



Make sure you book your place on our Licensing Drop ins designed to help trade members with any complex issues they may have experienced as part of the licensing process.

See inside for more details

A Tale of Two Cities or Two Taxis

I had to use a taxi on two different occasions recently, and I thought I would highlight my experience (neither driver knew I was a councillor- so I assume I was treated like a usual Saturday customer).



I caught a HC from Temple Meads (having been away to a conference). The driver got out of his cab and offered to help me with my heavy bag, opened the door and asked if I needed a hand getting in. He was polite, went out of his way to chat, asking me if I was a visitor and telling me about what was happening in Bristol that weekend. It was a really pleasant experience and I felt safe and confident in his driving. Needless to say I was happy to tip!

The other ride couldn't have been more different. I ordered a cab from home and when he arrived he stopped in the middle of the road with the engine idling (despite there being a parking space about 10 yards in front) and annoyed several drivers behind who could not pass. He made no attempt to confirm which company he was from when I asked to check it was the right booking. When I asked how much it was likely to cost he said 'I don't know cos I don't know where it is'. He had no idea where he was going, even though I had the address, and looked for it on his phone. I asked if he had a busy evening, to make small talk, and he muttered something. He drove over the speed limit all the way, and I was thrown about in the seat and he shouted aggressively at another driver who overtook. No attempt was made to open a door or offer me any help and I felt very unsafe. As a fare paying passenger why would I want to use this operator again if I am treated in this way? It makes no business sense to me. Before anyone asks, the vehicle and driver was licensed by BCC!

As the Public Safety Committee, we need to have policies that ensure that all our drivers meet robust licensing standards and we are proud, as a city, that we are rigorous in doing this. However, we also need to be able to guarantee a good standard of customer care if we are to have a taxi & private hire fleet that we are confident in promoting and supporting as an important part of an integrated public transport system.

National Taxi Licensing Report: Steps Towards a Safer and More Robust System

The Taxi Task and Finish Group has made a lot of recommendations to improve licensing, such as introducing national minimum standards, so it would not be easier for a driver to get licensed in a different authority. It also makes recommendations about public safety, training, plying for hire and other key areas. It says that the Government should legislate that all taxi and PHV journeys should start and/or end within the area for which the driver, vehicle and operator are licensed-which would address many Bristol drivers' concerns. If you think that the recommendations would make a difference to the trade, then it is worth lobbying your MP to try and get them to push for the legislation required to make it happen.

See www.gov.uk/government/publications/taxi-and-private-hire-vehicle-licensing-recommendations-for-a-safer-and-more-robust-system

Cllr. Ruth Pickersgill MBE

Transport Update

The Transport team have provided updates on key topics and issues previously raised by the trade.

Bus lanes to be used for Bristol licensed vehicles only

The bus lane traffic regulation orders (TROs) do not discriminate between taxis licensed inside and outside of Bristol. The Council officers have looked into this carefully and the position is that it would not be practical to introduce such a distinction, for the following reasons:

- Issues around what's in the public interest and legalities
- Conflict with Council's transport policies
- Unlikely that the Department for Transport would support such an approach due to non-compliant signage
- Cost and enforcement challenges

Improve signage and information for taxi ranks

A lot of work has been carried out recently to try and improve information given to the public about ranks including:

1) Refreshing lines and signs so the ranks are more visible and easier to use

We will be implementing a programme of rank refurbishments to ensure all correct lining and signing is in place at existing ranks. An audit of all ranks has started and works are expected to begin in the new year –hoping to finish in Spring 2019.

2) Working with enforcement officers to ensure the ranks are kept clear for taxis

This is an ongoing piece of work with regular liaison between Sustainable Transport, Licensing, Parking Services and the Police.

3) Improving passenger information at ranks to help passengers with their journey and understand how taxis operate in Bristol

We are in the process of producing posters to be put in the display cases at taxi ranks. Once they are up, we will be approaching the taxi trade for feedback on the content of the posters which we anticipate will be ready by February 2019.

4) Improving 'taxi' passenger information on travelwest.info as part of a large-scale website redesign

The Council has set up a working group with the neighbouring authorities. The objective is to ensure there is a dedicated taxi page on the TravelWest website including an interactive map showing the location of ranks, and other information which will be useful for members of the public in planning their journey.

5) Proposing to integrate taxi infrastructure/ information into the Bristol 'Legible City' wayfinding system including provision of an illuminated Taxi Beacon at key ranks

The Sustainable Transport Team and City Design have been working together over the last couple of months to progress this work. The proposed Taxi Beacon is currently going through the Council's internal process for approval as there are some issues which need resolving such as power costs and ongoing maintenance. A decision on the Taxi Beacon is expected in February 2019.

Rank Review – provision of new ranks and review of existing ranks

The introduction of new ranks, or the amendment of existing ranks are subject to legal processes which in some cases can take over 12 months to implement (NB/ there may be some locations can be progressed much quicker depending on their current status). The Sustainable Transport Team has been reviewing the requests made by the Bristol Blue Licensed Taxi Association (BBLTA) and has carried out internal consultation with teams across the Transport Service. There is a meeting in January 2019 with the BBLTA and representatives from the Council and Police to feedback on progress so far.

At those locations which seem to be possibly viable, the next stage is to carry out informal public consultation – this is currently planned for the end of 18/19. Subject to the outcome of informal consultation, statutory consultation will then follow in early 19/20 to be carried out in Autumn 19/20.

Private Hires

Through the Taxi Forum meetings, the Council will continue to listen to any concerns or issues raised and take forward and address as appropriate.

Notes from the BBLTA

Ranks: At the moment there is no rank in the heart of the city where taxi drivers can work during the day or night, over 70% night business is there. It has big impact on drivers livelihood, and on their mentally and physically health. It clearly shows the partiality, jeopardising the public and taxi drivers safety by removing Hippodrome rank. Our request/demand for 24 hours ranks, night ranks and hospital rank is honest and rightfully and all the drivers are united for this fair request. Trade will not sit peacefully until the ranks issue get resolved. Taxis are the part of the public transport and can not be pushed out from City Centre.

Trade thanks to Nick Carter, Jonathan Martin and Ruth Pickersgill for working with Sustainable Transport on our behalf to resolve the rank issue.

Application Form: drivers are continuously making mistakes in filling up the forms, especially for declarations of any offences and driving points. Trade request the drivers to be extra careful in filling up the badge renewal application forms.

Exercise: most of the taxi work is sitting for long hours, very challenging and can be stressful, trade urge the drivers to have time for themselves on routine basis like, walking, jogging, or any other physical activities to keep yourself healthy and fit.

Patrick Masih Chair of the BBLTA



Community Toilets Scheme

A Community Toilets Scheme, introduced to provide toilet facilities to the public following the closure of public toilets in Bristol, has encouraged businesses to sign up. Eighty venues have so far signed up across the city, with 82% of these facilities having accessible facilities.

Georgie Bryant, Project Development Officer, said “The scheme is still growing, and there are still areas where we need more coverage so if you do happen to find a venue please let us know. Please provide the business name and contact email address, so

that we can invite them to join the scheme. We will continue to chase the businesses who have previously been identified”.

If you are out and about and need to find a facility, check out www.toiletmap.org.uk on your smart phone. All of the current venues have been added to this map, which also shows many other venues that are not currently part of our Bristol scheme.

Further to the current list of venues, a further 14 have expressed an interest in signing up to the scheme. Be sure to keep updated by regularly checking the toilet map website.



Appeal for Private Hire representation at the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Forum

The Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Forum is currently under-represented by the Private Hire trade. We are looking for individuals who would be interested in representing the needs of the Private Hire trade.

The Forum meets every two months at City Hall, and is designed to improve communication and partnership

between the Licensing Team and the Trade.

Notes from previous meetings can be found on the Council website at www.bristol.gov.uk/licences-and-permits/taxi-forum

If you would like to express an interest in attending, please email licensing@bristol.gov.uk for further information.

DVLA Mandates and the checking of Driving Licences

As previously mentioned in the September edition of the Private Hire and Hackney Carriage newsletter, the current way we perform checks on DVLA driver licences has now changed.

What has happened

From December 2018, we are no longer able to carry out checks using the DVLA's Driver Licence Check service. A new system is being put in place by the DVLA, however this will not be available until at least April 2019.

What this means

This means that from 1st December 2018 to at least April 2019, all drivers renewing their private hire or hackney carriage driver licences between this period will be required to create a 'check code' with the DVLA, and given to the Licensing Service.

The check code will enable the Licensing Team to view your driving licence information online.

What you need to do

You can create a check code by going to the following web address: www.gov.uk/view-driving-licence

You will need your;

- DVLA Licence Number
- National Insurance Number
- Postcode on DVLA Licence

Once you have logged in using the above details, you can create a check code by clicking on 'Get a code'.

Once you have clicked 'Get a code', a code will be generated.

You will need to share this code with the Licensing Team; you will be given a form to complete in addition to your application form. Please note; the code will only be valid for 21 days, so we suggest you produce

The screenshot shows the GOV.UK website interface for viewing driving licence information. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'Your details', 'Vehicles you can drive', 'Penalties and disqualifications', and 'Get your check code'. Below this, there's a section titled 'Get a licence check code' with instructions on how to use the code. A green button labeled 'Get a code' is circled in red. Below the button, it says 'Active codes' and 'You have no active code(s) to view'.

the code on the same day you submit your renewal application. We will process your application up to 4 weeks before your expiry date.

What we will do

We will use this code to perform a check on your driving licence entitlement as part of the renewal process.

Please note the code is a single use code, so cannot be used again once a check has been carried out.

We understand this may cause inconvenience, but please be assured we are working with the DVLA, and will keep you updated on developments on implementing the new service.

Other information

Please note, the new system being introduced by the DVLA in 2019 will continue to use the D906 DVLA Mandate form which is completed every three years. This means we will still ensure a valid D906 DVLA Mandate form is in place on your file.

If you have received a renewal stating there is a DVLA Mandate due, please continue to complete the Mandate for when the new system is introduced.

The use of Taxi Meters

Do you drive a Hackney Carriage vehicle? Do you undertake Private Hire work for a licensed Operator?

Did you know that you still need to use your meter?

Any journey undertaken by a Hackney Carriage vehicle requires that the meter is on and working during the journey. This includes those vehicles undertaking Private Hire work where a fare has already been agreed.

If the fare shown on the meter at the end of the journey is less than the pre-agreed fare, you can only charge the amount shown on the meter.

Please note the Taxi Cop regularly undertakes roadside inspections of Hackney Carriage vehicles to ensure this is complied with, do not get caught out!



Increase in Hackney Carriage Fares

Following a review of the current fare structure and consultation with members of the Hackney Carriage Trade, an increase in Hackney Carriage fares was implemented with immediate effect. All meters should by now have been calibrated to reflect the new fares.

The Council are committed to an annual fare review, and will be working with the Hackney Carriage trade to undertake this.

Taxi Licensing Drop-in Sessions

Following the recent trial of drop-in sessions, the Licensing Team will be holding a further limited number of sessions over the coming months.



The sessions are designed to help those with any complex issues which they may have experienced as part of the licensing process, and senior members of staff will be on hand to help.

The service will run on an appointment only basis, and will take place at the Citizen Service Point at 100 Temple Street.

The next series of dates will be as follows:

Tuesday 8th January 2019	10:00 – 12:00
Tuesday 5th February 2019	11:00 – 13:00
Tuesday 5th March 2019	11:00 – 13:00

If you would like to book an appointment, please email licensing@bristol.gov.uk with the following information:

- Name
- Badge/Plate number
- Brief details of the issue you would like to discuss

Please note appointments will be allocated in order, and we will confirm your allocated time via email.

Disclosure and Barring Service Checks

Increasing numbers of drivers are not responding straight away when Licensing writes to them saying they need to do the paperwork to get their DBS checks renewed. If you leave it until you come to do the final paperwork for your renewal- it is more than likely your DBS will not be back in time as they can take months to process.

Drivers are then having to ask for a temporary license until the DBS comes through, which is not something that we can recommend and is not good practice. The Council needs to put public safety first, and make sure all checks are up to date on renewal, so we really need all drivers to act immediately when they get their DBS reminder, and not put it aside, in order to make the process work smoothly.



Switching to Electric - Incentives

There is a scheme available to those drivers wishing to purchase an Electric Vehicle;

A package of incentives offered to Hackney Carriage proprietors for purchasing a ULEV. These incentives would be offered over a 5 year period and total £3,635 per proprietor.

A breakdown of the package is presented below:

- Subsidising full cost of Licensing fees: £187/annum
- Subsidising Certificate of Conformity fee: £50/annum

- Subsidising full cost of permit to operate at Temple Meads Rail Station: £490/annum

The council has also recently submitted a bid for Government funding to create a network of dedicated electric charging points for the taxi trade. News will follow if the bid is accepted.

Please contact us for further information at licensing@bristol.gov.uk



Mandatory Training for Drivers

The Licensing Team are currently undertaking a process to reshape training and introduce a mandatory training programme for all drivers.

Over the years that have passed since any training update, there has been a huge shift in the requirements and responsibilities placed on drivers. As a Core City Council, it is important that we stay at the forefront of the highest standards of taxi licensing. A highly skilled fleet of drivers is more likely to be used again by customers than those who have been trained to a lower standard.

The new training programme is likely to include topics including Keeping yourself safe while driving, Child Sexual Exploitation, Human Trafficking, Conflict Management, and Disability Awareness.

As a licensed driver, we will keep you informed of any updates in relation to the development of the new training programme and provider.

What would you like to see?

The Licensing Team aim to improve communication between the council and the trade.

Remember, this is your newsletter!

If you have something you think would be useful, or would like to see included in future issues, or you have a good news story or information you want to share, please get in touch at licensing@bristol.gov.uk with the subject 'Newsletter'.

Previous Newsletters:

The Taxi Newsletter is a good way for the Licensing Team to communicate with the Private Hire and Hackney Carriage trade. Past issues of the newsletter are available on our website: bristol.gov.uk/licences-and-permits/taxi-forum