



Taxi and private hire newsletter January 2023

New Dates for Safeguarding Training

Disappointingly there are still drivers that have yet to sign up or attend the mandatory safeguarding training. **This is the last chance to sign up, those not having done so will be required to attend a Licensing and Community Sub Committee for failing to comply with the Council's policy.**

Virtual sessions available include:

Tuesday 17 January 17:00 – 19.00

Wednesday 25 January 11.00- 13.00

Thursday 9 March 10.30 – 12.30

Go to www.northdevon.gov.uk/bookings to sign up without delay.

Drugs and Driving

In 2022 North Devon Council Licensing Team disappointingly had to revoke four Hackney/Private carriage licences due to notifications from Devon and Cornwall Police. These drivers had been arrested on suspicion of driving or being in charge of a motor vehicle with a concentration of specified controlled drugs namely cannabis or cocaine above the specified limit.

We know the overwhelming majority of Hackney/Private carriage licence drivers provide a professional, caring, diligent and essential service to the community of North Devon. There are however a small minority of drivers that tarnish the good reputation of the rest by their recreational consumption of drugs.

North Devon Council Licensing will actively work with partners to ensure that all licensed drivers suspected of the use of recreational drugs are dealt with robustly. This will on all occasions almost certainly result in the immediate revocation of their Hackney/Private carriage licence.

The biggest risk you take when driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs is the risk of causing a collision. Data suggests that there is:

2 x risk of fatal or serious injury crash when driving on cannabis.

2 – 10 x risk of fatal or serious injury crash when driving on cocaine or opiates.

5 – 30 x risk of a fatal or serious injury crash when driving on amphetamines.

Driving under the influence of drink or drugs is extremely dangerous and can affect your driving in numerous ways, such as:

- ability to judge speed and distance
- reaction and coordination skills
- blurry or impaired vision
- drowsiness
- aggression
- erratic behaviour
- panic attacks and paranoia
- hallucinations
- nausea
- dizziness
- tremors

Alcohol and drugs can also create a false confidence which can lead to an increase in risk-taking behaviour, which puts your life and the lives of others in danger.

It's illegal to drive if either:

- you're unfit to do so because you're on legal or illegal drugs
- you have certain levels of illegal drugs in your blood (even if they have not affected your driving).

Legal drugs are prescription or over-the-counter medicines. If you're taking them and not sure if you should drive, talk to your doctor, pharmacist or healthcare professional.

The police can stop you and conduct a roadside screening test or a field impairment test, both of which may result in your arrest if:

- they think you have taken drugs
- you've committed a traffic offence
- you've been involved in a road traffic collision.

Officers can test for cannabis and cocaine at the roadside, and screen for other drugs – including ecstasy, LSD, ketamine and heroin – at a police station.

Even if you pass the roadside check you may still be arrested if the police suspect that your driving is impaired by drugs and you can be taken to a police station for further tests.

Penalties for drug driving

If you're convicted of drug driving you may get:

- a minimum 1 year driving ban
- an unlimited fine
- up to 6 months in prison
- a criminal record

Your driving licence will also show you've been convicted for drug driving. This will last for 11 years.

The maximum penalty for causing death by careless driving under the influence of drugs is **life imprisonment**.

The consumption of so called recreational drugs including cannabis and cocaine is a criminal offence and evidence provided to North Devon Licensing Team of the use of these drugs by Hackney/Private carriage licence will also almost certainly result in the immediate revocation of their Hackney/Private carriage licence.

North Devon Council Licensing team would encourage anyone who has suspicions that Hackney/Private carriage licence drivers are using recreational drugs to report this to both the Police and North Devon Council. Reports can be provided anonymously and all reports will be dealt with in the strictest of confidence.