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APRIL FOOL? WE SINCERELY HOPE NOT...

Since our last edition, the PM has announced a degree (!) of release of the current UK lockdown – which kicks off on 12 April, as we go to press. So what does that mean? This applies to England only; Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have their own parameters:-

Stage two (no earlier than 12 April):

- All shops allowed to open, along with close-contact services, including hairdressers and beauty salons
- Restaurants and pubs allowed to serve food and alcohol to customers sitting outdoors
- Gyms and spas can reopen, as can zoos, theme parks, libraries and community centres
- Members of the same household can take a holiday in England in self-contained accommodation
- Weddings attended by up to 15 people can take place

So the question is: How will this first stage of release affect your business within our industry? As you may know, further phasing out of lockdown is scheduled for May and June... but as always, things could change on a daily/weekly basis, as they often have done over the past year or so.

In the meantime, it's still all down to staying safe, healthy – and still running a business. Along those lines, we have several rather meaty features this month; top of the list is the latest update on our council survey as regards funding for licence holders in each individual area. We've had a tremendous response since last month's edition and Facebook coverage, and are looking for even more support from those councils that were either sitting on the fence, or had previously taken a negative stance on the matter of dishing out assistance to our trade in their area.

To bolster our campaign further from within the industry, the **NPHTA** has been rather busy (!) in all directions Covid-wise and otherwise; you'll see no fewer than three features inside this edition updating **PHTM** readers on the current position as regards safety screens, CCTV, and an overview of **NPHTA** activities in recent days/weeks.

There are also welcome contributions from **NPHTA** Board member Steven Toy, our usual correspondents from the GMB and Unite (Yes!), Wayne's World, Know Your Rights, Round the Councils, World Wide Taxi Focus, and of course a jam-packed issue filled with current trade news generally.

So what are you waiting for: the Easter Bunny? Get reading, and here's hoping the more positive vibes coming out of Downing Street, plus the marginal improvement in the weather around your way, add up to a more positive intro into spring.

And thank you as always for being there, and supporting your number one national industry paper.



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FOLLOWING ON FROM THE RECENT ICO PUBLICATION - AN EXPANSION OF YOUR LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Many of you have seen or received the notice issued by the Information Commissioners Office last month, reminding all businesses of their legal responsibilities under the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), with a link to information and advice from the ICO - Data protection advice for small organisations: <https://bit.ly/3w9Rbb1>

Our March article went into a lot more detail to explain what all this meant for our readers, especially those using dashcams for protection, but as you all know we like to spell things out a little more clearly.

The actual regulations regarding the use of recording devices in taxis and private hire vehicles are:

1. Where there is audio, it must be permanently disabled and only activated where justified by a panic switch.

This does not mean “can be switched off”, nor does it mean “may be activated through settings”. It means exactly what it says: **it must be permanently disabled**; where there is justifiable reason to record audio, it must be switched on by a **“panic switch”**.

Imagine the scenario: A passenger becomes verbally aggressive towards you, you go into the dashcam settings in order to switch on the audio, or wave your hand to activate audio, and then ask your customer: *“Excuse me sir, would you mind repeating that threat for the camera?”* Yeah sure... does that sound feasible, practical, or even safe to you?

2. Devices must be securely mounted and protected from unauthorised removal.

All dashcams are merely stuck to the windscreens using suction cups or sticky pads - one quick twist or tug and they are removed. Imagine that scenario: an attacker sees the camera recording them, he or she



will simply twist it off and take it with them. Not only have you been assaulted or robbed, but you have also given them a gift of a dashcam; some may be cheap versions from a petrol station at £15, others such as Nextbase are quite expensive, sometimes upwards of £300.

3. Data must be stored away and protected from unauthorised access including the use of encryption to a minimum standard of FIPS 140-2.

The data in the case of a dashcam is stored internally on an SD card. There is no separate storage device; most are not encrypted at all, and for the minority that are, the software to view the data is available online to download, which renders the encryption worthless.

OK - so what is FIPS 140-2?

FIPS 140-2 is a standard which handles cryptographic modules and the ones that organisations use to encrypt data-at-rest and data-in-motion. **FIPS 140-2** has four levels of security, with level 1 being the least secure, and level 4 being the most secure. It is an American standard, but it is the minimum standard that has been adopted by the UK.

Why is this important?

Since creating a scenario is quite often the easiest and best way to explain things, imagine this: Passengers towards the end of their night out are on their way home, a little worse for wear, not looking their best or being on their best behaviour, is the only polite way to explain it. This is quite normal within our industry, so it is no problem, right? Your camera is recording their images, but then an attacker gets in, attacks you (as described above) and takes the camera, along with the SD card.

Once at home, curiosity gets the better of them, they remove the SD card and plug it into any computer for a quick look. The images are hilarious, which results in them being posted on social media for all to see. This is an instant breach of GDPR; as such you could be in a lot of trouble, on top of having been attacked or robbed and having provided them with the gift of the dashcam!



How can shops sell them if they cannot be used?

This one is quite simple: In reality, shops do not know what type of vehicles the devices will be installed into; many of them do not install the devices, nor are they aware of licensing conditions, let alone GDPR. These devices are perfectly OK for private use vehicles, but as soon as you license the vehicles for public or private hire, those regulations apply.

Add to that the fact that not all dashcams have the facility to record internally. Whether that be images or just audio, they are not all non-compliant, which is how insurance companies can use dashcams - as external event recorders only, for the sole purpose of identifying liability in the event of a collision.

What does this mean for vehicle owners or drivers?

Quite simply put, it means this: Be careful what you buy, please understand the regulations, study, research and make sure you are buying the correct products that can comply with the ICO regulations.

Where can I find these regulations?

The best place to look is on the ICO website. Remember: your local authority may set local conditions, but in most cases this is merely a translation of the ICO regulations.

If I register as data controller, then it is perfectly fine to use a dashcam.

This is not the case at all. Registering as data controller

merely makes you the person or organisation that is legally responsible for the way data is stored, accessed, and used, which includes making sure the data is captured and stored using compliant devices and procedures. It is not the product that is registered; it is you as the data controller!

What does this mean for local authorities?

Where a local authority has made CCTV a mandatory condition of licensing, it becomes the data controller for any images captured, but it must first carry out a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA), where external cameras are included as a part of the mandatory requirement. Then the DPIA must include those cameras, with justifiable reason as to why they are included.

However, where the external cameras are “allowed” to be added as an extra feature, as opposed to being a mandated part, then these additional cameras do not need to be included in the DPIA since they are optional.

But this is of extreme importance: Where the additional cameras are not allowed, with the opinion being that *“if a driver wants those cameras then they can get those as a separate product that may not record to the same hard drive”*.

This opinion leaves it wide open for vehicles or drivers to get any dashcam they like, and install them, many of which have internal cameras and audio. This in practice renders the entire CCTV condition worthless, since the whole point is to ensure that any devices used within licensed vehicles are compliant.

The resounding message here is: Be careful, read and understand the regulations, please do not get caught out using non-compliant devices.

All devices which record internally **MUST** have a dedicated data controller, this may be the local authority, it may be an operator, it may be an association, organisation, or union, or it may be yourself as an individual. Data may only be accessed by the data controller, which may only be for *“legitimate interests”* which simply put means, where an alleged crime has occurred.

Be safe, be compliant, be protected!

Article by: David Lawrie, Director NPHTA
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THE CASE OF WORKER STATUS

Article by Low Incomes Tax Reform Group
www.litrg.org.uk



The Supreme Court has recently found some Uber drivers were 'workers' rather than 'self-employed' for employment law purposes. In this article we explain what this means and also look at why headlines like '*Supreme Court's decision means drivers should be considered as workers entitled to holiday and sick pay and the minimum wage*' are incorrect.

In employment law, there are three potential employment statuses - employee, 'worker' and self-employed. Your employment status determines the rights you are entitled to. 'Workers' have fewer rights than employees, but they have more rights than the self-employed, who tend to have very few legal protections. The Supreme Court has recently found some Uber drivers were 'workers' rather than 'self-employed' for employment law purposes.

WHAT IS 'WORKER' STATUS?

A 'worker' in employment law terms, is basically someone who provides work or a service as part of someone else's business. For example, an electrician working for a single building contractor as opposed to his own domestic customers, could be classed as a 'worker' for employment law purposes.

Their work arrangements tend to be midway between self-employment and employment in that they do not have the 'master/servant' relationship that an employee has with their engager (the person or company taking them on); but neither are they entirely their own bosses, deciding how much to charge for their work, how much holiday to give themselves, and so on.

This is why 'workers' have a minimum set of employment rights to help protect them, including the right to be paid the minimum wage, to a workplace pension and to annual leave.

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM WITH 'WORKER' STATUS?

The definition of a 'worker' in the *Employment Rights Act 1996* includes anyone employed under a contract of employment but also extends to some individuals who are self-employed. This would be where that individual has: "*entered into or works under any contract, whether express or implied and (if it is express) whether oral or in writing, whereby the individual undertakes to do or perform personally any work or services for another party to the contract whose status is not by virtue of the contract that of a client or customer of any profession or business undertaking carried on by the individual*".

(Although 'workers' can sometimes be defined slightly differently depending on what right you are talking about, this main *Employment Rights Act 1996* definition is picked up for the main things such as minimum wage and annual leave).

This definition tells us that there are three strands to 'worker' status:

- 1) There has to be a contract between the worker and engager
- 2) The worker generally must carry out their work personally, rather than being able to send someone in his or her place.
- 3) The worker must not really be in business on their own account (so, the engager isn't a client or customer of the worker's own business)

The last bullet point is where things get difficult and technical as working out whether people are in business on their own account for 'worker' status purposes, really starts at the same point as working out if people are in business on their own account for employee v self-employed purposes.

'Worker' status is basically for those who do reach the 'pass mark' for acquiring employee status, but even to us, there is a lack of clarity over where the line is (or should be) drawn!

WHAT DOES THIS JUDGEMENT MEAN?

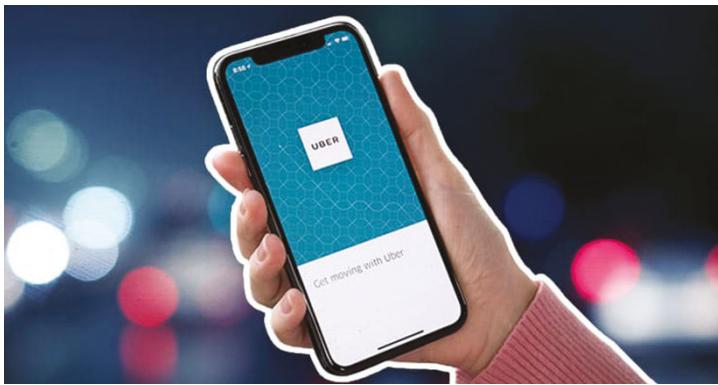
In summary, Uber argued that drivers are independent contractors who work under contracts made with customers and do not work for Uber. Basically, they tried to argue that points 1 and 3 above did not apply.

The Supreme Court disagreed. It said that even though there is no written agreement between Uber and the drivers, in reality (and it is what happens in reality that counts), Uber London contracts with passengers and engages drivers to carry out bookings for it, which is the relevant legal relationship.

The Court also found that the drivers and services offered were tightly defined and controlled by Uber. The drivers had little or no say over their pay and working conditions because they were in a subordinate and dependent position in relation to Uber. The drivers therefore had little or no ability to improve their economic position through professional or entrepreneurial skill (thus, were not in business on their own account). In practice the only way in which they can increase their earnings is by working longer hours while constantly meeting Uber's measures of performance.

The judgement means that the specific Uber drivers who took the case (Mr Aslam and Mr Farrar), are entitled to certain employment rights which they were being denied.

AND STATUTORY SICK PAY



Other Uber drivers working at around the same time as the claimants (2016), will no doubt be taking a careful look at their positions.

Although we understand that Uber doesn't consider that the ruling applies to all current and future staff because of changes made to their business practices, it is an important case with far reaching implications for other workers in '**self-employed**' roles, where they have little autonomy and derive all or most of their income from the business they work for.

It is important that you seek advice if you are unsure on your employment status and/or believe that your employment rights have been breached. You could try ACAS, an employment law adviser/solicitor (they may offer a free initial consultation) or a trade union, if you belong to one (or want to join one).

WHAT ABOUT TAX?

Employment law status is different from tax law status.

Employment law: three types of status - employee, worker and self-employed.

Tax law: two types of status - employed and self-employed.

Because employment law and tax law are different, the decision does not change the drivers' position as '**self-employed**' for tax purposes. This means the drivers still have to submit annual self-assessment tax returns to tell HMRC about their earnings. They will continue to pay their income tax and National Insurance through self-assessment rather than through the Pay As You Earn system. This is confusing enough in itself, and it also has a knock-on effect for entitlement to statutory payments (as we consider below).

HMRC and/or a tax tribunal would have to rule that the drivers are '**employees**' for there to be a change to their tax position. Arguably, it would take a bigger 'swing' to reclassify a driver from self-employed to employed than from self-employed to worker.

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM WITH SSP?

As mentioned above, if Uber drivers are '**workers**' under employment law, they are entitled to annual leave, the national minimum wage and a workplace pension. Even if Uber drivers are '**workers**' under employment law however, they will not automatically become entitled to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) from Uber.

This is because currently, most Uber drivers are treated as self-employed for tax purposes and so are paid gross. Not being paid under the PAYE system means that there is no secondary contributor (someone who is liable to pay Class 1 secondary National Insurance Contributions). Secondary contributors are responsible for administering and part-financing statutory payments under the **Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992**. If there is no secondary contributor, then it follows that the worker cannot be entitled to Statutory Sick Pay or any other statutory payments for that matter, e.g. Statutory Maternity Pay, etc.

As we explained in our opening, some of the news stories following the case incorrectly concluded that the drivers involved would be entitled to SSP as a result of the decision because they assumed SSP is an employment law right, which as we have explained, is not the case.

Therefore, entitlement to Statutory Sick Pay would require not only a change in the Uber driver's employment law status but a change in their tax status as well. In the absence of this, Maternity Allowance or Employment and Support Allowance may be available instead from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)

WHY IS IT ALL SO COMPLICATED!?

Good question! These complexities demonstrate the need for a more certain and simpler system - for both individuals and businesses to navigate.

In response to some concerns raised and recommendations made about the employment status regime in the **Matthew Taylor 'Good Work' Report**, the government issued a consultation in February 2018 looking at questions around whether to legislate to improve the clarity of the employment status tests and whether to align the employment status regimes for both tax and employment law purposes. LITRG's response can be found here:

<https://bit.ly/3te7QrK>

Over three years later, unfortunately - the consultation is still labelled with 'feedback being analysed'.

Sadly it is a case of 'watch this space.'

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IN THE NEWS

MINICABIT LOOKING FOR MORE FLEETS AFTER INTEGRATING WITH A FURTHER FIVE LEADING DISPATCH SYSTEMS

minicabit, Britain's largest, most visited cab comparison site, is primed to drive more bookings for local cab operators across an even wider footprint of the UK, beyond the 550 towns and cities that it already serves.

It has spent the recent lockdown integrating with five more dispatch systems to add to existing ones.

Now taxi, private hire and chauffeur fleets that use:

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- DataMaster
- InsoftDev
- Marandy
- Cab9

can instantly provision minicabit and chauffeurit bookings within their existing workflow.

This is in addition to existing dispatch partners such as:

- Autocab
- CMS
- iCabbi
- Cab Treasure

minicabit
The UK cab network

Demand patterns on minicabit have changed since the first impact of Covid-19, with a significant increase UK-wide in regional journeys, particularly in respect of staycations which are now more prevalent.

Trips for railway stations now account for 34 per cent of minicabit's overall searches, and its average booked fare has increased from £42 pre-Covid up to £57.

Currently more than 70 per cent of

minicabit's 800 cab operator partners are based outside of the M25 area, including more rural locations.

Amer Hasan, CEO of minicabit, said: *"We've been retooling our platform during lockdown for new, exciting capabilities which all sizes and locations of private hire operators can benefit from.*

"This can help them really bounce back as we emerge out of lockdown into this new normal."

Enabling quicker, easier integrations with dispatch systems is one such capability, though even the smallest fleets with no such technology can still provision bookings via minicabit's portal.

The platform is on the lookout for more Cab and Chauffeur fleets around the UK to take on its demand.

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IN THE NEWS

COMPETITION AND MARKETS AUTHORITY APPROVES UBER'S AQUISITION OF AUTOCAB

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) launched an investigation in January 2021 to examine whether the proposed takeover of Autocab by Uber, announced on 6 August 2020, could impact rival companies.

Uber said every month thousands of people open the Uber app in places such as Oxford, Doncaster, Swansea and Aberdeen where the company doesn't operate to try to get a trip. Through Autocab's iGo marketplace, Uber will now be able to connect these passengers with local operators who choose to take their booking. In turn, operators should be able to expand their operations and offer more earnings opportunities to local drivers. Uber will also explore providing drivers with additional revenue opportunities related to its platform for other services,

The image shows the logos for Autocab and Uber side-by-side. Autocab is in a bold, sans-serif font, and Uber is in its signature blue and white logo.

such as delivery.

As part of the deal Uber pledged that post-acquisition, Autocab will remain independent with its own board focused exclusively on providing technology to the taxi and private hire industry around the world.

The investigation concluded that there is only limited indirect competition between the two companies, with no evidence suggesting that Autocab was likely to become a significant and more direct competitor to Uber in the future. Joel Bamford senior director of mergers at the CMA said: "It is important that mergers like these are properly scrutinised to ensure that cus-

tomers aren't negatively affected.

"After a thorough investigation, the CMA has found no competition concerns as a result of this deal. This is because the companies are not close competitors, the two businesses will continue to face competition from rivals and Autocab's customers can switch to credible alternative providers if they wish."

A spokesperson for Uber said: "We look forward to working with the Autocab team to help local operators grow and provide drivers with genuine earnings opportunities."

An Autocab spokesperson said: "We welcome this decision. By working with Uber, we can scale up our ambitions, and provide hundreds of thousands of extra trips for our customers, and help cement the place of licenced operators in their local community."

The advertisement features a large yellow circle on the left containing the text 'Private Hire Insurance' and 'SEIB are the one stop shop for private hire insurance.' Below this is a paragraph of text and a phone number. To the right is a stylized orange tree shape listing various insurance benefits. At the bottom right is the SEIB logo and a small text box about motor legal expenses. The bottom of the page contains a website address, social media icons, and a small disclaimer about the Civil Liability Bill.

www.seib.co.uk 

*From May 2021 the new Civil Liability Bill will come into effect. This will change the way drivers claim for whiplash injury and further increases the need to ensure you have pre-purchased a motor legal expenses insurance policy. As a result of the Civil Liability Bill, you will be liable for any legal costs for pursuing claims of up to £5,000 in respect of whiplash injuries following a motor accident. However, if you have pre-purchased motor legal expenses cover then this will cover your legal fees so you can pay for a solicitor to pursue the claim on your behalf. A standard motor legal expenses could cover up to £100,000 in legal fees and typically cost around £3 a month in premiums. **This option is exclusive for Multi Vehicle/Fleet policies.

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ROUND THE COUNCILS...

SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE: TAXI LICENCE FEES TO RISE

Licensing fees for taxi and private hire operators in South Oxfordshire are to be revised.

According to the Henley Standard, South Oxfordshire District Council is consulting on the new charges, which it plans to roll out on April 26 unless there are objections, in which case this could then be delayed for amendments until June 21.

A standard hackney carriage would pay £315 a year under the new scheme while a single private hire vehicle would pay £220 with reductions for low-emission cars.

A private hire firm would pay between £158 and £577 depending on the size of their fleet.

REDCAR AND CLEVELAND: LICENCE FEES TO GO DOWN

Hackney carriage and private hire drivers in Redcar and Cleveland will pay less to be licensed after councillors approved proposed changes to fees.

According to GazetteLive, new driver licences along with the cost for renewals are going down after the council said its financial accounts for drivers and vehicles were close to being balanced.

A new 12-month licence will now cost £170, rather than £210, while a new three-year driver licence drops from £460 to £400.

Drivers renewing their 12-month licence will now pay £145, rather than the previous £185, and for three years the fee will be £370, rather than £430.

However it may be only a temporary reprieve while a review into a potential increase in vehicle and operator fees which had been due to take place - and was expected to lead to a potential increase in these charges - is deferred so that the "effects of the current pandemic and how it will affect the licensed trade can be fully understood".

Meanwhile, fees for criminal checks, payable every three years, are going up from £40 to £50.40.

Members of the council's regulatory committee were told this was because of the introduction of a new online service that had been rolled out.

Stephen Brown, Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council's licensing manager, said the new system, which means drivers do not have to attend in person at the council with relevant documents, was really simple and effective and "everyone has taken to it".

A consultation has already taken place with drivers over the various fee changes and no comments were received, a report added.

TUNBRIDGE WELLS: NO LICENCE FEE INCREASE DUE TO COVID

Plans for licensing fee increases have been scrapped by councillors after hearing cabbies' responses to a consultation.

According to KentOnline, back in December, members of the borough's licensing panel had approved plans put forward by officers for a raft of increases for both hackney carriage and private hire drivers but councillors changed their minds and voted on 9 March to retain the current fees.

Officers explained that the service currently ran at a loss to the council, with fees failing to cover the cost of carrying out vehicle checks, issuing licences and maintaining taxi ranks. The current shortfall was £4,897 year.

But councillors unanimously agreed that although in principle fees should match costs, the middle of a pandemic was not the time to put up charges.

However, the council has introduced an additional test this year - the EQUO - to raise drivers' understanding around matters such as CSE, safeguarding, disability awareness and county lines. The one-off fee for that is £66.

WOKINGHAM: STRUGGLING DRIVERS GET LICENCE FEE HIKE

Taxi and private hire drivers in Wokingham will have to pay an extra £42 over the next year for their licence.

According to the Bracknell News, Wokingham Borough Council has decided to increase the fee for hackney carriage and PHV licences from £248 to £290 in 2020/21.

Labour and Liberal Democrat councillors called for the fees to be frozen at £248 during a meeting of the council's Licensing Committee on March 9. But the Conservatives refused, after stating the hiked fees will be used to cover the council's administrative costs and taxi drivers have been offered grants and other support.

Council figures show 18 hackney carriage drivers and 23 private hire drivers in Wokingham have quit the trade during the pandemic.

However, Conservative councillors claimed it would not be fair to freeze fees for taxi drivers or offer a discount, when other local businesses that have been hit hard by the pandemic continue to pay their fees.

The Licensing Committee agreed to review the fees in June after more work is done to assess the impact of the pandemic on taxi drivers and the support they have been offered. They will then decide whether the drivers' licence fees should be subsidised. If a subsidy is approved, monthly payments made by the drivers after June will be smaller.

...ROUND THE COUNCILS

ISLE OF WIGHT:

RANK DISRUPTION CAUSES ANGER

Taxi companies operating in Newport are up in arms as they are being forced to give up their ranks in South Street for six months, but claim they were only given one weeks' notice. The Island Echo reports that works to widen St George's Way over the next 24 weeks means a one-way system will be in operation around Newport resulting, in some road closures. According to Amar Exclusive Taxis, Island Roads and the Isle of Wight Council have failed to consult with the trade about the changes, having only been informed on 2nd March, for works beginning the following week.

A temporary rank in St James Street, will result in the loss of a number of spaces and taxi drivers highlight safety concerns due to the narrow street and the fact the rank is to be situated on a corner. They also say that the narrow pavement will make it hard to safely side load passengers.

NORTH NORFOLK:

NEW KNOWLEDGE AND SAFEGUARDING TESTS

Taxi drivers will soon have to undertake a safeguarding and knowledge test by North Norfolk District Council.

According to the Eastern Daily Press, the council is introducing a new version of its Taxi Handbook, which guides the requirements for hackney carriages and private hire vehicles and their drivers across the district. One key update is that cabbies will have to agree to undertake a safeguarding and knowledge test to ensure the safety of both the public and themselves.

The revised Taxi Handbook was approved unanimously at a full council meeting on February 24, and came into effect from 1 April. The update was made in consultation with the North Norfolk Taxi Association, which represents more than 50 per cent of all taxi drivers in the district.

TORBAY:

TOUGHER LICENSING REGIMES

Taxis and PHVs in Torbay are to be governed by new tougher rules on background checks and criminal behaviour.

DevonLive reports that Torbay Council has updated its Taxi Policy to meet new legal standards introduced by the DfT. The updated policy was approved by the council's licensing committee. A report to a meeting of the committee on Thursday 11 March said the new approach on criminal

convictions followed Government changes "aimed at toughening up the licensing regime in relation to drivers, vehicle proprietors and operators convictions, as well as taking into account any cautions, warnings, reprimands, endorsable fixed penalties and any other relevant information."

All owners and operators must now have an annual DBS check, and drivers now have DBS checks every six months, as well as six-monthly licence checks.

Taxi operators must carry out and maintain records showing that they have carried out a DBS check on any staff involved with booking or dispatching vehicles for their company.

All drivers are expected to attend a CSE awareness course within six months of receiving a licence, and that will be brought in as a requirement from May 2, 2022. From the same date, they will have to undertake disability and dementia training before being licensed.

The committee also approved a move towards bringing in zero emission vehicles. Councillors decided to add the condition for vehicles used with reissued HC licences.

Councillors heard that two licences from a total of 169 had been surrendered and could be reallocated. They agreed to add the zero emission requirement and a waiting list process to the policy. Councillors decided to keep the number of hackney carriage licences in Torbay at a total of 169, converting six seasonal licences to full-time. That was in line with recommendations following a survey of demand in the sector carried out in 2020 between lockdown restrictions.

TELFORD AND WREKIN:

TOUGHER RULES BROUGHT IN FOR CABBIERS

Taxi and private hire drivers in Telford will face more regular criminal record checks and have to declare new offences sooner under updated council rules.

According to the Shropshire Star, Telford & Wrekin's licensing committee approved an updated policy requiring drivers and operators to inform the council of arrests, charges, convictions or fixed penalties within 48 hours, replacing previous rules which gave them a week.

The new measures, coming into force in April, also call for annual DBS checks for taxi and private hire operators and six-monthly checks for drivers. Previous rules only required them every three years.

Deputy council leader Richard Overton told the committee the updated policy was based on new DfT standards.

The new policy has also added "immigration penalties or offences" to the list of reasons for barring a licence application or revoking an existing one.

Officers have told councillors they would like the government to impose national standards. Cllr Overton said: "Although we continue to lobby around cross-border hiring, the government hasn't made any changes at present."



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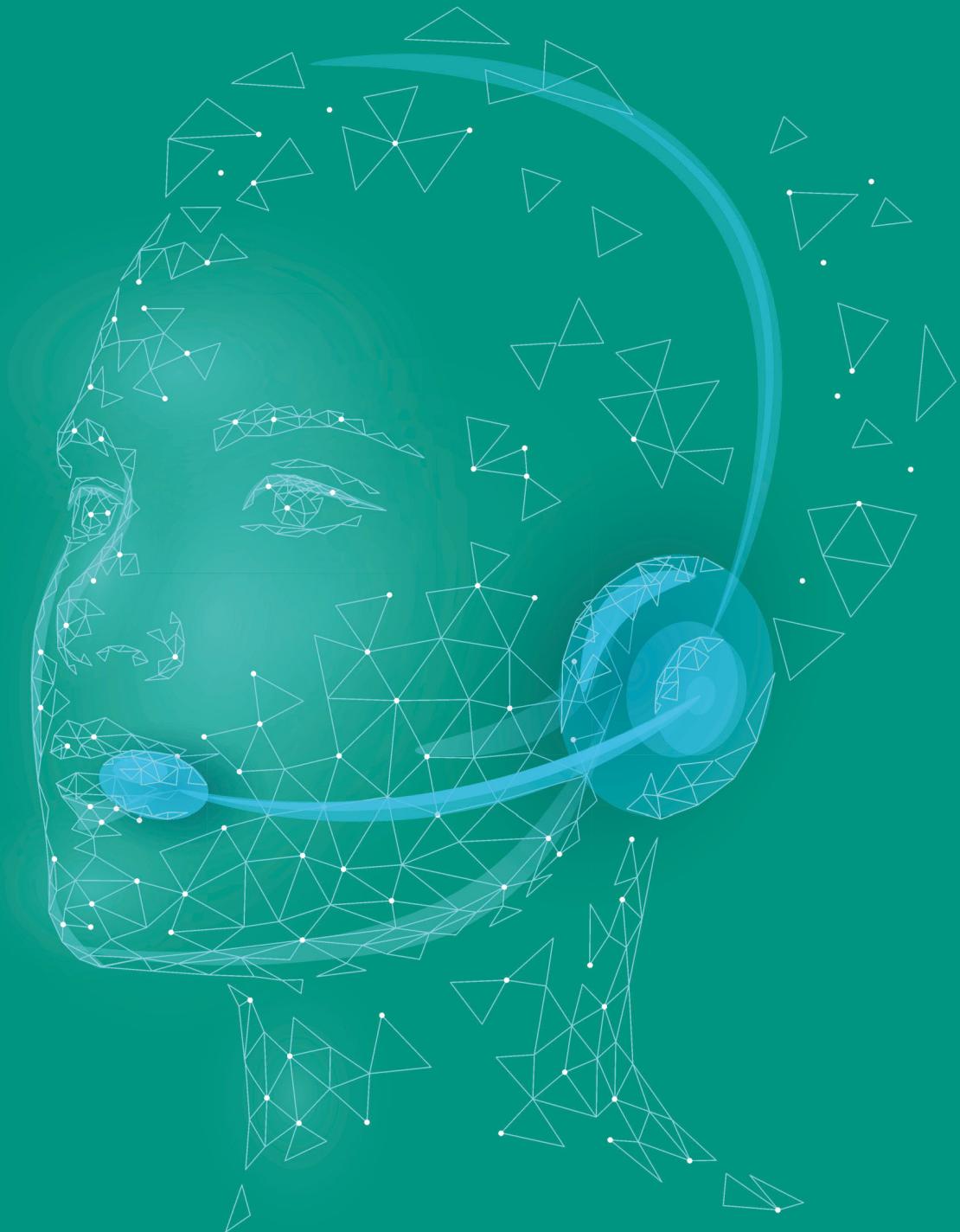
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PROTEST PLIGHT

CABBIES PROTEST AGAINST PLANNED BRADFORD CLEAN AIR ZONE

Bradford cabbies have held a protest outside City Hall over concerns a planned Clean Air Zone could have a major impact on the industry.

Bradford Council plans to introduce the CAZ in the city in January 2022. It would see the most polluting cabs charged £12.50 per day to enter the city centre.

On the evening of Friday 12 March dozens of private hire and taxi drivers drove their vehicles to City Hall to protest the plans and, what they argue is the lack of consultation with the industry.

Asif Shah, Chair of Better Taxi Action Group and the West Yorkshire Coalition, who organised the protest told **PHTM**: "Drivers came from across Yorkshire including Bradford, Leeds, Wakefield and Keighley to protest at the introduction of the Clean Air Zone at a time when our trade is already struggling to survive and neighbouring city Leeds has put their CAZ plans on hold.

"Bradford Council has shamefully offered no financial support to their licensed drivers during this pandemic and the trade is understandably frustrated and angry to be given only eight months to comply with something which they have had little consultation or guidance on."

Asif added: "With the pandemic, in these times of hardship, it is not feasible to expect drivers to fork out so much money.

"Drivers in Bradford are very concerned about this. The lack of communication from the council is a huge problem and there has been little clarity on the matter. Taxis make up about five per cent of traffic in Bradford, so if the council is serious about the CAZ, why is not targeting other drivers, too?

"We are not against the CAZ at all, we just think that this can be executed in a better way, instead of it being targeted against an industry which has already



been struggling.

"It's been very difficult for taxi drivers over the last 12 months. There has been an 80 per cent drop in customers, which has had a huge impact. Drivers have had SEISS grants, but that only covers their costs - it adds nothing extra.

"Taxi drivers have been reliant on their income for most of their lives, and suddenly, it has come to a stop. People are struggling and it is causing a lot of mental health issues.

"It is having a much bigger impact than what meets the eye. Some drivers are having marital and family problems, which come back to the fact that they are struggling at work and are going through stress.

"We feel that the council has failed to think about the impact its decisions are having on people and their everyday lives. The decisions they make can impact people a lot more than they realise."

Mr Shah confirmed that great lengths have been taken to ensure that the protest is Covid-secure and does not cause any disruption to others.

He stated: "When the Council sees how many people are affected and upset by this issue, we hope they will reconsider their decision."

At a meeting of the Council's Regulatory and Appeals Committee on Thursday 11 March, some Councillors raised similar concerns, claiming that Bradford's taxi industry has been ignored when draw-

ing up the CAZ proposals. During the meeting Councillors and officers got into a heated and at times fiery discussion about how much taxi drivers had been consulted on the plans.

Members were due to vote through changes including increasing the amount of time drivers are able to run CAZ compliant vehicles to 15 years, rather than ten years.

Kamran Hussain said he supported the CAZ, but he also seemed to question whether a consultation with taxi drivers had ever happened.

Cllr Zafar Ali said: "Hackney carriage drivers in Keighley are concerned by this extra burden. Some say they will quit the business this year."

Cllr Mohammed Amran said he felt the grant available to taxi drivers was "very low." He said there had been little engagement with cabbies about these plans, saying: "It is not acceptable. You never inform us Councillors. We could have got the message out to taxi drivers. I say this all the time and I feel it just goes in one ear and comes out the other."

Three councillors suggested the decision be deferred until a future meeting, when taxi representatives are in attendance.

Andrew Whittles, programme manager, pointed out that the CAZ was still going ahead, and the grants process would soon begin and that the amount being offered to cabbies to upgrade their vehicles was much higher than other cities.

He said: "Deferring this decision will just mean that taxi drivers won't be as sure as to what vehicles they will be able to apply for. The zone will go ahead, it just means for now taxi drivers won't know which vehicle they can buy."

Despite this warning the committee voted to defer the decision to a future meeting, which members heard would not likely be held for several weeks.

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UBER'S SUPREME COURT DECISION WHAT HAPPENS NOW?

As the real world problems of working people are brought into the legal realm, the 'disruptive technology' company Uber has made sure to avoid and deny. For a company supposedly like no other, they have dealt with this 'like no other'.

At first, they 'seemed' not to understand the scale and implications of the trouble that they were in. Far from admitting defeat, Uber's leadership highlighted that the judgement was based on a small group of drivers that acted in 2016. Most of us watching knew that although true, the ramifications of this would stretch further.

A couple of weeks ago, Uber did a complete 360-degree turn. Alongside a call for all other gig economy companies to do the same. Uber boss Dara Khosrowshahi published an article in the Evening Standard. He announced that drivers will now receive holiday pay, pension contributions and the National Living Wage.

Here is what this means for Uber, their drivers, and the gig economy at large.

- **Drivers are now entitled to money whether they pick up a passenger or not. However, will they need a lawyer to get it?**

Lord Leggatt's judgment outlined that 'working time' was not limited to trips **ONLY**, as Uber has argued, but any time the driver is logged into the app and ready to accept trips. This, one of the most significant parts of The Supreme Court's ruling, was absent from Uber's most recent announcement.

TUC boss, Frances O'Grady, accused Uber of "cherry-picking" from the ruling, which said Uber should consider its drivers as workers from the time they logged onto the app.

Straight after the dismissal of The Supreme Court appeal, Uber sent a message to every driver's screen. It said: *"Today we learned that our case was not successful and a small number of drivers from 2016 should have been classified as workers, but this judgment does not apply to drivers who earn on the app today."*

- **Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) is an employment right, not a right of workers. As a result, Uber drivers are not entitled to sick pay.**

In their noble declaration of a 'willingness to change', Uber simply gave the bare minimum that comes with their drivers being classed as workers. As mentioned above, this did not even include payment for time spent on the app without a ride - something that Lord Leggatt specifically outlined.

Even while classed as workers, Uber drivers are paid gross. Outside of the employed PAYE system, there is no secondary contributor to pay Class 1 National Insurance Contributions.

Without this, drivers are not entitled to SSP or other related payments such as Statutory Maternity Pay.

To give sick pay, Uber would have to change not only its driver's employment law status but also its tax status too. Without this benefit, Uber drivers will have to rely on Maternity Allowance or Employment and Support Allowance.

- **Do drivers working for multiple apps provide a get-out clause for Uber?**

There are two ways courts can consider multi-app waiting time:

1. **you pro rate the working time between the employers you are standing by with**
2. **you rule that if you are standing by for two you cannot be a worker at that time.**

Industry consultant and expert Dr Mike Galvin, who consults for Uber competitor Bolt, had this to say: *"It's not mission impossible to work out how to apportion waiting time among companies, but it's pretty clear that a driver with three or four apps on the go is definitely an entrepreneur, not a dependent contractor."*

It is a valid and interesting point. Much of Uber's emphasis in their statements has been on the 'flexibility' that it gives drivers. They claimed that after carrying out a survey, only 20% **wanted more protection if it meant a loss of flexibility.** That sounds like Uber spin - a convenient truth that ignores the thousands of full-time drivers who are treated as expendable and left without employment or workers' rights. However, as Dr Galvin points out, things do not seem as straightforward with the presence of multiple apps.

That being said, drivers registered with multiple apps are not doing so to enjoy life as a high-flying businessman. They are looking to pay the bills, and so hedge their bets on several apps to get enough work.

'Flexibility', which is a genuine benefit nauseatingly inflated by Uber, is less critical than employment protections for people working full-time in the gig economy. Part-time workers using multiple apps are likely to enjoy the flexibility, but full-time app users may well be the 'subordinate' and 'dependent' workers Lord Leggatt's judgement is protecting.

So here is the big **BUT**. Is this relevant to one big app or will this affect the private hire industry. A lot has to do with operator relationships and the genuine working practice of drivers in the traditional operator sub-contracting role. Watch this space for our article on 'Workers Rights and Good Practice' How to survive and thrive in the gig economy.

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At the start of 2020, the most awful year we have experienced in a long time, with lockdowns, infection rates climbing, drivers becoming ill, infected, or worse and the trade being decimated with no support at all, one of the first things required was some drastic form of action.

As a result, many drivers wanted to install Covid protection screens in their vehicles for added protection and to prevent the spread of the virus. There were some awful sights, including shower curtains, bits of plastic, even cling film wrapped between the two posts behind the front seats.

Many councils allowed anything, since something was better than nothing. In fact, some councils even paid for these cheap screens that were and are not actually fit for purpose, but at least they did something to support and assist, which was far better than those that refused to allow anything to be installed.

One of the first to adopt a specific criterion as such was Transport for London; this criterion included many impossible requirements such as "*obtain a certificate of compliance from the vehicle manufacturer to verify the installation did not materially affect the structural integrity of the vehicle,*" and "*must be MIRA approved*" at a minimum cost of over £2,000 per vehicle type.

OK, not exactly fit for purpose, but this was only London right?...wrong!!

The Government decided to copy and paste this as "*government guidance*" which was then copied by many other councils including Cardiff, Glasgow, Edinburgh, and others.

What's the problem with the TfL condition being national guidance?

Actually, there are a few issues with this: for a start, it referred to MIRA approval, but on further enquiries, MIRA was **ONLY** testing to TfL conditions and requirements. They had not been contacted by any other local authority at all, and they were aware that the "*vehicle manufacturer certification*" was "*obviously almost impossible to obtain*".

So why were other councils using TfL conditions?

Why not, right? After all, why reinvent the wheel when someone else has already written it?

For a start, TfL operates under its own unique transport act, the **Private Hire Vehicles (London) Act 1998**. For example, they do not have external licence plates; they have window stickers known as "roundels" to identify the PHV as being licensed.

Glasgow and Edinburgh run under a different act of legislation again, and as such should not be copying anything from the London transport legislation.

Cardiff seemed to mirror most of the **LGMPA 1976**, so again, should not have been referring to the London transport legislation or local conditions.

Wakefield Council currently still will not allow the installation of such protection devices at all.

So, what is the issue?

Let us not pull any punches here: people are literally dying from Covid, the government guidance is to take any measures necessary to prevent the spread of the virus, and yet we have such a mixture of opinion amongst local authorities, and very little support, with the exception of the Scottish Government who actually released quite a substantial amount of funding for this and other Covid prevention measures.

What has changed?

Once the issues caused by this disparity around the UK came to light, the DfT appointed the TRL (Transport Research Laboratory) to review the guidance on the installation of Covid screens into vehicles. We were delighted to be invited to assist and support this review, which also included motor vehicle manufacturers, insurers, the Institute of Licensing, various local authorities, and various other stakeholders.

The result was the release of updated government guidance which was released in early March 2021: <https://bit.ly/3cwlhN3>

This new guidance removed the requirement for MIRA testing, and reduced the requirement for "*vehicle manufacturer certification*" to read "*where possible*", and allowed for this to be obtained from a local dealership instead of an actual vehicle manufacturer.

Why is this such an issue?

According to the HSE Commissioner, taxi and private hire drivers are responsible for their own health and safety at work, and that of their passengers. This may include carrying out their own risk assessments, which could lead to the conclusion that the installation of such measures is necessary.

This means that any attempts to prevent these measures from being adopted or implemented could be a breach of the Health and Safety at Work Act: <https://bit.ly/3cwoe1c>

NEW?



Every living person has the inherent lawful right to protect themselves from health issues according to Article 2 of the ECHR (right to life), not even the government can overrule this inherent lawful right, let alone a local authority:

<https://bit.ly/39oigxC>

The worst scenario here would be that a driver or vehicle owner is instructed to remove such a screen or forbidden from installing it in the first instance. If this were the case, and the driver - or indeed their passengers - were to contract the virus as a result, this could be directly blamed on whoever refused to allow or instructed the removal of protective measures.

If the person then died as a result, this has the potential to be the fault of the instructing officer or body, and could have extremely severe consequences.

<https://bit.ly/3w7tsby> / <https://bit.ly/3csNSnD>

Manslaughter can be committed in one of three ways:

- Killing with the intent for murder but where a partial defence applies, namely loss of control, diminished responsibility or killing pursuant to a suicide pact;
- Conduct that was grossly negligent given the risk of death, and did kill ("gross negligence manslaughter"); or
- Conduct taking the form of an unlawful act involving a danger of some harm that resulted in death ("Unlawful and Dangerous Act manslaughter").

The term "*involuntary manslaughter*" is commonly used to describe manslaughter falling within (2) and (3) while (1) is referred to as "*voluntary manslaughter*".

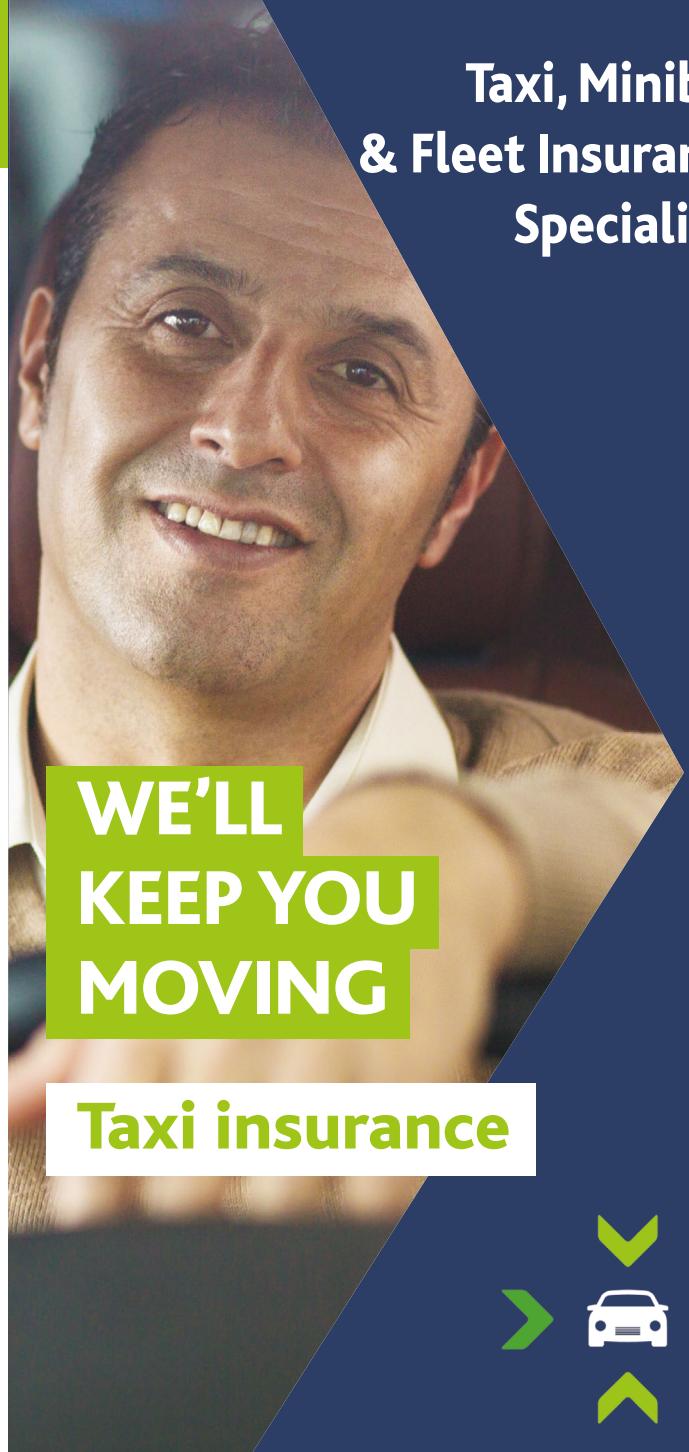
We hope this never happens, and if it does, then it will be a matter for the courts and legal experts to decide.

This is why the topic of Covid screens is so important. Yes, there will be those who are certain that they are useless and a waste of money; there are others who would not and will not carry passengers without a screen installed. In fact, there are some education authorities who have insisted that there must be a screen installed for any school transport journeys.

But regardless of your own personal thoughts and feelings on this topic - stay safe, stay protected, stay healthy.

Article by: David Lawrie, Director NHTPA
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CCTV: YOUR SECURITY

BRADFORD CABBIE'S FALSE ACCUSATION BY PASSENGER STILL NOT RESOLVED

PHTM is angry and sad to report this story which has been ongoing since May 2020. Asif Shah, head of the West Yorkshire Coalition and proprietor of Baildon Private Hire, Shipley told **PHTM**: "One night in May 2020 at around 11.40pm a woman called using our freephone at Bradford Royal Infirmary to book a cab to Asda in Shipley - a six to eight-minute journey. We dispatched the car 20 minutes later. Usually we pick up within a one to two minutes but that night we were busy. "When they got to Asda, around six minutes after picking her up, she said she needed to go to the cash machine, so our driver waited. Two minutes later a police officer approached the driver; the police were in fact already parked at Asda waiting for them.

"The police told the driver that the customer had made an allegation that he

had touched her leg and threatened her with a knife. She also alleged that he had locked her in the cab by locking the doors internally.

"However, the police officer found this to be impossible as even if the driver had locked the doors internally, passengers can still open the doors from inside. "Furthermore, the officers after checking our dispatch system - we use Autocab, which logs actual pick up times and tracks the journey taken with times and speeds, concluded that these allegations the woman was making **could not** possibly have happened within the six minutes of the actual journey time.

"PC 6137 Lee logged the incident and assured us that this woman would be charged and prosecuted.

"However, I have chased this incident up many times with the police but to date:

March 23 2021, nothing has been done."

PHTM comment: It's a disgrace - why do the police treat out trade with such contempt? We all know what would have happened to this poor innocent driver, a lovely guy by all accounts, if there was no evidence to prove his innocence and the police actually believed these lies. He would have been charged, prosecuted and sent to prison - for sure! We ask that you call for Bradford police to take action now to show passengers who think that they can falsely accuse our drivers instead of paying their fare that they will be prosecuted.

PHTM is warning all licensed drivers, please do not leave yourself open to this form off false allegation - install CCTV, and make sure you return home safe to you families at the end of your shift.

PROTECT YOURSELF!

CABBIES IN TELFORD TO FACE NEW RULES OVER CCTV

Taxi and private hire operators will have to hand over footage from their in-car CCTV systems if the authorities request it, under proposed new licence conditions.

The Shropshire Star reports that in a report for the authority's licensing committee, public protection manager Anita Hunt says the revised Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Policy will ensure systems comply with council standards and will require video to "be made readily available to an authorised officer".

The new rules also nominate the council as "data controller" for footage gathered by the CCTV.

Telford & Wrekin Council consulted on its revised policy between January 18 and February 15.

"The main consideration, when reviewing the council's policies and conditions of licence, remains ensuring public

safety," Ms Hunt writes.

"Licensing authorities have a legal duty to have regard to the statutory standards relating to hackney carriage and private hire licensing."

Ms Hunt says those standards say CCTV can "deter, prevent and reduce the fear of crime, assist the police in investigating crime and assist motor insurance companies in investigating vehicle accidents", yet "do not mandate the requirement of CCTV in vehicles".

However, she adds, Telford & Wrekin Council "encourages drivers and operators to install it on a voluntary basis".

"If approved by committee, a condition will be imposed upon private hire vehicle and hackney carriage licences issued by the council to ensure that the CCTV complies with the council's CCTV policy in licensed vehicles and access to it must be made readily available to

an authorised officer," she writes.

The updated policy will nominate the council as the "data controller", making it "responsible for managing data in compliance with requirements set by the Information Commissioner's Office", she adds.

Guidance at the ICO's website defines "data controllers" as "the main decision makers [who] exercise overall control over the purposes and means of the processing of personal data".

Ms Hunt stated: "By being the data controller, the council provides partial oversight of data management and it reduces the burden on operators and drivers in relation to time and expenditure."

Ms Hunt recommends the 11-member licensing committee approves the updated policy when it meets remotely on Tuesday, March 16. If it does so, it will come into force on Thursday, April 1.

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SCOTTISH UPDATE

DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL LEAD THE WAY IN SUPPORTING OUR TRADE IN SCOTLAND



Dundee taxi operating companies, regardless of employee numbers, that can evidence significant non-staff costs for fleet maintenance can now apply for a one-off grant of £10,000.

Also, a further £900,000 of financial support has been approved by the city council for an extra taxi driver grant which will provide a discretionary top-up of £1,000 in addition to the £1,500 which has already been paid out.

Mark Flynn, convener of Dundee City Council's city development committee, said: *"This £900,000 extra will help address the ongoing challenges that the sector is facing as a result of the pandemic, in particular restrictions on travel and reductions in footfall."*

"There is no need for drivers to contact the council or reapply, we will be in touch with eligible drivers to arrange the top-up payments to be made into their nominated bank accounts."

PHTM applauds Dundee council for this extra financial support and the cash boost has been hailed as a national example by unions, amid calls for the grants to be rolled out across Scotland.

Trade union Unite Scotland welcomed this further support announced by Dundee City Council and is now demanding that all local authorities in Scotland follow the lead of Dundee as it repeats its call for the suspension of

licensing fees by all local authorities to assist drivers at this time.

Willie Thomson, Unite industrial officer, said: *"We welcome this support from Dundee City Council. It's desperately needed for many drivers whose income has been and continues to be decimated by Covid and the current restrictions. Other councils including those of our largest cities, Glasgow and Edinburgh, must follow Dundee's lead and do more to help workers and families in the taxi trade."*

"Through no fault of their own many of our members have been refused support over the past 12 months. They continue to face significant financial hardship as a result of drastically reduced trade. Taxis remain a vital part of our public transport network and more support from the Scottish Government must be delivered. The Scottish government must recognise the high fixed costs faced by many taxi operators and deliver support to these workers."

Unite is also calling on the Scottish government to deliver a £10,000 grant for every taxi operator in Scotland, which is the equivalent support being given to other small business owners, and for an additional second cash grant to all Scottish drivers from the £57m Coronavirus (Covid-19): Taxi and Private Hire Driver Support Fund.



Councillor Mark Flynn

A recent Scottish Parliament petition lodged by Unite in March calling for more support for the taxi trade has gained thousands of signatures.

In December 2020, an online survey of over 200 taxi drivers released by Unite Scotland highlighted that many drivers are regularly working 16-17-hour days with a shift being determined as having been 'good' if £50 is cleared. The survey also showed that 30% of drivers had at the time been unable to access any financial help from government support schemes. For those that had been able to access financial help from government the biggest group (37%) reported that it represented less than 25% of their average earnings.

For further information or enquiries:

<https://bit.ly/31z4XWS>

Email: dbg@dundee.city.gov.uk

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“ This £900,000 extra will help address the ongoing challenges that the sector is facing as a result of the pandemic, in particular restrictions on travel and reductions in footfall.



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Ref. KNW



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Ref. VAJ



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Ref. HJY



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Intercom	Fuel Diesel
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Ford Procab

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Transmission Manual	2 electric steps
Mileage 136,000	Air conditioning
Fuel Diesel	Bluetooth®
Engine 2.0	7 passenger seats



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Article by: Steven Toy, NPHTA Board member and Trade Leader of the Cannock Chase HC PH Liaison Group

Many thanks to Antony Schiller of Dennings Solicitors, Rowley Regis for his help in preparing this article.

A number of councils up and down the land are currently undertaking consultation exercises in order to revise their licensing policies. Most do this in good faith with a view to making their policies more fit for purpose to improve the service we provide to the travelling public, public safety and perhaps even ease some of the burdens placed upon us by their regulatory activities and policies.

Unfortunately, as many of you are aware, other councils regard the process as a score-settling exercise and view it as an opportunity to give the trade a sound thrashing. This can take the form of placing onerous burdens upon us or threatening to do so in order to appear accommodating when they don't subsequently carry out those threats. On the face of it they may simply be reacting positively to responses received from the trade through the consultation process. A more cynical interpretation is that they were never serious about [insert hare-brained proposal] in the first place and were diverting attention away from other onerous proposals in their draft policy document.

Either way, many councils are perceived by their local trade as 'a law unto themselves.' By way of example, my own local authority back in 2012 proposed to require the removal of social and domestic use from insurance documentation in order that vehicles may only be used for hire and reward. Another was a requirement to notify them in advance of a licensed vehicle being road tested by a mechanic who was not a licensed hackney carriage/private hire driver.

Fortunately, neither of these saw the light of day in the policy document that later came into force. Things have improved drastically since those days in my area, I must say. Other examples of silliness from other areas include a requirement to replace factory-installed tinted glass with clear glass, the removal of seats from MPVs when this is likely to cause the vehicle's body control module to mal-function and other pointless and onerous modification requirements. Then there are those driver dress codes that some councils dream up....

The good news is that councils are not as free to impose arbitrary and burdensome regulations upon us as we or they might think. Firstly, **sections 47 (1), 48 (2), 51 (2), 55 (3) of the Local Government Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1976** all make provisions for councils to attach conditions to the

granting and renewal licences of hackney carriage vehicles, private hire vehicles, private hire drivers and private hire operators respectively but only *as they/the council may consider reasonably necessary*.

In all instances, to the attachment of such conditions there is a right of appeal to the Magistrates' Court within 21 days of them coming into force. If relief is required from the wider stated aims of policy, a judicial review may be needed but this is perhaps the most drastic of the remedies which are available.

What is meant by '...consider reasonably necessary'?

Consideration is a process by which we arrive at a conclusion based on evidence. **To consider** is not the same as **to think** or **to believe** for these are just opinions which, in the absence of supporting evidence, are completely worthless. Therefore the use of the word **consider** points to the need for evidence that the condition is **reasonably necessary** and this means that the benefit of the condition must demonstrably outweigh the burden placed upon the licensee.

Appeals against conditions in the courts are usually upheld when the condition fails the **reasonably necessary** test. Otherwise, what would there be to stop councils requiring all licensed drivers to wear pink underpants as an outer garment while driving a licensed vehicle? What may be subjectively desirable on the part of often septuagenarian or even octogenarian councillors and/or licensing officials is certainly not the same as being **reasonably necessary** in law.

There was also the **Best Practice Guidance 2010** document: <https://bit.ly/2O1PM5g> - that many councils chose to ignore because it was only 'guidance'.

Further, there was James Button and Philip Kolvin's **Safe and Suitable Guidance 2018**:

<https://bit.ly/3u4QkXC>

- which many councils chose **not** to ignore but to adopt in its entirety, without so much as casting even a passing critical eye over it, despite it also only being merely guidance- and the fact that it states in the document itself that it need not be '*slavishly followed*'.

(See 1.6 on page 3 of the Guidance).

Guidance on determining the suitability of applicants and licensees in the hackney and private hire trades



April 2018

Institute of Licensing

Produced by the Institute of Licensing in partnership with:



In addition to the above test in the **LGMPA 1976** there exists other checks and balances in the form of the: **Regulators' Code 2014:** <https://bit.ly/2PlhOP2>

Whilst this is not actual legislation, all regulators including licensing authorities are expected to adhere to it; it is a code not merely guidance.

As the **Regulators' Code** applies to all regulators and not just licensing authorities, I shall select the most relevant sections.

In the foreword written by Michael Fallon, the Minister of State for Business and Enterprise at that time, it is stated:

*"This Government is committed to reducing regulatory burdens and supporting compliant business growth through the development of an open and constructive relationship between regulators and those they regulate. The Regulators' Code provides a flexible, principles-based framework for regulatory delivery that supports and enables regulators to design their service and enforcement policies in a manner that best suits the needs of businesses and other regulated entities."**

(*Emphasised by author)

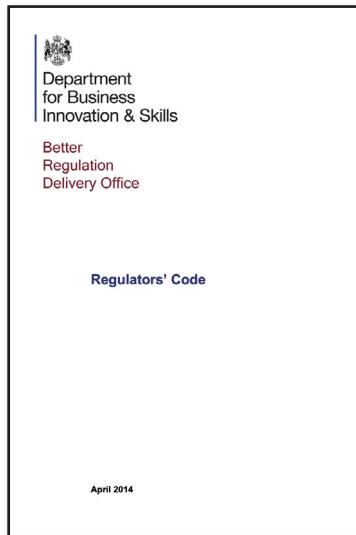
Such words of comfort (for us) would probably come as a culture shock to a number of councils:

"You mean, we have to be nice to these, er, people and adopt a can-do approach instead of putting up barriers and showing them who's boss?

Open and constructive? Seriously?

Bad times!"

I wonder if some councils, even to this day, have ever read the document! I'm thinking of one in particular, quite close to Wales but not actually in Wales...



1. *Regulators should carry out their activities in a way that supports those they regulate to comply and grow*

1.1 *Regulators should avoid imposing unnecessary regulatory burdens through their regulatory activities and should assess whether similar social, environmental and economic outcomes could be achieved by less burdensome means. Regulators should choose proportionate approaches to those they regulate, based on relevant factors including, for example, business size and capacity.*

1.2 *When designing and reviewing policies, operational procedures and practices, regulators should consider how they might support or enable economic growth for compliant businesses and other regulated entities, for example, by considering how they can best:*

- *understand and minimise negative economic impacts of their regulatory activities;*
- *minimising the costs of compliance for those they regulate;*
- *improve confidence in compliance for those they regulate, by providing greater certainty; and*
- *encourage and promote compliance.*

I've **emboldened** the most pertinent parts and they require no further explanation.

2. *Regulators should provide simple and straightforward ways to engage with those they regulate and hear their views*

2.1 *Regulators should have mechanisms in place to engage those they regulate, citizens and others to offer views and contribute to the development of their policies and service standards. Before changing policies, practices or service standards, regulators should consider the impact on business and engage with business representatives.*

Basically, councils are required to consult in good faith and engage with all interested parties and their representatives and not cherry pick who to engage with.

2.2 *In responding to non-compliance that they identify, regulators should clearly explain what the non-compliant item or activity is, the advice being given, actions required or decisions taken, and the reasons for these. Regulators should provide an opportunity for dialogue in relation to the advice, requirements or decisions, with a view to ensuring that they are acting in a way that is proportionate and consistent.*

REGULATION NOT DEREGULATION

I can think of at least one council's driver penalty point scheme that would fall foul of that!

*2.3 Regulators should provide an impartial and clearly explained route to appeal against a regulatory decision or a failure to act in accordance with this Code. Individual officers of the regulator who took the decision or action against which the appeal is being made **should not be involved in considering the appeal**. This route to appeal should be publicised to those who are regulated.*

This means that councils must outline your right of appeal to the Magistrates' Court or to a licensing committee in accordance with their scheme of delegation, comprising entirely of elected members who are independent of the licensing department. An 'officer panel' or body with any licensing officers included within it would be in clear breach of this requirement.

3. Regulators should base their regulatory activities on risk

3.1 Regulators should take an evidence based approach to determining the priority risks in their area of responsibility, and should allocate resources where they would be most effective in addressing those priority risks.

This indicates that those silly tinted glass policies need to go given the lack of evidence that they are a public safety issue.

3.5 Regulators should review the effectiveness of their chosen regulatory activities in delivering the desired outcomes and make any necessary adjustments accordingly.

Consultations are not just an opportunity for the trade to say "yea" or "nay" to the council's proposed changes. They are an opportunity for trade representatives to suggest their own changes to existing and perhaps long-established policies, especially those which would fail the reasonably necessary test or be in breach of this code.

4.1 Regulators should collectively follow the principle of "collect once, use many times" when requesting information from those they regulate.

When you come to renew your vehicle or driver licences, does your council require the same documentation each time in support of your application (driving licence, passport, photos, V5c) even when these have not changed or need to be changed since last time? If they already have it on file they don't need it again.

5.1 Regulators should provide advice and guidance that is focused on assisting those they regulate to understand and meet their responsibilities. When providing advice

and guidance, legal requirements should be distinguished from suggested good practice and the impact of the advice or guidance should be considered so that it does not impose unnecessary burdens in itself.

Some officers have a tendency to give advice in a way that it is intended taken as instruction rather than guidance.

*5.4 Regulators should seek to create an environment in which those they regulate have confidence in the advice they receive and feel able to seek advice **without fear of triggering enforcement action**.*

Quite.

Monitoring the effectiveness of the Regulators' Code

*The Government is committed to making sure the **Regulators' Code** is effective. To make sure that the **Code** is being used effectively, we want businesses, regulated bodies and citizens to challenge regulators who they believe are not acting in accordance with their published policies and standards. It is in the wider public interest that regulators are transparent and proportionate in their approaches to regulation.*

*The Government will monitor published policies and standards of regulators subject to the **Regulators' Code**, and will challenge regulators where there is evidence that policies and standards are not in line with the **Code** or are not followed.*

It is worth reading the whole **Code** and trying to identify areas in your council's licensing policy which may be in breach of it. If you believe that your licensing authority is contravening the **Code**, the remedial route is not through the courts (unless you are considering a judicial review) but through the complaints procedure.

First you complain to the licensing manager, then the CEO of the department, usually Business or Environmental Health, followed by the CEO of the entire council. If this does not provide relief you can refer your case and all previous correspondence to the Local Government Ombudsman.

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PROUD OF OUR TRADE

HERO LIVERPOOL CABBY SAVES LIVES AFTER FIRE RIPS THROUGH BUSINESSES

A hero taxi driver reportedly saved the lives of strangers after he alerted them to a fire ripping through businesses below where they live.

According to the Liverpool Echo, emergency services raced to Walton Road at around 5am on 26 March, as a fire tore through furniture stores. A taxi driver driving past the blaze dialled 999 before selflessly trying to wake up those who live above the businesses.

Merseyside Fire Service said “all people were accounted for” and all residents

were thankfully evacuated in time. Footage from the scene shows the devastating fire burning inside the buildings, as smoke was seen billowing away. Roof tiles were strewn all over the road as firefighters worked at the scene. Home Decor, family run business, which has been in the community for 15 years, were one of three businesses affected. Owners, Stanley and Rebecca Richards, said the business had suffered terrible damage.

Rebecca said they were “lucky” com-

pared to their neighbours, as they had only suffered flood damage and because of the wind fortunately blowing in the other direction, their business didn’t suffer as much fire damage. Stanley Richards said that it was “important” to know about the driver’s heroic actions today. Walton Road was closed as emergency services worked at the scene. Merseyside Fire Service, including six fire engines and a combined platform ladder, left the scene at around 11am.

THE BISHOP AUCKLAND TAXI DRIVER DOING STREET PERFORMANCES FOR MENTAL HEALTH

A taxi driver is once again taking to the streets to perform for charity. The Northern Echo reports that Paul Brown from Bishop Auckland runs Auckland Travel. However, due to the lockdowns he has been unable to do his normal job but this has not deterred him from doing his bit for the locals.

During the lockdown in 2020 he performed tribute acts on his driveway for



his neighbours and in the process raised hundreds for local charity the Angel Trust.

As the lockdown eased last year,

he took his performances on the road, visiting local care homes and cheering

up the residents.

Mr Brown was invited to an award ceremony run by the local MP Dehenna Davison, dedicated to the unsung heroes of Bishop Auckland who shone through in the pandemic.

Now, Mr Brown wants to raise money again, bringing back his performances outside his home every Saturday. He is also intending to hold a ticketed event at Bishop Auckland Snooker Club at the end of July. This time his chosen charity is the mental health charity Mind.

Mr Brown said: “I chose Mind because these lockdowns have taken a toll on people’s mental health. The charity is chuffed to bits that I have chosen them. “I’ve set a target of £1,000 but I’m intending to smash it by the end of July. I hope this will be my biggest one yet.”

Dehenna Davison MP said: “I was first made aware of the fantastic work done by Paul when he won an Unsung Hero award for his singing during the first lockdown, keeping spirits up and raising over £5,000 for The Angel Trust.

“Paul is a true hero for continuing to put smiles on faces within our community whilst raising money for an incredible cause and I hope as many people as possible support him.”

LEEDS TAXI DRIVER'S AMAZING ACT OF KINDNESS

A taxi driver went above and beyond to help an elderly woman with a random act of kindness in Leeds.

LeedsLive reports that Mary, 63, from Great Preston, was travelling home from her daughter's house with Roadrunners Taxis. The driver noticed Mary, who suffers with osteoarthritis and fibromyalgia, was struggling with her breathing. This sparked a conversation about medications and the way in which Mary manages her condition.

She said: “The cabby told me he was a great believer in herbs and advised about which were suitable and how to

prepare them. He told me he would drop some off for me but in all honesty I didn’t expect him to.

“The next evening he turned up at the door with them and told my partner how to prepare them. He refused any payment but just asked that I say a prayer for him. I was totally blown away by his kindness to a complete stranger.”

Mary posted what happened in Leeds-place Facebook Group and finished by saying: “What a wonderful random act of kindness from a caring gentleman.” The post was liked over 2.9k times and posts commented “how lovely.”

PROUD OF OUR TRADE

SCOTS CABBIE TO RUN ENTIRE WEST HIGHLAND WAY IN 24 HOURS FOR HOSPICE CHARITY

A Scots cabbie, inspired by stories of passengers affected by terminal cancer, is taking on an epic challenge to raise money for their loved ones' end of life care. Stephen Logan aims to run the West Highland Way in one 24-hour stint for Marie Curie Hospice in Glasgow. The 48-year-old will set off at midnight on June 20 with hopes to complete the gruelling 96-mile route by midnight on June 21.

According to the Daily Record, Stephen has often provided a listening ear to patients' relatives, as he's ferried them to and from the New Stobhill Hospital in his cab over the years. Touched by their tales and aware of the charity's inability to raise vital funds during the coronavirus pandemic, the dad-of-three wanted to take matters into his own hands.

Stephen, from Bishopbriggs, East Dun-



bartonshire, told the Record: "I often say being a taxi driver is like being a priest; people open up and for years I've heard nothing but amazing things about Marie Curie Hospice and the care they give at the end of someone's life. "I found out that the hospice relies heavily on donations from the public. The pandemic has made this more difficult for the hospice, that's why I wanted to do something."

Going sober 12 years ago led to Stephen taking up running for the first time and he never looked back.

"It started with five and 10k runs, which went onto half marathons," Stephen added. Then a couple of years ago I started marathons, I've even been to Morocco to do them."

The one challenge Stephen is yet to complete is pounding the path of the West Highland Way in 24 hours.

Stretching from Milngavie in East Dunbartonshire to Fort William in the Highlands, the route will test Stephen, and fellow runners hoping to join him, to the limit. "I'm determined to get it done in the 24-hour stint for Marie Curie who are fully supporting me."

Stephen has a fundraising target of £10,000. You can donate by heading to his official JustGiving page: <https://bit.ly/3t4y6EZ>

CASTLE DOUGLAS CABBIE RAISES £100s FOR CHARITY



A Castle Douglas taxi driver raised hundreds of pounds for charity by taking part in the Dee Dip.

According to the Daily Record, Sheila Scott braved the chilly waters of Loch Ken with other revellers on New Year's Day to raise money for Macmillan Cancer Support.

And in doing so, she raised the fine sum of £717.

CARDIFF TAXI DRIVERS RAISE MORE THAN £10,000 FOR FOOD BANKS

Cardiff taxi drivers have been thanked for raising thousands of pounds for local food banks at a time when many have seen their incomes plummet.

According to ITV News, taxi driver and Unite branch secretary Yusef Jama said the support was a lifeline for many.

"We knew drivers were struggling to feed their families. We had drivers who've got anxiety and depression, and many other concerns. Sometimes they were even going to food banks themselves."

Yusef decided to rally his fellow drivers to contribute money for local charities, including Cardiff Foodbank. Each contributed whatever they could afford. Together, they raised more than £10,000.

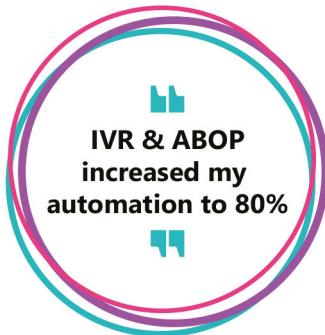
The money has been shared among several food banks and community



projects in the capital.

Hugely generous donations of both food and money during this pandemic has been extraordinary. The drivers credit Yusef's friendly encouragement and determination to meet their target. Taxi driver Paul O'Hara said: "Yusef has done a marvellous job campaigning and getting everybody on board and collecting the money. Every little bit helps".

Our reputation speaks for itself!



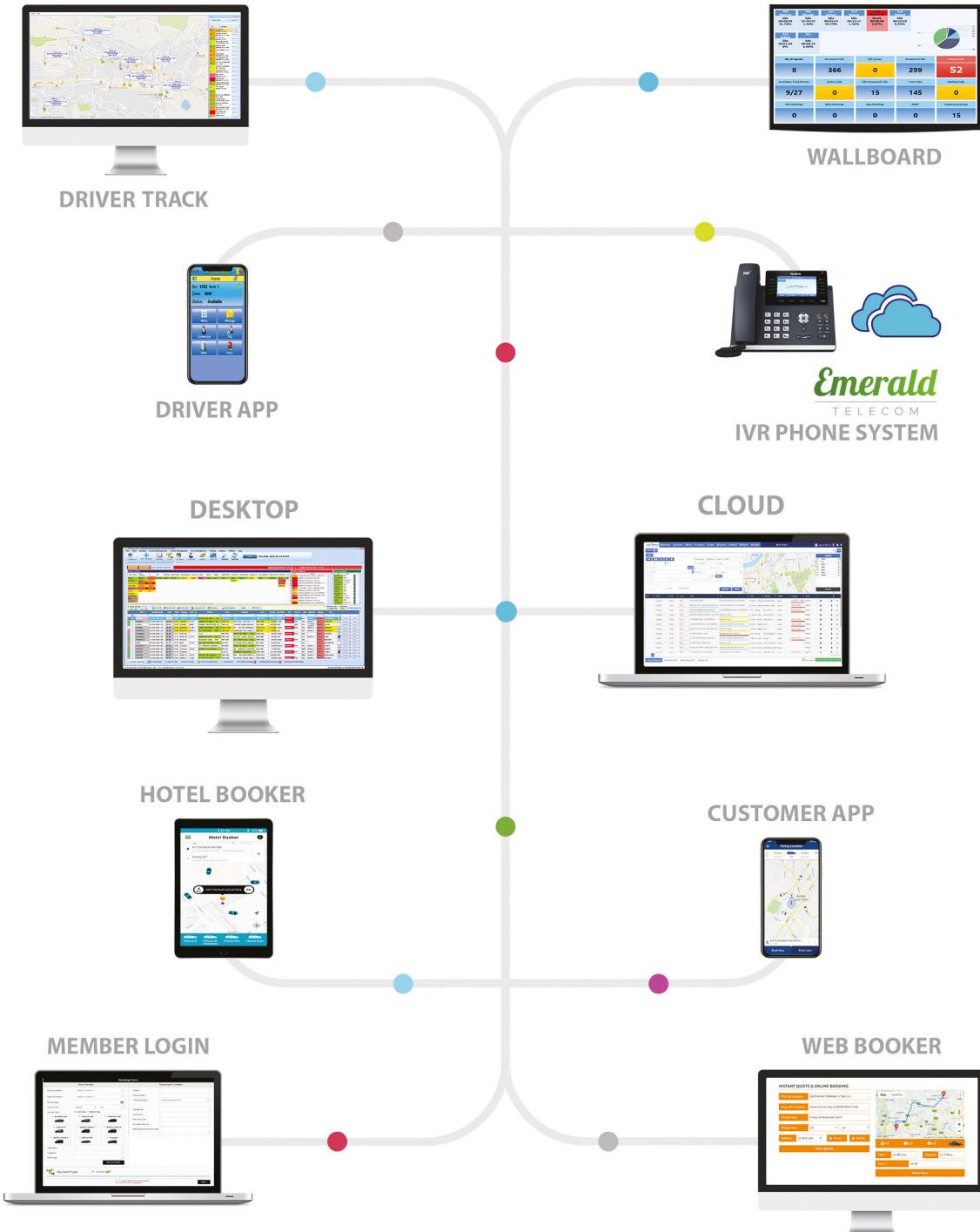
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SHOCKING SHOCKING

COCAINE SNORTING LIVERPOOL CABBY STASHED GUNS AFTER MARRIAGE BREAK UP

A taxi driver stashed an arsenal of guns at his home after running up cocaine debts after his marriage broke down.

According to the Liverpool Echo, Michael Lyons was convicted of guns, drug dealing and assault charges when he was a youth. A court heard he turned his life around and managed to secure a taxi licence to help provide for his wife and two children.

But that all came crashing down and he became a wanted man after police linked him to three different firearms. The 33-year-old's DNA was identified on a stolen army assault rifle, a sawn-off shotgun and a semi-automatic pistol.

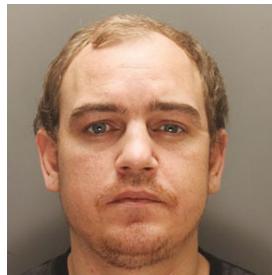
Liverpool Crown Court heard "unknown persons" struck at the Merseyside Army Cadet Force centre in 'Newton-le-Willows, in March 2019. Lee Bonner, prosecuting, said eight rifles with 1,000 rounds of ammunition were stolen during the burglary.

He said one rifle was recovered when Merseyside Police raided a property in June 2019. A 5.56mm calibre SA80 model assault rifle, manufactured exclusively for the British Army, was found with a serial number linking it to the burglary.

A forensic test revealed Lyons' DNA on multiple parts of the rifle and police raided his flat in Kirkdale on September 13 that year. Lyon was not at home and officers forced entry then found a sawn-off shotgun on top of a Nike holdall next to his bed.

Mr Bonner said a small amount of cannabis and a machete was also seized, along with Lyons' driving licence and passport. Again, his DNA was found on multiple parts of the shotgun.

Mr Bonner said police were informed that a man had an injury consistent with a shooting at on September 14, 2019. He said there was no suggestion Lyons was involved in that shooting,



but police attended the victim's home in Kirkby. The court heard the house was "spattered" in blood, there was a bullet hole in a wall,

and two black handguns with magazines were found. Lyons' DNA was recovered from one of the guns.

Lyons was circulated as wanted but not arrested until November 19, 2020, when he gave a no comment interview. He admitted three counts of possessing prohibited weapons.

Lyons has ten previous convictions for 18 offences, including inflicting grievous bodily harm and having an air weapon in public, when he was 16. Phillip Astbury, defending, said Lyons had all three guns at the same time at his home and urged the judge to impose concurrent prison sentences. He said Lyons took possession of the weapons at a time when his life had reached "rock bottom" and was "disintegrating". Referring to his "troubling" past as a youth, Mr Astbury said: "After 2010 the defendant was able to turn things around. He's proud for example, despite those convictions he was able to secure a licence as a taxi driver.

"He was able to work to contribute to the community, surprisingly as it may be, the committee must have been impressed with his efforts to rehabilitate himself."

Mr Astbury said Lyons "seized that opportunity" and provided financially for his young family. However, he said: "It fell apart sadly as did his marriage, not least because of his medical issues."

He said these included mental health issues, now stabilised in prison thanks to medication, and epilepsy and



seizures, which had seen him twice admitted to hospital while on remand. Mr Astbury said Lyons was also awaiting an appointment with a consultant regarding "cancer concerns".

Lyons was also now back in phone contact with his wife and children.

Judge Robert Trevor-Jones said Lyons' DNA was "all over" the rifle and shotgun and on three areas of the pistol. The judge added: "These are all potentially weapons of significant lethal capacity."

He said Lyons had previous convictions as a young man linked to "serious criminality". He added: "I accept that no doubt your life fell apart when your marriage broke down back in 2017.

"It seems you then descended into a spiral of drug - mainly cocaine - abuse, incurred debt and then people began to use your flat. You realised a holdall left there at least contained a shotgun and you left the accommodation.

"Clearly there was a real prospect of them being used by others in the furtherance of serious crime."

Judge Trevor-Jones said Lyons handed himself into police and was "clearly not a well man". He said: "I accept there was a degree of coercion as far as you were concerned when these weapons came to your property."

The judge jailed Lyons for five years and five months.

SHOCKING SHOCKING

JAIL FOR CRUEL SWINDON CABBIE WHO SUBJECTED WIFE TO YEARS OF ABUSE

A “cruel” cabbie who subjected his wife to years of abuse has been jailed for more than three-and-a-half years. The Swindon Advertiser reports that Mohit Wadhwa, 37, attacked his wife physically and verbally, ordered she cut herself off from her parents, demanded she take out a £10,000 loan and threatened her with divorce.

The taxi driver, who had an open affair with another woman while married to his wife, had denied charges of controlling and coercive behaviour and assault causing actual bodily harm to his wife. But last month, a jury saw through his lies – taking less than four hours to unanimously find him guilty of controlling behaviour and two of the ABH charges.

Sending Wadhwa to prison for three years and seven months on 18 March, Judge Jason Taylor QC said the dad-of-two had shown “not one iota” of



remorse.

The judge said: “You were married to your victim and had two children together. During the course of the marriage you began what was to become an open

affair yet still came back to the marital home as and when it suited you and on your terms. Over a period of almost three years your behaviour ranged from psychological to physical abuse which chipped away at your wife’s self-confidence and self-worth.”

“You isolated your wife from her friends and family and with the latter you made her choose you over them to the extent that she didn’t see her parents between 2008 and 2018. Of course, I will only sentence you for the indicted period for when this law was

in force [from 2015], but it is notable that your control was such that her mother never even met her grandson before she sadly passed away.

“That lack of compassion and the cruelty is striking but it fits with your character that I had an opportunity of observing at the trial.”

The catalogue of abuse suffered by his wife between 2015 and 2018 caused her to lose so much weight she dropped from a size 12 to a six. She claimed he had been controlling throughout their decade-long relationship.

“All in all, over this prolonged period of time you made her life miserable and you treated her with no respect. She was yours to do with as you pleased – a chattel, not a wife,” the Judge said. Wadhwa appeared in court via video link from HMP Bullingdon. He was also made subject to a ten-year restraining order.

DRUG DRIVING CABBIE’S CHILD FELL OUT OF CAR AND WAS HIT BY TAXI IN ACCRINGTON

A two-year-old girl fell out of the back of a car being driven by her cabbie dad and was hit by a passing taxi.

According to the Lancashire Telegraph, Blackburn Magistrates heard that police and an ambulance responded to reports that the child’s head had been run over.

The court heard that in fact the child was relatively unharmed. Ahmed, 32, from Accrington, pleaded guilty to drug driving. He was made subject to an eight week curfew between 8pm and 8am, banned from driving for 18 months and ordered to pay £85 costs and £95 victim surcharge.

Samantha Hayward, prosecuting, said at 3pm police received reports suggesting a two-year-old child had been run by a taxi over near the traffic lights

at Eastgate retail park.

“A witness saw the defendant, who had been driving the car from which the child fell, scoop her up and put her back in his vehicle before driving off,” said Miss Hayward.

“Police were making inquiries when he returned with the child and its mother.” Ahmed failed a roadside drug swipe and a later test gave a reading of 2.4 against the legal limit of 2.

Zabair Afzal, defending, said the defendant had put his daughter in her car seat and fastened the belts. He had dropped his wife off at home and had done some errands during which his brother had remained in the car with the child.

“As he drove off he noticed the rear door had swung open and his daughter

had fallen out,” said Mr Afzal. “She is a very active child but at no point did he envisage this could happen.”

Mr Afzal said his client picked the girl up and rang his wife who was hysterical. “She demanded that he come home right away,” said Mr Afzal. “He picked her up and returned to the scene.”

Mr Afzal said the child suffered no long lasting damage and is “perfectly fine” now.

He said his client had smoked cannabis two days before the incident but had no idea it would still be in his system.

“He works as a taxi driver and is the sole bread winner for his wife and three children,” said Mr Afzal. “His biggest punishment is that he will lose his livelihood today, as a result of his own actions, and it will impact on his family.”



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GMB PERSPECTIVE

LICENSING FEES AND THE RIGHT FOR ANYONE TO SUBMIT AN FOI TO THEIR COUNCIL

PART 1:

GMB We all know how it is when it comes to renewing your driver and vehicle licences. It's like.... "Here we go again.. more demands for money" ... but we pay up with no questions asked. However I would advise that from now on you start putting questions in about how much you are paying and more importantly how much of your money your council is currently hanging on to.

As you will probably know, no council is allowed to make a profit from licensing fees and all such funds raised must be ring-fenced. This means that your hard-earned money that you have paid for your licensing renewals cannot be spent on the councils dog wardens (do they still have these?) or indeed anywhere else.

Legislation permits a council to recover all or part of the costs of providing the taxi licensing service which will include its administration and control, such as enforcement. Surpluses must be carried forward and deficits may be carried forward to future years within each ring-fenced licensing budget.

I would like to think that most councils are extremely efficient at keeping on top of how much your fees are going to be. However, I currently know of two councils that appear not to know how to properly set licensing budgets.

If you have read any of my previous articles then you will be very aware of my dealings with Lewes District Council - which is next door to Brighton & Hove - that became a 'soft licensing' area for Uber with a huge majority of the 500 plus LDC private hire vehicles predominantly working in Brighton & Hove.

“

LDC has been holding onto a staggering excess of over £300k which is money paid by licence holders...!

”



This of course is as we all know a practice actively encouraged by Uber all over the country. I have previously expressed my views on the 'efficiency' of the LDC Licensing Department whilst also having a touch of sympathy with the 93 per cent increase in demand of licence applications as recorded in a 2019 DfT report which was highlighted alongside the infamous Wolverhampton City Council.

So, out of interest I decided to submit an Freedom of Information request regarding LDC licensing fees income and expenditure. I don't have enough room here to go into the finer details, but the ultimate finding was that the council has been holding onto a staggering excess of over £300k which is money paid by licence holders built up over a number of years.

The Freedom of Information request format I used sets out information required over several years which would show any surplus or deficit to be carried forward. This will demonstrate whether whoever makes the decision on how much fees will be from one year to another has had full financial control.

I suppose it is not surprising that LDC has refused to put in writing a verbal statement made in a web-meeting when we spoke about this financial position. In fact the doors have been firmly slammed shut on me.

Because Eastbourne Borough Council shares licensing facilities with Lewes District Council, I thought it would be interesting to also submit the very same FOI request on its own taxi/private hire licensing fees. However this came back as being rejected on grounds which I considered to be totally unreasonable!

GMB PERSPECTIVE

I also found this quite staggering because the reply was sent by the very same person who had previously and efficiently supplied me details on my Lewes District Council FOI. Of course no one likes being rejected so I got up on my hind-quarters and protested about this.

This prompted the FOI request to be escalated and at the time of writing I am currently waiting for an official response. And of course this involves another wait of up to twenty days - again. If this gets refused then I shall report this to the Information Commissioners Office which I have made very clear.

However, on the other side of the coast is Southampton City Council and I have been communicating with my good friend and GMB colleague, Ian Hall, who has been in the SCC cab trade for many years and who also writes for **PHTM**. Ian decided to submit his own FOI request to SCC relating to licensing fees, in the same format that I have been using which is very clear and precise.

Ian has discovered that SCC is holding onto a staggering (I make no excuse for using this word yet again) excess of over £500k in licensing fees! Yes half a million quid! When Ian told me about this, to say I was shocked would be underestimating my reaction, which I distinctly remember as I was in the process of drinking a cup of tea - in fact I nearly choked on my Tetley's. Again this is money that drivers and proprietors have been paying in over a number of years and in my view owed back to them without any hesitation!

It has to be made very clear here that the calculation of licensing fees is not the responsibility of any one single person. There are several parties that are responsible, which includes whoever is in charge of the taxi/private hire licensing department and the respective Licensing Committee which is made up of local councillors.

In fact in normal circumstances I would imagine that it would ultimately be the responsibility of the Licensing Chair to ensure that the fees charged reflect not only the reasonable costs as previously described, but also as to whether any excess funds have been accumulating.

“

SCC is holding onto a staggering excess of over £500k in licensing fees!

”



At the time of writing this I have just had a reply from Wolverhampton following my FOI request on licensing fees in the same format that I have used elsewhere. This covers the years 2016/17 2017/18 2018/19 2019/20 for numbers of private hire / drivers / vehicles / operators with income and expenditure totals. I have specifically not asked for a breakdown in expenditure as this would take time to do but this can be done later if needed.

Yes again I was staggered in seeing that Wolverhampton have licensed over 43,000 vehicles and over 33,000 driver licences so you can easily imagine the amount of fees that are generated! At this moment in time I have decided not to release this information as I need to respond back to Wolverhampton with some specific questions.

So I ask all of you in the trade: **are you fully up to speed with your own licensing fees accountability and what funds your own council may be holding onto?**

If not then you have the absolute right to initiate an FOI request and I would strongly recommend that you use the same format that I have used - the details of which you can view by going to: **bhtaxinews.cab/foi** where there is a link to a pdf and an excel file template that you can download.

Keep in mind that we have to be tested and regarded as fit and proper to hold a taxi/private hire licence and I do sometimes question whether those in charge of us should be tested likewise.

PART 2: next month.

Andy Peters
Secretary
GMB Brighton & Hove Taxi Section
andy.peters@gmbtaxis.org.uk

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PHTM GRANT CAMPAIGN REAPS RESULTS

PHTM, the **NPHTA** and local trade associations across the country have been campaigning for financial support for our drivers from the beginning of this pandemic. ONE YEAR has passed - it has been a hard and frustrating journey but finally we see some light at the end of the tunnel.

As our industry is still governed by a licensing system that allows drivers to be licensed by one council and live and work in another licensing area, the allocation of grants was always going to be extremely difficult to administer.

However, from the initial indifference of so many councils to our trade's plight, we are now pleased to report that of the 312 councils in England, 239 have now given self-employed drivers access to grants either via the ARG Scheme or via specific taxi driver grants.

BUT shockingly 72 councils are still offering **NO FINANCIAL SUPPORT**; and these councils, which are clearly highlighted on the following tables, should hang their heads in **SHAME**.

Furthermore, the tables clearly show that whilst some councils have been very supportive, which is commendable and much appreciated; the alarming disparity in grants offered across the country, even sometimes by neighbouring councils or even those in the same county, is questionable and totally unfair.

TAXI DRIVER SPECIFIC GRANTS:

On a positive note, most drivers were made aware of these grants, but they are generally paltry payments not giving any real help towards drivers' ongoing fixed business costs or alternatively have no monetary value and are just contras against future licensing fees.

Frustratingly, many taxi driver specific grants also exclude drivers who live outside of the council area, so despite paying their licence fee to that council these drivers are inexplicably deemed ineligible to then claim the grant; whilst some grants pay hackneys but not private hires and others pay drivers but not vehicle owners and vice versa.

Furthermore, the issuing of these specific driver grants has meant that taxi drivers, unlike other self-employed businesses, have then in the majority of cases been precluded from accessing grants via their council's main ARG scheme which offers much more money on a regular basis - a clever cost saving move by those councils.

ADDITIONAL RESTRICTIONS GRANT (ARG):

ALL councils in England were allocated pro rata budgets to support businesses in their area whose income has been impacted by Covid-19. There have been tier restrictions and three national lockdowns in the last 12 months. Therefore, has our trade not been affected just like other businesses? Do our drivers still not have fixed monthly costs? Can they work remotely? Can they work online?

The majority of councils have not widely publicised the ARG scheme so that many drivers were not even aware they were eligible to claim and if and when they did find out, all the money had been allocated or the application window closed.

Thankfully though some councils have made the ARG application process simple whilst others have made it so complicated and request so much documentation that drivers have been deterred from even trying to apply; in some cases when drivers appear to be eligible, they are rejected and told to go and claim a grant from where they are licensed or vice versa; or even worse are refused support as they have received SEISS.

PHTM reminds all those councils that the ARG scheme is aimed at helping businesses with ongoing fixed costs, SEISS is calculated on income after fixed costs have been paid. Therefore, eligibility for ARG has **NOTHING TO DO** with claiming SEISS and this **SHOULD NOT** be part of the criteria.

In reality **ALL** self-employed drivers are entitled to this grant and should have been able to claim it, if not from the council where they're licensed and pay their fees then certainly from the council where they live:

Wychavon Council told **PHTM** to share the message below:

"Please always check with your local council first, not where you are licensed. We have paid lots of grants to Wychavon taxi drivers, including those who are licensed in other areas. We cannot believe that a taxi driver who lives in our area but is licensed in Birmingham did not contact us until after we had closed the process.

"It is unbelievable to us that any business owner would not contact the local council in which they are based; as regardless of where a taxi driver is licensed, their business base from an HMRC perspective, is their home address."

Chris Brooks, Head of Economic Development Wychavon DC

THE FORGOTTEN AND NEGLECTED DRIVERS:

PHTM has sadly been inundated with emails, phone calls and Facebook messages from thousands of desperate drivers nationwide. These drivers are angry at only receiving minimal financial support or worse still have slipped through the net, resulting in them receiving no driver grants and no ARG grant, in fact no financial help at all from either the council where they are licensed or the council where they live - **THIS IS A DISGRACE!** Central government is now also demanding answers from councils as to why grant money has not been distributed to those businesses that so desperately need it.

THE INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THE FOLLOWING TABLES SAYS IT ALL and clearly explains why licensed drivers in some parts of the country are handing their vehicle plates and badges back in droves. Please note that grant amounts listed are correct at time of publication.

Whether this inequitable allocation of grant money is **ILLEGAL** is yet to be confirmed but we are sure you will agree that it is most certainly **UNJUST**!

TAXI DRIVER GRANTS

ARG in BLACK

COUNCIL	GRANTS	LIVE IN AREA
ADUR	£250 PER 28 DAYS OF RESTRICTION	YES
ALLERDALE	£467 PER 14 DAYS OF RESTRICTION	NO
AMBER VALLEY	SHAME	n/a
ARUN	£250 PER 28 DAYS OF RESTRICTION	YES
ASHFIELD	£500	YES
ASHFORD	SHAME	n/a
BABERGH	UPTO £1,071	YES
BARKING - TfL	SHAME	n/a
BARNET - TfL	SHAME	n/a
BARNSLEY	£1,000 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	SYBA
BARROW -IN - FURNESS	£562.50 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	NO
BASILDON	£2,500	YES
BASINGSTOKE & DEANE	SHAME	n/a
BASSETLAW	£1,000	YES
BATH & N.E SOMERSET	£5,270	YES
BCP	SHAME	n/a
BEDFORD	£500	YES
BEXLEY - TfL	SHAME	n/a
BIRMINGHAM	£1,000 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	YES
BLABY	AMOUNT SUBJECT TO FIXED COSTS	YES
BLACKBURN & DARWEN	£500 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	YES
BLACKPOOL	£75 TAXI DRIVER AND / OR £205 VEHICLE OWNER	NO
BOLSOVER	£1,500	YES
BOLTON	£700 VEHICLE OWNERS ONLY	NO
BOSTON	£1,334	YES
BRACKNELL FOREST	SHAME	n/a

DRIVER GRANTS in BLUE

COUNCIL	GRANTS	LIVE IN AREA
BRADFORD	£600 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	NO
BRAINTREE	£4,416	YES
BRECKLAND	£1,001 PER 42 DAYS OF RESTRICTION	YES
BRENT - TfL	SHAME	n/a
BRENTWOOD	£2,000	YES
BRIGHTON & HOVE	£400 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	NO
BRISTOL	£1,686 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	NO
BROADLAND	AMOUNT SUBJECT TO FIXED COSTS	NO
BROMLEY - TfL	SHAME	n/a
BROMSGROVE	£1,334	YES
BROXBOURNE	AMOUNT PAID NOT DETERMINED YET	NO
BROXTOWE	£3,000	YES
BUCK'HAMSHIRE	SHAME	n/a
BURNLEY	£500 PER 28 DAYS OF RESTRICTION	YES
BURY	UPTO £677 PER 28 DAYS OF RESTRICTION	YES
CALDERDALE	SHAME	n/a
CAMBRIDGE	£700 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	NO
CAMDEN - TfL	SHAME	n/a
CANNOCK CHASE	£135 DRIVER AND / OR £320 VEHICLE OWNER	NO
CANTERBURY	SHAME	n/a
CARLISLE	£2,568	YES
CASTLE POINT	UPTO £1,000	YES
CENTRAL BEDS	£2,000	YES
CHARNWOOD	SHAME	n/a
CHELMSFORD	£400 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	NO
CHELTONHAM	£1,000 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	YES

TAXI DRIVER GRANTS

88 SPECIFIC DRIVER GRANTS

COUNCIL	GRANTS	LIVE IN AREA
CHERWELL	SHAME	n/a
CHESHIRE EAST	SHAME	n/a
CHESHIRE WEST & CHESTER	SHAME	n/a
CHESTERFIELD	£500 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	NO
CHICHESTER	£250 PER 28 DAYS OF RESTRICTION	YES
CHORLEY	AMOUNT PAID NOT DETERMINED YET	YES
CITY OF WESTMINSTER - TfL	SHAME	n/a
COLCHESTER	£500 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	NO
COPELAND	£1,868	YES
CORBY	£2,001	YES
CORNWALL	SHAME	n/a
COTSWOLD	SHAME	n/a
COVENTRY	AMOUNT PAID NOT DETERMINED YET	YES
CRAVEN	£800	NO
CRAWLEY	£250 PER 28 DAYS OF RESTRICTION	YES
CROYDON -TfL	AMOUNT SUBJECT TO FIXED OVERHEADS	YES
DACORUM	£750 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	NO
DARLINGTON	£500 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	YES
DARTFORD	AMOUNT SUBJECT TO FIXED COSTS	NO
DAVENTRY	AMOUNT SUBJECT TO FIXED COSTS	n/a
DERBY	£250 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	YES
DERBYSHIRE DALES	£350 PER 28 DAYS OF RESTRICTION	NO
DONCASTER	£1,000 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	SYBA
DORSET	£467 PER 14 DAYS OF RESTRICTION	YES
DOVER	£1,000- £2,096 SUBJECT TO FIXED COSTS	NO
DUDLEY	£2,000 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	YES

COUNCIL	GRANTS	LIVE IN AREA
DURHAM	£500 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	NO
EALING - TfL	SHAME	n/a
EAST CAMBS	£4,000	YES
EAST DEVON	£1,401	YES
EAST HAMPSHIRE	£500 PER 28 DAYS OF RESTRICTION	YES
EAST HERTS	£1,500 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	YES
EAST LINDSEY	£667 PER 28 DAYS OF RESTRICTION	YES
EAST NORTHANTS	£1,334 PER 28 DAYS OF RESTRICTION	NO
EAST RIDING	AMOUNT SUBJECT TO FIXED COSTS	YES
EAST STAFFS	SHAME	n/a
EAST SUFFOLK	£2,600- £3,715	NO
EASTBOURNE	£500 TAXI DRIVER GRANT AND £1,000 HARSHIP GRANT	NO
EASTLEIGH	VEHICLE OWNERS ONLY, AMOUNT SUBJECT TO FIXED COSTS	NO
EDEN	£2,001	NO
ELMBRIDGE	AMOUNT SUBJECT TO TURNOVER	YES
ENFIELD TfL	SHAME	n/a
EPPING FOREST	£500	NO
EPSOM & EWELL	SHAME	n/a
EREWASH	UPTO £1,000	YES
EXETER	AMOUNT SUBJECT TO FIXED COSTS	YES
FAREHAM	£1,915	NO
FENLAND	SHAME	n/a
FOLKESTONE & HYTHE	£1,334	YES
FOREST OF DEAN	SHAME	n/a
FYLDE	£350 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	NO
GATESHEAD	£500 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	NO

72 COUNCILS SHAMED

COUNCIL	GRANTS	LIVE IN AREA
GEDLING	£500 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	YES
GLOUCESTER	SHAME	n/a
GOSPORT	£400 - £3,000 SUBJECT TO FIXED COSTS	YES
GRAVESEND	£500 PER 28 DAYS OF RESTRICTION	YES
GT. YARMOUTH	£1,000	YES
GREENWICH - TfL	SHAME	n/a
GUILDFORD	SHAME	n/a
HACKNEY - TfL	AMOUNT SUBJECT TO FIXED OVERHEADS	YES
HALTON	£300 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	LCAA
HAMBLETON	SHAME	n/a
HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM - TfL	SHAME	n/a
HARBOROUGH	£4,488	YES
HARINGEY - TfL	SHAME	n/a
HARLOW	£1,000 TAXI DRIVER GRANT OR £2,000 FOR DRIVERS WITH HC AND PH LICENCE	NO
HARROGATE	SHAME	n/a
HARROW - TfL	SHAME	n/a
HART	£1,334	YES
HARTLEPOOL	£250 DRIVER AND / OR £500 VEHICLE OWNER	NO
HASTINGS	SHAME	n/a
HAVANT	£500 PER 28 DAYS OF RESTRICTION	YES
HAVERING - TfL	SHAME	n/a
HEREFORDSHIRE	SHAME	n/a
HERTSMERE	£500 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	NO
HIGH PEAK	£1,000 HARSHIP GRANT	YES
HILLINGDON - TfL	SHAME	n/a
HINCKLEY & BOSWORTH	£500 - £1000 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	YES

COUNCIL	GRANTS	LIVE IN AREA
HORSHAM	£250 PER 28 DAYS OF RESTRICTION	YES
HOUNSLOW - TfL	SHAME	n/a
HULL	£1,500 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	YES
HUNTINGDON	SHAME	n/a
HYNDBURN	UPTO £934 PER 28 DAYS OF RESTRICTION	NO
IPSWICH	£1,334 PER 28 DAYS OF RESTRICTION AND / OR £500 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	NO & YES
ISLE OF WIGHT	£500 - £1,200	YES
ISLINGTON - TfL	SHAME	n/a
KENSINGTON & CHELSEA - TfL	SHAME	n/a
KETTERING	£4,097	YES
KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK	£1,000	NO
KINGSTON UPON THAMES - TfL	SHAME	n/a
KIRKLEES	£500 & £500 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	YES
KNOWSLEY	£300 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	LCAA
LAMBETH - TfL	SHAME	n/a
LANCASTER	£125- £450 PER 14 DAYS OF RESTRICTION	YES
LEEDS	£390 THREE YEAR LICENCE AND £500 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	YES
LEICESTER	SHAME	n/a
LEWES	UPTO £1,000 HARSHIP GRANT	NO
LEWISHAM - TfL	AMOUNT SUBJECT TO FIXED OVERHEADS	YES
LICHFIELD	£7,500	YES
LINCOLN	£667 PER 28 DAYS OF RESTRICTION	YES
LIVERPOOL	£410 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	LCAA
LUTON	£500 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	YES
MAIDSTONE	SHAME	n/a
MALDON	£400 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	NO

TAXI DRIVER GRANTS

GRANTS BEING UPDATED DAILY

COUNCIL	GRANTS	LIVE IN AREA
MALVERN HILLS	AROUND £1,000	YES
MANCHESTER	FREE VEHICLE LICENCE RENEWAL AND MOT TAX VEHICLE OWNERS ONLY	NO
MANSFIELD	£750 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	YES
MEDWAY	£175 - £7,000 SUBJECT TO FIXED COSTS	NO
MELTON	AMOUNT SUBJECT TO CRITERIA	YES
MENDIP	AMOUNT PAID CALCULATED ON A POINTS SYSTEM	YES
MERTON - TfL	SHAME	n/a
MID DEVON	£467 PER 14 DAYS OF RESTRICTION	YES
MID SUFFOLK	UPTO £1,071	YES
MID SUSSEX	£250 PER 28 DAYS OF RESTRICTION	YES
MIDDLESBROUGH	£467 PER 28 DAYS OF RESTRICTION	YES
MILTON KEYNES	£250 VEHICLES OWNERS ONLY	NO
MOLE VALLEY	£500 - £2,096 SUBJECT TO LOSS OF INCOME	NO
NEW FOREST	£3,125	YES
NEWARK & SHERWOOD	£500	YES
NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE	£250 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	NO
NEWCASTLE - UNDER - LYME	£750 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	NO
NEWHAM - TfL	SHAME	n/a
NORTH DEVON	£1,598- £2,239 SUBJECT TO TURNOVER	NO
N.E. DERBYSHIRE	SHAME	n/a
N.E LINCS	SHAME	n/a
NORTH HERTS	£500 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	YES
NORTH KESTEVAN	£1,000 OR £2,000 SUBJECT TO TURNOVER	NO
NORTH LINCS	£979	YES
NORTH NORFOLK	£1,000	YES
NORTH SOMERSET	£928	YES

COUNCIL	GRANTS	LIVE IN AREA
NORTH TYNESIDE	£500 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	NO
NORTH WARKS	£1,334	YES
NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE	UPTO £1,334	YES
NORTHAMPTON	£500 - £1,500 VEHICLE OWNERS ONLY	NO
N' THUMBERLAND	£700 OR £1000 IF NO SEISS TAXI DRIVER GRANT	YES
NORWICH	£1,000 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	YES
NOTTINGHAM	£400 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	NO
NUNEATON & BEDWORTH	£1,334	YES
OADBY & WIGSTON	£1,667	YES
OLDHAM	£162 DRIVER AND/OR £267 VEHICLE OWNER PLUS £1,000	NO
OXFORD	UP TO £540 TOWARDS ONE-YEAR COST OF TAXI LICENCE	NO
PENDLE	£1,500 HACKNET VEHICLE LICENCE HOLDERS ONLY	NO
PETERBOROUGH	£300 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	YES
PLYMOUTH	£2,434	NO
PORTSMOUTH	£1,872 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	NO
PRESTON	UPTO £1,000 ON MERIT	NO
READING	SHAME	n/a
REDBRIDGE - TfL	SHAME	n/a
REDCAR & CLEVELAND	AMOUNT SUBJECT TO FIXED COSTS	YES
REDDITCH	£1,334	YES
REIGATE & BANSTEAD	£2,001	YES
RIBBLE VALLEY	SHAME	n/a
RICHMOND UPON THAMES - TfL	SHAME	n/a
RICHMONDSHIRE	£1,175	YES
ROCHDALE	£500 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	NO
ROCHFORD	£1,334 -£4,000 SUBJECT TO FIXED COSTS	YES

ENGLISH COUNCILS A-Z

**CHECK YOUR COUNCIL WEBSITE
WHERE YOU LIVE & WHERE YOU ARE LICENSED**

COUNCIL	GRANTS	LIVE IN AREA
ROSSENDALE	£500	YES
ROther	SHAME	n/a
ROtherham	£1,000	SYBA
RUGBY	£500 PER 28 DAYS OF RESTRICTION	YES
RUNNYMEDE	£250 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	NO
RUSHCLIFFE	£500	YES
RUSHMOOR	CIRC £750 PER 28 DAYS OF RESTRICTION	YES
RUTLAND	AMOUNT SUBJECT TO FIXED COSTS	YES
RYEDALE	SHAME	n/a
Salford	£500 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	NO
SANDWELL	AMOUNT SUBJECT TO FIXED COSTS	NO
SCARBOROUGH	£750	YES
SEDGEMOOR	AMOUNT SUBJECT TO SCORING	YES
SEFTON	£300 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	LCAA
SELBY	UPTO £1,334 PER 28 DAYS OF RESTRICTION	YES
SEVENOAKS	UPTO £667 PER 14 DAYS OF RESTRICTION	NO
SHEFFIELD	£1,000 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	SYBA
SHROPSHIRE	SHAME	n/a
SLOUGH	£5,500	NO
SOLIHULL	£1,000 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	YES
SOMERSET WEST & TAUNTON	AMOUNT SUBJECT TO FIXED COSTS	YES
SOUTH CAMBS	AMOUNT SUBJECT TO CIRCUMSTANCES	YES
SOUTH DERBYSHIRE	SHAME	n/a
SOUTH GLOS	SHAME	n/a
SOUTH HAMS	£467 PER 14 DAYS OF RESTRICTION	YES
SOUTH HOLLAND	SHAME	n/a

COUNCIL	GRANTS	LIVE IN AREA
SOUTH KESTEVEN	£2,800 ARG AND / OR £500 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	YES & YES
SOUTH LAKELAND	£3,335	NO
SOUTH NORFOLK	AMOUNT SUBJECT TO FIXED COSTS	NO
SOUTH NORTHANTS	SHAME	n/a
SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE	£3,000	NO
SOUTH RIBBLE	SHAME	n/a
SOUTH SOMERSET	SHAME	n/a
SOUTH STAFFS	£1,500	YES
SOUTH TYNESIDE	£250 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	YES
SOUTHAMPTON	£1,000 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	SO POSTCODE
SOUTHEND-ON-SEA	SHAME but grant promised	n/a
SOUTHWARK - TfL	AMOUNT SUBJECT TO FIXED OVERHEADS	YES
SPELTHORNE	AMOUNT SUBJECT TO FIXED COSTS	YES
ST. ALBANS	£1,334	YES
ST. HELENS	£300 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	LCAA
STAFFORD	£750 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	NO
STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS	£1,000 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	YES
STEVENAGE	£500 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	YES
STOCKPORT	£200- £1,000 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	YES
STOCKTON - ON -TEES	£200 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	YES
STOKE -ON-TRENT	£2,239 ARG AND / OR £500 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	YES & NO
STRATFORD UPON AVON	£2,812	YES
STROUD	SHAME	n/a
SUNDERLAND	£500 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	NO
SURREY HEATH	£2,000	YES
SUTTON - TfL	AMOUNT SUBJECT TO FIXED OVERHEADS	YES

ENGLISH COUNCILS A-Z

WE KNOW NOT ALL OF YOU HAVE BEEN ABLE TO CLAIM
...PHTM WILL CONTINUE THE FIGHT!!

COUNCIL	GRANTS	LIVE IN AREA
SWALE	AMOUNT SUBJECT TO COSTS	YES
SWINDON	£2,000 ARG AND / OR £1,000 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	YES & NO
TAMESIDE	£1,500 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	NO
TAMWORTH	£1,000 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	YES
TANDRIDGE	£500	YES
TEIGNBRIDGE	£2,068	NO
TELFORD & WREKIN	£2,134	YES
TENDRING	£934 PER 28 DAYS OF RESTRICTION	NO
TEST VALLEY	SHAME	n/a
TEWKESBURY	£1,500- £3,000	YES
THANET	SUBJECT TO FIXED COSTS	YES
THREE RIVERS	£500	YES
THURROCK	SUBJECT TO FIXED COSTS	YES
TONBRIDGE & MALLING	£2,000	YES
TORBAY	£934 PER 28 DAYS OF RESTRICTION	YES
TORRIDGE	£1,598- £2,239 SUBJECT TO TURNOVER	NO
TOWER HAMLETS - TfL	SHAME	n/a
TRAFFORD	£218/£344 DRIVER AND / OR £98 v/o PLUS £2,000 ARG	NO & YES
TUNBRIDGE WELLS	£750	NO
UTTLESFORD	£1,000 ON MERIT	YES
VALE OF WHITE HORSE	£3,000	NO
WAKEFIELD	£500 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	NO
WALSALL	£3,250	YES
WALTHAM FOREST - TfL	SHAME	n/a
WANDSWORTH - TfL	SHAME	n/a
WARRINGTON	£420 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	YES

COUNCIL	GRANTS	LIVE IN AREA
WARWICK	£1,000 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	YES
WATFORD	£500 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	NO
WAVERLEY	£1,334	YES
WEALDEN	£1,000	NO
WELLINGBORO'	£2,001	NO
WELWYN HATFIELD	£500	YES
WEST BERKSHIRE	AMOUNT SUBJECT TO FIXED COSTS	YES
WEST DEVON	£467 PER 14 DAYS OF RESTRICTION	YES
WEST LANCASHIRE	£200 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	NO
WEST LINDSEY	SHAME	n/a
WEST OXFORDSHIRE	£677 PER 14 DAYS OF RESTRICTION	YES
WEST SUFFOLK	£1,200 FOR RESIDENTS OR £500 FOR NON RESIDENTS	YES & NO
WIGAN	£300 VEHICLE OWNERS ONLY	NO
WILTSHIRE	£1,500	YES
WINCHESTER	£1,334 PER 28 DAYS OF RESTRICTION	YES
WINDSOR & MAIDENHEAD	AMOUNT SUBJECT TO FIXED COSTS	NO
WIRRAL	£300 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	LCAA
WOKING	AMOUNT SUBJECT TO FIXED COSTS	NO
WOKINGHAM	SHAME	n/a
WOLVERHAMPTON	£2,000 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	YES
WORCESTER	£2,001	YES
WORTHING	£250 PER 28 DAYS OF RESTRICTION	YES
WYCHAVON	£5,431	YES
WYRE	£500 TAXI DRIVER GRANT	YES
WYRE FOREST	£4,097	NO
YORK	£500 PER 28 DAYS OF RESTRICTION	YES

THERE IS LIGHT FINALLY...

TO ALL COUNCILS AND LOCAL MPs

THANK YOU

**to those councils that
have financially
helped our trade**

SHAME

**on those councils that
have insulted our trade
with little or no support**

**WE IMPLORE THOSE COUNCILS
TO FIND MONEY NOW**

**...OR SUFFER THE CONSEQUENCES OF A DECIMATED TRADE
WHOSE NUMBERS ARE SO DEPLETED THAT IT WILL BE IMPOSSIBLE TO
SERVICE THE INCREASED DEMAND WHEN THE COUNTRY OPENS AGAIN**

IMAGINE THE CHAOS THIS WILL CAUSE!

It has to be said beyond any shadow of a doubt that this last year has been an absolute challenge for everyone. There have however been some positive spins to this whole situation. For example, we have all found it much easier to stay in touch, to reach out, to have meetings with various government agencies which may not otherwise have been possible, or at the very least would have been far more difficult.

Who have we been meeting with?

- Department for Transport on various topics concerning our industry.
- Joint Air Quality Unit (JAQU) on clean air zones.
- Department for Health and Social Care for rapid testing rollout.
- British Rail for ongoing transport solutions.
- NHS for test track and trace.
- Transport Research Laboratory on Covid screens.
- Various local authorities nationwide on consultations.
- Institute of Licensing.
- Transport for Greater Manchester on the minimum licensing standards and clean air zone.
- Local and National MPs and Ministers to discuss local issues within their regions.
- British Horticultural Society for delivery services.
- Department for Education on the provision of payment for school runs.
- We worked with several Covid protection screen suppliers to try to find the most suitable, offering technical support in the design and installation.
- Energy Saving Trust on the rollout and payment of the Scottish government Covid protection devices funding.
- We even sourced and obtained face coverings, contactless thermometers, air purifying systems, and anything else we could get our hands on to protect the industry and help prevent the spread of the virus.

Add to this list of course the communication with other large stakeholders nationally to ensure we are all working to the same goals and getting remarkably similar messages across.

As a result, we have actually achieved quite a lot over the year. We launched the funding **Name and Shame Campaign** in partnership with **PHTM**, which was by no means an easy task, exploring each local authority to find accurate details as to what level of support was being offered to our members and readers, creating up to date charts which were easy to read and understand, and of course reporting back to the governing bodies accordingly. That campaign is ongoing, as you will see in this edition of **PHTM**.

- We managed to get the government guidance on Covid screens completely rewritten as of early March.
- The messaging about the wearing of masks was amended to include taxi and private hire journeys.
- Several local authorities suddenly started to announce, or

at least better publicise the funding available either through driver grants, or Additional Restrictions Grants.

- Several local authorities have also launched consultations on local conditions, especially as a result of the reform to licensing, which was announced in July 2020. As a result, we have been asked to be involved in various consultations, either to advise and support in the background, or to review and supply responses in the background, or to directly respond, even in some regions to take part in their virtual meetings in support of the local associations.

TellMAMMA launched a taxi and private hire driver focused campaign: <https://bit.ly/2PB699w> An excellent charity which has a drive and motivation to alert, highlight and hopefully reduce attacks on drivers and racial abuse. **NPHTA** was delighted to be invited to be a part of the launch, and we offer our full support to this scheme, which for now is based around the Derby area, but is hoping to expand nationwide. So please get behind this and support it, as this is all about your safety and protection.

As if that was not enough! Drivers and vehicles of course are still subject to licensing conditions, potential suspensions, and revocations, so we have also been supporting and advising on such matters nationally, providing legislation and case law where appeals are necessary, or advising on presentations to licensing committee hearings.

Additionally, we are watching court rulings and local issues, sharing information to keep you all informed, and of course posting and sharing the latest government announcements as and where necessary.

We were approached by the Information Commissioners Office to publish a bulletin for them around CCTV recordings. Initially it had errors, but we were delighted that they were happy to work with us to amend the document prior to publishing it; the resulting document was a much clearer message. This bulletin was published in the March edition, we expand on this within the **CCTV v Dashcams** article.

Our work as your **National Private Hire and Taxi Association** has never stopped, faltered, or wavered for over 30 years; we have always been in your corner and we always will be.

As with any association, union, or any type of trade organisation, we are only as strong as our membership, so once again, if you are not already a member, then we need **YOU** to join and help us to make a difference, keeping our voice a powerful one when we are representing you, at all levels.

DON'T DELAY, JOIN TODAY!

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STRENGTH IN NUMBERS!!

GOVERNMENT TO INVESTIGATE LOCAL AUTHORITY FAILURE TO PAY OUT GRANTS

The Government is to investigate why Local Authorities have failed to release almost £1.6bn worth of grants to businesses, the Events Industry Alliance (EIA) has said.

According to Conference News, an investigation by the EIA found that 82.5% of the total funds given by the UK Government to councils had not yet been paid, despite the funds being issued on 31 October 2020.

The EIA submitted a Freedom of Information request on 26 January and despite the statutory deadline for responses being 23 February, only 128 councils out of a total of 314 English authorities responded to the request in full and on time, although some are reported to have requested extensions to the deadline.

The Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) was announced on 31 October and £1.6bn has been made available to local authorities to distribute to businesses that have been forced

to cease activities due to Covid restrictions. Individual ARG payments could be up to £3,000 per company per month - a critical amount for smaller businesses.

"We welcome the Government's decision to urgently investigate the non-payment of £1.6bn in ARGs to eligible businesses by local councils," said Andrew Harrison, director of the Event Service and Supplier Association, an EIA member.

"It is vital that we now see urgent action on payments, as businesses desperately need the funds they have been promised as well as further support over the coming months, so they can survive until national restrictions are lifted."

Following the EIA's request for more information on the level of payments to be made public, last week the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) published its own data that showed an even lower level of payments than the EIA's investigations had uncovered.

The Daily Telegraph reported a response from the Government on 25 February, stating that "a senior government source" had told the paper that ministers were "concerned" by the slow delivery of the grants by local authorities after giving councils "clear guidance". The Telegraph also reported that officials are understood to have approached councils to find out why the funding is not being sent out at speed to cash-starved firms.

The EIA has written to the chancellor, business secretary, and head of the Association of Local Government urging them to take urgent action to ensure the blocked payments are released to eligible businesses and to ensure that any new schemes do not see the same delays that have afflicted the ARG programme.

FREE SAFETY SCREENS AVAILABLE FOR OLDHAM DRIVERS

An ex-private hire driver who now serves as a councillor has welcomed the support offered by Oldham council to his former trade. The Oldham Times reports that Cllr Peter Davis, who represents the Failsworth West ward, has lauded the grant scheme for Oldham's licence holders as "a welcome helping hand".

The closure of the night-time economy over the last 12 months has had a devastating effect on the local taxi trade. Until Oldham Council's offer of £1,000 for every Oldham taxi licence plate holder, an investment totalling £1.3million, there was no single support scheme for cabbies.

He said many taxi drivers struggled to identify which scheme, if any, they were eligible for, and even when they did the application process was challenging to navigate.

Cllr Davis, who was a PH driver for Failsworth-based Embassy Taxis for over 20 years, said: "I can't imagine how difficult it must have been these last 12 months for taxi drivers. I know drivers that I used to work with have taken other jobs this last year or claimed Universal Credit. I hope that this grant will help drivers to hang in there until the economy picks up again. This grant is a welcome helping hand."

To be eligible for the Discretionary Business Grants for Taxis scheme drivers must hold a current driver's licence with the council; and have all DBS, DVLA and medical checks in place (or be in the process of renewing a licence).

As part of the funding package each driver will also receive a free internal safety screen, cleaning materials and sanitiser to help fight the spread of Covid-19.

Every taxi driver in Oldham could receive £1,000 to help them get over the impact of coronavirus after Oldham Council agreed a potential funding package of more than £1.3million.

The council has launched the Discretionary Business Grants for Taxis scheme to help drivers across the borough. The scheme would see eligible drivers receive a one-off payment. It is aimed at hackney carriage and private hire taxi drivers who are licensed by Oldham Council.

As part of the funding package each driver will also receive a free internal safety screen, cleaning materials and sanitiser to help fight the spread of the disease.

Licensed drivers will be contacted with details of how to apply.

TAXI DRIVER GRANTS DON'T GO FAR ENOUGH SAYS KEIGHLEY COUNCILLOR

Bradford Council has announced it will after all provide support grants to taxi drivers to help them survive the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Keighley News reports that it has decided to join more than 100 other local authorities across the country in awarding one-off payments to licensed drivers. But Keighley town councillor Mohammed Nazam, who was among those pressing for action by Bradford Council, says the £600 grants on offer don't go far enough. "Taxi drivers have really struggled over the past year and the trade will take a long time to fully recover from the Coronavirus pandemic," he said. "I don't think the £600 is sufficient, especially when the council is proposing a clean air zone within Bradford city centre. This will affect all taxi drivers, particularly when having to buy new vehicles."

"The majority of grants paid by other authorities have been



over £1,000 on average.

"I urge the council to look again at this decision with a view to increasing the amount of grant."

However, council leader Cllr Susan Hinchcliffe said the grants would provide a "much-needed boost" to drivers and the taxi trade.

She added: "Our taxi drivers play a vital role in our district's transport system. They have provided an invaluable service for our

residents and businesses throughout the pandemic. The impacts of Covid will be with us for some time yet, so it is essential that we continue to support them through these difficult times to keep the district moving."

The council says all licensed taxi drivers will be asked to complete a simple form to confirm eligibility for a grant. Applications were invited until March 29 and grants will then be paid from the week beginning April 5.

SCOTTISH MSP WRITES TO PARLIAMENT TO ASK FOR MORE FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR CABBIES

Monica Lennon, MSP for Central Scotland Region, has written a letter, on 23 March, to Kate Forbes, Cabinet Secretary for Finance, on behalf of Unite the Union in Scotland to urge the Scottish Government to offer the financial support that the trade desperately needs in order to survive.

In the letter Lennon writes that Scotland's taxi industry has "experienced significant financial hardship during the pandemic" with a dramatic fall in passenger numbers and thus revenue. She states: "The Scottish Government delivery of the £1,500 grant this year was welcome, albeit belated."

Lennon continues: "I recently held discussions with representatives of Unite the Union Cab Branches who described how the past 12 months has impacted them. They told me that taxi operators across Scotland had been purchasing vehicles with a view to improving environment performance, yet many operators are struggling to make the required finance agreement payments for their vehicles and are facing the threat of repossession."

"I listened to drivers describe mental health concerns and of drivers going to bed with their radio on to remain alert of any



work, no matter what time of day. "I heard of many leaving the industry for good and some seeking alternative employment just to meet the payments on their vehicles."

"I listened to operators plea to be recognised as business owners, given parity with business grants and for the Government to distinguish between a taxi driver and a taxi operator."

Lennon explained that due to the Unite campaign in Wales, drivers have received three sums of £2,000 with more to come. And in Northern Ireland, a second scheme closed on 26 February and a second grant of £1,500 has now been released.

Lennon finishes off by asking Forbes to "urgently set out":

- **What specific financial support can be provided to taxi operatives such as the Strategic Business Framework Fund that gives grants to businesses by delivering a £10,000 grant.**
- **When will a second financial assistance scheme for drivers be announced.**

 Edinburgh Cab Branch
@branch_cab

...
Thanks to @MonicaLennon7 for writing to @_KateForbes on behalf of Unite the Union, Cab branches in Scotland. The fight continues to get the Scottish Taxi trade the financial support it desperately needs to keep operators from going to the wall.

6:55 PM · Mar 23, 2021 · Twitter for Android

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GREEN MEANS GO

LONDON ELECTRIC VEHICLE COMPANY CELEBRATES MILESTONE WITH ITS 5,000th TX SALE

London Electric Vehicle Company is celebrating a significant milestone with the sale of the 5,000th TX to a private taxi business in Berlin, Germany. In 2018, LEVC's iconic 'black cab' was totally redesigned for the 21st Century into a zero-emissions capable model, TX. This electric transformation, along with its purpose-built high quality and durability, unique design, ample space for six passengers, wheelchair accessibility and safe, comfortable passenger experience has enabled TX success in both the taxi and premium shuttle markets.

Joerg Hofmann, CEO of LEVC, said: "With 5,000 electric TXs now on the road, I'm proud of LEVC's positive contribution to air quality improvements in cities around the world. Our unique eCity technology delivers zero emissions capability with a total range of more than 300 miles - a critical combination needed by commercial operators."

LEVC estimates that TX drivers have now covered a total distance of 188



million miles, which equates to driving roughly 7,500 times around the world. This means that TX has now prevented more than 57,000 tonnes of CO2 from entering the atmosphere, stopped 35m litres of fuel from being pumped and saved drivers around £34m in fuel costs. The recipient of the 5,000th TX is Mr Serkan Demir, a self-employed taxi driver who plans to operate his TX in Berlin as a service for private and business passengers. and will be working closely with health services to provide a vital transport solution for wheelchair users.

Mr Demir said: "I wanted a vehicle that was high quality, durable and unique and the TX ticks all those boxes and more. A major draw for me was TX's built in accessibility features, meaning I can offer transport solutions to almost anyone, which is key when I'm working with local health services. Not only will this vehicle save me money in the long run but it will also mean I can offer a better service to my customers."

Mr Demir also chose TX for its many unique features including the purpose-built partition screen, which separates the driver from passengers - essential for safe and hygienic Covid travel - and its eCity range-extender powertrain which allows him to operate with zero-emissions in the city. TX offers 62 miles (101 km) pure electric range and a total range of over 316 miles (510km), meaning the driver has peace of mind and no range-anxiety regardless of journey distances and operating hours.

BATH CLEAN AIR ZONE - CABBIE SLAMS THE LUDICROUS NEW SCHEME

A cabbie from Bath has slammed the new Clean Air Zone which took effect on Monday, 15 March.

According to SomersetLive, the scheme is the first in the country, outside London, and will see some vans, buses, coaches and taxis charged to enter a zone covering most of the city. Ian Green, 55, said the £9 daily charge for some taxis was "ludicrous" after such a tough year for drivers.

He said: "There are probably about 400 taxis in Bath and two thirds will need replacing, in a year when hospitality has been non-existent and we haven't earned any money.

"The council might give us £4,500 as a grant, but it's around £14,000 for a new car and it has to be under three years old to register as a taxi. It just seems ludicrous to be doing it at this time."

Mr Green said that taxis were "probably cleaner than most cars" because they had to be serviced regularly to keep their licence.

He drives a Nissan Qashqai and is exempt from road tax due to its low emissions. However, the vehicle still qualifies for a £9 charge under the CAZ brought in by Bath and North East Somerset Council.

The extra cost comes after a difficult

year for taxi drivers, Ian explained. "Around a third of taxi drivers work nights but they can't now, so they come into town during the day, so there are extra drivers and about 20 per cent of the work."

"I can't imagine many places will give finance for a new car when we haven't worked all year, and if we can't get finance, we could be exempt for two years. Well that just seems not to be working at all, why not start it in two years? Taking away 300 taxis isn't going to stop pollution," he said. "I don't know how many taxis will actually be in Bath after the pandemic."

GREEN MEANS GO

GLASGOW CABBIERS AWARDED UP TO £10K GRANTS TO HELP COMPLY WITH LOW EMISSION ZONES

More than £1million has been awarded to taxi owners in Glasgow to help comply with Low Emission Zones.

The Glasgow Times reports that more than 100 taxis have now been successfully retrofitted with LPG engines. This is in preparation for Scotland's Low Emission Zones (LEZs) which will be introduced by May 2022.

The Scottish Government funding is to retrofit non-LEZ compliant vehicles with Clean Vehicle Retrofit Accreditation Scheme (CVRAS) approved solutions, that meet the minimum proposed standards of the LEZs.

Grants of up to £10,000 are available to cover up to 80 per cent of the cost of a

retrofit solution.

Michael Matheson, Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity, said: "With every taxi trip potentially eliminating the need for another private vehicle to enter the city centre - it's clear to see why having LEZ compliant taxis is an important part of the sustainable travel mix.

"Funding will again be available in April 2021 and I encourage any taxi driver who is interested to find out more about the support on offer."

An LPG engine is cheaper to run for cabbies, gives a quieter and smoother experience for passengers and provides cleaner air with reduced car-

bon dioxide emissions.

Taxi owner Donald Wilson said: "My taxi was retrofitted in early January 2020 and since then, I have had no issues to date and my fuel costs have been reduced by an average of 20 per cent. The running and smoothness of my taxi has been fantastic. Customer feedback is very positive, and I am frequently asked if I am driving an electric taxi."

The LEZ Retrofit Fund provides targeted support for small taxi businesses who would otherwise struggle to afford an LEZ compliant, Euro 6 engine vehicle. To find out more please visit: <https://bit.ly/312S5rP>

ELECTRIC TAXIS AVAILABLE FOR TRIAL IN COVENTRY COUNCIL'S 'ELECTRIC FLEET FIRST' PROJECT

Electric taxis are now available for trial as part of Coventry Council's 'Electric Fleet First' project.

Both Councillor Patricia Hetherton and Councillor Jim O'Boyle visited Whitley Depot to see the electric vehicles for themselves.

The iconic Coventry based LEVC Taxi and the 100 per cent Zero Emission Nissan Dynamo are both on offer for trial.

Councillor O'Boyle who is Cabinet Member for Jobs and Regeneration said: "This is a fantastic opportunity for the taxi trade to experience all the benefits that EVs have to offer. The electric fleet first trial is about giving local businesses the opportunity to understand more about the long-term benefits of switching to an EV for their business."

The Nissan Leaf will be part of the trial so that the private hire trade can also try out EVs for themselves.

Cllr O'Boyle added: "We want to support our drivers and provide as much incentive as possible to take part in the



Cllr Jim O'Boyle and Cllr Patricia Hetherton with the fleet available for trial

green movement."

The trial is FREE. There will be no charges for hire or for insurance, the only cost will be when customers are charging the vehicle during the trial period.

Cllr Hetherton, who is Cabinet Member for City Services, said: "I'm delighted that the Council is operating this

scheme. We are already increasing our own council fleet of electric bin lorries and other vehicles and we want to show local businesses what can be achieved when we adapt to future sustainable transport.

"We have nine fleet vehicles available for taxi drivers and a further 70 vans and cars for businesses so I'd also encourage local businesses to get in touch."

"We would like to express our thanks to Highways England for funding this project.

Our taxi trade can help make Coventry greener by lowering carbon emissions across the city."

The Electric Fleet First is a try-before-you-buy scheme which allows people to try out a vehicle for up to two months.

To register your interest please visit: www.coventry.gov.uk/electricfleet



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TERROR TIMES

IWGB CONDEMNS BOLT CEO'S "NEGLIGENCE" AFTER BOLT DRIVER'S CAR STOLEN AT KNIFEPOINT



The Independent Workers' Union of Great Britain (IWGB) has condemned Bolt CEO Markus Villig for "negligence" after private hire driver Muhammad Alam was threatened at knifepoint by passengers while on a job for Bolt, demonstrating a failure to improve safety measures as demanded by IWGB following the stabbing of Bolt driver Gabriel Bringye on 17 February 2021.



Private hire driver Muhammad Alam was punched in the face by passengers while on a trip for Bolt on Friday 19 March at 8pm in Chingford and then threatened at knifepoint by the assailants to hand over his keys after which they stole his car.

Muhammad's assailants made use of a stolen phone to book the Bolt trip in an attempt to remain unidentified.



On 17 February, IWGB member and Bolt driver Gabriel Bringye, was stabbed while on a job for Bolt. The assailants made use of a fake account.

Following Gabriel Bringye's murder, the IWGB's United Private Hire Drivers' branch called on Bolt CEO, Markus Villig, to implement improved safety protections for drivers, such as tougher ID requirements for passengers, including a photograph on the app visible to drivers, to allow drivers to assess if a passenger is a verified Bolt app user: <https://bit.ly/2PvjYG8>



The IWGB also launched a petition calling for Bolt CEO, Markus Villig, to improve driver safety protections following the murder of Gabriel Bringye.

Gabriel's Life Matters, Campaign for Driver Safety can be found here: <https://bit.ly/3cjsotb>

Bolt has failed to implement these measures or engage with the IWGB regarding this matter.

Muhammad Alam, Bolt driver and IWGB member who was threatened at knifepoint, said:

"I had my car stolen from me at knifepoint while on a job for Bolt last week. Since this happened to me I have been scared to go back to work again, but I have to go back in order to support my family. Bolt must urgently improve the safety measures they have in place to protect drivers so this does not happen again to me or any other driver.

My assailants used a stolen phone to book the Bolt job where they punched me, threatened to stab me and then stole my car. Bolt must introduce photo requirements for customers in their app so that drivers like me can tell if the person getting in my cab is definitely the right person.

I am not the only driver that this has happened to. In February another driver called Gabriel Bringye who was a member of my union - the United Private Hire Drivers - was stabbed by his passengers while on a job for Bolt. His assailants were also using a stolen phone.

"I could well have ended up dead like Gabriel.

"Bolt must make its app safe for drivers now before it's too late and another person is killed."

Nader Awaad, Vice Chair of IWGB's United Private Hire Drivers branch, said:

"After the horrific stabbing of private hire driver Gabriel Bringye while on a job for Bolt, we called on Bolt's CEO, Markus Villig, to implement safety measures so this would never happen again.

This recent attack on another driver, Muhammad, shows the necessity of the safety measures we have been calling for.

Markus Villig's failure to implement improved protections for drivers after Gabriel's death nearly cost Muhammad his life. This is negligence and Bolt must take action now to ensure their drivers are safe.

It is unacceptable if a passenger loses a phone someone else can order a job using their name to commit a crime. It's Bolt's responsibility to ensure that their account can be accessed by the account holder only."

TERROR TIMES

HOODED THUGS SMASH UP LEICESTER TAXI FIRM WITH AXE AND HAMMER

Hooded thugs armed with an axe and a hammer smashed up the front of the cab office of Fosse Taxis in Braunstone Gate, Leicester.

The Leicester Mercury reports that nobody was injured during the incident, which happened at 8.10pm on Monday 1 March but the company has released CCTV of it in the hope it will help Leicestershire Police track down those responsible.

The two men can be seen running up to the premises and striking the windows repeatedly before fleeing. The attack was over in seconds but



caused extensive damage.

A Fosse Taxis spokesperson said: "We hope that, by sharing this

footage, our community can come together to prevent this ever happening again and to raise awareness for violence against local business in our community.

"If you have any information, we kindly ask that you come forward so that the individuals responsible can be held accountable for

their actions."

Anyone with information is asked to call Leicestershire Police on 101.

GLASGOW CABBIE JUMPED BY TEENS AND CAR STOLEN BEFORE BEING DITCHED 3 MILES AWAY

Two teenagers have been charged after a taxi driver was allegedly jumped and his car stolen near Glasgow.

According to the Daily Record, the boys, aged 14 and 15, stopped the driver who is believed to have been sitting in his car before they allegedly

robbed him of his motor and sped off on New Road in Cambuslang at around 9.50pm on Saturday 20 March.

Officers attended the scene and the car was later found dumped almost three miles away on Station Road in Blantyre.

The youths were traced by police nearby in Bothwell before they were arrested and charged in connection with the incident.

A report was submitted to the Procurator Fiscal and the pair were due to appear before Glasgow Sheriff Court on Monday 22 March.

15-YEAR-OLD BOY REPORTED AFTER STONES THROWN AT BUSES AND TAXI IN EDINBURGH

A number of buses and a taxi were damaged in south east Edinburgh through reckless behaviour after stones were thrown at them.

According to the Edinburgh Reporter, officers have confirmed that a 15-year-old boy has been charged and will be reported to the youth assessor in connection with these incidents.

The investigation into the activity

remains ongoing.

Chief Inspector Sarah Taylor, Local Area Commander for North West Edinburgh said: "We will continue our efforts to keep our communities, Lothian Buses staff and all motorists safe, through a proactive and co-ordinated approach, alongside working closely with our partners.

"Officers continue to investigate these completely unacceptable and

senseless incidents to ensure that offenders are held accountable for their actions.

"I reiterate our request for the support of parents, guardians and the wider public in tackling this behaviour.

"If you see this behaviour, or congregations at bus stops causing a disturbance, please contact police on 101, or 999 in an emergency."



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40 MONTHS' JAIL FOR NEWCASTLE THUG WHO ATTACKED CABBIE AND TRIED TO STEAL HIS CAR

A taxi driver was attacked by a drunken city centre thug who tried to steal his car and called him a racist name.

According to ChronicleLive, the victim was sitting in his vehicle on Newcastle Quayside when he was approached by John Armstrong and two other men.

Newcastle Crown Court heard that Armstrong asked to be taken to South Shields just after 1am in July 15 2019 then suddenly attacked the cabbie as he looked up the location on his sat nav. Now Armstrong has been jailed for 40 months.

Graham O'Sullivan, prosecuting, said: "The defendant approached the driver's door and the complainant asked what he was doing. The defendant grabbed him round the throat with sufficient force that he struggled to breathe and began punching him repeatedly in the face. He tried to push him off and the defendant grabbed him by his top and pulled him out of the car. He landed on his knees and the defendant started to kick and punch him all over his body. He was on the floor try-



ing to defend himself."

As the victim tried to run away, Armstrong jumped into the driver's seat and tried to start the car.

The cabbie came back and tried to grab the keys from the ignition, at which point he had his thumb bent back with force. Armstrong, 26, then tried to get out of the taxi but the victim pushed the door closed.

Mr O'Sullivan said: "The driver's window was open and the defendant put both of his feet through the open window, trying to kick him in the chest so he would move and the defendant could get out.

"The complainant grabbed his feet to stop him kicking and he tried punching the complainant. He kicked the car wing mirror causing it to crack.

"The victim was shouting for help and asking someone to call the police."

He managed to keep the car door shut until police arrived to arrest him.

As he was taken to the police van, he shouted "He is a p***".

Armstrong then lunged towards a police officer as if he was going to assault him and he was taken to the ground, swearing at police.

The cabbie was left with soreness to his head and face and pain to his thumb, wrist, chest, neck and knees, grazes to his face and difficulty swallowing.

His phone was smashed and the cost of repairing that and the wing mirror was £600. He had two months off work, which left him £3,000 out of pocket, and was left scared to do his job but had to return to provide for his family.

Armstrong, who has previous convictions for wounding and excess alcohol, was subject to a suspended prison sentence for producing cannabis and abstracting electricity at the time.

He pleaded guilty to assault occasioning actual bodily harm, attempted theft, criminal damage, racially aggravated harassment, alarm or distress and being in charge of a car while over the drink drive limit.

TEEN POINTS GUN AT STOKE TAXI DRIVER'S FACE IN TERRIFYING ROBBERY

Drugged-up teenager Bradley Rushton pointed a gun at a taxi driver's face during a terrifying robbery.

The Stoke Sentinel reports that Rushton, 18, has been handed a three-year community order at Stoke-on-Trent Crown Court. The Prosecutor said the defendant approached a busker in Fenton in November 2019 and threatened to kick his teeth in.

That evening the defendant was in Blurton and waved down a taxi which Rushton approached the front passenger door. The driver wound down the window and Rushton shouted: "Get out the car" repeatedly. He opened the

passenger door, sat in the seat and told the cabbie to get out. He pulled out a handgun from his pocket and pointed it towards the driver's face. He believed it to be real.

The driver was screaming and pressed the car horn to alert passers-by. He managed to grab the gun. The two men grappled and the driver let go of the gun so the defendant used it to strike him across the forehead.

The driver was covered in blood. He was left with a three-inch cut which needed three stitches.

"The police arrived. The defendant got out the vehicle and ran off. Officers

caught up with the defendant who put the gun to his head and mouth and then to his head again. The police told him to drop the gun. The gun was recovered and was a ball bearing firing gun. The taxi driver's phone was recovered from the defendant."

Rushton, from Stoke, pleaded guilty to robbery and possession of an imitation firearm with intent to cause fear of violence.

As part of the community order Rushton must complete a six-month electronically-monitored curfew from 7pm to 6am and a rehabilitation activity requirement for 40 days.

KNIFE WIELDING THUG JAILED FOR 13 YEARS FOR SOUTHEND ROBBERIES

A knife-wielding robber has been jailed for 13 years after a number of robberies and other offences over the course of three months.

According to the Echo, Marcus Piper, 27, of no fixed address, was sentenced at Basildon Crown Court on 4 March. Piper had committed robberies, an attempted robbery and an aggravated burglary over the course of three months in 2020.

His arrest followed the robbery of a taxi driver on Colchester Road in Southend on August 22.

Another robbery took place on September 5 and an attempted robbery the day after on Palmerston Road in Westcliff.

On September 12 he had used a knife to intimidate an employee at Station News, Shoebury, threatening to "cut [his] throat" and stab the victim. He then demanded money from the till and took three packets of cigars from behind the counter.

Piper dropped the weapon and a pack-



et of cigars near Shoebury train station which were forensically recovered to add to the case against him.

On October 14 he threatened to kill

an employee at Londis newsagents in Ronald Park Avenue, Westcliff, if he did not give him the money from the till. He was armed with a knife on this occasion too.

Piper forced entry to a property on Rochford Road, Southend, armed with a baseball bat and caused injuries to one resident before stealing electrical items from the victim.

At court Piper was sentenced to 13 years in prison for the aggravated burglary.

He received four years for each of the robberies of taxi drivers, and six-and-a-half years for newsagent charge.

These sentences will run concurrently

to the aggravated burglary sentence, and he must serve two thirds of his time in prison before being considered eligible for parole.

Detective Inspector Steve Franklin, who manages Southend CID, said: "Piper continually targeted people who were just doing their job during a really difficult time for small businesses and those who are self-employed. I know they suffered significant losses because of his greed.

"I am sure that his violent actions will have a lasting impact on all of those who were affected by these crimes and I would like to thank all of the members of the public who came forward to report these incidents to us."

Detectives had issued an appeal to find Piper on social media and through the charity Crimestoppers offering a reward.

Public information helped intelligence teams track down Piper and he was arrested by Southend Proactive Team on October 21 last year.

22 MONTHS' JAIL FOR DRUNK MAN WHO ATTACKED GLASGOW DRIVER BEFORE STEALING AND CRASHING TAXI

A banned drink driver who stole a taxi and crashed it into railings has been jailed for nearly two years.

STV News reports that Callum Heap, 20, lunged at cabbie Geofray Ezi with a knife before jumping in the front seat on November 15, 2020.

Heap raced the taxi from Glasgow's Castlemilk and collided with a metal railing at Parkhead Forge Retail Park.

He was later found to be more than four times over the drink driving limit and had been disqualified from driving until 2022.

He pleaded guilty at Glasgow Sheriff Court to drink driving, dangerous driving and driving while disqualified.

Heap also admitted the assault on Mr Ezi which was racially aggravated.

Heap was ordered to serve 470 days of an earlier sentence before beginning his latest 22 month jail term and disqualified from driving for 47 months.

The court heard Heap was told by Mr Ezi that he was not allowed to enter the taxi with the bottle of alcohol he was carrying.

Heap stated he wanted Mr Ezi to take him to Pollok before calling him a "black monkey."

Heap pulled out a "long-serrated knife" while sitting in the back of the taxi and lunged at Mr Ezi making stabbing motions.

Prosecutor John Bedford said: "Heap was observed climbing from the rear seat and entering the driver's seat. He revved the engine and drove off from Ballantay Road at speed in a reckless manner, narrowly missing two people." Police later found the Volkswagen Passat taxi crashed against metal railings at the shopping complex.

Heap was spotted exiting the car while extremely drunk carrying a bottle of Buckfast.

He fled while stating "I don't have a knife" and dropping a number of items. Officers caught up with him and he was arrested and discovered to have an alcohol count of 97. The legal limit is 22.

NOTTINGHAM CABBIE'S CLOTHING MAY HAVE SAVED HIS LIFE AFTER STABBING

A taxi driver's life may have been saved by the four layers of clothing he was wearing after he was stabbed near his heart.

His attacker was Gary Pearson, who planned out a knife-point robbery of the driver after booking the car under the false name of "Miles".

Nottingham Crown Court heard the driver had a knife held with its point to his neck after he was told to pull over at a bus stop on December 3 last year. The knife left a puncture wound as Pearson, who was wearing a mask, demanded cash from the terrified driver. The cabbie, who had just started his shift, said he had little money and handed over some banknotes from his trouser pocket.

But Pearson responded "you should have more than that", and the driver offered £20. Pearson was still unsatis-



fied and asked where his change was.

The cash was produced from the door pocket in a cloth bag. Pearson demanded his phone too and released his grip on the man to allow him to reach for the device.

The driver then opened his door and escaped. He bravely attempted to kick and stamp at Pearson to keep him in the back of the taxi.

Pearson jabbed at him with the knife repeatedly towards his torso and he felt the blade connect with his chest area. One blow with the knife punctured his chest, leaving a two-centimetre wound that needed two stitches.

Pearson, 34, from Nottingham, fled

with £90 but was sniffed out shortly afterwards by a police dog guided by the scent from a woolly hat he had left at the scene.

The animal, Police Dog Reno, led officers to a nearby ground floor flat. Entry was gained and Pearson was arrested on suspicion of robbery.

At court on Friday, March 19, he pleaded guilty to having the knife; robbery, and wounding with intent.

Judge John Burgess sentenced him to ten years for the robbery and wounding with intent concurrently, and 16 months concurrently for having the knife.

He extended Pearson's licence period for four years on his release.

The judge said it was extremely fortunate the driver was wearing four layers of clothing, including a showerproof jacket. "The wound was near his heart," added the judge. "He considers the clothing may well have saved his life".

DCI Kim Binns, of Nottinghamshire Police, said afterwards: "This was a brazen frightening knife-point robbery that could easily have been a lot worse for the victim. Pearson posed as a typical customer as he climbed inside and sat in the back seat, even engaging in the kind of small talk that is typical of most taxi journeys.

"He then held a knife to his victim's neck in an attempt to steal just a small amount of cash. For that cowardly, impulsive but ultimately futile act he will now spent a very considerable amount of time behind bars.

"Faced with the overwhelming evidence against him I am pleased that Pearson has accepted his guilt and hope he will use his time in prison to change the direction of his life.

"I would also like to pay tribute to the fantastic work at the scene by Police Dog Reno and his handler. Thanks to bit of quick-thinking and one very powerful nose we were quickly able to track down a violent and dangerous offender and bring him into custody."

SALFORD RACIST WHO BIT CABBY SPARED JAIL CLAIMING PTSD FROM DEATH OF DOG

A woman who bit a private hire driver twice in a racist attack has been spared jail after she claimed to have PTSD. Metro reports that Rebekha D'Stephano, 43, said she was suffering from the effects of her puppy being mauled to death by another dog when she attacked Jahangir Alam and called him a 'P***i b*****d' in a row over a fare.

She also punched him, and smashed his windscreen and rear-view mirror as she refused to pay when he dropped her off at her home in Salford, shortly after midnight on February 16 last year.

When police arrived, D'Stephano, who had been out drinking, was having an argument with another cabbie about her son.

She was told she faced a jail sentence for racially aggravated criminal damage and ABH. However, she told the



court that she was receiving counselling for the attack on her dog. Prosecutor Mr Zak Azim said the defendant had seven previous offences including a similar assault and criminal damage offence in 2009.

D'Stephano was sentenced to 26 weeks jail suspended for 12 months and she was also ordered to pay £700 compensation to the taxi driver.

Chairman of the bench Julian Fisher told her: "This is a serious case where you caused injuries to the victim and stopped the taxi driver from working. We are going to impose a suspended sentence, but you could have gone down for this."

JUST DESSERTS

DERBY TEENAGER WHO BEHAVED LIKE A WILD ANIMAL WHEN ATTACKING CABBIE JAILED FOR 44 WEEKS

A Derby teenager behaved “like a wild animal” when she attacked four police officers and a taxi driver when breaking lockdown regulations on New Year’s Eve.

According to the Derby Telegraph, Laine Thomason, 19, was jailed for 44 weeks. District Judge Jonathan Taaffe said: “Your behaviour on this night can only been described as like a wild animal.

“This appalling incident occurred on New Year’s Eve when the Christmas break from Covid regulations was over. You should not have been going from one address to another anyway and in your own words you were plastered. “A taxi driver came to pick you up and because of your state asked for the money up front and for his troubles gets assaulted.

“He ran from the taxi calling ‘help, help, help’ and you threw a glass at



him which smashed on his back. “When the police arrived you said to one female police officer ‘I will f***** batter you, you slag’ and that is what you proceeded to do. You ripped off her mask and earpiece you kicked out at other officer and they put a spit hood on you. “If that wasn’t bad enough when you arrived at the police station they were kind enough to give you a cup of

water, and you spat that into the face of a police sergeant. It was unbelievable.” Neil Fawcett, prosecuting at Southern Derbyshire Magistrates’ Court, said the incident took place at around 7pm on December 31 at Auriga Court, Chester Green.

Thomason pleaded guilty to four counts of assaulting an emergency worker, one count of common assault and one count of criminal damage. She has a previous conviction for violence from 2016.

Jaz Soodi, mitigating, said his client has worked in the care industry and lives at home with her parents. He said: “She is appalled at how she behaved and acknowledges she was out of control that evening and she apologises for that.”

As well as the jail term, Thomason was ordered to pay a £156 victim surcharge.

“I’M GOING TO BREAK YOU IN PIECES” - FORMER SOLDIER’S THREAT TO BRADFORD DRIVER

A man who used to serve in the Army has been jailed for three years and five months for punching a man and stealing his car and taking a phone from a taxi driver.

The Telegraph and Argus reports that Reece Campbell, 28, confronted a man who was sitting in his car, punched him, grabbed his car keys from his hands and drove off at speed near the Mill pub in Westgate, Baildon.

After he was punched, the man, who owned the stolen red Ford Fiesta, managed to get out of his car before Campbell drove off in it.

Campbell was spotted by police officers driving the Fiesta in Bradford, and a ‘stinger’ was used by officers to stop the car on Sticker Lane, Bradford.

Campbell, who was in the car on his



own, was arrested and provided a sample of breath for officers, which was more than twice over the drink drive limit. It was discovered at this stage that Campbell was disqualified from driving. He was also driving with no insurance.

The second charge, a theft, saw Campbell being picked up by a taxi driver from a pub after drinking and scuffling with another person in a pub.

When he got in the taxi, Campbell told the cabbie: ‘I’m going to fight you. I’m going to break you in pieces’. He

grabbed the taxi’s steering wheel during the journey, forcing the car to then go into the side of the road. Campbell ran away with the cabbie’s PDA phone system worth £100. This incident took place in December 2019. Jane Brady, mitigating, told the court Campbell turned to alcohol after leaving the Army and splitting up with a former partner.

Campbell was jailed for 32 months for robbery and nine months for theft, with both sentences to run consecutively. Sentencing Campbell, Judge Jonathan Rose said it was very fortunate no-one who seriously injured or killed while Campbell was behind the wheel of the Judge Rose added the taxi driver was terrified in the second attack while carrying out his duties.

UNITE VIEWPOINT

BILLS BILLS BILLS BILLS BILLS

Well here we go again, as they say... As always, I hope that I find you well, all things considered. Thanks to those of you who have been in touch and for your kind words.

I say here we go again as some themes and problems seem to recur on a fairly regular basis; like the subject of Government support to the self-employed and the cab trade, which we will revisit this month.

Whilst I applaud the Government's recent extension of the Self Employed Income Support Scheme (SEISS), it is once again totally out of step with and disproportionate to, the financial support that has been provided continuously to employees under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (JRS).

The support for employees under the JRS has been provided for each and every month from the beginning, as opposed to the SEISS which has been subject to gaps in the support. The first gap was in September and October last year when no financial support at all was provided to the self-employed. The second gap in support was during February and March this year, when again no financial support at all was provided. During both of these periods the "employees" received continuous financial support. This amounts to four months less assistance than employees have been given, the obvious question is: **WHY???**

There is also the matter of the difference in the level of support. For example, employees have received their assistance based on their take-home pay as opposed to the self-employed only having received an average (taken over the past three years) of their net trading profits. No account was taken of, or given to, overheads or operating costs that continue to accrue.

Many cab drivers have taken out large loans to buy new clean air compliant vehicles in addition to their normal overheads. It is clear that the local cab trade(s) up and down the nation struggle to feed and sustain themselves and their families during restrictions and the associated lack of trade.

Both the Prime Minister and the Chancellor have previously and publicly said: "...**we will do whatever is needed to get everyone through this...**" Words that seem to ring rather hollow now in light of the reality of the assistance and the clear glaring inequalities of financial support!

Have I misunderstood the Government's definition and meaning of the word "**everyone**"? I also question if they understand the meaning of basic fairness?

Industry-wide warnings have been circulating for some time now, cautioning that once support ends, companies and employers will start sacking staff as the money dries up. This will clearly knock onto an enduring depression in public demand for leisure-based services, such as taxis. Our sector



has crashed in real terms and this will most likely only get worse - I'm not being alarmist, merely being realistic and pragmatic.

Turning to sector grants; most other sectors have received sector-specific grants and in some cases businesses have been entitled to and have received more than one type of extra grant. Yet the cab trade received no sector specific assistance. Whilst there has been some access to the 'Additional Restrictions Grant' (ARG), some local authorities have placed arbitrary restrictions, conditions and/or limits upon assistance grants for the cab trade compared with other businesses that are also entitled to this grant pot.

Some have even said that cabbies who have received the SEISS are not entitled to the ARG - my question here again is **WHY???** We even have some councils trying to pass off a reduction in licence fees as financial assistance! Licence fee reductions arise from a surplus in their licensing account, this of course has nothing to do with Covid assistance!

Many self-employed people have struggled to meet their living costs. A large amount are renters and whilst homeowners have been offered mortgage holidays if they cannot make payments, renters have received no such support.

One thing is for sure, we need and we deserve help!

"We're all in this together" has never been so true, but oddly some seem to be in another group, at least as far as the Government is concerned...

Cue the music: **Gwen Guthrie - "Ain't Nothin' Goin' On but the Rent"...**

Drive carefully and above all, stay well...

Article supplied by:

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SHAME SHAME

HALIFAX CABBIE JAILED AFTER SELLING DRUGS TO BOOST HIS INCOME

A taxi driver who dealt drugs from his vehicle to boost his income has been jailed for 21 months.

The Telegraph and Argus reports that Iftiqar Ali, who had been a licensed cabbie since 2017, was caught with a £10,570 stash of the Class C sleeping pills, Bradford Crown Court heard.

Ali, 52, had Diazepam tablets in his hand after he was stopped by the police on Shay Lane in Halifax on February 28 last year.

A search of his home turned up a stash of Diazepam, Etizolam and Tamazepam, prosecutor Imran Khan told the court.

Ali, from Halifax, pleaded guilty to three offences of possessing Class C drugs with intent to supply.

Mr Khan said his taxi was pulled over by



the police at 7.45pm because intelligence had been received that he may be drug dealing.

Ali's hand had to be prised open to reveal the tablets and he shouted to another taxi driver in a language the police officers did not understand. Cash to the value of £530 was found in the vehicle.

Ali had 14 previous convictions for 33 offences. They were driving offences and matters of dishonesty, the court heard, and all were many years ago.

His barrister, Shufqat Khan said the father-of-three was deeply ashamed and regretful about what he had done.

Ali had been a taxi driver since 2017 but that employment was now lost to him. He was a hard-working man and had obtained new work packing at a factory. He had caused his family great distress by his actions and had left home as a consequence, Mr Khan said.

Recorder Taryn Turner told Ali it was a very serious matter that called for immediate custody. He was dealing in drugs as a sideline because he wasn't making enough money from taxi driving.

"Members of the public were exposed to the risk of you offering to supply them with drugs," Recorder Turner said. The court is disgusted and horrified," Recorder Turner said.

She set a Proceeds of Crime Act timetable to decide how much Ali benefited from his drug dealing.

'COVID' SPARES BELFAST CABBIE JAIL FOR DRIVING OFFENCE

A speeding taxi driver who claimed a friend was driving his car to avoid penalty points has been spared jail because of the current 'global Coronavirus pandemic'.

According to BelfastLive, Judge Neil Rafferty QC told Martin Kelly on 24 March that this was 'the only thing' that saved him from jail for perverting the course of public justice.

The Belfast Crown Court judge said that the law and courts regarded his crime so serious and regardless of offender, "from highest to lowest, from cabinet minister to taxi driver" a jail sentence was demanded.

However, the pandemic presented courts with significant difficulties, not least public health considerations where sentenced prisoners must initially undergo two weeks isolation.

Judge Rafferty told Kelly, from Belfast, he would instead suspend his six-month sentence for three years.

Kelly, caught speeding in his Skoda taxi in December 2019, claimed a friend from Dublin was the driver but later admitted lying to avoid a fine and penalty points on his licence. Judge Rafferty said while quite shocking, he could only assume the reason behind the act was to save having to pay increased insurance premiums as a result.

JERSEY CABBIE JAILED FOR POSSESSING INDECENT IMAGES

A taxi driver who downloaded almost 900 indecent images of children has been jailed for two and a half years by the Royal Court.

The Jersey Evening Post reports that Ian Martyn Le Gallais, 53, admitted six counts of possessing and distributing indecent images of children. The police investigation revealed a total of 893 images, of which 377 which classed a Category A - the most serious category.

Le Gallais was also placed on the Sex Offenders Register for seven years.

A police spokesperson said: "The viewing and making of indecent images causes real harm to real children. It creates a market and demand for these types of pictures so leads to further abuse.

"It is far from a victimless crime, the children in the pictures are real children, who suffer real harm.

"The States of Jersey Police is committed to catching those who offend in this way and ensuring that they are put before the courts."



SHAME SHAME

EX-SEFTON PHV DRIVER JAILED FOR ASSAULTING DRUNK WOMAN HE ILLEGALLY PICKED UP

A bogus driver who squeezed a woman's leg has lost his PHV licence after eight complaints about "sexuallyised" comments.

According to the Liverpool Echo, ex-PH driver Joseph Prior, 40, went out late at night trying to pick up illegal fares and targeted a "drunk" lone woman.

After she got in the his Ford Focus, he pulled into a quiet street, then put his hand on the "terrified" 23-year-old's thigh. When she rejected his advances, he took her to a McDonald's drive-thru where she mouthed "help" to staff who rang police.

Prior was jailed for 18 months after admitting common assault and offering his victim cocaine during her ordeal.

He has also been banned from having any female, child or adult, in a car, apart from in a very limited set of circumstances. This unique Criminal Behaviour Order was imposed after a judge set out a history of complaints against him. Judge Rachel Smith said his private hire licence, issued by Sefton Borough



Council, was revoked in February 2018. Liverpool Crown Court heard this followed an investigation into allegations made by eight women in 2016 and 2017.

Judge Smith said these passengers alleged Prior made "sexually inappropriate comments" and or attempted to engage them in "sexual conversation". The judge said none of these allegations led to criminal convictions.

But she said: "You had been warned about your behaviour in 2016, but persisted in it, and further allegations in 2017 led to your licence being revoked."

Judge Smith added: "Notwithstanding the revocation of your licence in February 2018, you attempted to seek self-employed taxi work with Britannia Taxis in March that year, and worked for them until November 2018, when they were informed of the situation relating

to your licence being revoked by Sefton Borough Council."

The judge said Prior was aware of these past allegations and had been reminded of his obligations to female passengers.

She said it was reasonable to infer he would have been left in "no doubt" about the standards he had to uphold. The court heard Prior was posing as a taxi driver when he picked up the woman as she walked along Vauxhall Road shortly after midnight on March 9, 2019.

He told her "don't worry, your mum won't be worrying, we'll get you home later" and asked about her boyfriends. Zillah Williams, prosecuting, said the victim "was very uncomfortable and was afraid of what he might do to her". Ms Williams said the victim was "terrified" and added: "An inference that could be drawn is that he was over friendly to see if he got anywhere, and when he didn't, he drove off and they carried on to McDonald's."

WORTHING CABBIE JAILED AFTER GROOMING TEENAGE GIRL, 14, HE CONTACTED ON INSTAGRAM

A West Sussex man has been jailed for seven years after grooming and sexually assaulting a 14-year-old girl.

SussexLive reports that Andrew Cullen, 53, from Worthing, and formerly of Wick, was convicted on January 20. This involved one count of grooming and five of sexual assault by touching, against the teenager, following a week-and-a-half long trial.

He was sentenced at Portsmouth Crown Court on Friday 5 March, to serve the first five years in custody and remaining two years on extended prison licence supervision.

Cullen, who had been a licensed taxi driver in Worthing, has already been



dismissed from his employment and had his licence removed.

He will also be a registered sex offender for life and was given a

Sexual Harm Prevention Order (SHPO) to last until further court order, severely restricting his access to computer devices and young people.

Detective Constable Louise Clark of Chichester CID said; "Cullen made contact with this young girl and systematically groomed her on many occasions over a period of months. The

direct sexual contact was limited but his intention was clear.

"Eventually his activity was uncovered in June 2019 when by mistake he drove the girl in his taxi to what he thought was a quiet lane in Crossbush but which was in fact the drive to someone's house.

"As they were there, the owners returned home and confronted him, realised what was happening, and told the police.

"This is another example of the way in which youngsters can be vulnerable to approaches, often online, from people they do not know and who have sinister intentions."

SHAME SHAME

PAEDOPHILE BIRKENHEAD CABBIE OFFERED GIRL MCDONALDS IN EXCHANGE FOR SEX ACTS

A paedophile taxi driver said a 'girl' could get a McDonalds if she carried out sex acts.

According to the Liverpool Echo, the 60-year-old made vile comments about the acts he wanted to perform on the '12-year-old' who was actually a woman from a paedophile hunter group.

Sarah Griffin, prosecuting at Liverpool Crown Court on March 25, explained that the messages took place between February and May in 2019 through an online forum. While speaking to what he thought was a 12-year-old girl called 'Lucy Lou', he claimed he was 28 and 'instigated a conversation of a sexual nature', stating that he knew girls who get "mackies and credit for fones" in exchange for sex acts.

Griffin explained Hughes asked if she wanted a picture of him after which he sent a picture of his face and asked her to do the same. The court heard there were 88 pages worth of screenshots in which Hughes had messaged what he thought was a schoolgirl.

Another member of the paedophile hunter group created an account as an



adult female in an effort to get contact information but Hughes didn't respond to a message to meet up, after which a third member got in touch.

They pretended to be from an 'online safety group' and asked Hughes to meet them outside Birkenhead Police Station, which he did and after which he was arrested.

Ms Griffin said: "The daughter of the defendant's ex partner attended the police station on August 8, 2019, and handed over a number of electronic devices." On a Dell hard drive officers found 61 indecent images of children, 54 of which were unique while others were duplicates.

Quentin Neal, defending, asked the judge to consider that Hughes had pleaded guilty at the first opportunity, had shown remorse and that he has no previous convictions.

The court heard he "was a taxi driver for 15 years" but has now lost his job and doesn't have contact with family members.

Mr Neal said: "He lost his home and since these offences was on the streets for a short period of time." He told the court he suffers from mental health difficulties and added that there is a "prospect of rehabilitation. I would ask your honour to hold back from an immediate custodial sentence."

Hughes, from Birkenhead, admitted possessing 61 indecent images of children, making the images and attempting to engage in sexual communication with a child.

Judge Gary Woodhall, sentencing, said: "You are of previous good character and have described yourself as 'disgusted' and 'ashamed' for what you have done. The judge said in this case there can be "no harm" in accordance with guidelines because "your victim was a fictional decoy".

Judge Woodhall reduced Hughes' sentence by a third for his prompt guilty plea and took into account the current conditions in prisons as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

Suspending the sentence the judge said: "There is here a realistic prospect of rehabilitation" and concluded the public is "best protected by the imposition of a Sexual Harm Prevention Order" as well as work with the probation service.

Hughes was given a ten-month sentence suspended for two years and was ordered to complete 40 Rehabilitation Activity Requirements and 150 hours of unpaid work. He was ordered to sign the Sex Offenders Register for ten years and comply with a Sexual Harm Prevention Order for seven years.

EAST KILBRIDE CABBIE ACCUSED OF MOWING DOWN AND MURDERING MAN

A taxi driver is to stand trial later this year charged with mowing down and murdering an amateur footballer.

STV News reports that Derek McClinton is accused of killing Craig Kearney in East Kilbride on March 5, 2017. Prosecutors claim McClinton hit the 24 year-old with his car, knocked him to the ground before driving over his head and body. It is alleged the 49-year-old then failed to get medical help and left Craig lying injured on the road in the dark.

Craig - who had played for AFC Bonnyholm in Glasgow's Pollok - later died. McClinton, also of East Kilbride, faces a separate charge of then attempting to

pervert the course of justice.

The includes a claim he did "continue in the course of (his) employment as a PHC driver" in the car afterwards. This is said to have allowed "video footage" taken by a device in the vehicle to be erased. The charge also states McClinton did wash the car in "an attempt to destroy evidence".

McClinton - represented at the time by QC Donald Findlay - originally pleaded not guilty at a hearing at the High Court in Glasgow in February 2020.

A planned trial for October last year was postponed due to the pandemic and is now to be held in July.

SHAME SHAME

LIVERPOOL NHS WORKER DRAGGED DOWN STREET BY PHV IN ROW OVER FIVER

A NHS worker was hospitalised after thinking a PHV driver was going to kill her over a fiver.

According to the Liverpool Echo, Maxine Rodgers was dragged down the street holding onto the inside of the car door. CCTV footage caught by a neighbour showed Maxine being thrown into the middle of the road after letting go of the vehicle shortly after midnight on Sunday 21 March.

The incident kicked off after the 49-year-old had just returned to her home from her sister's house, when she realised she'd left her phone in the car. Maxine claims she called the Delta driver within minutes of the vehicle leaving and the driver said she would return the phone for a £10. When the driver returned Maxine realised she only had £5 in her purse which she handed over, but the driver was unimpressed.

Maxine told the Liverpool Echo "I gave her the £5 and she said: 'I said £10



you're not getting your phone.

"I said: 'just give me my phone, I've just given you some money.'"

Maxine said it was at this point that the driver asked her to close the car door and said she would look in the boot for her phone.

"I said: 'do you think I'm soft? You're going to drive off.' She looked right at me and said: 'right b****' and put her foot on the accelerator."

Maxine, who had her hand on the inside of the car door at the time, said she

was dragged down the road, covering the distance of two houses, before she let go.

Maxine said: "I just had to let go. I thought she's going to kill me. If I had been under that wheel I would have been dead."

Maxine suffered from concussion and cuts and bruises on her arms and legs. She went to A&E to be checked over and was given two weeks off work but said "it could have been a lot worse." She said: "I'm just in shock. I just can't get to grips with what's happened. I was chatting away to her nicely on the journey home, I can't believe she's done that."

Merseyside Police said CCTV and witness enquiries into the incident are ongoing. Anyone with information on this incident should contact Merseyside Police social media desk via Twitter @MerPolCC or Facebook 'Merseyside Police Contact Centre'.

GROPING STOKE-ON-TRENT TAXI DRIVER JAILED AFTER GRABBING MUM'S BREAST

Taxi driver Najibullah Hakani has been jailed after groping a passenger's breast under her clothing.

The Stoke Sentinel reports that the 27-year-old was taking the young mum and her son to a friend's house when he pulled off the A500 and told her to get in the front seat.

The frightened woman did as she was told and the defendant put his hand inside her top and cupped her breast. He told her not to tell anyone about the assault. But she reported the incident to the police and the defendant's DNA was found on the victim's clothing.

Now Hakani, from Stoke, has been jailed for two years at Stoke-on-Trent Crown Court after being convicted of sexual assault.

In a victim statement, the woman said:

"I felt dirty. I felt it was my fault. I blamed myself. I was left feeling depressed. I tried to take my own life by taking an overdose. I am currently undergoing therapy. My mental health now feels stable."

"I now have justice and will continue to fight every day to live a happy, positive and peaceful life."

The defendant maintains his innocence. He can no longer work as a taxi driver. Anis Ali, mitigating, said: "He has lost everything by virtue of his conviction. He will carry with him the stigma that this offence carries. He is embarrassed and feels ashamed. He has aspirations to go to university."

"Several people are reliant on the jobs he provides. The consequences of an immediate custodial sentence are dire."

But Recorder Julian Taylor jailed Hakani and placed him on the Sex Offenders' Register for ten years.

Recorder Taylor said: "The defendant started a conversation which was sexualised and asked her questions about her sex life and whether she used sexual toys. She was disgusted, particularly with her young child in the car."

"He stopped the car and asked her to get in the front seat. She felt she had no alternative. She could not leave the car because of her son. The main aggravating feature is the presence of the child when the sexualised comments were made and the sexual assault took place. "The defendant is a risk to females because of his behaviour. The appropriate punishment can only be achieved by an immediate custodial sentence."

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DRIVERS SAY THEY WERE FIRED AFTER FACES NOT RECOGNISED BY UBER SOFTWARE

Uber drivers claim they were fired after the company's identification software failed to recognise their faces. According to ITV News, thanks to modern technology, each face of an Uber driver is now a password that Uber can use to authenticate drivers and ensure its rides are safe. In recent years, Uber has had problems with drivers faking their identities. "Real-Time ID Check" is the company's response. The Uber app regularly asks drivers to submit a selfie before logging on. A driver can choose whether the selfie is verified by a human or facial identification software which compares it to a photograph on Uber's database. The problem is the software isn't always accurate.

Imran Raja says he was fired by Uber after the verification software failed to recognise his face, leaving his family without his income for three months. He says the experience had an impact on both his mental and physical health.

"Without any knowledge they revoked my licence and in the second month I thought I'm going to go on the street with my family,"

Mr Raja told ITV News: "I haven't money to pay the rent and the car. So they broke my everything, they broke my future." ITV News has seen copies of the messages that Uber sent Imran. On 2nd October 2020, Uber informed him it had been "unable to verify [his] identity for a second time" and had decided to "terminate the partnership". Imran insisted an error had been made but Uber reported his dismissal to TfL. On 21st October, TfL wrote to Imran and told him it no longer considered him "fit and proper" to be a taxi driver and revoked his private-hire licence "with immediate effect". A month after firing him, Uber told Imran it had finished its review of his case and "[would] not be taking any further action".

Imran's account was reactivated but he couldn't work because his licence had been cancelled. It took TfL another two months to reinstate it. Imran says Uber hasn't apologised, neither has it offered to compensate him. Imran isn't alone.

Abdul Kadir Ali told us that he too was dismissed by Uber after failing the Real-Time ID Check in December. Uber says his account was deactivated because he "submitted a photo of a photo" in violation of the company's policy". Once again, TfL revoked his licence. He has now registered for universal credit. "Face ID is a good idea," Mr Ali told ITV News. "But the system makes mistakes and I lost my job and I lost my licence". The FACE API technology that Uber uses for its Real-Time ID Checks was developed by Microsoft.

Two years ago, in an interview with ITV News, the president of Microsoft said facial recognition technology has great potential but also serious limitations. "One of the challenges with the technology in its current form is it doesn't work as well for women as it does for men, it doesn't work as well for people of colour," Brad Smith said.



"It is more likely to find an error, it's more likely to find a mismatch, it is more likely to fail to identify you, it's more likely to identify you as someone you are not."

Many of Uber's drivers are from minority ethnic groups. The App Drivers and Couriers Union says seven members have been fired after Uber's identification software failed to recognise them. It plans to take legal action against the company.

"I think the issue is how the technology is applied and how it's governed. So the technology itself may be technically correct, but if it's not governed properly, if it's not applied properly, you're going to get bad results," says James Farrar, the union's General Secretary.

"We have a workforce here who is being discriminated against, being denied their rights. The protections are simply not there. And Uber is not in a position to govern it properly, apparently neither is TfL. I say to Microsoft, suspend the use of it."

Uber wouldn't tell us how many times its Real-Time ID Check has failed to identify drivers since it was introduced last April. In a statement it did apologise to Imran for his experience but insists the mistake was down to "human error". Uber said: "While no tech or process is perfect, we believe the technology, combined with the thorough process in place to ensure a minimum of two manual human reviews prior to any decision to remove a driver, is fair and important for the safety of our platform."

Microsoft wouldn't say if it has any concerns about the way Uber is deploying its technology. A spokesperson said that Microsoft is "committed to testing and improving Face API, paying special attention to fairness and its accuracy across demographic groups". And that Microsoft "provides customers with detailed guidance" to "help them assess fairness in their system".

In a statement, TfL apologised to Imran Raja for any distress the removal of his licence caused. It confirmed that Abdul Kadir Ali is pursuing an appeal against the decision to revoke his licence via the Magistrates' Court. A spokesperson for TfL said: "The safety of the travelling public is our top priority and where we are notified of cases of driver identity fraud, we take immediate action to revoke a driver's licence so that passenger safety is not compromised. "Where additional information is disclosed, for example relating to complaints raised against a driver, this also needs to be analysed before a decision to reinstate a licence can be made. We always try to ensure this is done in a timely way."

Facial recognition technology is impressive but imperfect. Those who have developed it are transparent about its capabilities, its limitations and the need to understand both if a system is to be fit for purpose.

UBER AGREES TO UK'S MINIMUM WAGE POLICY WITH HOLIDAY PAY AND PENSION

Uber has announced that 70,000 of its drivers in the UK will be guaranteed a minimum wage, holiday pay, and pensions. The tech giant told its partners: "We have listened to what you told us, assessed the Supreme Court judgement, and have reached the clear conclusion that you should not have to compromise on flexibility in order to benefit from new rights and protections.

So from the, 17 March 2021, we commit that every trip you complete on Uber will include:

- An additional payment of 12.07% of your earnings (after vehicle running costs) every two weeks, to reflect your right to paid holiday.
- A guarantee that you will always earn at least the minimum wage (National Living Wage) of £8.72 per hour (after vehicle running costs) starting from the time you accept a trip on the app to the point at which the trip completes. This is a minimum amount, not a maximum, and you will continue to have the opportunity to earn more.
- Uber will establish a pension scheme for all eligible drivers to be automatically enrolled into, with contributions from both Uber and drivers. This will take time to set up with the Pensions Regulator, but you will be notified once established and have the option to opt out if you choose.
- The first payment for holiday pay and any necessary wage top ups will be paid on 3 May 2021. This will include payments dated from 17 March 2021.
- We want to reassure you that the following will remain the same:
 - You still have the flexibility and control over when and how you earn on the Uber app.
 - Upfront pricing still applies and fares will still be calculated in the same way based on the time and distance rates.
 - There are no changes to trip information or service fee.
 - You remain self-employed for tax purposes.
 - You still have access to benefits such as free insurance with AXA and education with The Open University through Uber Pro.
 - You can still drive with other operators, but we aren't aware of others making these important changes. We hope others will follow.
- We will share details over the next few days on how to express interest in a compensation payment for historical trips if you are eligible.

Please note that the changes mentioned above do not apply to Uber Fleet Partners and Uber Eats Couriers.

For more information, please visit our Frequently Asked Questions page:

<https://www.uber.com/en-GB/blog/worker-faq>.

Please note that unfortunately we won't be able to help at our Greenlight Hubs as we are following COVID guidelines at this time, so if you have any additional questions please visit the 'Help' section in your app.

TAXI DRIVER UNIONS PROTEST UBER'S RETURN TO BARCELONA

Hundreds of yellow and black taxis disrupted traffic in Barcelona on 18 March to protest the return of Uber to the Spanish city after a two-year hiatus.

The Independent reports that Uber was driven out of Barcelona in February



2019, when regional authorities ordered that rides arranged through mobile apps had to be hired 15 minutes in advance. At the time, Uber said the requirement was "totally incompatible with the immediacy of on-demand services." But Uber has now resumed operating in the city, allowing users to order rides from over 350 regular cabs with taximeters. The company said it is seeking regulatory permission to also offer fixed rates for rides, Uber's original model.

The company's current platform in Barcelona also provides car-sharing services and displays information about public transportation, following a similar initiative in London, Paris, Lisbon and Rome, Uber said in a statement.

The return has angered cab driver unions in the Catalonia region's capital. Three columns of taxis made their way through Barcelona's main thoroughfares on Thursday, advancing toward the seat of the regional parliament.

Representatives of the Elite Taxi union called drivers who are working with Uber "traitors" and called the company's re-entry in Barcelona illegal.

TAXI DRIVERS BLOCK INNER BRUSSELS ORBITAL RING ROAD

A group of 800 independent taxi drivers blocked part of the inner Brussels orbital ring road with their vehicles. The drivers were protesting against the decision of the Brussels government that does not permit them to pick up drivers via smartphone.

The protest is an initiative of drivers with an LCV licence like Uber drivers, but also unaffiliated drivers. They number some 2,000 in Brussels. The Brussels authorities are not permitting companies that rent out cars with a driver e.g. like Uber to take orders via geolocation on a smartphone. Independent drivers who violate the rules in Brussels could see their vehicle impounded. Drivers are supposed to agree to take a fare three hours in advance. Uber and other drivers, who do not possess an expensive taxi licence, but may have invested in their vehicle, are now unable to work as a result.

The protesters are demanding a proper job status as well as a clear taxi plan for the Belgian and Flemish capital. After years of talks this has still failed to materialise.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

In this month's edition we feature more road traffic issues relevant to the trade supplied by Patterson Law. These questions are based on real enquiries that we have received from professional drivers this month. If you need any advice on motoring matters please email e.patterson@pattersonlaw.co.uk or call 01626 359800 for free legal advice.

For regular updates on road traffic law follow us on facebook.com/PattersonLawMotoringSolicitors or twitter.com/Patterson_law_

Q I was stopped for using my phone while driving in January last year. I was sat in traffic and I admit that I was looking at my phone, but I wasn't holding it. It was resting on my lap at the time. I missed the lights ahead of me turning green and a police officer walked over and issued me a ticket. I got a summons to court, and I pleaded not guilty. I now have a trial coming up. I was supposed to be in last year, but it was adjourned due to coronavirus. I'm now worried that the change in law means that I might be found guilty. Can you help?

A *Don't worry, the law hasn't changed yet. And even if it did, it would only be for offences moving forward. A change in the law does not have retrospective effect.*

Your case seems to be on the basis that the phone was not handheld. As the law currently stands, to commit an offence the phone must be held in your hand, even if you accept using it. If it was resting on your lap, then that is not an offence. I would like to make representations to the prosecution service to try to persuade them to withdraw the case. We can have those negotiations behind the scenes and try to stop the matter from going to trial.

However, I am concerned that the prosecution may try to amend the charge. Even though you were not using a handheld phone whilst driving, there is an offence of 'not being in proper control', where all the prosecution must show is that you were not in full control of your vehicle or you did not have a full view of the traffic ahead. They may well make an application to amend the charge at the hearing. If they do, we will oppose. They ought to make any such applications within six months and are well outside of that time, and we would argue that this case is not exceptional enough to allow them to do it.

In my opinion I believe this may turn into a legal battle with the prosecution about applications to amend. You will need a solicitor to make those arguments for you. They are complicated. Call us so we can get to work straight away.



I was caught speeding by an undercover police car. I feel angry about this. She was just following me for ages and I didn't even know it was a police car. When she pulled me over they hadn't even recorded my speed properly, just followed me and said that I was going at 40 in a 30. Are they even allowed to do that? I thought that it had to be a camera or a speed gun that caught you. Also, the road is two lanes and to me it looks like a 40 limit. I don't think there are any signs but how do I know that it's a 30?



A 30mph limit is denoted in a built-up area by a system of street lighting in place no more than 200 yards apart. 20, 40 and 50 limits are noted by signs. If there are no streetlights or signs, it is usually either a national speed limit or 70 if a motorway.

Call me so that we can have a look at the road and what is in place - whether it be signs, streetlights or a national speed limit.

Regarding the method by which they have recorded your speed, it sounds very much like a follow check. There are several ways that the police can record a vehicle's speed, and speed guns/cameras is just one of them. A follow check is a recognised method that the police use where they maintain an even distance behind the rear of your vehicle for a minimum of 2/10 of a mile.

The police do have guidelines which they have to follow, and although not following the guidelines in the strictest terms is not automatically a defence, if they have not followed their guidelines properly then we may be able to cast some doubt on the accuracy of the speed. I would also like to have a look at whether 40mph was the speed at which they had to travel to catch you up, and not the actual speed at which you were travelling.

If you are at court already, we need to request a copy of the evidence urgently so that we can go through it with a fine-toothed comb and determine exactly how accurate their check was.

If you are not at court, then to get this evidence we will need to reject any fixed penalty or speed awareness course you have been offered to get the matter to court, and then get the evidence.



I was stopped for drink driving last week when I was going to the shops. I fully accept that I was above the limit and I truly regret what I have done. It is very out of character for me. My reading was 43 in breath. I don't think it's that high. But I have read online that you can argue exceptional hardship to avoid a ban. Is this something you can help with?

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS



A For the reading given, you will be at risk of a 12 to 16-month disqualification and an unlimited fine. Unfortunately drink driving carries a mandatory, minimum 12-month disqualification. There is no discretion for the courts not to disqualify. If you plead guilty, you will be banned. The best sentence you can hope for is a 12-month ban together with the option to complete a drink drive rehabilitation course which, when completed, would take 1/4 off the ban.

It is different from, for example, a totting disqualification. When a person accumulates 12 or more points during a three-year period, they are at risk of a six-month ban, but that is discretionary, and the courts don't have to ban you. They can consider an exceptional hardship argument and decide not to disqualify. They cannot do that with drink driving cases.

If you want to try to avoid the disqualification, we will need to discuss the offence with you in more detail and review the papers so that we can advise if there is any defence.

Q During the first lockdown when my partner and I were at home we were sharing both of our vehicles because we only have a small drive, and we would take the car that was parked at the end of it. At one point one of us was speeding in the car but we didn't know who it was. It was only at 35 in a 30mph zone. We got a letter from the police asking us to name the driver, but we said we didn't know. We both have clean licences so there was nothing to avoid. We wrote back to them to explain we didn't know and then they ended up prosecuting me for failing to provide driver information. When I got the letter from the court, I pleaded not guilty to that and to speeding, for which they had also prosecuted me. They then sent me a Summons for trial. I am now going to court in April and I just feel completely out of my depth. The prosecution wrote to me yesterday to say that they will withdraw failing to provide driver information if I plead

guilty to speeding. I don't know if I should do that if I wasn't speeding. But I just want it dealt with. Is that the sensible thing to do?

A That is certainly an option open to you. Failing to provide driver information carries six penalty points and up to a £1,000 fine. Speeding carries three penalty points and up to a £500 fine. So half the sentence.

If you accept their offer, then you would be sentenced for speeding. The court imposes the points and the fine and that will be the end of it. They could probably even do that in your absence without you ever having to go to court.

If you reject their offer, it is a gamble. Both matters, so speeding and failing to provide driver information, would go to trial.

Unless they have strong identification evidence of you speeding, so for example a front facing photograph, then it is unlikely they will have enough identification evidence to find you guilty, so it is likely that matter would be withdrawn.

That would leave failing to provide driver information. You may have a defence to that as well. If the keeper of the vehicle is unable to nominate the driver there is a defence available if you can show that you did not know who was driving and could not with reasonable diligence have ascertained who it was. In your case the reason you did not know was because you were both sharing the vehicle regularly, so could not obviously work out who it was. The key to your defence is going to be the diligence that you've exercised and the steps you took to try to work it out. It could include things like checking your bank statements to see if you were on the way to the shop or had stopped for petrol, perhaps checking your phone records and diaries to see if anything could have jogged your memory.

If you have gone to those lengths and you have a strong defence, it may be to your benefit to defend both matters as you may walk away with no points and no fine. However, it is a gamble because if you lose, then you will end up with six points and £1,000 fine. It is too late at that point to go back and accept their offer of a plea to the speeding offence.

Call me so that we can discuss further.

This impartial advice has been provided by
Patterson Law Solicitors
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Patterson Law
THE DRIVER DEFENCE SERVICE

The Bryan Roland Memorial

NATIONAL HACKNEY FARES TABLE APRIL 2021

TABLE COLOUR CODE	TARIFF ONE		TARIFF ONE		TARIFF ONE	
RISE IN 2021	POSITION	COUNCIL/AIRPORT	TWO MILE FARE	POSITION	COUNCIL	TWO MILE FARE
RISE IN 2020	1	LONDON (HEATHROW)	£11.40	66	EAST DORSET	£6.60
RISE IN 2019	2	LUTON AIRPORT	£9.20	67	EAST SUFFOLK (NORTH)	£6.60
RISE IN 2018	3	EPSOM & EWELL	£8.60	68	EXETER	£6.60
RISE IN 2017	4	LONDON	£8.60	69	HIGH PEAK	£6.60
RISE IN 2016	5	WATFORD (x)	£8.40	70	MEDWAY	£6.60
RISE IN 2015	6	GUILDFORD	£7.60	71	MORAY (x)	£6.60
RISE IN 2014	7	KERRIER	£7.60	72	NORTH HERTS	£6.60
RISE IN 2013	8	JERSEY	£7.43	73	NORWICH	£6.60
RISE IN 2012	9	BOURNEMOUTH	£7.40	74	SCARBOROUGH	£6.60
RISE IN 2011	10	BRIGHTON & HOVE	£7.40	75	SHETLAND ISLES	£6.60
RISE IN 2010	11	CHELTENHAM	£7.40	76	SOUTH CAMBRIDGE	£6.60
RISE IN 2008	12	MID SUSSEX	£7.40	77	SOUTH GLOUCESTER	£6.60
RISE IN 2007	13	CARRICK	£7.30	78	TEIGNBRIDGE	£6.60
NO SET FARE	14	BATH & NORTH EAST SOMERSET	£7.20	79	NORTH DEVON	£6.55
	15	READING	£7.20	80	ASHFORD	£6.50
	16	TORRIDGE	£7.20	81	DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL	£6.50
	17	TUNBRIDGE WELLS	£7.20	82	HUNTINGDONSHIRE	£6.50
	18	CHELMSFORD	£7.10	83	MAIDSTONE	£6.50
	19	DARTFORD	£7.10	84	SOUTH SOMERSET	£6.50
	20	GUERNSEY	£7.10	85	WORTHING	£6.50
	21	MOLE VALLEY	£7.10	86	BRISTOL	£6.40
	22	PENWITH	£7.10	87	CANTERBURY	£6.40
	23	SEVENOAKS	£7.06	88	COUNTY OF HEREFORD	£6.40
	24	EAST LOTHIAN	£7.00	89	CREWE & NANTWICH	£6.40
	25	HARROGATE	£7.00	90	EAST HAMPSHIRE	£6.40
	26	HERTSMERE	£7.00	91	HARLOW	£6.40
	27	POOLE	£7.00	92	HASTINGS	£6.40
	28	STROUD	£7.00	93	IPSWICH	£6.40
	29	TONBRIDGE & MALLING	£7.00	94	LEEDS	£6.40
	30	WELWYN HATFIELD	£7.00	95	LINCOLN	£6.40
	31	WILTSHIRE	£7.00	96	MALVERN HILLS	£6.40
	32	RESTORMEL	£6.95	97	MID SUFFOLK	£6.40
	33	EASTBOURNE	£6.90	98	NORTH KESTEVEN	£6.40
	34	VALE OF WHITE HORSE	£6.90	99	OXFORD	£6.40
	35	WEALDON	£6.90	100	PURBECK	£6.40
	36	WEYMOUTH & PORTLAND	£6.90	101	RUSHMOOR	£6.40
	37	ADUR	£6.80	102	SHEFFIELD	£6.40
	38	CARADON	£6.80	103	SOUTHEND ON SEA	£6.40
	39	CHRISTCHURCH	£6.80	104	SOUTH LAKELAND	£6.40
	40	COLCHESTER	£6.80	105	STEVENAGE	£6.40
	41	EAST DEVON	£6.80	106	SURREY HEATH	£6.40
	42	FIFE	£6.80	107	TENDRING	£6.40
	43	GLASGOW	£6.80	108	WAVERLEY	£6.40
	44	GRAVESEND	£6.80	109	WOKING	£6.40
	45	HART (x)	£6.80	110	WOKINGHAM	£6.40
	46	NORTH CORNWALL	£6.80	111	NEWARK & SHERWOOD	£6.32
	47	NOTTINGHAM	£6.80	112	BLACKBURN	£6.30
	48	SEDEMOOR	£6.80	113	BURY	£6.30
	49	SWALE	£6.80	114	COTSWOLD (y)	£6.30
	50	WEST BERKSHIRE	£6.80	115	COVENTRY	£6.30
	51	YORK	£6.80	116	DACORUM	£6.30
	52	EDINBURGH	£6.75	117	ISLE OF MAN	£6.30
	53	NUNEATON & BEDWORTH	£6.75	118	LEWES	£6.30
	54	TORBAY	£6.75	119	PEMBROKESHIRE	£6.30
	55	CHESTER	£6.70	120	SOUTH HOLLAND	£6.30
	56	CRAWLEY	£6.70	121	FOREST OF DEAN	£6.27
	57	EASTLEIGH	£6.70	122	MIDLOTHIAN	£6.22
	58	ROOTHER	£6.70	123	ARGYLL & BUTE	£6.20
	59	SWINDON	£6.70	124	BIRMINGHAM	£6.20
	60	HARBOROUGH	£6.68	125	BRAINTREE	£6.20
	61	ARUN	£6.60	126	CHICHESTER	£6.20
	62	BABERGH	£6.60	127	DAVENTRY	£6.20
	63	BASINGSTOKE & DEANE	£6.60	128	DERBY	£6.20
	64	BRENTWOOD	£6.60	129	EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE	£6.20
	65	CAMBRIDGE CITY	£6.60	130	EAST SUFFOLK (SOUTH)	£6.20

POSITION	TARIFF ONE		TARIFF ONE		TARIFF ONE	
POSITION	COUNCIL/AIRPORT	TWO MILE FARE	COUNCIL	TWO MILE FARE	COUNCIL	TWO MILE FARE
66	EAST DORSET	£6.60	131	FOLKESTONE & HYTHE	£6.20	
67	EAST SUFFOLK (NORTH)	£6.60	132	HORSHAM	£6.20	
68	EXETER	£6.60	133	MENDIP	£6.20	
69	HIGH PEAK	£6.60	134	NORTHAMPTON	£6.20	
70	MEDWAY	£6.60	135	NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE	£6.20	
71	MORAY (x)	£6.60	136	PORTSMOUTH UA	£6.20	
72	NORTH HERTS	£6.60	137	ROCHFORD	£6.20	
73	NORWICH	£6.60	138	RUNNYMEDE	£6.20	
74	SCARBOROUGH	£6.60	139	SOLIHULL	£6.20	
75	SHETLAND ISLES	£6.60	140	SOUTHAMPTON	£6.20	
76	SOUTH CAMBRIDGE	£6.60	141	SPELTHORNE	£6.20	
77	SOUTH GLOUCESTER	£6.60	142	ST ALBANS	£6.20	
78	TEIGNBRIDGE	£6.60	143	STRATFORD ON AVON	£6.20	
79	NORTH DEVON	£6.55	144	TAUNTON DEANE	£6.20	
80	ASHFORD	£6.50	145	WEST OXFORD	£6.20	
81	DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL	£6.50	146	WINCHESTER	£6.20	
82	HUNTINGDONSHIRE	£6.50	147	WYCOMBE	£6.20	
83	MAIDSTONE	£6.50	148	CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE	£6.13	
84	SOUTH SOMERSET	£6.50	149	ABERDEENSHIRE	£6.10	
85	WORTHING	£6.50	150	CARDIFF	£6.10	
86	BRISTOL	£6.40	151	CLACKMANNAN	£6.10	
87	CANTERBURY	£6.40	152	EAST HERTS	£6.10	
88	COUNTY OF HEREFORD	£6.40	153	ELMBRIDGE	£6.10	
89	CREWE & NANTWICH	£6.40	154	FYLDE	£6.10	
90	EAST HAMPSHIRE	£6.40	155	NEW FOREST	£6.10	
91	HARLOW	£6.40	156	NORTH WARWICK	£6.10	
92	HASTINGS	£6.40	157	SOUTH AYRSHIRE	£6.10	
93	IPSWICH	£6.40	158	TAMWORTH	£6.10	
94	LEEDS	£6.40	159	SELBY	£6.06	
95	LINCOLN	£6.40	160	CHARNWOOD	£6.05	
96	MALVERN HILLS	£6.40	161	SCOTTISH BORDERS	£6.05	
97	MID SUFFOLK	£6.40	162	ABERDEEN CITY	£6.00	
98	NORTH KESTEVEN	£6.40	163	BASILDON	£6.00	
99	OXFORD	£6.40	164	BOSTON	£6.00	
100	PURBECK	£6.40	165	BRACKNELL FOREST	£6.00	
101	RUSHMOOR	£6.40	166	BROXTOWE	£6.00	
102	SHEFFIELD	£6.40	167	CARMARTHENSHIRE	£6.00	
103	SOUTHEND ON SEA	£6.40	168	CASTLE POINT	£6.00	
104	SOUTH LAKELAND	£6.40	169	CONWY	£6.00	
105	STEVENAGE	£6.40	170	DOVER	£6.00	
106	SURREY HEATH	£6.40	171	EAST AYRSHIRE	£6.00	
107	TENDRING	£6.40	172	EAST LINDSEY	£6.00	
108	WAVERLEY	£6.40	173	GLOUCESTER	£6.00	
109	WOKING	£6.40	174	GREAT YARMOUTH	£6.00	
110	WOKINGHAM	£6.40	175	GWYNEDD	£6.00	
111	NEWARK & SHERWOOD	£6.32	176	ISLE OF WIGHT	£6.00	
112	BLACKBURN	£6.30	177	KETTERING	£6.00	
113	BURY	£6.30	178	KINGS LYNN & WEST NORFOLK	£6.00	
114	COTSWOLD (y)	£6.30	179	LUTON	£6.00	
115	COVENTRY	£6.30	180	MILTON KEYNES	£6.00	
116	DACORUM	£6.30	181	NORTH DORSET	£6.00	
117	ISLE OF MAN	£6.30	182	PLYMOUTH	£6.00	
118	LEWES	£6.30	183	PRESTON	£6.00	
119	PEMBROKESHIRE	£6.30	184	RYEDALE	£6.00	
120	SOUTH HOLLAND	£6.30	185	SLOUGH	£6.00	
121	FOREST OF DEAN	£6.27	186	SOUTH HAMS	£6.00	
122	MIDLOTHIAN	£6.22	187	SOUTH TYNESIDE	£6.00	
123	ARGYLL & BUTE	£6.20	188	STOCKPORT	£6.00	
124	BIRMINGHAM	£6.20	189	TAMESIDE	£6.00	
125	BRAINTREE	£6.20	190	TEST VALLEY (x)	£6.00	
126	CHICHESTER	£6.20	191	THREE RIVERS	£6.00	
127	DAVENTRY	£6.20	192	THURROCK	£6.00	
128	DERBY	£6.20	193	VALE OF GLAMORGAN	£6.00	
129	EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE	£6.20	194	WARRICK	£6.00	
130	EAST SUFFOLK (SOUTH)	£6.20	195	WEST DORSET	£6.00	

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NATIONAL HACKNEY FARES TABLE APRIL 2021

TABLE COLOUR CODE		
RISE IN 2021		
RISE IN 2020	RISE IN 2019	RISE IN 2018
RISE IN 2017	RISE IN 2016	RISE IN 2015
RISE IN 2014	RISE IN 2013	RISE IN 2012
RISE IN 2011	RISE IN 2010	RISE IN 2008
RISE IN 2007	NO SET FARE	

POSITION	TARIFF ONE COUNCIL	TWO MILE FARE	POSITION	TARIFF ONE COUNCIL	TWO MILE FARE	POSITION	TARIFF ONE COUNCIL	TWO MILE FARE
196	WEST LINDSEY	£6.00	261	SOUTH BUCKINGHAM	£5.60	326	WAKEFIELD	£5.20
197	WIRRAL	£6.00	262	SUNDERLAND	£5.60	327	CHORLEY	£5.10
198	DARLINGTON	£5.95	263	WEST LOTHIAN	(x)	328	CONGLETON	£5.10
199	BASSETLAW	£5.90	264	WOLVERHAMPTON	(x)	329	GATESHEAD	£5.10
200	BROXBOURNE	£5.90	265	WREXHAM	£5.60	330	SEFTON	£5.10
201	DUDLEY	£5.90	266	CHERWELL	£5.56	331	SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE	£5.10
202	KINGSTON-UPON-HULL	£5.90	267	NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME	£5.55	332	COPELAND	£5.00
203	MANCHESTER	£5.90	268	DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY	£5.50	333	EAST NORTHANTS	£5.00
204	NORTHUMBERLAND	£5.90	269	EAST DUNBARTONSHIRE	£5.50	334	KIRKLEES	£5.00
205	STAFFORD	£5.90	270	EAST STAFFORDSHIRE	£5.50	335	NORTH EAST DERBYSHIRE	£5.00
206	TANDBRIDGE	£5.90	271	EDEN	£5.50	336	NORTH LANARKSHIRE	£5.00
207	WALSALL	£5.90	272	EPPING FOREST	£5.50	337	PETERBOROUGH	£5.00
208	CALDERDALE	£5.85	273	EREWASH	£5.50	338	ROCHDALE	£5.00
209	TEWKSBURY	£5.85	274	FALKIRK	£5.50	339	ROSSENDALE	£5.00
210	BLACKPOOL	£5.80	275	HAMBLETON	£5.50	340	SOUTH NORTHANTS	£5.00
211	BRIDGEND	£5.80	276	MERTHYR TYDFIL	£5.50	341	STOKE-ON-TRENT UA	£4.95
212	BROMSGROVE	£5.80	277	OLDHAM	£5.50	342	CORBY	£4.90
213	CARLISLE	£5.80	278	SHROPSHIRE	£5.50	343	TELFORD & WREKIN	£4.90
214	EAST KILBRIDE	(x)	279	TORFAEN	£5.50	344	WELLINGBOROUGH	£4.90
215	FAREHAM	£5.80	280	CEREDIGION	£5.46	345	WESTERN ISLES	(x)
216	FLINTSHIRE	£5.80	281	NEATH PORT TALBOT	£5.46	346	ASHFIELD	£4.80
217	HAVANT	£5.80	282	SALFORD	£5.46	347	DERBYSHIRE DALES	£4.80
218	HIGHLAND	(x)	283	ALLERDALE	£5.45	348	HARLPOOL	£4.80
219	LANCASTER	£5.80	284	BARNESLEY	£5.40	349	HYNDBURN	£4.70
220	LEICESTER	£5.80	285	BARROW IN FURNESS	£5.40	350	WEST LANCASHIRE	£4.70
221	NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE	£5.80	286	CAERPHILLY	£5.40	351	BOLSOVER	£4.60
222	NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE	£5.80	287	CHILTERN	£5.40	352	BURNLEY	£4.50
223	NORTH NORFOLK	£5.80	288	CLYDEBANK	£5.40	353	REDCAR & CLEVELAND	£4.50
224	NORTH TYNESIDE	£5.80	289	DUNBARTON & VALE OF LEVEN	(x)	354	STOCKTON ON TEES	£4.50
225	ORKNEY	(x)	290	ELLESMERE PORT	£5.40	355	OADBY & WIGSTON	£4.40
226	REIGATE & BANSTEAD	£5.80	291	MACCLESFIELD	£5.40	356	PENDLE	£4.40
227	RUGBY	£5.80	292	NORTHERN IRELAND	£5.40	357	AYLESBURY VALE	£4.30
228	RUTHERGLEN	(x)	293	PERTH & KINROSS	£5.40	358	MIDDLEBROUGH	£4.30
229	SOUTH RIBBLE	£5.80	294	POWYS	£5.40	359	MALDON	£
230	TRAFFORD	£5.80	295	ROTHERHAM	£5.40	360	RUTLAND	£
231	UTTLESFORD	£5.80	296	THANET	£5.40	361	SOUTH DERBYSHIRE	£
232	WEST SOMERSET	£5.80	297	WYCHAVON	£5.40	362	SOUTH NORFOLK	£
233	WEST SUFFOLK	£5.80	298	MANSFIELD	£5.35	363	SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE	£
234	WINDSOR & MAIDENHEAD	£5.80	299	INVERCLYDE	£5.34	364	WEST DEVON	£
235	WORCESTER	£5.80	300	BLABY	£5.30			
236	WYRE	£5.80	301	BRADFORD	£5.30			
237	YNS MON	£5.80	302	CRAVEN	(x)			
238	CHESTERFIELD	£5.75	303	EAST RENFREW	£5.30			
239	DONCASTER	£5.75	304	FENLAND	(x)			
240	ANGUS	£5.70	305	LICHFIELD	£5.30			
241	CANNOCK CHASE	£5.70	306	MELTON	£5.30			
242	GEDLING	£5.70	307	NORTH AYRSHIRE	£5.30			
243	MID DEVON	£5.70	308	REDDITCH	£5.30			
244	MONMOUTHSHIRE	£5.70	309	RIBBLE VALLEY	£5.30			
245	NORTH SOMERSET	£5.70	310	SOUTH KESTEVEN	£5.30			
246	RENFREWSHIRE	£5.70	311	SOUTH LANARKSHIRE (Clydesdale)	£5.30			
247	STIRLING	(x)	312	ST HELENS	£5.30			
248	SWANSEA	£5.70	313	VALE ROYAL	£5.30			
249	WARRINGTON	£5.70	314	WIGAN	£5.30			
250	DUNDEE CITY	£5.66	315	WYRE FOREST	£5.30			
251	BRECKLAND	£5.60	316	BEDFORD	£5.26			
252	DENBIGHSHIRE	£5.60	317	AMBER VALLEY	£5.20			
253	GOSPORT	£5.60	318	BLAENAU GWENT	£5.20			
254	HINCKLEY & BOSWORTH	£5.60	319	BOLTON	£5.20			
255	LIVERPOOL	£5.60	320	EAST RIDING	£5.20			
256	NEWPORT	£5.60	321	HALTON	£5.20			
257	NORTH WEST LEICESTER	£5.60	322	HAMILTON	(x)			
258	RICHMONDSHIRE	£5.60	323	KNOWSLEY	£5.20			
259	RUSHCLIFFE	£5.60	324	RHONDDA CYNON TAFF	£5.20			
260	SANDWELL	£5.60	325	STAFFS MOORLANDS	£5.20			

NATIONAL AVERAGE
TWO MILE HACKNEY FARE
TARIFF ONE
IS NOW £6.00

PLEASE NOTE

Since the last time the league tables were published, we have added a new council to our list: this is West Devon which is positioned at no. 364 as they don't charge a definitive amount. Where an (x) appears by a listing, it refers to the fact that a fare update has been passed by the council, but the price of our two-mile fare has not increased. In the case of Cotswold where a (y) appears alongside the listing, the (y) refers to a fare update but one in which the fare has decreased for a two mile tariff.

point of sale...point of sale...

SURGE IN OPTIMISM AS LOCKDOWN ENDS



The Taxi Shop's Sales Director Josh Rhynas reflects on how the 'roadmap' out of lockdown has lifted the country - and the taxi trade.

"After what has been a very turbulent 12 months in the taxi trade, the Prime Minister's 'roadmap' announcement in February unlocked a wave of optimism amongst the public. It's reflected in the high level of enquiries The Taxi Shop is getting from private hire and taxi drivers. The prospect of a buying boom seems very likely.

The taxi trade has been dragged through unprecedented circumstances this past year, the consequences of which will be felt for many more months to come. However, the feedback we're now getting, together with a distinct rise in enquiries and sales, means we are witnessing a growing confidence for our owner-driver and operator customers across the UK.

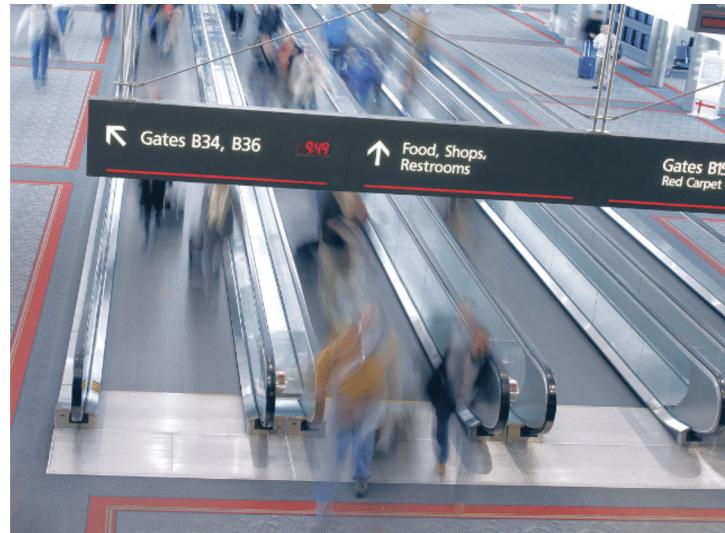
I recently spoke with a private hire operator who has seen airport bookings skyrocket since the roadmap was announced and who is successfully securing bookings for airport transfers after June. Thus far, this operator has taken nearly 40 bookings - and all of them have paid deposits. Deposits, however small, show commitment from your customers. After hearing this I felt it was a real positive sign that the general public is eager to binge this summer season on holidays galore.

The UK is coming back to life and the taxi trade is going to benefit. Every major news outlet is reporting record numbers of new holiday bookings, internationally and domestically, with Tui reporting a 500% surge overnight after last Monday's Lockdown Exit Plans. The BBC give us reason to look forward to what is to come:

"Tui said its bookings for July-onwards had soared with Greece, Spain and Turkey the most popular destinations."

Another couple of extracts from major UK media giants with jaw dropping statistics:

"EasyJet reported a 337% surge in flight bookings and a 630% jump in holiday bookings for locations such as Alicante, Malaga, Palma, Faro and Crete."



and wait for it...

"Tour operator and airline Jet2 also reported a 1,000% increase in bookings in the 24 hours following the Prime Minister's announcement. Popular destinations include Spain, the Canary Islands and the Balearic Islands, with a notable spike in demand from July onwards".

Jet2's Chief Executive, Steve Heapy, said:

"The government's announcement is the news [holidaymakers] have been longing for, and the continued surge in bookings shows how ready our customers are to get away to the sunshine on a real package holiday."

The upturn is inevitably coming and it is a brilliant opportunity for us all to get back on our feet. But don't miss the boat here! To benefit from what is to come you will all need to be able to meet that demand. We look forward to hearing from you."

Contact Josh Rhynas to discuss WAVs for your fleet on 01525 717 695, or email sales@thetaxishop.com with any queries or see our advert on page 29.

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point of sale...point of sale...

HAS THE PIN HAD ITS CHIPS?



When was the last time you wrote a cheque? The things we took for granted just a few years ago are now history. Even Chip & PIN payment technology - groundbreaking when introduced in 2003 - is now on the way out.

Then 'contactless' arrived. First seen as recently as 2007, contactless payments were already well-established before Covid-19 struck, but since then have become a must-have for virtually every public-facing business operating today. Avoiding contact with cash or cards is now accepted 'best practice' and, for high-risk front-line workers, such as taxi and private hire drivers, could even be considered a potentially life-saving safety precaution. Consumers are looking after themselves too. As the recent Visa 'Back to Business' survey confirms, 78% of consumers have adjusted the way they pay for items in the wake of intensified safety concerns.

Until recently, that meant investing in a dedicated PIN pad which could range in size from a palm-sized unit to a bulkier terminal. Now though, the operational life of these dedicated card payment terminals is coming to an end too. They've served us well, but there are better and cheaper ways to collect money now.

A self-contained contactless payment terminal

With near field communication (NFC) technology and the contactless payment limit soon to increase from £45 to £100, customers are spoilt for choice so demand is set to increase further still. Curb is leading the charge with its unique CurbPay app. It can simply be downloaded onto your android phone turning it into a self-contained contactless payment terminal, and completely eliminating the need for any additional hardware, installation and maintenance.

Low transaction processing fees

Of course decluttering the inside of your vehicle is a great benefit in its own right, but the CurbPay app also comes with a new, low processing rate - even lower than the rates associated with legacy Curb payment products, and certainly lower than many competing products (which still require dedicated hardware anyway). That will be good news for thousands of drivers and fleet operators who are looking to cut their costs as they prepare for life after Covid-19. The app can be downloaded onto any android smartphone (Android 8.1 and above) from the Google Play Store, and is free.

"CurbPay has helped us adapt quickly and painlessly. Non-contact payment is key now and reassures our drivers and customers alike." - Simon May, Radio Taxis, Southampton

Next day payments

Made for in-car contactless card and mobile wallet



transactions, the CurbPay app is a safe post-Covid-19 way to pay. Curb takes just one working day to process transactions and credit driver accounts with the proceeds. The app also enables drivers to email receipts to passengers easily, making it attractive to the general public and business travellers alike.

Where can you go for help and advice?

Whilst Curb has always dedicated significant resources to customer care with their Driver Services team, the CurbPay App is incredibly easy to use. Video tutorials are available despite the fact that operation is intuitive and certainly a lot simpler than the dedicated payment terminals that are now being phased out. The Curb team can help with technical or payment/account related queries over the phone or by email.

"The App has revolutionised the business. My drivers love it and the passengers appreciate the convenience and safety aspect too." - Daniel Whiteside, Whiteside Taxis, St. Annes

CurbPay app download

PHTM readers can download the new CurbPay App now. Being able to explore the app first-hand, means that **PHTM** readers can reassure themselves that it lives up to all the impressive claims Curb makes before they switch.

Just visit the Google Play Store and search 'CurbPay App'.

For more information please call 0333 666 1000, visit: curbpay.co.uk or see our adverts on pages 2-3.



WORLDWIDE TAXI FOCUS

from USA



NYC TO LAUNCH \$65M TAXI DRIVER FUND USING FEDERAL COVID-19 RELIEF

New York City will launch a \$65 million "relief fund" to help taxi drivers restructure their debt, Mayor Bill de Blasio said on Tuesday 9 March. According to the New York Post, the fund will provide "financially-distressed" drivers a zero-interest \$20,000 loan plus another \$9,000 to restructure the debt on their medallions, which the city sold them at a premium based on the dubious promise of future dividends.

The relief fund will be paid for using money from the federal \$1.9 trillion Covid-19 relief bill.

Taxi drivers, many of whom were already struggling to repay their loans before Covid-19, have been financially devastated by a massive drop in ridership in the last year.

"Many medallion owners are struggling and have asked for assistance from the city," said Aloysee Heredia Jarmoszuk, the chair of the city's Taxi and Limousine Commission.

"We understand the gravity of their situation. They need help with this debt to survive."

But de Blasio's plan falls short of the desires of the New York Taxi Workers Alliance, which has called for a gigantic bailout to cut every driver's debt to \$125,000, with the city providing the money to make it happen.

An investigation by the New York Times in 2019 found that the city knowingly misled thousands of people into taking on debt to buy taxi medallions at inflated costs. Some 6,000-plus drivers and retired drivers were impacted, according to NYTWA's estimate.

"The mayor's plan is a disgraceful betrayal from a city that already has blood on its hands," said Bhairavi Desai, the group's director. "We've given the mayor ample opportunity to respond to our proposal. Instead, he put forward a plan that costs the city more than our proposal while doing absolutely nothing for the drivers."

The NYTWA proposal is supported by a number of prominent political leaders, including Attorney General Letitia James, who last month backed off an \$800 million suit against the city over the situation — saying massive debt-restructuring was the better course of action.

"This isn't going to be nearly enough," tweeted State Sen.



Jessica Ramos, who sponsors NYTWA's plan in the state legislature. "We need real debt forgiveness and a robust plan so that no more taxi drivers face bankruptcy and lose their homes, their retirement savings, or worse."

New York cabbies reacted to the news with daily protests for over a week against Mayor de Blasio's plan. Democracy Now reports that the cabbies have been demanding a living wage and chanting: "No more suicide! No more bankruptcy! No more bankruptcy! No more suicide!"

Bhairavi Desai stated: "It's a cash bailout for lenders while drivers are left to drown in debt, foreclosure, and bankruptcy. The mayor's plan is a disgraceful betrayal from a city that already has blood on its hands."

from Israel



ISRAELI TAXI CO TO APPLY DISINFECTION TECHNOLOGY ON ITS TAXI FLEETS

The Israeli Metro Kav taxi company won a tender from the Israeli Ministry of Transportation to operate its taxi fleet with a unique disinfection technology to minimise exposure to coronavirus (Covid-19) pathogens.



According to CTech, it plans to deploy the auto-cool ADS3000 filtration system following a three-month long successful pilot project, and is the first such air filtration system to disinfect viruses and bacteria that can be fitted inside air conditioning ducts. It will be deployed on shared taxis in central Israel, in the cities of Tel Aviv, Bat Yam, Holon, and Rishon Lezion.

The company developed smart filters that can be placed into existing vehicular air conditioners, with a smart algorithm that alerts the driver when the filter has to be replaced. The system may also be operated by remote control.

"We examined a large number of advanced technologies over the past year, under the assumption that we will all have to learn to live with the coronavirus for some time to come," Ilan Zikri, CEO of Metro Kav said.

"Our goal is to make this timely system accessible around the world to facilitate its adoption in all modes of transportation" said Ziv Farber, CEO of Auto-Cool, adding that laboratory tests of the filters showed 100% efficiency in successfully removing coronavirus pathogens and other bacteria from the air.



from Greece



ATHENS TAXI DRIVERS PROTEST DEMANDING HELP AMID VIRUS

Taxis lined the roads as drivers held a protest in central Athens on Thursday 4 March demanding financial assistance and tax cuts, as Greek authorities introduced new Covid restrictions following a spike in infections.

Republic World reports that Greeks woke up to a new set of restrictions on Thursday with police now able to target people making false exercise claims to bypass stay-at-home orders as part of tougher new measures.

Permission to visit banks and supermarkets is now only permitted in a two-kilometer radius of each person's home, while those wishing to exercise can not use their vehicles or public transport to travel to that outing.

Virus infections continue to rise in Greece, despite four months of lockdown measures. Most residents in the country can only leave their homes using a number-categorised permission system, normally requested and granted via SMS message.



A new government body is being established to spearhead EV-related policy and consultations will be held later in March over private sector participation.

"These measures will support Singapore's targets to cease new diesel car and taxi registrations from 2025, require all new car and taxi registrations to be of cleaner-energy models from 2030, and have all vehicles run on cleaner energy by 2040," the LTA said.

from Singapore



SINGAPORE WON'T ALLOW NEW DIESEL CARS AND CABS FROM 2025

Singapore won't allow diesel-powered taxis to be registered from 2025, five years ahead of previously scheduled, as part of its push to reduce emissions and encourage use of EVs. According to the Financial Post, about 2.9% of passenger cars in Singapore run on diesel, while the proportion is as high as 41.5% for taxis, according to Land Transport Authority figures. Most goods vehicles and buses in the city-state run on diesel and won't be affected by the new rule announced by the government.

Singapore plans to install 60,000 EV charging stations by 2030, two-thirds of which will be in public car parks and the remainder on private premises, the LTA said in a statement.

from Ireland



PEOPLE IN DUBLIN COULD SOON BOOK E-SCOOTERS WITH FREE NOW TAXI APP

People in Dublin could soon book e-scooters through the Free Now taxi app.

According to DublinLive, the popular app has announced that it has partnered with micro-mobility operator Tier. The partnership with Free Now will be launched across eight German cities next month, followed by France before it's rolled out on a wider European scale.

The plan reportedly includes an Irish rollout as long as Tier can successfully launch an e-scooter rental scheme in one or more Irish cities.

A recent passenger survey revealed that 59% of people said they would like to see additional options available for transport in the app.

Niall Carson, Free Now's general manager, said: "Our new partnership with Tier is another key milestone in the growth of Free Now's multi-mobility offering to passengers in cities across Europe.

"In the Irish market, we welcome this announcement and are working closely with Tier and other leading micro-mobility providers to offer passengers a broader range of transport options in the future.

"Already in other markets such as Germany and soon in France, we have a mix of taxis, e-scooters, e-bikes, e-mopeds, and car-sharing on the Free Now app, offering a more integrated approach and we look forward to expanding this further in Ireland."

This comes after the Irish Government announced that it will legalise e-scooters on roads in the coming months.



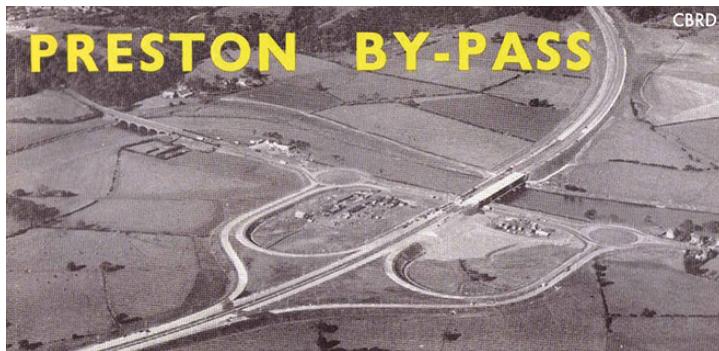
A LOOK BACK INTO THE FUTURE OF MOTORWAYS

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SOME INTERESTING FACTS

The longest road in the world is the Pan-American Highway, which starts in Prudhoe Bay Alaska, ending in Argentina, totalling 18,641 miles. Italy built the first motorway in the world in 1924.

Britain's first motorway was the Preston by-pass which opened in 1958 at a cost of nearly £3million. It was just over eight miles in length and planning started in 1937, but until the Special Roads Act 1949 came into force providing the construction of roads reserved for special classes of traffic, motorways were then classed as special roads.



In this small island of ours we have 2,173 miles of motorway and every day we rely on them. Before motorways we had trunk roads and there were thirty of them in the UK. Trunk roads were listed on ordnance survey maps with the letter (T) after their number. A trunk road which has been upgraded to a motorway will have a (M) to denote that motorway regulations apply. For example A1(M) in England and the A74(M) in Scotland.

There are fifty motorways in the UK, which includes seven in Scotland, and 19 roads have been upgraded to motorways with the letter M. The controversial smart motorways have been in the UK since 2006, the M42 in the West Midlands being the first one. At the present time there are more than 400 miles of smart motorways and the problems we have with them, apart from reducing congestion at certain times of the day, are many.

There are eighteen recommendations by the government to tackle the safety of these smart motorways, including abolishing dynamic hard shoulders, speeding up detection technology for stopped vehicles and building more emergency refuge areas.



There are three types of smart motorways:

- dynamic hard shoulders, where the hard shoulders are temporarily opened up to traffic
- all lane running (ALR) where the full width of the road is useable with emergency refuge areas alongside
- controlled three or more lanes, a hard shoulder and variable speed limits.

One of the concerning problems of these smart motorways is a big rise in near-misses and motorists breaking down on active lanes. The Automobile Association (AA) made a Freedom of Information request to Highways England, between 2017 and 2019. Motorway lanes were closed for 945 hours due to vehicle breakdowns. If you break down on the live lane of a smart motorway and you cannot pull into one of the emergency refuge areas located not at regular intervals, you have to try to pull in as close as you can to the nearside boundary or grass verge. It is a nerve racking experience, especially when traffic is racing past you.

I do hope you stay safe on our motorways.

Information for this article was collated from Highways England and newspaper articles.

<https://www.roads.org.uk/sites/default/files/articles/open-booklets/prestonbypass.pdf>

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IT'S FEBRUARY ALREADY AND MY ATTENTION IS drawn towards Prestbury Park in March. With crowds unlikely to be in attendance this year in any great numbers, if at all, it will be a muted event but still a glorious example of national hunt racing. Trials Day has been and gone and most of the targets have been identified so below is my tips for the week.

CHELTENHAM FESTIVAL

So to Cheltenham. I hope you appreciate it! I say this because last year's runner-up in the Champion Bumper is my headline nap for one of two races at Cheltenham. In the Supreme on the Tuesday **APPRECIATE IT**, trained by Willie

We say goodbye sadly to Cheltenham for another year and hopefully by next year it will be full once again with 100,000 plus racegoers. And what a Cheltenham it was for readers of this column. Not only did I advise BOB OLINGER at 6/1 for the Ballymore but the opening race of the whole festival went to APPRECIATE IT (an SP of 6/4 on the day but advised at a whopping 14/1). With close seconds on Zanahiyr, A Plus Tard and others which hopefully you backed each way, it was a real money-spinner. Perhaps the easiest victory was in Ireland winning the Prestbury Cup by 24-4 over the meeting and this demolition was advised for big punters at 1/2 where there was never a moment's doubt that the Irish would not dominate.

Surprisingly, the champion trainer (on countback) turned out to be Willie Mullins who tied with six winners with Henry de Bromhead. Henry was the real victor as three of his six victories were in the Champion Hurdle, Champion Chase and the Blue Riband of the meeting - the Gold Cup.

But now that Cheltenham has passed we look unashamedly at the biggest betting race in the whole racing calendar - the Grand National. It is a shame that national restrictions will preclude any racegoers being on course this year after last year's historic abandonment. I details this down because the

winner of the 2020 VIRTUAL

GRAND NATIONAL is running this year and I have an inkling that he will run well (but more later) as my number one nap is the Irish horse **ANY SECOND NOW** trained by Ted Walsh.

Ted (Ruby's father) has charted a perfect course for Any Second Now with victory recently over an insufficient two miles at Navan. Owned by the legendary JP (McManus), Any Second Now is widely available at 10/1. With most firms going non-runner no bet, it secures you in the knowledge that you will get your money back if for whatever reason the horse doesn't run. **Look out for a raft of offers from enhanced each-way to inflated odds from the UK bookmaking industry in an attempt to get your money as they will look upon this race as the supreme marketing opportunity.**

As alluded to earlier, the winner of last year's Virtual Grand National was **POTTER'S CORNER** who this year can give us a good run for our money at 25/1. Last year the computers had Potter's Corner victorious over Tiger Roll, so trust to technology this year (I am sure a lot of you IT geniuses will extol its virtues) to give you a good run for your money. At the end of the day whilst the Grand National is not as much as a lottery as it used to be now that safety measures have been implemented and the quality of runner has improved, thereby reducing the likelihood of a Foinavon winning again. While the chances of CLOTH CAP cannot be underestimated 4/1 hardly represents any value at all.

Lastly, away from horse racing we are now seeing the culmination of the English football season and next Tuesday sees the beginning of the quarter finals of the Champions League.

I would advise a ten unit four-timer on the quarter-finals where I fancy Manchester City, Real Madrid, PSG and Porto to qualify from their respective ties. **The four-timer pays a shade over 18/1.**

In accompanying Europa League I would also advise a four-timer on Ajax, Slavia, Villa Real and Man United at cumulative odds of 10/1.

Lastly, the Masters takes place in the middle of the month and I would tip up **BRYSON** (once again) at 9/1, **SUNGJAE IM** at 40/1 and maybe a resurgent **JORDAN SPIETH** at 18/1.

Good punting

Bernie the Book



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