



Taxi and private hire newsletter

February 2024

Safeguarding Training

For those drivers still requiring to sit on the Council's mandatory Safeguarding Training, please note that the [bookings](#) page has now been updated with the link to the latest offer which will be held on the 13 February at 11am. For those unable to attend this session the subsequent session will be undertaken on the 24 July at 11am. Please ensure you book on one of these sessions if you have yet to undertake the training.

The Council is now to actively issue suspension notices in respect of those drivers not having received their training in the time allocated to them.

Please note that a fee of £10 now applies.

Making Timely Vehicle Renewals

It has come to our attention that certain drivers/vehicle owners are still not placing their vehicle renewal dates in their diaries. With the availability of phone calendars with associated alerts and reminders, this may be a good time to use the facility. You can see the expiry date of a vehicle licence on the repeater plate displayed inside, please check this today and make appropriate plans.

It is a vehicle owner's responsibility to make sure renewal applications are made in a timely way. The Licensing Team suggests that applications should be made no later than 7 days prior to expiry. Remember also that there will be knock on implications for drivers; insurance is generally invalidated if a vehicle is used for hire and reward and it is not appropriately licensed. As such, drivers should be making these checks also.

Maintenance Checks – Are They Being Recorded?

A number of vehicles have been presented with MOT advisories. Moreover, on an evening inspection of vehicles undertaken in December, officers suspended a vehicle due to an issue surrounding tyre wear. Please ensure that advisories are kept in check, and regular maintenance checks are undertaken.

The latest Hackney Carriage and Private Hire [Policy](#) requires maintenance checks to be undertaken and recorded. Are you compliant?

Appendix K of the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing cites the following in terms of the deposit of drivers' licences and keeping of records:

6.1 If the proprietor permits or employs any other person to drive the vehicle, they shall before that person commences to drive the vehicle cause the driver to deliver to the proprietor a copy of the driver's Hackney Carriage driver licence for retention, until such time as the driver ceases to be permitted or employed to drive the vehicle or any other vehicle in the ownership of the proprietor. The proprietor shall keep a record book that shall contain the following particulars:

- *the name(s), address(es) and licence number(s) of the persons permitted or employed to drive the Vehicle;*
- *the name of the person driving the vehicle at any time, including the date, and the time the person commenced and finished driving the vehicle;*
- *records of daily vehicle maintenance checks and inspections undertaken;*
- *dates and times of each mechanical inspection and maintenance check;*
- *the name of the person or garage which undertook the inspection or check;*
- *details of defects identified and dates when the defects were corrected.*

The Licensee shall retain this record book for a minimum period of twelve months and produce it to the Authorised Officer or a Police Officer if requested to do so at the time and place specified.

Notification of Motoring Convictions/Points on your Driving Licence

We are aware of drivers not notifying the Council of motoring convictions. This is a failure to meet Appendix O of the [Policy](#) whereby drivers must notify the Council within a period of 48 hours of any arrest and release, charge or conviction, receipt of a driving disqualification for any period of time, receipt of any fixed penalty, or anti-social behaviour order imposed on him/her whilst the licence is in force.

In addition they must notify the Licensing Team in writing, within a period of 48 hours, if they are notified by the Police of an allegation of an offence by them that the Police are investigating. Drivers are required to disclose the alleged offence and alleged offence date in their notification to the Licensing Team.

Failure to notify will bring into question a driver's ongoing fitness and propriety so please be sure to comply with the above.

Old Torrington Road

The Licensing Team has been in dialogue with Devon County Council (DCC) in respect of the bus gate in Old Torrington Road, Barnstaple. DCC apologise for the confusion, however the signs that the developers originally erected were incorrect, these have now been amended. The position is that taxi and private hire vehicles are not permitted to access this stretch of highway. Any queries should be directed to DCC directly.

DBS update service

Please be reminded of the following important information in respect of the [DBS Update Service](#) :

- If you have signed up for the DBS update service you are advised to retain your original DBS certificate.
- If your certificate is lost or misplaced then you will be required to apply for a new DBS.
- If you change address you will need to inform the DBS update service but you will not be required to apply for a new DBS certificate.
- If you change your name or have any new convictions, cautions or warnings then you will be required to undertake a new DBS certificate.
- If you have signed up for the service and you lose your credit/debit card or it expires, you will need to contact the DBS update service to provide your new card details. If the DBS update service is unable to debit your account when required and your subscription is stopped, then your disclosure will no longer be valid.

It is imperative that the Licensing Team can check a driver's DBS mid-term through a licence by way of the Update Service, so the subscription must be kept valid by a driver at all times. If not this will lead to delays in driver renewals or suspension or revocation of licences in some instances.

VERSO is Coming

In the next 9-12 months the Licensing Team are to transition to new software for the issue and administration of taxi and private hire related licences. VERSO will allow users to submit renewal applications, and upload supporting documentation such as MOTs, etc., and pay the required fees. Additionally it will provide an audit trail of documents that have been submitted, or where the Council has requested information. The Council already requires drivers to have a current email address, and this will be imperative in moving forward, considering it will be necessary for drivers to set up an account.

This newsletter serves to provide an early heads up of the plans ahead, and the Licensing Team will endeavour to provide support to drivers and vehicle owners in this transition phase. The Team is excited to be making this change and believe that it will be positive for both the trade and Council.