



Chair article

Our new online application system is now live. It is designed to be as streamlined as possible, to ensure all documentation is in one place for ease of administrative purposes and user friendly from an applicant perspective. We continue to discuss the roll-out of this system in our regular Taxi Forum meetings so please give your feedback so we can make this task as painless as possible for all involved and get those licences out so people can start working.

The CAZ system is live and has been in operation for a couple months. There have been some



teething problems especially in and around the Asda car park exit onto Coronation Road. Drivers need to be aware that when exiting the car park onto Coronation Road all vehicles enter the CAZ and will be charged if applicable. Given the confusion any charges (roughly until the end of January) can be challenged and will be viewed favourably in terms of scrapping charges but to be clear these charges do now apply in this CAZ section.



I have been working with lead officers and local external health teams to try to make the medicals more streamlined and less onerous for both drivers and the health professionals that provide this service. This is an ongoing task at this time, the council must ensure that licensed drivers possess a level of health that ensures safety for the public they serve as well as a process that is realistic and efficient as possible. Please bear with us as we continue to work through this.

Councillor Christine Townsend,
Public Safety and Protection Committee

PC Quinton update

Taxi Cop

In December and January, I ran two Operations with Licensing Officers from Bristol City Council, South Gloucestershire Council and the Driver & Vehicle Standards Agency.

We checked 115 vehicles, which resulted in 15 DVSA prohibitions and 33 Council Notices being issued. A number of drivers have been given tickets (mostly for bald tyres) and one will be going to Court. One PHV was found with an unlicensed driver. This sort of work is important to keep drivers and the travelling public safe. If you were stopped and checked, thank you for your patience and cooperation.

Some drivers have asked why we stop vehicles when there are passengers on board. As well as the practicalities of not knowing if there are passengers on board until we stop the vehicle, we also need to check if Hackney Carriages are using their meters as required and whether a Private Hire driver has a booking for that journey. Most Hackney Carriage drivers know to pause the meter if they are stopped and checked.



We will carry on doing these multi-agency checks as they are a vital tactic to ensure that your valued work is carried out safely.

Have a safe shift,

PC Quinton, Taxi Compliance Officer

The Bridewell police station
PC Quinton
07469 400 832

Fleet Services

We have recently had drivers book in for their Vehicle Inspection Check, but not turn up to the appointment. If you are unable to attend your appointment you will need to give us a minimum of 24 hours, if you do not you will lose the fee for that booking.

From August 2021 all drivers have been required to show their current private hire or hackney carriage badge when presenting a licensed vehicle for a vehicle inspection check. This is because only drivers who hold a valid Bristol City Council Driver Licence can drive a vehicle which is currently licensed by Bristol City Council.



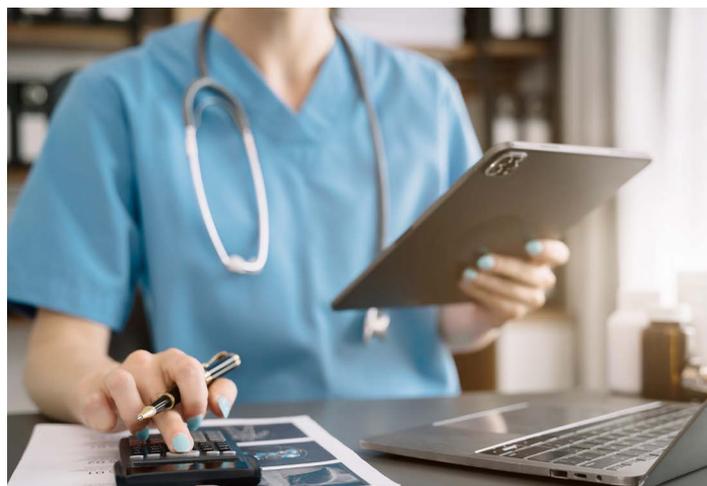
If your licence has expired, or you do not hold a licence with us, you are unable to drive a licensed vehicle even for personal use. If you do not bring your badge to the appointment the compliance check will be cancelled, and you will lose the fee for that booking.

Medicals

In November 2022 we told you that we had made a change to our Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy to allow drivers to have their medicals done by any registered doctor.

If your medical is done by a doctor that is not your registered GP, your GP practice will need to provide your medical history and notes.

We have updated our medical form to include a section for your GP to complete to confirm that this has happened, as well as updating the guidance to confirm that a medical summary is accepted for your medical history. This is the most common format that GPs use, and should have all the relevant details on it.



It can take some time for doctors to obtain your notes from another medical practice, so if you aren't going to your own doctor make sure you book your medical well in advance of your licence renewal date.

Consider the environment when ranking up

As you will be aware the Clean Air Zone was introduced in Bristol on 28 November 2022 in order to reduce the level of air pollution to meet the government's legal limits and improve air quality within the city.

With this in mind when you're sat waiting for fares, please consider the helping to reduce pollution and help the environment by turning your engines off whilst waiting.



Changes to online applications

On 9 January 2023 the way you contact us, and the way apply for your licences changed.

All applications must now be submitted via the online system, and you can pay for all applications, except transfer applications on our website. Make sure you submit all of your supporting documents at the time you submit your application to prevent delays in your licence being issued. You can also report:

- [a change of name or address](#)
- [a change to your health or convictions](#)
- [an incident with your vehicle online](#)

If you need to contact us about anything else, or upload additional documents you can do so using our [online contact forms](#) (bristol.gov.uk). We don't accept emails about taxi related matters anymore.

Make sure you read through the options to choose the right one for your query.

Renewal Reference Numbers

In order to submit your renewal application online you will need to know your renewal reference number. This number is provided on your renewal reminder letter, and it will also appear on all paper licences issued from 9 January 2023.

Your renewal reference number is unique to your licence, and you must ensure you are using the correct one for the application. Make sure you are using your driver renewal reference for your driver licence, and your vehicle renewal reference for your vehicle renewal. If you have a hackney carriage driver licence and a private hire

driver licence, there will be a separate reference for each one, don't use the same reference twice. The format of your renewal reference number is:

AA0AA0AA0AA00

This is different to your licence reference number.

You can make an application up to six weeks before your licence expires. If your renewal reference number isn't working please check that you are applying within this period. If you are still having issues you can call us to check the number you are using is correct.

Safeguarding Training

Congratulations to the majority of you who have attended and passed your safeguarding training.

Certificates will be sent out to all drivers who've passed over the coming weeks. Anyone who hasn't attended or has not passed will need to complete and pass a further training session prior to the renewal of their licence. If you have not passed the safeguarding training, we are unable to renew your licence. We will update the website [Safeguarding training for taxi drivers](#) with future dates.

Vehicle Tint Policy

Our Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing policy restricts tinted windows to a pale tint as long as 75% of light is transmitted through the windscreen, 70% through the front side windows and 65% through the rear side windows. It only applies to vehicles where the tints are manufacturer installed, and licensees are not allowed to add tints to a vehicle later.

We are aware that some drivers have had issues sourcing vehicles which meet our policy in relation to tints. We are currently looking into the availability of vehicles which comply with our tints policy, and once this is completed, we will consider whether we need to make a change to our policy. If this happens, it will go out to consultation, and then be put before the Public Safety and Protection Committee for determination. This process will take several months.



Our policy has not yet changed. If you apply to licence a vehicle which does meet our policy it will be referred to the Public Safety and Protection Committee for determination. If you purchase a vehicle that has tinted windows which are darker than the above measurements, you might not get a licence so please think carefully before making a purchase.

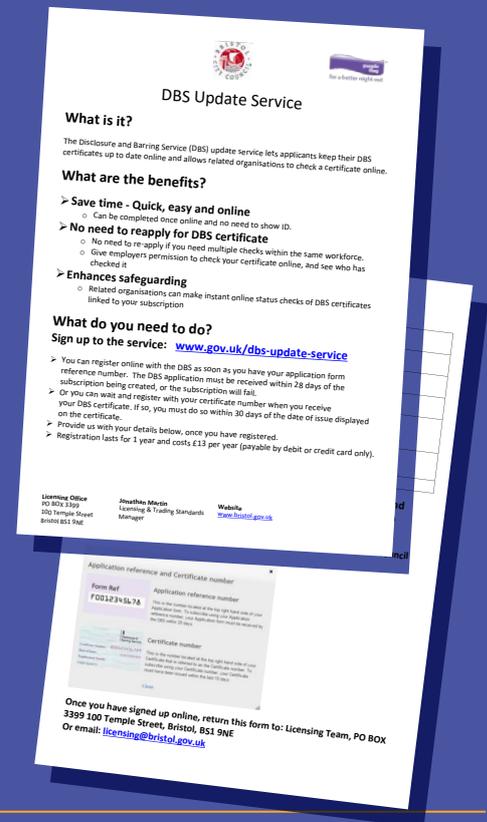
Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificates and update service

All licensed drivers are required to sign up to, and maintain a subscription to, the DBS Update Service at all times that they hold a Hackney Carriage or Private hire Driver's Licence.

If you have already signed up to the DBS Update Service, we need to make sure we have seen a copy of the certificate you used when signing up. To do this we will ask you to provide us with a photo of the front and back of the DBS Certificate you used to sign up to the Update Service on your next renewal, along with an [Update Service Authorisation form](#) which you can find on our website. This gives us permission to check your DBS status.

If you haven't signed up to the Update Service, you'll need a new DBS check. You'll need to contact us so we can complete a new DBS check with you. You'll then need to sign up to the DBS Update Service within 30 days of the certificate being issued. If you do not sign up in this time frame you will be required to complete another DBS Check.

If you have not signed up to the DBS Update Service, we won't be able to renew your licence until you have.



DBS Appointments

We have DBS appointments each week on Wednesday afternoons and Thursday mornings, these are for drivers who need to verify their ID in order to apply for an enhanced DBS certificate or complete a right to licence verification.

These appointments are by appointment only, if you need an appointment you will need to call the Citizen Service Centre on 0117 35 74900 and pay the fee of £53. You must submit your DBS application online prior to the appointment.

The officer completing the ID check can't help with questions or queries, or take documents from you, except for your DBS or right to licence check. Check the website to see if the answer to your question is there, and use the contact forms if you still need to speak to us.

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 via our [online contact forms](#) with the subject 'Newsletter'.