had a proven reoffending rate of 33.4% within a year of their conviction in court or release from prison.¹³

- 2.11 Dynamic factors are considered changeable and can vary over time. They include attitudes, cognitions and impulsivity.¹⁴ Behaviour can also be a factor in assessing risk, and behavioural changes can be used in making risk assessments. It is documented that the greater their unmet need, the more likely an individual is to re-offend. When considering whether an individual has been rehabilitated or is a risk, it is important to have regard towards the motivation behind their offending, and the dynamic risk factors present at the time of offences against the steps taken to address such factors, thus reducing the risk of re-offending.
- 2.12 It is of note that problems and/or needs are more frequently observed in offender populations than in the general population.¹⁵ Many of these factors are interlinked and embedded in an individual's past experiences. These factors can impact upon that person's ability to change their behaviour, particularly if the areas identified have not been addressed or support has not been sought. Needs will vary from individual to individual and will rely upon their level of motivation and the nature of the offence committed. However, we also ought to recognise that, and at core, known previous behaviour is the best predictor of future behaviour bar none. Good risk assessment is evidence based and uses statistical evidence, understands offence type and risk factors, but also is individualised and takes account of factors that can reduce or increase an individual's risk. It is also holistic and takes account of behaviour in a range of contexts and a good understanding of the whole person at the centre of the assessment. It also requires a somewhat critical and sceptical attitude and doubt towards emotional claims and assertions of change. Often persistent offenders will claim that they have stopped offending only to be reconvicted. These are assertions from the subject that are challenged by contradictory behaviours.
- 2.13 Whether a person who has offended is a risk in the future is a complex debate and has given rise to extensive publications, theories and changes in legislation, with many focusing upon the need for more rehabilitation projects as a means of reducing re-offending rates. Central to the rehabilitation of offenders is the concept of criminogenic needs. This has been described in criminal justice as "any area where the offender has needs or deficits, in which a reduction in the need or deficit would lead to a reduction in the risk of re-conviction. An individual's ability to address and reduce such needs relies heavily upon their motivation to change and desist and often takes place over a period of time".¹⁶
- 2.14 Kurlychek, in her study noted that "a person who has offended in the past has been found to have a high probability of reoffending, but this risk is highest in the time period

¹³ [Proven reoffending statistics: April to June 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/proven-reoffending-statistics)

¹⁴ McGuire, J. (2008). A review of effective interventions for reducing aggression and violence. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences*, 363(1503), 2577-2597

¹⁵ Nash, M. (1999) *Police, Probation and Protecting the Public*. London: Blackwell Press.

¹⁶ National Offender Management Service (2016). *Public Protection Manual Edition. Proven Reoffending Statistics Quarterly Bulletin, October 2015 to December 2015*

immediately after arrest or release from custody and, thereafter, decreases rapidly and dramatically with age”.¹⁷ In contrast though, one of the few long-term studies (The Sheffield Desistance Study)¹⁸ which examined the lives of 113 men aged 19–22 years over four years. Their subsequent convictions over the next ten years generally demonstrate a pattern of continuing convictions, but with major crime-free gaps suggesting with some very persistent offenders, desistance, if seen as continuing cessation from crime, may not be fulfilled.

- 2.15 A consistent finding in criminological literature is that many male offenders tend to desist from crime over time, and risk of offending even for those previously convicted reduces once individuals reach the aged 30 years and over.¹⁹ It is well documented that the change occurs for various reasons; for example, as a result of successful treatment, natural maturation or the development of positive social relationship.²⁰ Female offenders are also considered more likely to desist from offending as they mature. The peak age of reported offending for females is 14 compared to 19 for males.²¹ It is true that generally many people do age out of crime, but we should be careful not to count all crime as the same. Serious sexual and violent offences may not be the same as acquisitive offences.
- 2.16 Some people are convicted of crime and will not be further convicted. The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 aims to help some offenders re-enter the workforce and makes some convictions spent after a determined period. For people who have been involved in persistent and more serious offending, it is a difficult and complex process, likely to involve lapses and relapses. Some criminal convictions, especially those attracting lengthy prison sentences are not considered spent. Some individuals may never desist from crime.²² As a result, it is important for individuals to evidence change in their behaviour before they can be considered to present a low risk of re-offending. Often the only way of achieving this is through lapse of significant time.
- 2.17 Typically, the longer the time elapsed since an offence has been committed, the more likely the individual has desisted from crime. It is noted that the more a life is lived crime-free, the more one comes to see the benefits of desistance.²³ Demonstrating a change in offending behaviour and an ability to make effective choices takes time and comes with some ambiguity for those who have committed offences. A study in 2007 looking into previous convictions and the links to re-offending concluded that “individuals who have offended in the distant past seem less likely to re-offend or offend again than individuals

¹⁷ Kurlychek, M C, Brame, R (2007). Scarlet letters and recidivism: Does an old criminal record predict future offending? University of South Carolina.

¹⁸ Bottoms, A.E. & Shapland, J. (2016) Learning to desist in early adulthood: the Sheffield Desistance Study. In: J. Shapland, S. Farrall & A.E. Bottoms (Eds.) Global perspectives on desistance: reviewing what we know, looking to the future. Abingdon: Routledge or Shapland, J. (2022) Once convicted? The long-term pathways to desistance. *The Howard Journal of Crime and Justice*, 61, 271–288. <https://doi.org/10.1111/hojo.12473>

¹⁹ Serin, R, C. and Lloyd, C.D (2008). Examining the process of offender change: the transitions to crime desistance. 347–364.

²⁰ Nash, M. (1999) Police, Probation and Protecting the Public. London: Blackwell Press.

²¹ Trueman, C.N. (2015). Women and Crime. The History Learning Site. Ingatestone: Essex.

²² Farrell, S (2005). Understanding Desistance from Crime: Emerging Theoretical Directions in Resettlement and Rehabilitation (Crime and Justice) Paperback.

²³ Maguire, M., Morgan, R. and Reiner, R. (2002). The Oxford Handbook of Criminology. 3rd Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

who have offended in the recent past”.²⁴ This is likely substantively true, and yet there are some categories of crime, and some crime types, perhaps particularly sexual offences, where caution is very much needed, because those crimes are so much less frequently taken through the justice system successfully and the offence may illustrate more complex attitudinal and behavioural and thinking patterns. For general offences (not violence and sexual offences), some academics have suggested that a period of around seven years is when the risk of offending for convicted offenders and non-convicted population becomes the same.²⁵

- 2.18 Although it is not possible to determine the future behaviour of an individual, taking steps to reduce risk and protect the public can be achieved by following correct processes and guidance. Having regard to an individual’s previous behaviour and their potential to cause harm as a result of the choices they have made plays a significant part when deciding whether to grant a licence. Being able to evidence change in behaviour will involve consideration of the circumstances at the time of the offence, steps taken to address any issues identified and that person’s ability to sustain such change. This can be a long process that can only be achieved over time.

- 2.19 Offences where taxi and private hire drivers are victims are much more frequent than offences by such drivers. Taxi and private hire drivers are often in situations where they can face victimisation in terms of violence, threat, assault and false allegations. It must be recognised that taxi and private hire drivers have access to people who are vulnerable because of their situation, very often as a sole individual unsupervised in a vehicle. A small minority of people may seek to abuse their positions, or even secure positions because of the potential to take advantage of passengers’ trust and vulnerability.

- 2.20 It is estimated that 23.5 per cent of males in England and Wales in the age range 10 – 52 in 2006 had had a previous a conviction. For adult males aged between 18 and 52 the figure is 28.2 per cent. Almost a third of all adult males in the UK have a criminal conviction. However, often individuals will come to light and be recognised because of patterns of behaviour, not always criminal behaviour. It ought to be remembered that a great deal of criminal behaviour in some categories may never come to be known about by authorities, and it is widely accepted that, for example, violence against women and girls, domestic violence and sexual crimes tend to be the most under reported and least convicted.

- 2.21 According to ONS crime statistics for England and Wales,²⁶ 20% of women (1 in 5) and 4% of men will experience sexual violence in their lifetime. It is vital that it is recognised that a great deal, and likely most, of the sexual abuse may never be reported. It has been suggested that some 40% of adults who are raped will not report, and unreported childhood cases are likely much higher. The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW)

²⁴ Kurlychek, M C, Brame, R (2007). Scarlet letters and recidivism: Does an old criminal record predict future offending? University of South Carolina.

²⁵ Soothill, K and Francis, B (2009) *When do ex-offenders become like non-offenders?* Howard Journal of Criminal Justice, 48 (4). pp. 373-387. ISSN 0265-5527

²⁶

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingdecember2023#overall-estimates-of-crime>

estimated that 1.1 million adults aged 16 years and over experienced sexual assault in the year ending March 2022 (798,000 women and 275,000 men).

- 2.22 It is claimed that only some 10-15% of sexual offences are reported to the police in any year, and even when reported, sexual crimes are amongst the hardest to prove. In 2018 less than 1 in 65 reports of rape (1.5%) resulted in a charge or summons. However, according to CSEW statistics for the year ending March 2022, sexual offences recorded by the police were at the highest level recorded. In May 2021, there were 95,844 people on the sex offenders register in England and Wales, yet based on the accessing of Child Sexual Exploitation material the UK's National Crime Agency estimate that there could be between some 550,000 and 850,000 people in the UK who pose varying forms of sexual risk to children. While there is no consensus about the pathways between non-contact and contact offending, it seems sensible to consider even one incidence of possession of child sexual exploitation material must be seen as a risk flag.
- 2.23 There are a range of crimes that can be considered as sexual offences, including non-consensual crimes such as rape or sexual assault, crimes against children including child sexual abuse or grooming, and crimes that exploit others for a sexual purpose, whether in person or online. Crimes can occur between strangers, friends, acquaintances, current or ex-partners, or family members. The passage of time does not prevent the effective prosecution of sexual offences, and an increasing number of cases referred to the CPS by police feature allegations of a non-recent nature.
- 2.24 There is also complexity added to the category of sexual offences as there can be a sexual component in offences that may not be categorised primarily as a sexual offence, and the category runs a full gambit from sexually motivated homicides to non-contact internet offending in the form of possession of Child Sexual Exploitation material.
- 2.25 Sexual offences are prosecuted as part of the CPS Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy. This is an overarching framework to address crimes that have been identified as being committed primarily but not exclusively by men against women, but we ought not forget that men also commit sexual offences against men and boys. Reynhard Sinaga, a postgraduate student jailed for life in 2020 is who is thought to be the UK's "most prolific rapist"²⁷ was convicted of 136 rapes in Manchester and is believed by police to have assaulted over 200 men. There is a huge variation in sexual offenders, and there is a range of complex factors in their offending, which can vary hugely and significantly. Some historic crimes are no longer crimes due to changes in legislation since their conviction. For example, alterations in the age of consent that existed for gay men.
- 2.26 There is no singular type when it comes to sexual offending, and there are many gaps in knowledge. We know that most sexual offenders are men. Sex offenders constitute a diverse population of individuals and can be classified into types based upon characteristics and motivations of offending. The most common classification systems are those differentiating between types of rapists, child molesters, female sex offenders, juvenile sex offenders and cyber-sex offenders. There is also sometimes a division

²⁷ <https://www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/McCann-Sinaga-Shah-judgment-111220.pdf>

between non-contact (online) and contact offending, and discussions about whether the former is a pathway to the latter. It is often said that reoffending amongst sexual offenders is lower than that of general offenders, but we need to be careful to also frame that with the general knowledge we have about the complexity and difficulty in securing convictions for sexual offences generally.

2.27 Sex offenders constitute a similarly diverse group of individuals who begin offending for a range of reasons. Many offenders do not fit into discrete categories. Like violent offenders, sexual offenders have unique personal and criminal histories, and the attitudes and beliefs that support their deviant behaviour can vary. There is no clear-cut profile of a sex offender. Some offenders were sexually abused as children, but others have no such history. Some are unable to function sexually with adult partners and so prey on children, while others also have sexual relations with adults. Research shows that sexual offenders exhibit a variety of characteristics. Abusive people, including sexual offenders, typically think they are unique, they are different from other people, they have a sense of entitlement and do not have to follow the same rules as everyone else. Rather than being unique, abusers and sexual offenders often have a lot in common with one another, including their patterns of thinking and behaving. They are also often highly manipulative of other people and situations and will employ a range of tactics that can include lying, upsetting others or intimidating them with threats. Equally, they may attempt to charm people, engender feelings of sympathy to manipulate, feign interest or concern, or attempt to elicit sympathy. Sex offenders when compared to other offenders generally:

- Are more likely to deny their behaviour and guilt, can lack empathy (and victim) empathy and ability to understand or see things from the point of view of others.
- Have inappropriate or be very fixed in attitudes and character, including attitudes to sex.
- Put themselves in places and situations where vulnerable victims are present. (Offenders may frequent an amusement arcade or join a social media site or gaming platform where they will regularly be engaging with youth on a peer level or attempt to become a taxi or private hire driver" as referred to in the Telford report).²⁸
- The motivations to sexually offend can vary from offender to offender and offence to offence, but the specific deviant sexual motivations including paraphilias (a persistent and recurrent sexual interests, urges, fantasies, or behaviours of marked intensity involving objects, activities, or even situations that are atypical in nature) are often apparent. However sexual offenders will commit nonsexual offences.

2.28 Like sexual offenders, violent offenders are a diverse population, whose offences generally tend to be either expressive (a loss of control and anger) or instrumental (violence that is used to acquire or gain something, including some forms of acquisitive violence). We know that men commit far more violent offences than women and a very small group (less than

²⁸ Para 4.193 Report of the Independent Inquiry Telford Child Sexual Exploitation available at <https://www.iitcse.com/>

5% of the male population tend to commit around 50-70% of violent crime.²⁹ Often the most persistent violent offenders commence offending early in life and are characterised by criminal versatility, but because of their overt nature, much violence (with exceptions around domestic and intimate partner violence) has tended to be detected and prosecuted. Serious violence tends to result in conviction.

- 2.29 The risk of harm is not always linked to the offences committed previously, as persistent and repeat offenders often escalate or fluctuate in terms of the severity of crimes and the type of offences that they commit, and offenders often are not specialist and do not restrict themselves to one sort of crime.
- 2.30 Criminal versatility and a diversity of criminal offence types can also be indicative of underlying antisocial attitudes. Previous behaviour is a good indicator of future risks. Any conviction for a serious violent or sexual offence suggests at a degree of risk to the public that is heightened over those who have no convictions.
- 2.31 Beyond a very narrow core of hard cases, there are issues in both the boundaries of what constitutes the kind of behaviour that can be considered dangerous, which is open to dispute, and to what degree of likelihood of future risk should be required before an individual can be said to present a danger of future offending and subject to restrictions?
- 2.32 What is vital when considering violent and sexual offences are the access and opportunity that the offender requires to attempt to commit any offence. This is the focus of situational and administrative criminology. Situational crime prevention (SCP) is an applied criminological paradigm founded on two distinct, complementary conceptions of criminal situations. The first is the rational choice and the second is the routine activities perspectives.³⁰
- 2.33 SCP approaches consider criminal situations and understand that crime occurrences are essentially 'opportunities' that arise when an already motivated or criminally disposed offender, having rationally weighed up in terms of effort, risk, and reward decides to commit an offence. All else being equal, a crime is more likely to be committed when it requires little effort, when the would-be offender judges that there is a low risk of that crime being detected and punished, and when they anticipate they will meet their intended outcome. Core to the crime is a suitable target being available, there is the lack of a suitable guardian to prevent the crime from happening, and a motivated offender is present.
- 2.34 Licensing is a form of safeguarding and risk management. By virtue of the role and function of what opportunities and privileges a taxi or private hire drivers' licence affords, there can be a great deal of opportunity to access people who are situationally vulnerable, particularly those in the night-time economy. John Worboys (also known as John Radford)

²⁹ Moffitt, T. E. (1993). Adolescence-limited and life-course-persistent antisocial behaviour: A developmental taxonomy. *Psychological Review*, 100(4), 674–701. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.100.4.674>

³⁰ Cornish, Derek B., and Ronald V. Clarke. "Crime as a rational choice." *Criminological theories: Bridging the past to the future* (2002): 77-96, and *Social Change and Crime Rate Trends: A Routine Activity Approach*, Lawrence E. Cohen and Marcus Felson Vol. 44, No. 4 (Aug., 1979)

the British convicted serial sex offender, known as the Black Cab rapist, was convicted in 2009 for attacks on 12 women committed between 2007 and 2008. In 2019, he was convicted for attacks on four more women, the earliest of which took place in 2000. Police say he may have had more than 100 victims while operating in London and Dorset.

- 2.35 The taxi trade and licensing has also featured as part of the backdrop of discussions of Child Sexual Exploitation in a number of English towns. These crimes have frequently been discussed as the product of ‘grooming gangs’. While this term has been controversial, the night-time economy (NTE) and particularly take aways, taxi and private hire companies and children's homes all also featured as part of the situational and social context of offending across a number of English towns such as Telford, Rotherham, Bradford, Luton, and Rochdale. Specifically vulnerable, young white females were predominately the victims of Bangladeshi and Pakistani male perpetrators’, some of whom were employed as taxi drivers.
- 2.36 While the term ‘grooming gangs’ has become a contentious one bringing often unhelpful claims and counterclaims, the reality is that much Child Exploitation (CE), including Child Sexual Exploitation and Child Criminal Exploitation happens when vulnerable young people (under the age of 18) are encouraged, forced or manipulated into criminal or sexual acts. While not all victims of CE and CSE are vulnerable by virtue of factors other than age, many victims have a range of heightened vulnerabilities. These can include problems at home, statutory care experiences, trauma, emotional and physical neglect, experiences with a family member with mental health or substance use disorders, experiences of domestic violence and abuse, poverty, experiences of racism and discrimination and experiences of violence in the community. Those in the taxi and private hire trades can also gain useful local knowledge and insight around concerns about exploitation and can be extremely useful in crime prevention and encouraging and promoting community safety.
- 2.37 Individuals applying for or renewing taxi and private hire driver’s licences are subject to an enhanced DBS with barred lists check. There are debates as to whether taxi and private hire driving should become a regulated activity within the provisions of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.
- 2.38 When making decisions around individuals being ‘fit and proper’ it is important that too much weight is not placed on individual testimony or evidence that cannot be substantiated. Rather, a focus should be on:
 - What further offence(s) might the individual commit or exhibit?
 - Would they cause serious harm?
 - Who might the victim(s) be? Can they be accessed via occupational role?
 - What features might contribute to serious harm (the risk factors)?
 - What might protect against serious harm (the protective factors) and are they able to be guaranteed?
 - How probable is a high-risk scenario (likelihood)?

- How quickly could a further serious harm take place (imminence)?

2.39 Focusing on questions of access and opportunity and seeing licensing as a mechanism of safeguarding is vital when deciding if someone should be -licensed. While refusal of a licence is a restriction for the individual, it is also a method of situational safeguarding that can serve to prevent future victims.

Chapter 3: 'Taxi' and Private Hire Licensing Overview

- 3.1 Taxis and private hire vehicles are used by almost everyone in our society occasionally, but they are used regularly by particularly vulnerable groups: children; the elderly; disabled people; and the intoxicated, and a taxi or private hire driver has significant power over a passenger who places themselves, and their personal safety, completely in the driver's hands.
- 3.2 Local authorities (districts, unitaries and Welsh Councils) and TfL are responsible for taxi and private hire licensing.
- 3.3 The principal legislation is the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 and the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. The purpose of taxi and private hire licensing is detailed in the DfT *"Taxi and Private Hire Licensing best practice guidance for licensing authorities in England"* para 3. which states:

"The primary and overriding objective of licensing [the taxi and PHV trades] must be to protect the public."

Supported by para 3.2 of the DfT Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards which states:

"When formulating a taxi and private hire vehicle policy, the primary and overriding objective must be to protect the public."

And acknowledged in part 1 of the Welsh Government Guidance document "Taxi and Private Hire Vehicles: Licensing Guidance" which states:

"The licensing regime needs to be updated to remedy the current problems; ensure that the taxi and PHV licensing system is fit for modern Wales; and promote public safety."

- 3.4 Within the two licensing regimes, there are 5 types of licence: taxi vehicle; private hire vehicle; taxi driver; private hire driver and private hire operator.

- 3.5 In relation to all these licences, the authority has a discretion over whether to grant. Whilst there is some guidance issued by the DfT,³¹ there are no national standards.³²
- 3.6 Drivers and operators cannot be granted a licence unless the authority is satisfied that they are a “fit and proper person” to hold that licence (see Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 ss 51 and 59 in respect of drivers; s55 in respect of operators).
- 3.7 There are no statutory criteria for vehicle licences; therefore, the authority has an absolute discretion.
- 3.8 In each case, it is for the applicant or licensee to satisfy the licensing authority that they are “fit and proper”, not for the authority to prove that they are not.
- 3.9 The authority has powers to grant or refuse a licence, renew or refuse to renew it on application and, during the currency of the licence, suspend or revoke it.
- 3.10 What is the role of these powers, and how do authorities determine an application, or take action against a licence? Each Licensing Authority should adopt a cohesive Taxi Licensing Policy.³³ If a matter or situation is not addressed or covered by the Policy, that does not mean that matter cannot be taken into account by the Authority: in such circumstances the Authority will have to consider the issue from first principles, as if it had not adopted any policy on this topic.
- 3.11 Whenever a decision is made by a licensing authority (whether that is by Councillors or Officers), full and detailed reasons for that decision must be given.³⁴ This requirement is not just for refusals. It is important that all decisions are recorded correctly, and reasons given. This will include grants (on first application and renewals), addition of conditions, suspension, revocations and refusals. To assist decision makers, [Appendix 1](#) contains guidance on recording decisions against NR3S criteria and [Appendix 2](#) contains an example of a Decision Notice, both of which are adaptable for a council’s own purposes.

³¹ “Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards” Department for Transport 2020 (available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-taxi-and-private-hire-vehicle-standards> and 3 of “Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing best practice guidance for licensing authorities in England” Department for Transport revised in 2023 (available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/taxi-and-private-hire-vehicle-licensing-best-practice-guidance>)]

³² The Government has stated that it will introduce national standards for taxi and private hire licences. However, at the time of writing (May 2024) this will be after the next General Election. In Wales, Welsh Government has consulted on new legislation, but again this is awaited.

³³ see Para 3.1 Dft Statutory Standards

³⁴ This was made clear by the Court of Appeal in R (app Hope and Glory Public House Ltd) v Westminster City Magistrates’ Court [2011] EWCA Civ 31, [2011] 3 All ER 579, CA.

Taxi & Private Hire Drivers

- 3.12 There are two different occupations: taxi drivers and private hire drivers. In each case there are identical statutory criteria to be met before a licence can be granted. Some authorities grant separate taxi or private hire licences whilst others grant “dual” or “combined” licences to cover both occupations. Some authorities also issue “restricted” licences to drivers who only wish to perform home to school transport (H2S) work. Irrespective of the type or purpose of the licence, the decision making criteria remain the same.
- 3.13 An applicant must hold a full DVLA or equivalent driver’s licence, have the right to work in the UK, comply with tax conditionality requirements and be a “fit and proper” person.³⁵
- 3.14 The driving licence element is a question of fact. Although there are some issues with foreign driving licences, ultimately a person either has, or does not have a driving licence.
- 3.15 An applicant must have the right to remain, and work in the UK.³⁶ Again, this is ultimately a question of fact, and the local authority should follow the guidance issued by the Home Office.³⁷
- 3.16 The tax conditionality rules require any driver applying to renew their licence to demonstrate they are registered for tax with HMRC; new applicants must acknowledge that they will be required to register with HMRC.³⁸
- 3.17 Those requirements are all questions of fact. It is the whole issue of “fit and proper” that causes local authorities the most difficulties. It has never been specifically judicially defined but it was mentioned in *Leeds City Council v Hussain*.³⁹ Silber J said:

“... the purpose of the power of suspension is to protect users of licensed vehicles and those who are driven by them and members of the public. Its purpose [and], therefore [the test of fitness and propriety], is to prevent licences being given to or used by those who are not suitable people taking into account their driving record, their driving experience, their sobriety, mental and physical fitness, honesty, and that they are people who would not take advantage of their employment to abuse or assault passengers.”

³⁵ Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. Section 51(1) covers private hire drivers, and section 59(1) covers taxi drivers.

³⁶ Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 S51(1)(a)(ii) in respect of private hire drivers and S59(1)(a)(ii) in respect of taxi drivers.

³⁷ “Guidance for Licensing Authorities to Prevent Illegal Working in the Taxi and Private Hire Sector in England and Wales” - Home Office, June 2024 available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/licensing-authority-guide-to-right-to-work-checks>

³⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complete-a-tax-check-for-a-taxi-private-hire-or-scrap-metal-licence>

³⁹ [2002] EWHC 1145 (Admin), [2003] RTR 199 Admin Crt

- 3.18 This is reflected in a test suggested by the DfT Statutory guidance (although it is not a statutory test):

Without any prejudice, and based on the information before you, would you allow a person for whom you care, regardless of their condition, to travel alone in a vehicle driven by this person at any time of day or night?’⁴⁰

- 3.19 It is suggested that the expression “safe and suitable” person to hold a driver’s licence is a good interpretation which neither adds nor removes anything from the original term of “fit and proper” but brings the concept up to date.

- 3.20 How can a local authority assess and then judge whether or not someone is safe and suitable to hold a drivers’ licence?

- 3.21 The local authority has the power to require an applicant to provide:

“such information as they may reasonably consider necessary to enable them to determine whether the licence should be granted and whether conditions should be attached to any such licence.”⁴¹

This “information” can include any pre-conditions or tests that they consider necessary

- 3.22 Some of these are mandatory, such as Proof of right to work, Tax conditionality on renewal, NR3S search (conducted by the licensing authority, but this is only advisory in Wales). Others are universally required such as medical assessments.⁴² Some authorities may require further information such as:

- Enhanced DBS Certificates (recommended although widely regarded as mandatory),
- sign-up to the DBS update service;
- Knowledge tests;
- Driving tests;
- Disability awareness/training;
- Periodic signed declarations;
- Spoken and written English tests;
- CSAE (child sexual abuse and exploitation) awareness/training;
- County lines awareness/training.
- Relevant taxi qualifications

- 3.23 The provision of information in these terms can satisfy the local authority that a person has the skills and competencies to be a professional driver to hold a licence. However, the

⁴⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-taxi-and-private-hire-vehicle-standards/statutory-taxi-and-private-hire-vehicle-standards#decision-making~:text=5.4%20Fit%20and%20proper%20test>

⁴¹ Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 s57(1)

⁴² See Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 s57(2)

concepts of safety and suitability go beyond this. There is the character of the person to be considered as well.

- 3.24 In making the decision, as to whether an applicant is, or remains a fit and proper person, the licensing authority can take into account any information which is relevant to determining that question. This can include information obtained by the LADO (the Local Authority Designated Officer). The LADO is a statutory appointment under the Children Act 1989 whose role is to oversee and manage investigations following allegations being made against individuals who work or come into contact with children regularly. Their role is described in detail in *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023*. The basis of the lawfulness of the sharing of LADO information is that it is being used by the Licensing Authority for the same purpose as it was obtained by the LADO, namely safeguarding.
- 3.25 Both taxi and private hire drivers are exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. This means that there are no “spent” convictions and that any and all criminal convictions (apart from “protected convictions” and “protected cautions” where they have been declared⁴³) can be taken into account by the local authority in assessing safety and suitability, but only relevant spent convictions should be considered by the decision maker.⁴⁴
- 3.26 All Applicants/Licensees should be required to obtain an Enhanced DBS Certificate with Adult and Children Barred Lists checks⁴⁵ and to provide this to the Licensing Authority. This must be for “other workforce”+ “taxi”. Where a driver undertakes home to school contract work for an Education Authority (EA), they must obtain a different, separate Enhanced DBS Certificate to provide to the Education Authority, because that activity is “regulated activity” within the meaning of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, whereas general or day to day “private hire and taxi driving is not. The EA Enhanced DBS is for” Child Workforce“. A Licensing Authority cannot accept a Child Workforce DBS, and an Education Authority cannot accept an Other Workforce + Taxi DBS.⁴⁶ Licensees should also be required to maintain their Certificates through the DBS Update Service throughout the currency of their licence. Some licensing authorities issue “restricted” licences solely for home to school transport use.

⁴³ “Protected convictions” and “protected cautions” are generally minor and elderly matters that do not appear on any DBS Certificates.

⁴⁴ See *Adamson v Waveney District Council* [1997] 2 All ER 898 QBD

⁴⁵ “For Taxi [driver] Licensing purposes the correct level of check is always the Enhanced level check, with the Adults and Children’s Barred list check. Other Workforce should always be entered at X61 line 1 and Taxi Licensing should be entered at X61 line 2” - para 6.2 “Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards” Department for Transport 2020 (available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-taxi-and-private-hire-vehicle-standards>).

⁴⁶ This is because School Transport is “regulated activity” within the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, whilst general taxi and private hire driving is not.

- 3.27 If any new applicant has spent 6 months or more (whether continuously or in total), while aged 18 or over residing outside the United Kingdom, evidence of a criminal record check from the country/countries covering the relevant period should be required.⁴⁷ Where an applicant is unable to provide a satisfactory criminal record check, a licence will not be granted because the licensing authority cannot be satisfied as to their fitness and propriety.
- 3.28 Local authorities should have a policy to provide a baseline for the impact of any convictions, cautions or other matters of conduct which concern a person's safety and suitability.⁴⁸ This may be 'never' due to the type of offence/behaviour and the risk of re-offending capability as a taxi driver.
- 3.29 The character of the driver in its entirety must be the paramount consideration when considering whether they should be licensed. It is important to recognise that local authorities are not imposing any additional punishment in relation to previous convictions or behaviour. They are using all the information that is available to them to make an informed decision as to whether or not the applicant or licensee is or remains a fit and proper person to hold such a licence.
- 3.30 There are occasions where unsuitable people have been given licences by local authorities, or if refused by the authority, have had it granted by a court on appeal.
- 3.31 Often this is because of some perceived hardship. Case law makes it clear that the impact of losing (or not being granted) a driver's licence on the applicant and their family is not a consideration that can be taken into account.⁴⁹ This then leads to the question of whether the stance taken by some local authorities is robust enough to achieve that overriding aim of public protection.
- 3.32 However, all too often local authorities depart from their policies and grant licences (or do not take action against licensees) without clear and compelling reasons. It is vital that those making these decisions, whether they are Councillors or Officers, recognise that the policy, whilst remaining a policy and therefore the Authority's own guidelines on the

⁴⁷ There are considerable discrepancies between Government guidance across England and Wales about the timescales when overseas information is required. In Wales the Taxi and Private Hire Vehicles: Licensing Guidance refers to 6 or more continuous months spent outside the UK since the applicant's 10th birthday. The Home Office Guidance on the application process for criminal records checked overseas referred to in the DfT Statutory taxi and private hire vehicle standards requires criminal record checks where you have lived for 12 months or more (whether continuous or in total), in the last 10 years before the application, while aged 18 or over.

This paragraph has been revised having regard to these recommendations.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-records-checks-for-overseas-applicants/guidance-on-the-application-process-for-criminal-records-checks-overseas>

<https://www.gov.wales/taxi-and-private-hire-vehicles-licensing-guidance-html>

⁴⁸ See para 5.15 "Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards" Department for Transport 2020 (available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-taxi-and-private-hire-vehicle-standards>)

⁴⁹ *Leeds City Council v Hussain* [2002] EWHC 1145 (Admin), [2003] RTR 199 Admin Crt and *Cherwell District Council v Anwar* [2011] EWHC 2943 (Admin), [2012] RTR 15 Admin Crt

matter, is the baseline for acceptability. The policy should only be departed from in exceptional circumstances and for justifiable reasons which should be carefully and comprehensively recorded. Licensing Authorities should monitor their decisions on an annual basis and examine how often they depart from the policy.⁵⁰

- 3.33 One common misunderstanding is that if the offence was not committed when the driver was driving a taxi, it is much less serious, or even if it was in a taxi but not when passengers were aboard. This is not relevant: speeding is dangerous, irrespective of the situation; drink driving is dangerous, irrespective of the situation; bald tyres are dangerous, irrespective of the situation. All these behaviours put the general public at risk. Violence is always serious. The argument that it was a domestic dispute, or away from the taxi, is irrelevant. A person who has a propensity to violence has that potential in every situation. Sexual offences are always serious. A person who has in the past abused their position (whatever that may have been) to assault another sexually has demonstrated completely unacceptable standards of behaviour. Predators want taxi drivers' licences as it gives them easy access to victims.⁵¹ It should be noted that a licensing authority cannot prevent a person who has been refused a licence (or had it revoked) from re-applying to that, or any other, authority.
- 3.34 Applicants may claim that they have sought employment in other fields and been precluded as a result of their antecedent history particularly if that contains convictions. There should be a high standard of acceptability to enter the taxi industry. They therefore seek to become a licensed driver as an occupation of last resort. This is unacceptable as the granting of a licence would place such a person in a unique position of trust. It also undermines the position and reputation of the vast majority of professional licensed drivers. The paramount responsibility of a licensing authority is to protect the public, not provide employment opportunities.
- 3.35 Licensees are expected to demonstrate appropriate professional conduct at all times, whether in the context of their work or otherwise. Licensees should be courteous, avoid confrontation, not be abusive or exhibit prejudice in any way. In no circumstances should Licensees take the law into their own hands. Licensees are expected to act with integrity and demonstrate conduct befitting the trust that is placed in them.
- 3.36 There are those who seek to take advantage of vulnerable people by providing services that they are not entitled to provide; for example, by plying for hire in an area where they

⁵⁰ See para 3.5 of DfT Statutory Standards

⁵¹ Telford report volume 3 para 4.193: *'That is in my view a significant result and one which is more likely to be attributable to some feature of the job which is attractive to perpetrators, rather than to chance. The obvious feature that a CSE perpetrator would find attractive is that taxi drivers hold a position of responsibility to the public; people tend to trust them. It also shows why an effective system of licensing and enforcement is vital, and why the public must know about the standards they are entitled to expect: they must know how to complain and must be able to make a complaint easily and quickly.'* Report of the Independent Inquiry Telford Child Sexual Exploitation available at <https://www.iitcse.com/>

are not entitled to do so. Licensees are expected to be vigilant of such behaviour and to report any concerns to the Police and the relevant licensing authority. Passengers should feel confident to check that the person offering a service is entitled to do so. Licensees should willingly demonstrate that they are entitled to provide the offered service by, for example, showing their badge.

- 3.37 As a society, we need to ask the question “who is driving my taxi or private hire vehicle?” and be secure in the knowledge that the answer is “a safe and suitable person”. The vast majority of drivers are decent, law-abiding people who work very hard to provide a good service to their customers and the community at large. However poor decisions by local authorities and courts serve to undermine the travelling public’s confidence in the trade as a whole. Unless local authorities and the courts are prepared to take robust (and difficult) decisions to maintain the standards the local authority lays down, and in some cases tighten up their own policies, the public cannot have complete confidence in taxi and private hire drivers. This is detrimental to all involved.
- 3.38 In England, when any action is taken in relation to a drivers’ licence: refusal to grant or renew, revocation or suspension, the authority must apply the legal test to determine if this action must be entered by that authority on the NR3S database in accordance with the Taxi and Private Hire Licensing (Safeguarding and Road Safety) Act 2022. It is recommended in DfT Guidance that this action is also undertaken in Wales. When considering any new application, the name or names of the applicant must be checked against the NR3S database. There is no mechanism for a driver to surrender or hand in their licence, or to withdraw an application to avoid suspension, revocation or refusal, and thus avoid such an entry being made. In such circumstances, licensing authorities must make decisions to revoke, suspend or not renew. This will ensure the NR3S Database is accurate.⁵² A failed applicant for a licence cannot avoid the recording of a refusal.

Private Hire Operators

- 3.39 A private hire operator (“PHO”) is the person who takes a booking for a private hire vehicle (“PHV”), and then dispatches a PHV driven by a licensed private hire driver (“PHD”) to fulfil that booking. All three licences (PHO, PHV and PHD) must have been granted by the same authority.⁵³ A local authority cannot grant a PHO licence unless the applicant has the right to work in the UK, on renewal meets the HMRC Tax Conditionality requirements, and is a fit and proper person.⁵⁴
- 3.40 As with taxi drivers the role of the PHO and their staff goes far beyond simply taking bookings and dispatching vehicles. In the course of making the booking and dispatching the vehicle and driver, the PHO will obtain significant amounts of personal information.

⁵² See Journal of Licensing (2019) 24 JoL 46

⁵³ See *Dittah v Birmingham City Council*, *Choudhry v Birmingham City Council* [1993] RTR 356 QBD

⁵⁴ Section 55(1) Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

e.g. periods away from home, destinations, regular journeys. It is therefore vital that a PHO and their staff are as trustworthy and reliable as a driver, notwithstanding their slightly remote role. Taxis can also be pre-booked, but local authorities should be mindful that where that booking is made by anybody other than a taxi driver, there are no controls or vetting procedures in place in relation to the person who takes that booking and holds that personal information.

- 3.41 How then does a local authority satisfy itself as to the “fitness and propriety” or “safety and suitability” of the applicant or licensee?
- 3.42 The decision is made by the licensing authority. Each authority can decide by whom those decisions are made under their Scheme or Schedule of Delegations (contained in the Council’s Constitution). Decisions can be made by Councillors sitting on a Committee or delegated to Sub-committee, or officers.
- 3.43 Spent convictions, but not protected convictions, can be taken into account when determining suitability for a licence, and these must be declared on the application form. In addition, the applicant (or licensee on renewal) should be asked to obtain and then provide a Basic Disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service.
- 3.44 Although this is by no means a perfect system, it does give local authorities a reasonable basis for making an informed decision as to fitness and propriety of an applicant or existing licensee.
- 3.45 To enable consistent and informed decisions to be made, it is important to have a working test of fitness and propriety for PHOs and in the absence of a DfT test, this is suggested:

“Without any prejudice, and based on the information before you, would you be comfortable providing sensitive information such as holiday plans, movements of your family or other information to this person, and feel safe in the knowledge that such information would not be used or passed on for criminal or unacceptable purposes?”⁵⁵
- 3.46 There is a further point to consider in relation to PHOs and that concerns the staff used on the telephones and radios. A condition should be imposed on a PHO licence requiring them to have a policy to undertake checks on those they engage (whether as employees, workers or independent contractors) within their business to satisfy themselves that they are fit and proper people to undertake that task using the same criteria as the licensing authority used in relation to the PHO. The PHO must then retain that information to demonstrate that compliance to the local authority. Any failure on the part of the PHO to either comply with this requirement, or act upon information that they obtain (thereby allowing unsuitable staff to work in positions of trust), would then have serious implications on the continuing fitness and propriety of the PHO.

⁵⁵ This is a slightly modified version of the suggested test in Button on Taxis – Licensing Law and Practice 4th Ed Bloomsbury Professional at para 12.35

- 3.47 Care should be taken in circumstances where a PHO Licence is sought in the name of a limited company, partnership or other business structure that all the requirements applicable to an individual applicant are made of each director or partner of the applicant organisation.⁵⁶ Only by so doing can a decision be made as to the fitness and propriety of the operating entity. In these circumstances, a condition should be imposed on the PHO licence requiring notification to the licensing authority of any changes in membership any partnership or directors or secretary of a limited company. Such notification must be made within 7 days of the alteration and be accompanied by a Basic DBS for every new person.

Vehicle Proprietors

- 3.48 Similar considerations apply to the vehicle proprietors, both taxi and private hire. Although the vehicle proprietor may not be driving a vehicle (and if they are they will be subject to their own fitness and propriety test to obtain a driver's licence), they clearly have an interest in the use of the vehicle. That is to say all of those named on the licence as proprietor or part proprietor.⁵⁷ They will also be responsible for the maintenance of the vehicle, and vehicles that are not properly maintained have a clear impact on public safety. Where any insurance replacement vehicle is involved, special considerations may apply.
- 3.49 Taxis are used to transport people in many circumstances, and are seen everywhere across the United Kingdom, at all times of the day and night, in any location. Therefore, taxis could provide a transportation system for illegal activities or any form of contraband, whether that is drugs, guns, illicit alcohol or tobacco, or people who are involved in or are the victims of illegal activity, or who may be at risk of being, or are being, abused, exploited or enslaved.
- 3.50 In relation to both taxis and private hire vehicles, the local authority has an absolute discretion over granting the licence⁵⁸ and should therefore ensure that both their enquiries and considerations are robust. It is much more involved than simply looking at the vehicle itself.
- 3.51 Again, this is not an exempt occupation for the purposes of the 1974 Act, but exactly the same process can be applied as for private hire operators – Basic DBS, statutory declaration and consideration of spent convictions (but not protected convictions or protected cautions) on initial application and every subsequent renewal. This can then be used in the light of a similar policy in relation to suitability as the authority will already have for drivers and PHOs. This will not be required for proprietors who are already licensed as drivers and are registered with the DBS update service.

⁵⁶ See s57(1)(c) of the 1976 Act.

⁵⁷ "Proprietor" is defined in s80 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act as: "'Proprietor' includes a part proprietor and, in relation to a vehicle which is the subject of a hiring agreement or hire-purchase agreement, means the person in possession of the vehicle under that agreement."

⁵⁸ S37 of the 1847 Act in relation to taxis; section 48 of the 1976 Act to private hire vehicles.

3.52 in the absence of a DfT test, this is suggested as a suitable test:

“Without any prejudice, and based on the information before you, would you be comfortable allowing this person to have control of a licensed vehicle that can travel anywhere, at any time of the day or night without arousing suspicion, and be satisfied that they would not allow it to be used for criminal or other unacceptable purposes, and be confident that they would maintain it to an acceptable standard throughout the period of the licence?”⁵⁹

⁵⁹ This is a slightly modified version of the suggested test in Button on Taxis – Licensing Law and Practice 4th Ed Bloomsbury Professional at para 8.98

Chapter 4: Guidance on Determination

- 4.1 This Guidance is not binding on licensing authorities. They are all independent bodies, and it is for them to determine their own standards. This Guidance is intended to encourage greater consistency in decision making where it concerns the suitability of applicants for taxi and private hire licences.
- 4.2 This Guidance is also intended to enable licensing authorities, as the regulators of taxi and private hire drivers, vehicles and operators, to set standards that protect the public, and uphold the reputation of the trade and those licensed to work in it. As with any regulated activity, absolute certainty of safety cannot be achieved, and there will always be a tension between those regulated, and the regulators. The aim of this Guidance is to enable regulators to protect the public, whilst not preventing the vast majority of decent, law-abiding applicants and licensees to obtain and retain those licences. The 'public' is not restricted to passengers. It encompasses everyone: passengers, other road users and, of course, drivers.
- 4.3 As is clear from the [Chapter 2: Offenders, Offending, Re-offending and Risk of Harm - An Overview](#) above, there is no evidence which can provide precise periods of time which must elapse after a crime before a person can no longer be considered to be at risk of reoffending, but the risk may reduce over time. In light of that, the suggested timescales below are intended to reduce the risk to the public to an acceptable level.
- 4.4 Many members of our society use, and even rely on, taxis and private hire vehicles to provide transportation services. This is especially true of disabled and vulnerable people. This can be on a regular basis, or only occasionally, but in all cases passengers, other road users and society as a whole must have confidence in the safety and suitability of the driver, the vehicle itself and anyone involved with the booking process.
- 4.5 Ideally, all those involved in the taxi and private hire trades (taxi and private hire drivers, taxi and private hire vehicle owners and private hire operators) would be persons of the highest integrity. In many cases that is true, and the vast majority of those involved in these trades are decent, upstanding, honest and hard-working individuals. Unfortunately, as in any occupation or trade, there are those who fail to conform to those standards.
- 4.6 It is essential those making decisions (whether Councillors or officers) undertake regular (annual) training in the legislation relative to licensing and the purpose of this document is to offer guidance on how licensing authorities can determine whether a particular person is safe and suitable either to be granted a licence in the first place or to retain such a licence. As outlined above, a policy can be robust, and if necessary, say never, and each case is then considered on its own merits in the light of that policy.

Pre-application requirements

- 4.7 Licensing authorities are entitled to set their own pre-application requirements. These will vary depending upon the type of licence in question but can include some or all of the following (these are not exhaustive lists):

Vehicles:

- Basic DBS checks and overseas checks for the vehicle proprietor;
- Specifications e.g. minimum number of doors, minimum seat size, headroom, boot space, comfort and any similar considerations
- Mechanical tests and tests of the maintenance of the vehicle e.g. ripped seats etc;
- Emission limits/vehicle age limits;
- Wheelchair accessibility requirements.
- Electric Vehicles may have additional considerations

Drivers:

- Enhanced DBS checks (Other Workforce + Taxi) with update service and overseas checks;
- Checks made to the National Anti-Fraud Network NR3S database on refusals, revocations, and suspensions of taxi and private hire licences;
- Medical checks (Group 2 Standard as a minimum);
- Knowledge of the geographic area (for taxi and dual licences);
- Spoken and written English tests;
- Disability awareness training;
- Child sexual exploitation, county lines and safeguarding training;
- Right to work checks;
- Tax conditionality checks.

It should be noted that records only remain on the NR3S database for a period of 11 years after which they must be removed under S 4(3)(b) of Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Safeguarding and Road Safety) Act 2022. This means that there will no longer be any record of whatever caused the entry to be made. This is unsatisfactory because any subsequent search after 11 years have elapsed from the date of entry will not reveal anything and is therefore worthless. It is believed that the period is set at 11 years to prevent a conviction that has become protected being revealed. The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (Amendment) (England and Wales) Order 2013 (SI 2013/1198) contains a long list of offences that will never become protected so it is some comfort that they will be disclosed on an Enhanced DBS in the normal way.

Operators:

- Basic DBS checks and overseas checks;
- Details of their vetting procedures for their staff;
- Knowledge of the licensing area;
- CSAE and County Lines Training for operator and staff
- Right to work checks;
- Tax conditionality checks.

- 4.8 The licensing authority sets its own application requirements which will be detailed in its licensing policy.
- 4.9 In relation to each of these licences, the licensing authority has discretion as to whether or not to grant the licence.
- 4.10 Drivers and operators cannot be granted a licence unless the authority is satisfied that they are a “fit and proper person” to hold that licence (see Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 ss 51 and 59 in respect of drivers; s55 in respect of operators).
- 4.11 There are no statutory criteria for vehicle licences, therefore the authority has an absolute discretion over whether to grant either a taxi or private hire proprietor’s licence.
- 4.12 “Fit and proper” means that the individual (or in the case of a private hire operator’s licence, the limited company together with its directors and secretary, or all members of a partnership⁶⁰) is “safe and suitable” to hold the licence.
- 4.13 In determining safety and suitability, the licensing authority is entitled to take into account all matters concerning that applicant or licensee. They are not simply concerned with that person’s behaviour whilst working in the taxi or private hire trade. This consideration is far wider than simply criminal convictions or other evidence of unacceptable behaviour, and the entire character of the individual will be considered. This can include, but is not limited to, the individual’s attitude and temperament. The categories of behaviours described below are introduced as “offences” which may or may not lead to convictions. Any such behaviours will be taken into account, whether or not it resulted in convictions or other sanctions.
- 4.14 Convictions for attempt or conspiracy will be regarded as convictions for the substantive crime. A caution is regarded in exactly the same way as a conviction.⁶¹ Fixed penalties and community resolutions will also be considered in the same way as a conviction.⁶²

⁶⁰ Section 57(2)(c) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 allows a local authority to consider the character of a company director or secretary, or any partner.

⁶¹ This is because a caution can only be imposed following an admission of guilt, which is equivalent to a guilty plea on prosecution.

⁶² This is because payment of a fixed penalty indicates acceptance of guilt, and a community resolution can only be imposed following an admission of guilt.

- 4.15 It is important to recognise that matters which have not resulted in a criminal conviction (whether that is the result of an acquittal, a conviction being quashed, decision not to prosecute, police decide on no further action (NFA), bailed, released under investigation or where an investigation is continuing) can and will be taken into account by the licensing authority.⁶³ In addition, complaints and or investigations where there was no police involvement will also be considered. Within this document, any reference to “conviction” will also include matters that amount to criminal behaviour, but which have not resulted in a conviction.
- 4.16 In the case of any new applicant who is under investigation or has been charged with any offence and is awaiting trial, the determination may be deferred until the trial has been completed or the charges withdrawn. Where an existing licensee is charged, it will be for the licensing authority to decide what action to take in the light of these guidelines.
- 4.17 In all cases, the licensing authority will consider the conviction or behaviour in question and what weight should be attached to it, and each and every case will be determined on its own merits, and in the light of these guidelines.
- 4.18 Any offences committed, or unacceptable behaviour reported whilst driving a taxi or private hire vehicle, concerning the use of a taxi or private hire vehicle, or in connection with an operator of a private hire vehicle will be viewed as aggravating features, and the fact that any other offences were not connected with the taxi and private hire trades will not be seen as mitigating factors.
- 4.19 As the licensing authority will be looking at the entirety of the individual, in many cases safety and suitability will not be determined by a specified period of time having elapsed following a conviction or the completion of a sentence. Time periods are relevant and weighty considerations, but they are not the only determining factor.
- 4.20 In addition to the nature of the offence or other behaviour, the quantity of matters and the period over which they were committed will also be considered. Patterns of repeated unacceptable or criminal behaviour are likely to cause greater concern than isolated occurrences as such patterns can demonstrate a propensity for such behaviour or offending.
- 4.21 Most applicants or licensees will have no convictions and that is clearly the ideal situation. In relation to other people, it is accepted that human beings do make mistakes and lapse in their conduct for a variety of reasons, and it is further accepted that many learn from experience and do not go on to commit further offences. Accordingly, in many cases an isolated conviction, especially if committed some time ago, may not prevent the grant or renewal of a licence.
- 4.22 It is also important to recognise that once a licence has been granted, there is a continuing requirement on the part of the licensee to maintain their safety and suitability. The

⁶³ See *R v Maidstone Crown Court, ex p Olson* [1992] COD 496, QBD; *McCool v Rushcliffe Borough Council* [1998] 3 All ER 889, QBD; and *Leeds City Council v Hussain* [2002] EWHC 1145 (Admin), [2003] RTR 199 Admin Crt.

licensing authority has powers to take action against the holder of all types of licence (drivers, vehicles and operators) and it must be understood that any convictions or other actions on the part of the licensee which would have prevented them being granted a licence on initial application will lead to that licence being revoked.

- 4.23 Any dishonesty by any applicant or other person on the applicant's behalf which is discovered to have occurred in any part of any application process (e.g. failure to declare convictions, false names or addresses, falsified references) will result in a licence being refused, or if already granted, revoked and may result in prosecution.
- 4.24 Although the direct impact on the public varies depending upon the type of licence applied for or held, to maintain public confidence in the integrity of the taxi and private hire licensing regimes, it is suggested that the same standards are applied to all licences, except motoring convictions in relation to a private hire operator.
- 4.25 This Guidance suggests minimum periods of time that should elapse between the date of conviction or completion of the sentence (whichever is later) and the grant of a licence. Those periods are for single convictions. Where a person has more than one conviction, and can be seen as a persistent offender, this will raise serious questions about their safety and suitability. Convictions do become less important over time (hence the time periods) but multiple convictions or continued offending over any period of time will always be of significant concern to a licensing authority. The licensing authority is looking for safe and suitable individuals, and once a pattern or trend of repeated offending is apparent, a licence will not be granted or renewed.
- 4.26 Where an applicant/licensee is convicted of an offence, or has evidence of unsuitable behaviour, which is not detailed in this guidance, the licensing authority will take that conviction and/or behaviour into account and use these guidelines as an indication of the approach that should be taken.
- 4.27 These guidelines do not replace the duty of the licensing authority to refuse to grant a licence where they are not satisfied that the applicant or licensee is a fit and proper person. Where a situation is not covered by these guidelines, the authority must consider the matter from first principles and determine the fitness and propriety of the individual. It must be remembered that these are guidelines. It is for each authority to determine and adopt its own previous convictions policy, and then determine applications in the light of that policy.
- 4.28 It must always be borne in mind that these are Guidelines, not fixed periods, and if there are "truly exceptional circumstances"⁶⁴ the time periods can be reduced in individual cases. Such instances should only be for "truly exceptional circumstances" and not frequent occurrences. The decision makers must consider each case on its own merits, taking into account all factors, including the need to protect the public, the circumstances

⁶⁴ DfT Statutory Standards Guidance para 5.15

and effect of the offence, and any mitigation that has been offered. However, the conviction itself cannot be reconsidered.⁶⁵

Drivers

- 4.29 As the criteria for determining whether an individual should be granted or retain a taxi driver's licence are identical to the criteria for a private hire driver's licence, the two are considered together.
- 4.30 A driver has direct responsibility for the safety of their passengers, direct responsibility for the safety of other road users and significant control over passengers who are in the vehicle. As those passengers may be alone, and may also be vulnerable, any previous convictions or unacceptable behaviour will weigh heavily against a licence being granted or retained.
- 4.31 As stated above, where an applicant persistently offends, which shows a pattern or tendency irrespective of time since the convictions, serious consideration will need to be given as to whether they are a safe and suitable person.
- 4.32 In relation to single convictions, the time periods detailed in the following paragraphs should elapse following completion of the sentence (or the date of conviction if a fine was imposed) before a licence will be granted. For motoring offences see the paragraphs headed 'Motoring Offences' below.
- 4.33 As stated above, the categories of behaviours described below are introduced as "offences" which may or may not lead to convictions. Any such behaviours will be taken into account, whether or not it resulted in convictions or other sanctions.

Barred lists

- 4.34 A licence will not be granted to a person who is on any barred list.

Offences resulting in death

- 4.35 Where an applicant or licensee has been convicted of a crime which resulted in the death of another person or was intended to cause the death or serious injury of another person they will not be licensed.

Offences involving exploitation and criminal harassment

- 4.36 Where an applicant or licensee has been convicted of a crime involving, related to, or has any connection with abuse, exploitation, use or treatment or criminal harassment of another individual irrespective of whether the victim or victims were adults or children, they will not be licensed. This includes slavery, child sexual exploitation, grooming,

⁶⁵ *Nottingham City Council v Farooq (Mohammed) Times, October 28, 1998 QBD*

psychological, emotional or financial abuse, stalking without violence, but this is not an exhaustive list.

Offences involving violence against persons, property, animals or the State

- 4.37 Violence includes situations where the victim is put in fear, alarm or distress without any physical contact. It is accepted that the concept of “violence” is wide, but any such behaviour will be of concern. This Guidance does not differentiate between different levels of violence. It will be for the licensing authority to determine whether there is any justification for departing from this time period, dependant of the facts of a particular case.
- 4.38 Where an applicant has a conviction for an offence of violence, or connected with any offence of violence, a licence will not be granted until at least 10 years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed. Where the offence of violence was committed against a child or vulnerable adult a licence will never be granted.

Offences involving Public Order

- 4.39 Where an applicant has a conviction for a public order offence or similar that is not in itself an act of violence, a licence will not be granted for a period of 5 years.

Offences involving Possession of a weapon

- 4.40 Where an applicant has a conviction for possession of a weapon or any other weapon related offence, a licence will not be granted until at least 7 years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed.

Offences involving Sex, indecency or obscene materials

- 4.41 Where an applicant has a conviction for any offence involving or connected with illegal sexual activity or any form of indecency, a licence will not be granted. This includes any sexual harassment.
- 4.42 In addition to the above, the licensing authority will not grant a licence to any applicant who is currently on the Sex Offenders Register.

Offences involving Dishonesty

- 4.43 Where an applicant has a conviction for any offence of dishonesty, or any offence where dishonesty is an element of the offence, a licence will not be granted until at least 7 years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed.

Offences involving Alcohol abuse, Misuse or Dependency

- 4.44 Where an applicant has any conviction for, or related to drunkenness not in a motor vehicle, a licence will not be granted until at least 5 years have elapsed since the completion of the sentence imposed. If the applicant has a number of convictions for drunkenness and or there are indications of a medical problem associated with possible abuse, misuse of, or dependence on alcohol, the applicant will also be subject to additional medical testing/assessment before the application is considered. If the applicant was found to be dependent on alcohol, a licence will not be granted unless at least 5 years have elapsed since the dependency ceased.

Offences involving Drugs abuse Misuse or Dependency

- 4.45 Where an applicant has any conviction for, or related to, the production, import, trade in or supply of drugs, or possession with intent to supply or connected with possession with intent to supply, a licence will not be granted until at least 10 years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed.
- 4.46 Where an applicant has a conviction for possession of drugs, or related to the possession of drugs, a licence will not be granted until at least 5 years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed. In these circumstances, any applicant will also have to undergo drugs testing at their own expense to demonstrate that they are not using controlled drugs.
- 4.47 If there are indications that an applicant or licensee has, or has had a history of, a medical problem associated with possible abuse, misuse or dependence of drugs, the applicant will also be subject to additional medical testing/assessment before the application is considered. If the applicant was found to be dependent on drugs, a licence will not be granted unless at least 5 years have elapsed since the dependency ceased.

Offences involving Discrimination

- 4.48 Where an applicant has a conviction involving or connected with discrimination in any form, including non-compliance with the Equality Act 2010, a licence will not be granted until at least 7 years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed. This includes e.g. refusals to carry assistance dogs or to provide mobility assistance.

Offences involving Regulatory non-compliance

- 4.49 Regulatory crimes include local authority offences, licensing matters, and other offences prosecuted by other authorities. It also includes matters relating to the administration of justice such as failing to surrender to bail, and any other matter where regulations or requirements have been ignored or broken. These offences demonstrate a lack of compliance with legal requirements which would clearly be a worry in relation to taxi and private hire licensees. Serious consideration would need to be given as to whether they are a safe and suitable person to hold a licence.

Motoring Offences

- 4.50 Taxi and private hire drivers are professional drivers charged with the responsibility of carrying the public. Any motoring conviction can demonstrate a lack of professionalism and will be considered seriously. A single occurrence of a minor traffic offence may not prohibit the grant of a licence or result in action against an existing licence. Subsequent convictions suggest the fact that the licensee may not take their professional responsibilities seriously and may therefore not be a safe and suitable person to be granted or retain a licence.
- 4.51 Where an applicant has a conviction for drink driving or driving under the influence of drugs or failing to provide a specimen in relation to a driving matter, a licence will not be granted until at least 7 years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence or driving ban imposed. With drug offences, any applicant may also have to undergo drugs testing at their own expense to demonstrate that they are not using controlled drugs.
- 4.52 Where an applicant has a conviction for using a held-hand mobile telephone or a hand-held device whilst driving, a licence will not be granted until at least 5 years have elapsed since the conviction or completion of any disqualification imposed, whichever is the later.⁶⁶
- 4.53 Penalty points applied to a DVLA driving licence remain active for either 3 or 10 years, which may be from the date of the offence or the date of conviction depending upon the offence as detailed in "Penalty points (endorsements)".⁶⁷ They may be removed from the licence after 4 or 11 years. That action does not negate the offence that led to the points being imposed. Penalty points (and the underlying offence) will be relevant and taken into consideration for 4 or 11 years from the date of the conviction, or the date of the offence depending on the type of offence (see "Penalty points (endorsements)").⁶⁸
- 4.54 By attaining 7 or more penalty points on their DVLA licence a driver is demonstrating they may not be fit and proper and the authority should assess their suitability. It is suggested part of the assessment is to undertake a driver awareness course and/or pass a driver assessment, with no more than 8 minor infringements, within 2 months of notice from the authority they are considering the suitability of the licence holder. Failure to do so strongly suggests the driver is not fit and proper and not be licensed until a period of 12 months has passed with no further convictions and has passed a driver assessment since the last conviction.
- 4.55 Any offence which resulted in injury to any person or damage to any property (including vehicles), or any insurance offence then a licence will not be granted until at least 7 years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence.

⁶⁶ Research shows driving while using a handheld device is potentially more dangerous than driving under the influence of alcohol: <https://www.trl.co.uk/news/transport-select-committee-road-safety-enquiry-on-the-use-of-mobile-phones> Using an electronic device which is 'hands free' or 'factory fitted' does not constitute an offence on its own but drivers need to maintain proper control of the vehicle at all times. Any behaviour or activity other than driving may be considered an offence where control of the vehicle is compromised.

⁶⁷ Available at : <https://www.gov.uk/penalty-points-endorsements/how-long-endorsements-stay-on-your-driving-licence>

⁶⁸ Available at : <https://www.gov.uk/penalty-points-endorsements/how-long-endorsements-stay-on-your-driving-licence>

- 4.56 Any driver who has accumulated 12 or more points on their DVLA licence and has not been disqualified under the totting up procedure by a court as a result of making exceptional hardship arguments shall not be able to advance such arguments before the licensing authority as they are not a relevant consideration in determining what action the authority should take. Any such driver will not be licensed for a period of 5 years from the date of the accumulation of 12 or more points.
- 4.57 Any driver who has been disqualified as a result of “totting-up”, which erases the points when the licence is restored, will not be licensed for a period of 5 years from the date of the disqualification. Other disqualifications will need to be investigated, the reasons ascertained, and a decision will be based on the results of that investigation.
- 4.58 Drivers who commit parking, obstruction and other such motoring offences that do not attract penalty points are not displaying a professional approach to their work. Persistent offenders should be reported to their licensing authority who may consider a period of suspension depending on the severity and frequency of the incidents reported.

Behaviours

- 4.59 Driver behaviours that fall short of criminal behaviour but are indicators of more sinister behaviour need to be addressed to maintain confidence in the taxi trades and to stop unwanted behaviours before they evolve into criminal acts.
- 4.60 Behaviours such as
- Asking a passenger for their contact or social media details
 - Asking personal or intimate questions
 - Inappropriate physical contact with passengers or invade their personal space
 - Inappropriate conversations, questions or behaviour
- This is more important if the passenger is a lone vulnerable individual.
- 4.61 Except in the most serious of cases, drivers should be given a warning in the first instance, if appropriate sent on refresher safeguarding training and explained how the behaviour maybe perceived by a vulnerable passenger.
- 4.62 If the behaviour, on the balance of probability, is repeated and considered to be predatory in nature then any applicant should not be licensed.
- 4.63 Where an applicant or licence holder has a conviction for an offence contrary to any legislation relating to taxi or private hire activity not covered elsewhere, a licence will not be granted until at least 7 years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed.

Private Hire Operators

- 4.64 A private hire operator (“an operator”) does not have direct responsibility for the safety of passengers, other road users or direct contact with passengers who are in the private hire vehicle (except where they are also licensed as a private hire driver). However, in performing their duties they obtain and hold considerable amounts of personal and private information about their passengers which must be treated in confidence and not revealed to others or used by the operator or their staff for criminal or other unacceptable purposes.
- 4.65 As stated above, where an applicant has more than one conviction, serious consideration will need to be given as to whether they are a safe and suitable person.
- 4.66 Operators must ensure that any staff that are used within the business (whether employees or independent contractors) and are able to access any information as described above are subject to the same standards as the operator themselves. This can be effected by means of the individual staff member being required by the operator to obtain a basic DBS certificate. If an operator is found not to be applying the required standards and using staff that do not meet the licensing authority’s overall criteria, that will lead to the operator’s licence being revoked.
- 4.67 As public trust and confidence in the overall safety and integrity of the private hire system is vital, the same standards will be applied to operators as those applied to drivers, except motoring offences to recognise the operator is not connected with the use of a vehicle, which are outlined above.

Vehicle proprietors

- 4.68 Vehicle proprietors (both taxi and private hire) have two principal responsibilities.
- 4.69 Firstly, they must ensure that the vehicle is maintained to an acceptable standard at all times.
- 4.70 Secondly, they must ensure that the vehicle is not used for illegal or illicit purposes.
- 4.71 As stated above, where an applicant has more than one conviction, serious consideration will need to be given as to whether they are a safe and suitable person to be granted or retain a vehicle licence.
- 4.72 As public trust and confidence in the overall safety and integrity of the private hire system is vital, the same standards will be applied to proprietors as those applied to drivers, which are outlined above.

Appendix 1 - Guidance on Recording Decisions, Reasons and NR3S Criteria for reporting purposes

It is important all decisions including reasons are recorded (see example Decision Notice in [Appendix 2](#)). The following template may assist in preparing to report a decision to NR3S when appropriate and for the council's internal records.

Directorate:	The Directorate or department that oversees licensing matters in your authority.
Decision Maker	This will be either the committee/ sub-committee or officer under delegated powers
Subject	Name of licence holder
Delegated Powers Reference	If decision under delegated authority quote relevant section of the scheme here.
Decision	State in simple terms the decision and whether immediate effect. e.g. Revoked with immediate effect
Detail	Provide the facts in this section, not your views or thoughts. List the evidence you considered
Reason	Now explain your findings here, where there are conflicting accounts explain here the account you prefer and the reasons why. Refer to your policy and how you have applied it. Cover all of the options open to you and why others were discounted and why the option was chosen. Demonstrate consideration of the pieces of legislation listed in the 'Other' section below Include consideration whether the action is to have immediate effect and explain the reasons for this.
NR3S	The Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Safeguarding and Road Safety) Act 2022 imposes a duty on councils in England, and it is advisory in Wales, to record details on the NR3S Register, of any refusal, revocation and/or suspension of a driver's licence where the reasons meet one or more of the following criteria (tick all that apply):- ☐ has committed a sexual offence (whether or not the person was charged with, prosecuted for or convicted of the offence); ☐ has harassed another person; ☐ has caused physical or psychological harm to another person;

	☐ has committed an offence that involves a risk of causing physical or psychological harm to another person (whether or not the person was charged with, prosecuted for or convicted of the offence); ☐ has committed an offence under section 165, 168 or 170 of the Equality Act 2010 (whether or not the person was charged with, prosecuted for or convicted of the offence); ☐ has done anything that, for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010, constitutes unlawful discrimination or victimisation against another person; ☐ has threatened, abused or insulted another person; ☐ poses a risk to road safety when driving; ☐ may be unsuitable to hold a driver's licence for other reasons relating to— ☐ the safeguarding of passengers, or ☐ road safety. The Act also imposes a duty on council's to search NR3S Register before making a decision on a person's application for, or for the renewal of, a driver's licence. Further information can be found at www.nafn.gov.uk
Other	I have fully considered the relevant legislation including The Equality Act, Crime and Disorder Act, Human Rights Act, the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 (this is not an exhaustive list). I am duly authorised to make this decision.

Declared Officer / Member Interests				
Details of consultation undertaken if appropriate		Yes	No	Date
	Director			
	Chair of Regulatory Committee			
	Senior Solicitor			
Contact Person		Contact No		
Authorised Signatory		Date		

Appendix 2 – Example Decision Notice

NB: This is not a prescribed form and should be adapted for a council's own purposes

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) ACT 1976 Section 60/61/62

NOTICE OF [GRANT / REFUSAL / SUSPENSION / REVOCATION / RENEWAL / NON-RENEWAL/] of [LICENCE TYPE] LICENCE

TO: _____

OF: _____

LICENCE NO. _____

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that [Council], has today [granted / refused / suspended / revoked / renewed/not renew] [licence type] licence, [with immediate effect / with effect from XXXX / for the period from XXXX until XXXX] on the ground(s) and for the reason(s) indicated and stated below:

You are a fit and proper person to hold such a licence / You are not a fit and proper person to hold such a licence

Vehicles – Section 60

The vehicle is unfit for use / you are unsuitable to hold a proprietor's licence / on the following grounds

- (a) that the hackney carriage or private hire vehicle is unfit for use as a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle;
- (b) any offence under, or non-compliance with, the provisions of the Act of 1847, or of this Part of this Act by the operator or driver; or
- (c) any other reasonable cause

Drivers – Section 61

You are no longer a fit and proper person to hold the licence on the following ground(s):

- (a) That you have since the grant of the licence:
 - (i) been convicted of an offence involving dishonesty, indecency or violence, and/or
 - been convicted of an offence under or failed to comply with the provisions of
 - (ii) the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 or of Part II of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976; or
- (aa) That you have since the grant of the licence been convicted of an immigration offence or required to pay an immigration penalty, or
- (b) any other reasonable cause

Operators - Section 62

You are no longer a fit and proper person to hold the licence on the following ground(s):

- (a) any offence under, or non-compliance with, the provisions of this Part of this Act;
- (b) any conduct on the part of the operator which appears to the council to render him unfit to hold an operator's licence;
- (c) any material change since the licence was granted in any of the circumstances of the operator on the basis of which the licence was granted;
- (ca) that the operator has since the grant of the licence been convicted of an immigration offence or required to pay an immigration penalty; or
- (d) any other reasonable cause.

Reason(s):

[INSERT FULL AND DETAILED REASONS]

This decision does not take effect until 21 days have elapsed after receipt of this notice, except where the decision is to have immediate effect.

NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that in accordance with section 61 and supplementary provision contained in section 61 (2B) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, [Council] is satisfied that it is both proportionate and in the interests of public safety that the [suspension/ revocation] of your driver's licence takes effect immediately on receipt of this notice.

The effect of this part of the decision is that you cannot continue to drive a licensed vehicle (hackney carriage or private hire vehicle) pending the outcome of any appeal to the Magistrates' Court. You are required, in accordance with section 61(2)(a) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, to return immediately your driver badge number [BADGE NO] to the Licensing Department, [COUNCIL ADDRESS]. Failure to do so is an offence at law.

DATED XXXX

Signed on behalf of [Council]

RIGHT OF APPEAL

Sections 60(3), 61(3) and 62(3) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 provides that any applicant, proprietor, driver or operator aggrieved by the decision of this council to suspend, revoke or refuse to renew a licence may appeal to the Magistrates Court. The appeal must be submitted to the Court within 21 days of the date of service of this Notice. You are advised to take legal advice to ensure that your appeal is correctly submitted to the Court together with the required Court fees, for which you may be liable.

If you choose to appeal and do so within the time limit you may continue to drive until your appeal is determined except where this decision has immediate effect.

In the event that you choose to appeal and are unsuccessful, the council may seek costs against you. If you are successful, the council will resist any application for costs made by you.

Any correspondence with the council must be addressed to [NAME AND ADDRESS OF THE COUNCIL].

Contact Us



General Enquiries

01749 987333

info@instituteoflicensing.org

Team Contact details

Sponsorship enquiries

sponsorship@instituteoflicensing.org

Training and event enquiries

events@instituteoflicensing.org

Membership enquiries

membership@instituteoflicensing.org

To advertise job vacancies

jobs@instituteoflicensing.org

News articles

news@instituteoflicensing.org

Financial queries

accounts@instituteoflicensing.org

IoL membership is available to any person or organisation with an interest in licensing

Email us via membership@instituteoflicensing.org to find out more.



Institute of Licensing
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