



Taxi and private hire newsletter December 2022

New Dates for Safeguarding Training

We have had some excellent feedback in respect of our safeguarding training, for which we have had many drivers now attend. There are still drivers that need to book on, so if this is applicable to you please do so without delay.

Please remember it is now a requirement that you have attended or signed up for a session prior to the 1 January 2023.

The next available sessions are:

- Tuesday 17th January 2023 - 17.00 to 19.00 (virtual session)
- Wednesday 25th January 2023 -11.00 to 13.00 (virtual session)
- Thursday 26th January 10.00-12.00 (one off in person session to be held at Brynsworthy Environment Centre, Barnstaple)

All bookings to be undertaken via [our bookings page](#).

Mystery shopping

As part of 'Safer Barnstaple', an initiative funded via The Home Office in the fourth round of its Safer Streets fund, a taxi and private hire mystery shopping exercise was conducted in late October 2022.

In summary, thirty-five test purchases were undertaken of which virtually all were highlighted to be of a high standard. Meters were almost always used. There was found to be one driver who did not switch on his meter, and after investigation this individual has now received communication from the Council by way of an official warning. This will lead to enforcement action for any future non-compliance. That aside, drivers were found to be courteous, friendly and knowledgeable. Vehicles in good condition and clean.

Those conducting the exercise revealed that they were impressed by the taxi and private hire service and that the vast majority of taxis were good quality with professional drivers, both in the day and into the early hours.

Night time economy enforcement evening

A specific partnership enforcement evening took place of Barnstaple's late night economy on the 25th November 2022, also as part of Safer Barnstaple.

North Devon Council's Licensing Enforcement Officers, in partnership with the Police, undertook an enforcement evening focussed on the taxi and private hire trade and licensed alcohol and entertainment premises in the town centre. Fifteen taxis were inspected, having been drawn from plying from hire, in circulation, or from taxi ranks. Ten licensed premises, which comprised largely pubs and bars were also visited.

Officers noted a high standard of compliance with associated licensing legislation and the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy. One vehicle was issued an advisory notice in respect of a tyre at the legal limit. This was promptly actioned by the driver concerned and evidence provided of a new tyre having been fitted. On the whole the initiative highlighted a positive situation in the town centre whereby vehicles were all licensed; of a safe and clean standard; taxi meters adequately fitted; drivers licensed and wearing their licence badges.