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NPHTA: THE DBS DEBACLE

DBS: CONTINUING PROBLEMS AND PERSISTENT FAILURES

Article by Dave Lawrie,
Director NPHTA
info@nphta.co.uk



The failures of the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) update service continue to create problems for the taxi and private hire industry. Since it was adopted, concerns have been raised at several council liaison meetings and at the Institute of Licensing conferences. Despite years of feedback, many of the same issues remain unresolved - raising an important question: why has so little changed?

So what are the issues, and more importantly, why have they not been resolved yet?

DBS - a promising idea that made sense

When the DBS replaced the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) in 2012, the goal was clear: streamline criminal record checks and improve safeguarding through a single, more efficient system.

However, the rollout was far from smooth. Backlogs quickly built up, with applicants across multiple sectors - including taxi and private hire - waiting six months or more for certificates. This left thousands unable to work. Early warnings from the trade were raised, but largely overlooked at the time. Eventually, these delays eased, and were largely attributed to early technical "teething problems."

DBS update service: a step forward?

The DBS Update Service, introduced in 2013, was intended to simplify the process further. Once an applicant applied, they could then register using their application number (E number) or they could wait for the certificate to arrive, and register using the certificate number (C number)

Once registered, applicants could maintain their status with an annual fee, avoiding the need for repeat applications - provided no new information had been recorded and was supposed to be transferable to any local authority or employment. In principle, it was a significant improvement. In practice, however, several fundamental flaws have undermined its effectiveness.

SO WHAT WENT WRONG?

The 30-day registration limit:

One of the most widely criticised aspects is the requirement to register for the Update Service within 30 days of a certificate being issued - not received.

If this deadline is missed, applicants must start the entire process again.

This raises a simple question: if no information has changed, why impose a strict time limit at all? The rule creates unnecessary cost, duplication and delays, often through no fault of the applicant.

GET RID OF THE 30-DAY LIMIT!

Payment system failures:

The service currently relies on debit card payments, with no option for direct debit. When asked why, the simplified response was: "*a direct debit is more likely to fail, where a debit card is more guaranteed.*"

This is difficult to justify. Debit cards expire, are frequently replaced, and can easily fail - making them an unreliable method for ongoing payments. Further, you cannot log in at any time to update card details, this can ONLY be performed within 7 days of annual renewal, the system has been designed to fail.

In contrast, direct debit is widely used across essential services, precisely because it offers continuity and reliability. The next attempt to justify this decision on their part was: "*We do not have the ability to set up direct debit payment system.*"

Seriously? Let look at other service providers that use direct debit.

- TV licensing
- Car tax / insurance
- Council tax
- Magazine subscriptions
- Online platforms such as Adobe, Microsoft etc
- Electricity providers
- Phone services
- Gas providers
- Fuel card services

NPHTA: THE DBS DEBACLE

Now look at those that are card only which are generally one-off payments:

- Airbnb
- eBay
- Amazon
- Temu
- Travelodge
- Booking.com
- Plus scammers, fraudsters AND the DBS update service

GET THE SERVICE ON DIRECT DEBIT!

But why is this such a problem?

The absence of this option creates avoidable problems, particularly for elderly drivers who are less digitally engaged. Many do not regularly check emails, and some do not use email at all.

In fact when drivers come in to our office for application support, and we ask: *“is your update service live”*, the answer is: *“I don’t know”*, followed by: *“have they been taking payment”*, *“they “SHOULD have done”*. OK, please check your bank account and make sure.

As a result, failed payments often go unnoticed until it is too late - leaving individuals unexpectedly non-compliant and unable to work.

Lack of effective notifications

While DBS states that renewal reminders are sent by email, evidence from the trade suggests these are not consistently received.

With no alternative notification methods - such as SMS or postal reminders - the system relies heavily on a single, unreliable communication channel. This is particularly problematic for an ageing workforce or those without regular access to digital services.

The issue of double DBS requirements

Perhaps the most confusing issue is the requirement for separate DBS checks depending on the nature of the work. For licensing purposes (your badge) drivers are checked under other workforce category (taxi). However, if undertaking a council-issued school contract, the term changes to *“regulated activity”* meaning an additional DBS for *“vulnerable children and adults”* is required. However, it is our belief and submission that since a taxi/PH driver’s licence is issued by a local authority or “regulator” ALL trips are regulated.

This creates a clear inconsistency:

- A parent can privately book a driver with no additional checks required
- A school can do the same
- But if the same journey is commissioned by a local authority, a different DBS is needed

Despite the work being identical, the requirement changes based solely on who arranges it. This lack of clarity has led to confusion not only among drivers, but also within councils themselves, with incorrect certificates sometimes accepted or rejected in error and drivers being forced to repeat the process or face being out of work yet again, through no fault of their own.

Safeguarding is paramount – we all know this:

There is no dispute within the trade about the importance of safeguarding. DBS checks are a vital part of protecting children, the elderly, disabled and vulnerable passengers and maintaining public trust in or drivers.

However, safeguarding systems must also be practical, consistent and fair. When drivers are prevented from working due to administrative failures beyond their control, the system is not operating as intended.

Until meaningful changes are made, drivers are advised to take the following proactive steps to protect their livelihood:

- Set reminders to check renewal dates and payment details
- Ensure bank card information is up to date
- Log into the Update Service regularly to confirm status
- Keep DBS documentation accessible
- Submit new applications well in advance of licence renewals if needed

Conclusion

The DBS Update Service was introduced with good intentions and the potential to simplify compliance across the industry. However, ongoing design flaws - combined with a lack of flexibility - continue to create unnecessary barriers for those trying to work within the rules.

The trade has raised these concerns consistently. The question now is not what the problems are - but how much longer they will be allowed to continue.

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By Main Street Compliance
admin@mainstreetcompliance.co.uk
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For the UK's private hire drivers, the road ahead is changing - and it isn't just about the traffic. HMRC is currently rolling out the most significant overhaul to the tax system in a generation. By April 2026, the way you track your earnings, manage your expenses, and report to the taxman will be entirely digital. The days of shoe boxes full of faded receipts and confusing spreadsheets are over.

But for many, this shift feels like a threat. Between rising fuel costs and longer hours, the last thing a driver needs is a second job as an administrator. That is why Main Street Compliance has launched the **Solo Shield**, a revolutionary automated platform designed specifically to protect the livelihoods of the UK's professional drivers.

The end of paperwork

The core problem has always been the "paperwork gap." Drivers lose thousands of pounds every year in unclaimed expenses simply because receipts go missing or bank statements are too difficult to reconcile at the end of the tax year. Under the new HMRC digital mandates, these mistakes could lead to more than just lost money - they could lead to automated penalties.

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Introducing the Solo Shield

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As we move toward the 2026 deadline, the "wait and see" approach is no longer an option. The drivers who thrive will be the ones who embrace automation early. By joining Main Street Compliance today, you aren't just buying software; you are securing your business's future.

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MODERNISING PH LICENSING

Article by Wesley Bishop
Chief Customer Officer

Addison Lee www.addisonlee.com



Addison Lee has long advocated for a robust licensing framework - one that genuinely reflects the needs of those it serves and places public safety at its core.

The government's decision last year to introduce national minimum standards for the private hire industry was a significant and welcome step toward closing a critical regulatory gap. Passengers rightly expect a consistently high standard of service wherever they travel, and this move marked an important milestone in building that assurance across the sector.

But the reforms don't have to stop there. There are ways to maintain the flexibility our industry needs while curbing excessive out-of-area working.

Modifying enforcement powers

The government recently tabled an amendment to the English Devolution Bill which would give licensing authorities the power to temporarily suspend a licence, regardless of which authority originally issued it.

Currently, enforcement officers do not have the power to stop a vehicle for basic checks, such as confirming the driver's licence and ensuring that they are in a roadworthy vehicle. This presents a clear issue in terms of passenger safety.

As such, the proposed update is a vital modification to the current framework that marks a meaningful step forward in strengthening enforcement and protecting public safety. It is a position Addison Lee has championed for some time, and we have been working closely with the DfT to help make it a reality.

Maintaining flexibility and a level playing field

While the government's announcements so far establish a solid baseline for regulating out-of-area working, stronger and more targeted measures are needed to tackle licence shopping and protect local accountability.

A percentage-based system for out-of-area bookings would give operators the flexibility they need, while drawing a clear line against excessive licence shopping. It would preserve local accountability and ensure authorities retain genuine oversight of

services within their communities. As a practical starting point, operators could be restricted to fulfilling no more than 20% of bookings entirely outside their licensed area.

Operational realities also argue for a degree of local flexibility. An operator based near a border with another authority will naturally handle a higher volume of cross-border work, while proximity to airports, stations or major venues just outside a licensed area will similarly generate regular demand from customers travelling to and from those locations.

There will also be occasions where other forms of public transport fail, adding another layer of complexity. Train breakdowns or flight diversions require vehicles from across a region to mobilise rapidly to meet demand, with journeys potentially terminating anywhere in the country.

The most compelling case for a percentage-based system is its measurability. Operators are already required to record booking details, including pick-up and drop-off addresses. A straightforward requirement to submit that data – whether it is weekly, monthly or quarterly, would provide authorities with a clear and auditable picture on out-of-area activity.

Making the NR3 database mandatory

Making participation in the NR3 database mandatory across all authorities would be another straightforward step towards a safer, more coherent licensing system. Its current weakness is well documented: where authorities neither check nor contribute to the database, gaps emerge that drivers with a refused or revoked licence elsewhere can exploit simply by applying to another authority.

Mandatory participation would close that loophole permanently, ensuring that every licensing decision is made with full visibility of an applicant's history, regardless of where in the country they apply.

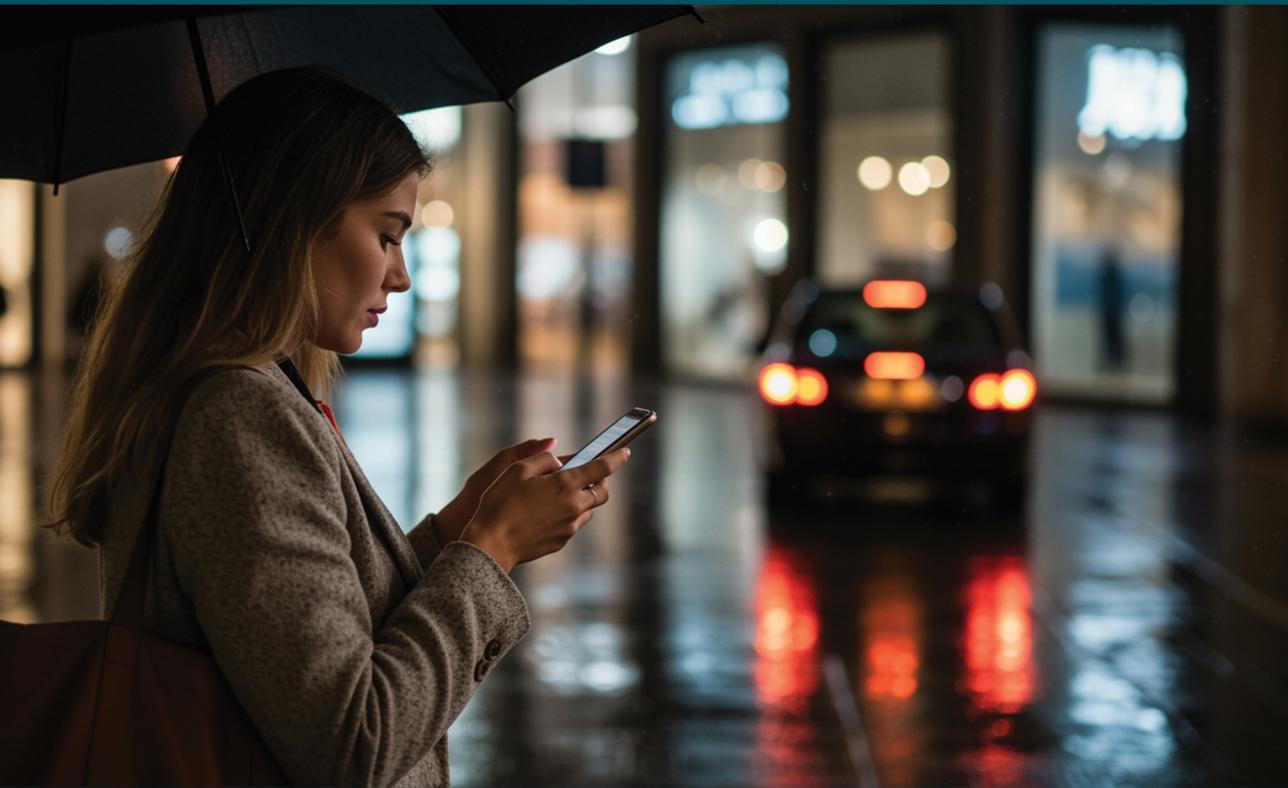
Modernising the licensing framework

The case for reform is clear. A modern licensing framework should be measurable, enforceable and fair – for passengers, drivers and operators. The steps outlined here are neither radical nor burdensome; they are the logical extension of progress already underway.

Addison Lee will continue to work closely with government to ensure that the regulatory landscape keeps pace with the industry it governs, and that public safety remains its foundation.



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THE WIDENING GAP BETWEEN CRIMINAL LAW OUTCOMES AND TAXI LICENSING ACTION

Article by Talal Malik, Solicitor
Transit Legal
www.transitlegal.co.uk



There is an increasing sense of disbelief among taxi and private hire drivers who find themselves facing suspension or revocation in circumstances where no criminal charge has been brought, let alone proved. The assumption, long held and understandably so, is that the absence of a conviction ought to bring matters to an end. In licensing law, that assumption is now routinely misplaced.

That sense of unfairness is not confined to drivers. It is shared by many who encounter the licensing regime for the first time and assume it mirrors criminal justice principles. It does not. Taxi and private hire licensing has always operated on a different footing, but the distance between the two systems has widened markedly in recent years.

The criminal justice system is retrospective and punitive. It looks backwards and asks whether wrongdoing can be proved to a defined standard. Licensing, by contrast, is prospective and protective. It looks forward and asks whether allowing an individual to continue to operate presents an unacceptable risk. A licensing authority is not tasked with determining guilt. Its function is to assess compatibility with public safety.

How police information is shared with licensing authorities

Police forces now share a far broader range of information with taxi licensing authorities than many drivers appreciate. That information may include arrests, allegations, warnings, reprimands, cautions, or intelligence which, for entirely proper reasons, has not resulted in prosecution. In criminal proceedings, such material would be treated with

caution. In the licensing context, it is frequently regarded as relevant, and sometimes decisive.

This is not a recent development, but its practical consequences have become more pronounced. Improved information sharing protocols, combined with a heightened focus on safeguarding, mean that licensing authorities are now far more likely to receive and act upon material which would never be discussed in a court of law.

The difficulty for drivers lies not in the existence of this information, but in the weight attached to it. What may appear to be untested or incomplete information is often treated as sufficient to trigger regulatory concern.

Safeguarding thresholds and urgent action in taxi licensing

This approach is most evident where safeguarding considerations are engaged. Modern licensing frameworks place a premium on early intervention. The prevailing logic is that delay itself can amount to a safeguarding failure. Urgent action powers, once exercised sparingly, are now deployed with increasing confidence.

Immediate suspension pending investigation has become a familiar feature of taxi and private hire regulation. While such action is often experienced by drivers as premature, licensing authorities characterise it as precautionary.

That characterisation explains why arguments framed solely around fairness or lack of proof so often fail to persuade. Taxi licensing decisions are not concerned with punishment for past conduct but with the prevention of perceived future harm. The threshold is not certainty, but concern.

Why “no further action” by the police rarely ends the matter

A recurring source of confusion arises where the police decide to take no further action. Drivers understandably regard such decisions as

IS NOT ENOUGH



exculpatory. Licensing authorities do not. Their focus is on what the information discloses about risk, insight, and future conduct.

The question asked is not whether the allegation could be proved, but whether it raises issues that remain unresolved. Where those issues are left unaddressed, the authority may conclude that the risk persists, regardless of the criminal outcome.

In practice, this is often where cases turn. A driver who relies entirely on the absence of criminal proceedings may find that they have failed to engage with the authority's real concern.

The role of insight, proportionality, and discretion

At this stage, tone and approach become critical. A defensive or dismissive response can be interpreted as a lack of insight, which itself may justify regulatory intervention. Licensing officers and sub-committees are attentive not only to the content of representations, but to the manner in which they are made.

That is not to say that licensing authorities are entitled to disregard proportionality or fairness. They are not. The law still requires a rational connection between the information relied upon and the action taken. But proportionality arguments are rarely effective unless they are framed within the safeguarding context in which decisions are now made.

Measured engagement, even in the absence of any admission of wrongdoing, is generally far

more persuasive than confrontation. The question for the authority is whether reassurance has been provided.

Responding effectively to safeguarding concerns

What tends to assist is a response that engages directly with the safeguarding issue as framed by the authority. That requires an understanding of why the information has been shared, what concern it raises, and what steps, if any, can be taken to mitigate perceived risk.

This is not an exercise in conceding guilt. It is an exercise in addressing regulatory anxiety. Where that anxiety remains unresolved, licensing authorities are unlikely to be reassured.

A reality tax and private hire drivers must now confront

None of this is to suggest that licensing authorities are entitled to act without scrutiny. Issues of evidential weight, procedural fairness, and proportionality remain central to lawful decision-making. But those arguments must be advanced within the correct regulatory framework.

The reality is that the protective force once assumed to lie in the absence of a conviction has been significantly eroded. Taxi and private hire drivers now operate in an environment where precaution frequently outweighs proof. Understanding that environment, and responding to it with care and restraint, is increasingly essential to protecting a licence.

Cases involving police disclosures and urgent licensing action require a clear understanding of how safeguarding, risk, and discretion are applied in taxi and private hire licensing.

I advise drivers and operators on responding to these issues, including urgent suspensions and licensing hearings, with a focus on addressing regulatory concerns properly rather than relying on criminal law outcomes alone. Early, informed advice often makes a material difference.

Please do not hesitate to contact me to discuss your position at an early stage.

BLUEDROP AT THE PHTM EXPO

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...FUEL FEARS...FUEL FEARS...

CABBIES FACE FINANCIAL CRISIS AS MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT DRIVES FUEL COSTS UP

Taxi and PH drivers are facing a severe financial squeeze as fuel prices climb following the recent outbreak of conflict in the Middle East.

According to the RAC, at the time of going to press, average petrol prices have hit c.150p a litre and diesel c.177p since the violence began, leaving many drivers struggling to stay profitable.

The **NPHTA** warns that cabbies have taken "a huge hit" because they are legally unable to raise their prices on the spot. Because local authorities set the fares, drivers must wait through a lengthy bureaucratic process to adjust what they charge.

David Lawrie, **NPHTA** director of, noted that it "could take up to six



months" before fares change because the trade must present a business case to the council, followed by public consultations and committee meetings.

Ironically, the rising cost of petrol has actually led to more people calling for taxis. Lawrie explained that "when fuel prices go up, people are often far more likely to stop using their own cars and rely on the taxi industry instead."

However, this creates a difficult situation for the industry. While drivers are busier than ever, their overhead costs are eating into their earnings. "They don't realise we need fuel as well," Lawrie added.

The price surge is largely due to the effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz, a vital shipping lane for 20% of the world's oil, following US and Israeli strikes on Iran in late February.

Lawrie also expressed frustration with fuel retailers, stating that "forecourts are putting the prices up before they've had a delivery."

This means drivers are watching costs rise daily even on old stock, leaving them with "no choice" but to absorb the losses for the foreseeable future.

UK DRIVERS FACE POSSIBLE £30 FUEL LIMIT AS MIDDLE EAST TENSIONS RISE

British motorists may soon see a £30 cap on petrol and diesel purchases as the government reviews emergency rationing plans to tackle a potential supply crisis.

The move follows a sharp escalation in the Middle East conflict, where the blocking of the Strait of Hormuz has threatened a region responsible for a fifth of the world's oil.

Under the proposed measures, individual stations might limit fuel sales to prevent pumps from running dry during "panic buying or supply shortages."

While these caps are typically managed by retailers, the government is also looking at ensuring

priority access for essential services such as the NHS and police.

Officials insist the plans are a precaution, but fuel prices have already hit an 18-month high, with diesel climbing to 160.3p per litre.

Addressing the uncertainty, Labour MP Dan Tomlinson stated: "At the moment, it is too early to tell what the impact of this crisis will be in the coming months."

He noted that while the government is monitoring the situation carefully, they have already stepped in with £50 million to support those reliant on heating oil. The RAC has urged the government and the fuel industry to protect regular drivers from unfair

costs.

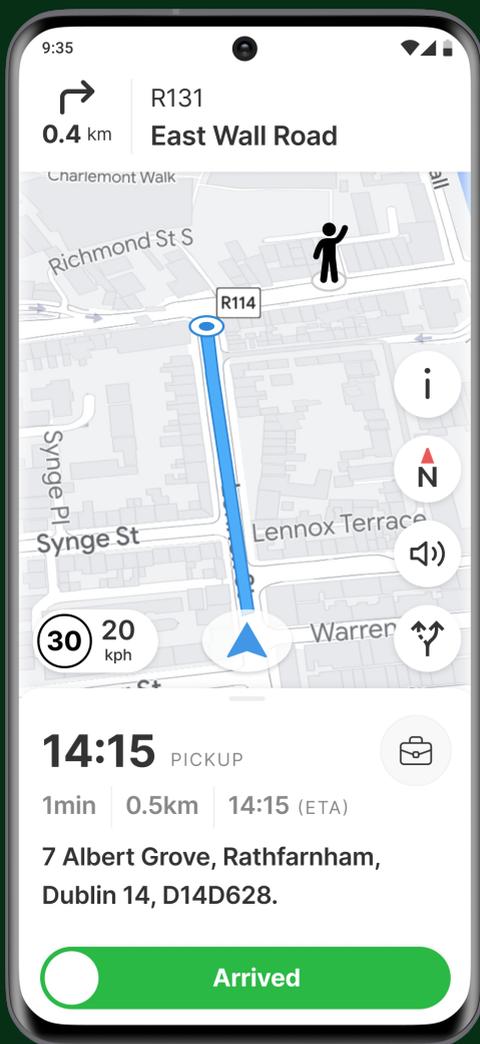
RAC head of policy Simon Williams commented: "Drivers deserve - and should expect - to be treated fairly when it comes to filling up, especially with pump prices still heading north."

"We therefore hope the meeting between the fuel industry and government on this important issue is productive."

For now, experts recommend using price-comparison tools to find the cheapest local options as global supply chains remain under pressure. Anyone looking to find cheap petrol or diesel in their area can use the Fuel Finder website: <https://www.fuel-finder.uk>

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IGNORE TESLA AT YOUR PERIL

TESLA, THE THREAT NO ONE IN PRIVATE HIRE IS TALKING ABOUT

Article by Rob Finlayson
Operations Manager
City Cars Glasgow
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In a previous article I intimated that 2026 might be the year that Uber's dominance of the taxi and private hire market starts to crack. Rising costs, unpredictable commission structures, weakening and fractious driver relations and declining customer service standards all conspiring to begin the downfall of the app giant.

Whilst the industry spends its energy arguing over Uber and either agreeing or disagreeing with my musings, the real long-term threat may be lurking somewhere else entirely.

That threat isn't another booking platform - it's the car itself. More accurately, companies such as Tesla.

Uber is fundamentally a software company. It doesn't own a fleet of vehicles, it doesn't manufacture hardware and it doesn't control the machines that actually move passengers. It simply sits in the middle matching supply with demand and taking its slice of the fare between passengers and drivers.

Tesla operates in an entirely different space. It controls the hardware, the software and increasingly the technological foundations for a transport network that could bypass traditional operators and drivers altogether. The scale of the potential fleet is already in place we just don't see it that way yet.

There are already more than 250,000 Teslas on UK roads. Every one of these is a connected vehicle, constantly receiving software updates, collecting driving data and capable of integrating into a wider digital ecosystem. Some older vehicles may need hardware upgrades before they could operate autonomously, but the underlying platform is already there and waiting.

Once autonomous driving technology becomes viable and legally approved at scale, the implications for our industry are enormous. A network of self-driving

vehicles wouldn't need drivers. It wouldn't need dispatch desks, controllers or fleet managers.

And crucially, it wouldn't need billions of pounds to deploy fleets across the country.

The fleet already exists.

Look around the next time you are on shift and count how many Teslas you see on the road. Then compare that number to the number of licensed taxis and private hire vehicles you encounter. You're not quite outnumbered.... Yet.

Hundreds of thousands of Tesla owners already possess vehicles that could, in theory, become part of a massive autonomous fleet almost overnight. That's a fleet that would absolutely dwarf any other operator on the Taxi Summit Power List. Last I checked, Veezu the UK's largest single operator in the UK, was sitting just shy of 20,000 drivers... Tesla has more than ten times that number of cars in the UK, with many more owners sitting in the wings should the winds of change blow in.

I would wager that a good number of the current, and an even bigger number of future owners, would be perfectly happy to monetise their cars if the option existed to allow them to operate autonomously whilst the owner is at work, at home or asleep. After all, who wouldn't want an asset that earns money while it sits on the driveway? Instead of your car depreciating in the company car park whilst you slave away at your 9-5, it's out on the road giving you a side hustle income.

On a purely economic basis the concept is powerful. A car that currently sits idle for twenty-plus hours a day suddenly becomes a revenue-generating asset. Owners take a share of the income while a platform manages routing, charging and passenger matching.

With no driver wages involved, the economics change dramatically.

The obvious question then becomes: how does the taxi and private hire trade compete with a global company capable of running transport networks at a fraction of the cost?

For now, this remains largely theoretical. Autonomous driving regulations in the UK still have significant

IGNORE TESLA AT YOUR PERIL



hurdles to clear and the technology continues to evolve. Fully driverless vehicles operating freely across complex British road networks will not appear overnight.

But the direction of travel is difficult to ignore.

Tesla is already heavily invested in autonomous systems and is collecting millions of miles of driving data every single day. Whilst its full self-driving system is not currently available in the UK, it is already operating in limited forms in other markets. The sheer volume of real-world driving data Tesla gathers puts it streets ahead of most other autonomous vehicle developers.

While drivers in the taxi and private hire industry debate surge pricing, commissions and the latest rule changes from Uber, a far larger technological shift may be quietly building in the background.

Tesla could ultimately represent a far more significant disruption than any booking platform ever has.

It's not all doom and gloom though, human drivers are not about to disappear tomorrow.

Autonomous transport will face enormous scrutiny. UK roads are complex, unpredictable and full of variables that software struggles to anticipate. Pedestrians, cyclists, roadworks, weather and the chaotic reality of British cities will slow adoption considerably.

Human drivers will remain essential for many years.

But ignoring the possibility of companies such as Tesla entering the transport market in a meaningful way would be a serious mistake.

The biggest disruption the taxi industry has ever faced did not come from a car manufacturer - it came from a software platform.

The next disruption may come from the opposite direction. Not from an app - but from the car itself.

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FLYING TAXIS

UBER UNVEILS FLYING TAXI SERVICE WITH 2026 DEBUT SET FOR DUBAI

Uber has announced the launch of “Uber Air,” a major shift in urban travel that will allow passengers to book all-electric flying taxis directly through their smartphones. Partnering with Joby Aviation, the service utilises electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) aircraft designed to carry four passengers and a pilot. These quiet, zero-emission vehicles are intended to turn hour-long ground commutes into minutes-long flights, bypassing city congestion by travelling between specialised hubs known as “vertiports.”



Dubai has been named the first city where the service will be available commercially, with operations expected to begin by the end of 2026. This inaugural service will connect key locations, such as the airport and city centre, allowing riders to book journeys that combine ground and air travel in a single app. Following the

Dubai launch, Uber plans to expand the service to major global hubs, including New York City, Los Angeles, the UK, and Japan, pending regulatory approval and infrastructure development.

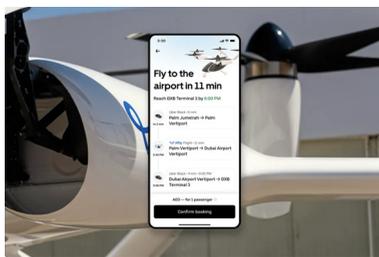
For now, the focus remains on Dubai as the testing ground for a future where urban transportation moves “from ground-only rides to integrated air mobility accessible right from your phone.”

FLYING UBER TAXIS SET TO TACKLE LONDON TRAFFIC BY 2030

The dream of soaring over London’s gridlocked streets could become a reality by 2030 as Uber, acting in partnership with Joby Aviation, prepare to launch electric flying taxis.

While Bristol-based Vertical Aerospace is aiming to have its taxis soaring across London’s skyline within two years, Uber’s chief product officer, Sachin Kansal, stated he would be “very disappointed” if the 2030 milestone was not met, noting that “London is going to be a very high priority market.”

The service would use eVTOL aircraft, which act like a helicopter for takeoff before cruising like a plane at speeds up to 200mph. This could turn a 90-minute cross-city crawl into a 10-minute hop. “To me, the number one advantage of being able to take that ride is time,” Kansal explained. “Being



able to save an hour is going to be amazing.”

The service is designed to be accessible rather than a luxury for the ultra-rich, with fares expected to be similar to an “Uber Exec” car journey - a 10-mile journey in central London typically costs between £50 and £70 depending on traffic and demand. Passengers would book via the app and travel between “verti-ports” located on rooftops or car parks.

Kansal believes the convenience will be a major draw, stating: “We

know our users would love a feature like this, which will help them escape a lot of the traffic and be able to get from their home to the airport within a few minutes rather than hours.”

Despite the excitement, the project faces hurdles including strict safety certifications from the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and the need for new infrastructure.

Jonathan Nicholson from the CAA confirmed they are “very close” to seeing flying taxis, adding that “as long as it is safe, we will seek to enable it.” However, the success of the scheme will ultimately depend on local planning approvals and whether the public feels comfortable swapping four wheels for a flight. Robotaxis have yet to be rolled out on a large scale in the UK and until this is normalised, it remains to be seen how popular self-flying taxis will be.



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WOLVERHAMPTON PH DRIVER LOSES LICENCE AND COURT BATTLE OVER ILLEGAL GHOST PLATES

A Midlands private hire driver has lost his legal fight to keep his licence after being caught using illegal “ghost plates” designed to hide his car from traffic cameras. Aqeel Shakeel’s appeal was dismissed at Dudley Magistrates’ Court following a council investigation that used “state-of-the-art technology” to prove his Audi A4 was equipped with the deceptive plates.

Wolverhampton Council first discovered the 3D plates during an inspection last May. Using a specialist digital night vision camera, officers confirmed the plates were “retroreflective,” meaning they could block infra-red signatures and prevent ANPR

cameras from recording the registration.

While Shakeel claimed he was “unaware they were ghost plates” and had bought the car with them already on, investigators found the car had previously failed an MOT because of the plates.

The council suspected Shakeel had “removed the plates to pass the follow-up MOT and replaced them afterwards,” leading to his licence being revoked for dishonesty.

The court’s decision to uphold the ban comes with a heavy financial penalty, as Shakeel was ordered to pay £1,923 in legal costs to the council.

Cllr Bhupinder Gakhil praised the result, stating the city is “investing

in specialist cameras to deter and detect ghost plates” and will always take “robust action when drivers fail to meet the high standards expected of them.”

Cllr Zee Russell, chair of the regulatory committee, noted that “public safety is our top priority” and warned that modified plates “pose a serious risk by concealing vehicle identity.”

The council has now “completely banned all 3D licence plates,” leaving drivers with “no excuse” for having them installed.

Cllr Russell added: “We welcome government’s progress in legislating against ghost plates and encourage all licensing authorities to ban them as soon as possible.”

GATWICK PH DRIVERS DEMAND NATIONAL CRACKDOWN ON ‘POSTCODE LOTTERY’ LICENSING

Gatwick’s private hire drivers are sounding the alarm over a “race to the bottom” in the industry, calling for the government to scrap inconsistent local rules in favour of a strict national standard. Long-term drivers and local officials argue that current laws allow a “licensing loophole” that endangers passengers and lets drivers operate far away from where they are actually registered. Michael Jones, leader of Crawley Borough Council, is set to challenge the government to end this “postcode lottery,” noting that local authorities are currently “powerless to act” against out-of-town drivers other than filing complaints. The push for reform

follows a chilling review into grooming gangs that suggested current gaps in vetting put women and children at risk.

Veteran driver Afran Raja, who has worked the area for 28 years, warned that the lack of regulation around cross-border hiring is “a big problem for customer safety,” citing concerns over human trafficking. Raja is calling for “legitimate background checks, a minimum of five years, and to ensure a good level of English.”

The core of the frustration lies in deregulation from 2015, which driver Mark Barrett says collapsed standards and pricing. This has allowed app-based competitors like Uber to flood the market using

drivers licensed in distant cities - such as Wolverhampton - where rules may differ. Nick Venes of Unite the Union warned that when drivers can “circumvent the licensing legislation,” it opens the door for serious criminality like “county lines” drug trafficking.

While Wolverhampton council claims it cannot legally refuse licenses to fit applicants or stop them from working elsewhere, the DfT insists passenger safety is the “top priority.” A government spokesperson confirmed they are legislating to introduce England-wide requirements and new suspension powers, promising that “passengers feel confident wherever they live, work or travel.”

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FIT AND PROPER

MANCHESTER-LICENSED DRIVER CAUGHT ILLEGALLY PLYING IN TRAFFORD BOROUGH AT UNITED MATCH

A taxi driver licensed by Manchester City Council was caught illegally hunting for fares following a Manchester United match at Old Trafford.

Guru Fatay Ronuk Singh, 44, was spotted by undercover licensing officers in January 2025. Singh, was parked in a bus stop on Chester Road with his "for hire" sign lit up.

When the undercover team asked for a lift to the city centre, Singh accepted the trip. Once the car was moving, the officers revealed their identities and ordered him to pull over.

During a later interview, Singh confessed to using the sign to lure in passengers, though he claimed he simply forgot to switch it off,

admitting he made "a very big boo boo."

The mistake proved expensive at Manchester Magistrates' Court, where Singh was found guilty of plying for hire without insurance.

He was ordered to pay a £180 fine, a £48 victim surcharge, and £180 in costs, while also receiving six points on his licence.

GLASGOW TAXI DRIVER SUSPENDED FOLLOWING CLAIMS OF ILLEGAL FARES AND THREATS

A Glasgow taxi driver has been handed a two-week suspension after he was accused of threatening a colleague who reported him for breaking licensing rules.

Qamar Farooq faced a city council licensing committee following allegations that he refused to use

his meter and instead attempted to charge passengers a fixed price. The trouble began when a fellow driver claimed he witnessed Mr Farooq "refusing hires" and offering a group of women a flat £10 fee for a trip. When the witness reminded him he was required to

"ensure that a taximeter fitted in the taxi shall be operated at all times," Mr Farooq allegedly responded "extremely aggressively." Mr Farooq denied the claims, stating he only told the passengers the fare "would be approximately £10" and that other potential customers were too drunk to pick up.

The situation escalated after Mr Farooq was called in for a formal interview with enforcement officers. The committee heard that the very next day, he "approached the taxi driver who had submitted the online complaint against him and threatened him for doing so." Councillors were shown a video of the exchange, leading Committee Chair Cllr Sean Ferguson to tell Mr Farooq: "What we have seen, you did behave in a very aggressive manner. The way you behaved in that video was profoundly unfortunate."

Despite some councillors pushing for a month-long ban, the committee ultimately voted 3-2 in favour of a shorter two-week suspension.

TORBAY CABBIE LOSES LICENCE OVER SAFETY & HARASSMENT CONCERNS

A Torbay taxi driver has been stripped of his licence after councillors ruled he was a risk to the public for making video calls while driving plus driving without car tax more than 40 times.

The unnamed driver also faced several police reports of harassment but claimed he was simply the "unluckiest person" and was being unfairly targeted by others. Torbay Council's regulatory sub-committee decided to revoke his driving and operating licences immediately, noting long-standing patterns of poor behaviour.

The committee also heard that the driver had sat outside a business partner's home in the middle of the night and sent an "excessive" amount of text messages.

Councillors found his excuse that people were colluding against him, including other cabbies, to be "fanciful." The council stated the driver's actions showed a "lack of self-awareness and responsibility."

Because of the safety and conduct issues, the committee concluded he was not a fit and proper person to continue working as a taxi driver or operator in the area.

FIT AND PROPER

EDINBURGH TAXI TRADE OUTRAGED BY LENIENT BAN FOR DRIVER LINKED TO CANNABIS FARM

The Edinburgh taxi community has expressed its anger at the 'lenient' one month ban given to a private hire driver who owns a property where a cannabis farm was discovered.

Muhammad Umar, who was convicted in 2024 for his role as a landlord of a flat housing a £40,000 cannabis farm, also has a record for careless driving after he was caught speeding on the wrong side of the road to skip a red light queue, later telling police he "did not want to wait."

At last month's licensing meeting, despite Police Scotland's recommendation that his licence be revoked entirely, city councillors opted for a brief 30-day ban.

The decision has sparked a

backlash from industry leaders who argue it damages the reputation of the trade.

The Association of Hackney Carriage Drivers stated the move "undermines" the hard work of professional drivers, adding: "This decision has left an extremely bad taste in the mouths of many honest, law-abiding members of our industry."

"It's particularly frustrating when the committee appears not to have learned from the intense scrutiny and criticism surrounding the last ill-advised decision it made."

The group warned that public confidence in the licensing system depends on "robust decision-making," particularly when public safety is at stake.

Unite the Union also weighed in questioning how Mr. Umar could still be considered a "fit and proper person" to hold a licence.

Secretary Keith Auld expressed a "growing feeling of uncertainty," asking for clarification on how the committee determines who is suitable to drive the public.

Defending the decision, Licensing Sub-Committee Convener, Cllr Joanna Mowat, explained that the board must meet specific legal requirements to permanently remove a licence.

She noted that the committee considered the "time elapsed since the offence" and "behaviour since the offence" before deciding that a one-month suspension was the appropriate response.

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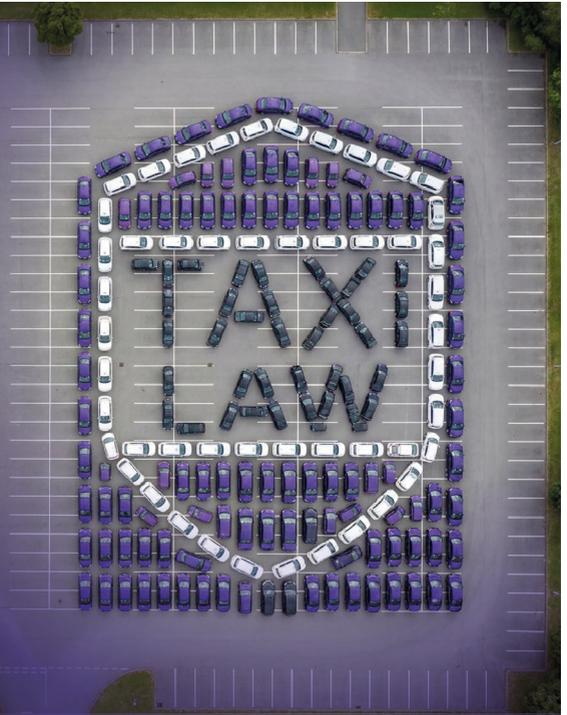
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DEVOLUTION AND EMPOWERMENT CONSULTATION RESPONSE

Article by Dave Lawrie,
Director NPHTA
dave@nphta.co.uk



Who are we?

The National Private Hire and Taxi Association (**NPHTA**) has been established for almost 40 years. We represent the taxi and private hire sector across the UK, including:

- Individual taxi and private hire drivers
- Private hire operators and their drivers
- Local associations as affiliate members

Our combined membership exceeds 60,000, giving us a strong and representative voice within the sector.

We have actively contributed to policy development, including participation in the Task and Finish Working Group. Our former Director, Donna Short, was a member of this group. We have also provided both written and oral evidence to the Transport Select Committee, most recently through David Lawrie, appointed Director in 2019.

In addition, we are active members of the Institute of Licensing, ensuring continued engagement in licensing policy and practice.

Why ARE WE responding?

We have closely monitored the proposed changes with interest, particularly:

- The rapid expansion of out-of-area working
- The widening gap in licensing standards across authorities
- The resulting inconsistency in conditions nationwide

We recognise and support the intention behind introducing national standards and devolved powers, particularly where this aims to improve transparency and consistency. However, we are concerned that key issues are not being adequately addressed.

What is on the table?

National Standards

There is a suggestion that national standards will eliminate licence shopping and cross-border working. This is incorrect.

Licence shopping is driven primarily by:

- Processing times
- Licensing costs

Unless national standards also address local authority approaches to these factors, the issue will persist.

Vehicle accessibility - WAVs

We strongly caution against mandating 100% wheelchair-accessible fleets outside major urban or tourism areas. A mixed fleet approach is more practical and proportionate, reflecting actual demand and the prohibitive cost of such vehicles.

CCTV

CCTV has been widely supported, including by Lillian Greenwood MP. Concerns around data security are already addressed by the Information Commissioner's Office.

However, we emphasise:

- Dashcams must not be used to capture internal audio or intrusive images
- Avoidance of remote access systems due to cybersecurity risks and ongoing subscription costs

If CCTV is mandated, it should be publicly funded, as this is a matter of public safety, not subsidising independent businesses, it should not be an additional financial burden on drivers.

Vehicle age

Policy should focus on:

- Safety features
- Emissions standards

rather than arbitrary age limits. Forced early replacement creates unnecessary financial pressure without any clear safety or environmental benefits.

Licensing efficiency and costs

Uniform standards alone will not resolve disparities. For example:

- TfGM: 6 months processing, £600 cost
- Wolverhampton: 2 weeks processing, £190 cost

This disparity is the root cause of licence shopping. Without addressing efficiency and cost, national standards will fail in their stated aim.

NPHTA: WORKING FOR YOU

Devolved licensing authorities

We understand the intention to create larger, more specialised licensing teams and departments. However:

- Taxi licensing is only a small part of local authority responsibilities
- There is no clear evidence this restructuring will benefit the sector
- Larger authorities may reduce geographic boundaries, increasing out-of-area working

This proposal does not address licence shopping and may inadvertently worsen it.

National enforcement powers

We acknowledge proposals to expand enforcement powers, including allowing officers to suspend licences issued by other authorities.

While welcomed, it is important to note:

- Most enforcement powers already exist under current legislation
- The proposed change primarily adds immediate suspension capability

The inclusion of compensation for incorrect enforcement decisions is a positive and necessary safeguard. However, these measures do not address the root causes of cross-border working.

Cross-border working & the Casey Report

We note the conclusions of the Casey Report linking cross-border working to the Deregulation Act 2015. This is inaccurate.

Key facts:

- Cross-border working has been a major issue since before 2007
- The Berwick case (2007) triggered significant out-of-area licensing
- Rotherham findings in 2013 primarily implicated locally licensed drivers, the whole report predated the Deregulation Act

Child exploitation is a serious and longstanding issue, but its causes are complex and not linked to the 2015 Act. We do, however, welcome the Government's commitment to addressing cross-border working as a priority.

Financial impact on the trade

It is highly unlikely these proposals will reduce costs. Instead, we anticipate:

- Fees aligning with the highest current levels
- Additional costs for rebranding, systems, training, and compliance

These costs will ultimately be passed on to drivers and passengers, reducing affordability and service availability.

How to address predominant out-of-area use

The core issue is not standards - it is incentives.

To effectively reduce licence shopping:

- Licensing must be consistent in cost and efficiency across authorities.
- High fees must not be used as a deterrent, as this harms both drivers and passengers

Proposed solution: "intended use" requirement

We strongly recommend introducing a statutory "*intended use*" requirement across all licensing authorities.

This would:

- Require applicants to declare they intend to primarily operate within the licensing area
- Pose the risk of loss of licence and/or prosecution for fraudulent declarations if they fail to comply with the declaration
- Not prevent legitimate occasional out-of-area work
- Remove the viability and attractiveness or benefit of licences obtained solely for remote operation

This approach replaces inconsistent local policies with a clear national requirement, directly addressing the root cause of licence shopping.

Conclusion

While we support the ambition to improve consistency and transparency, the current proposals do not adequately address the fundamental issue of licence shopping or cross-border working.

Without tackling:

- Licensing costs
- Processing efficiency
- Intended use of licences

these reforms risk adding complexity and cost without delivering meaningful change.

We urge policymakers to focus on practical, targeted solutions that address the underlying incentives within the system.

LETTER OF COMPLAINT TO ICO

Dear Information Commissioner's Office

I write to lodge a formal complaint against Transport for London (TfL) concerning its handling of payment card data within the taxi and private hire licensing application process. I have raised this matter directly with TfL under reference PDP-2526-0196. However, I consider TfL's response to be inadequate and failing to properly address serious data protection risks.

Summary of the issue

TfL provides applicants with a paper licensing application form, which includes a payment section requiring applicants to submit, in a single document, the following information:

- Full payment card number
- Card start and expiry dates
- CVV/CVC security code
- Cardholder name
- Billing/address details
- Authorised signature

Applicants are instructed to send this information via standard postal services.

Core concerns

In my view, this constitutes high-risk processing of personal data and payment credentials, raising significant concerns under the UK GDPR, particularly:

Article 5(1)(f) (Integrity and Confidentiality) – The aggregation of full card credentials with identity data in a paper format creates a clear and foreseeable risk of misuse, including card-not-present fraud.

Article 32 (Security of Processing) – The use of postal transmission and manual handling appears inconsistent with the requirement to implement appropriate technical and organisational measures.

Data minimisation and necessity principles – Collecting full card details including CVV/CVC in this manner appears excessive given the availability of more secure alternatives.

Additionally, this workflow appears inconsistent with widely accepted PCI DSS standards, particularly regarding the handling of CVV/CVC data.

Concerns regarding TfL's response

TfL has responded by stating that:

- Submission of card details on paper is "optional"
- Applications are processed in a PCI DSS-compliant contact centre
- Alternative payment methods exist

However, this response does not address the fundamental issue:

The continued operation of a system that permits (and facilitates) the transmission of complete card credentials via post and their handling in paper form.

Crucially, TfL has not provided:

1. Clear confirmation of whether CVV/CVC data is retained, stored, or processed after receipt
2. Details of how risks inherent in postal transmission are mitigated
3. Evidence of a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) or risk assessment
4. Clarification of PCI DSS scope and compliance for this specific workflow
5. Any indication that the process has been suspended or modified pending review

The existence of alternative payment options does not, in my view, cure the lawfulness or security deficiencies of the process itself.

Ongoing risk

This is not a historic issue. The process remains operational, meaning that individuals are currently being exposed to unnecessary and avoidable data security risks.

Request to the ICO

I respectfully request that the ICO:

- Investigate whether TfL's processing complies with UK GDPR, particularly Articles 5 and 32
- Assess whether the collection and handling of full card details (including CVV/CVC) via paper forms is lawful and proportionate
- Examine TfL's PCI DSS compliance in relation to this workflow
- Determine whether TfL has conducted an adequate DPIA or risk assessment
- Consider whether enforcement action or recommendations are appropriate

I have provided copies of correspondence, the application form, and TfL's responses to assist your investigation.

Given the clear and ongoing nature of the risk, I would be grateful if this matter could be treated with appropriate urgency.

Yours faithfully

Christopher Johnson

Veteran London hackney driver

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INCONSISTENT TAXI RULES: THE HIDDEN COMPLIANCE CRISIS

Article by CheckedSafe
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For countless people, taxis aren't just a transport option, they're a necessity. In fact, millions of taxi bookings are carried out daily across the UK. Most of us jump in a taxi assuming it is safe and good to go, but is that really the reality?

Hidden dangers?

Most transport sectors have a recognised national standard and framework regarding compliance for the industry they operate in. Unfortunately the same cannot be said for the taxi and PH industry. Surprising as it may be there is no recognised national standard. Instead, despite government guidelines, each local council is responsible for setting its own rules for:

- Vehicle safety checks
- Licensing drivers
- Licensing fees
- Driver background checks

But is this an issue?

Baroness Casey of Blackstock DBE CB seemed to think so in her June 2025 report called "*National Audit on Group-Based Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.*" She warned inconsistent taxi licensing rules between different councils are creating dangerous loopholes.

In Chapter 7, she highlighted that while some councils go beyond statutory guidance to protect passengers, others apply far weaker standards, and because drivers can apply for a licence anywhere in the country, those weaker rules can undermine stricter local rules. This "*cross-border*" licensing means a council can set high standards but has no power to enforce them on vehicles licensed elsewhere, even when they operate daily in its own area.

What currently happens?

As far as safety checks are concerned, currently some local authorities have mandated daily checks, but some have no process or procedure for them at all. Vehicles are only spot checked once a year (if at all). Licensing authorities have no visibility of safety checks or vehicle condition. Some authorities are also not

conducting any background checks on the drivers they license, leading to potential criminals driving your kids to school, and you to work...

All local councils are responsible for setting their own rules, and it's worth mentioning some are rightly taking a keen interest in setting good standards for their private hire and taxi vehicles. *This needs to change.*

What needs to change?

CheckedSafe is pushing for a NEW unified national compliance standard for taxis and PHVs that:

1. Mandates a minimum daily pre-use vehicle check
2. Enforces proper background checks for all licensed drivers
3. Implements rules to enforce drivers to license with the local authorities in which they operate
4. New rules regarding the amount of hours taxi drivers can work in a day
5. Mandate standardised national safety standards for the condition of all PH & HC vehicles
6. Regularly audits taxis

These relatively simple changes would have a transformative impact on the taxi and PH industry.

A unified national compliance standard would close dangerous loopholes, improve public safety, and restore confidence in a failing system. Daily vehicle checks and regular audits would ensure roadworthiness, while proper background screening and driver hour limits would reduce risks to passengers and drivers alike. Crucially, requiring drivers to be licensed locally would strengthen accountability and bring revenue and enforcement back to the communities where services are actually being provided.

Too often, meaningful change only follows tragedy, but this time we have the chance to act before lives are put at risk. The government has pledged to implement all 12 of Baroness Casey's recommendations, and the sooner they do, the safer our communities will be.

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ROBOTAXIS...ROBOTAXIS

UBER CHARGES FORWARD WITH \$100 MILLION INVESTMENT IN ROBOTAXI HUBS

Uber is making a major \$100 million bet on the future of driverless travel by building its own network of fast-charging hubs for robotaxis. The ride-hailing giant plans to set up these high-tech stations in the San Francisco Bay Area, Los Angeles, and Dallas, aiming to solve the “operational bottleneck” of keeping auto-nomous electric cars powered up and on the move. The investment will fund every-thing from digging the grid connections to installing heavy-duty equipment. Uber believes that owning its own chargers will help “increase operational efficiency, reduce costs, and keep vehicles in service longer.”

By controlling the power source, the company can ensure its robotaxis spend less time plugged in and more time picking up passengers.

The move comes at a time of “investor scepticism,” with Uber’s shares dipping 14% this year. However, the company remains “bullish on autonomous services” and plans to have robotaxis roaming its app in at least 10 cities by the end of 2026. This includes luxury Lucid Gravity SUVs equipped with Nuro’s self-driving tech and autonomous Volkswagen vans.

Uber has already teamed up with companies like EVgo and Ionity to

roll out over 1,000 chargers globally, providing “guaranteed usage” to help speed up the expansion.

While Uber is racing to catch up with Waymo, which already offers driverless rides in cities such as Phoenix and Austin, it isn’t just about competing. In some markets, Uber is actually working with Waymo to handle the dirty work of “charging, cleaning, and inspections.”

This new infrastructure push signals a major shift as Uber moves from just being an app on your phone to becoming the “infrastructure and services backbone” for a world without human drivers.

TESLA’S AUSTIN ROBOTAXI FLEET HITS ROUGH ROAD WITH 14 CRASHES IN EIGHT MONTHS

Tesla’s push into the self-driving taxi market is facing early scrutiny as new federal data reveals its Austin-based fleet has been involved in 14 crashes since service began last June.

While the EV maker has increasingly bet its future on autonomy and robotics, reports filed with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) show a steady string of incidents, including collisions with city buses and accidents resulting in hospitalisations. The trouble started just weeks after the June 2025 launch. While Tesla initially reported a July crash as involving only property damage, it later updated the filing to disclose that the event led to “minor injuries and hospitalisation.” Another July

incident also resulted in injuries. By January, the fleet saw a spike in activity, with five new reports filed in a single month. One notable collision involved a stopped robotaxi and an Austin city bus, while others saw the vehicles hitting fixed objects. The safety concerns extend beyond physical impacts. The NHTSA recently confirmed it is investigating videos showing Tesla’s robotaxis “driving erratically, including driving down the wrong side of the road and braking suddenly.”

Unlike competitors, Tesla often redacts the narrative descriptions of these events, leaving regulators and the public with limited information on exactly why the cars are misbehaving.

Despite these hiccups, CEO Elon

Musk remains undeterred, stating the company is “moving into a future that is based on autonomy.” Tesla has ambitious plans to expand to seven more cities by mid-2026 and eventually produce “far more Cybercabs than all of our other vehicles combined.”

However, Tesla is not alone in its “nascent robotaxi business” struggles. Alphabet’s Waymo has reported hundreds of incidents, including a recent case where a car hit a child in California and a recall of 1,200 vehicles due to software that caused them to “crash into chains, gates and other roadway barriers.”

While Waymo currently operates a much larger fleet across more cities, Tesla’s rapid rollout in Austin serves as a high-stakes testing ground for Musk’s vision of a driverless future.

ROBOTAXIS...ROBOTAXIS

ADDISON LEE CHIEF WARNS ROBOTAXIS COULD PRICE OUT HUMAN DRIVERS

The head of Addison Lee is calling for a “minimum price” on robotaxis to stop tech giants such as Waymo and Tesla from destroying the traditional taxi industry through “predatory pricing.”

Liam Griffin, chief executive of the private hire firm, warned that massive technology companies might use their wealth to offer fares so low that human drivers cannot compete. Griffin emphasised that the transition to autonomous vehicles must not ignore the people currently behind the wheel. “We can’t just have this new shiny technology roll out and all of a sudden forget about the drivers that we’ve all relied on for

such a long time,” he said.

As London prepares for the arrival of driverless fleets from companies like Alphabet’s Waymo and China’s Baidu, Griffin argued that the regulator must protect the industry by limiting permits and monitoring costs.

With analysts predicting robotaxis could eventually be 20% cheaper than human-led services, the fear is that established taxi driver livelihoods are at risk. Griffin noted that “there are livelihoods on the line here” and insisted that if the regulator “has to set a minimum price for it, then I feel it should.”

He expressed concern that without intervention, deep-pocketed

players could ride “roughshod over the existing industry” and make it impossible for current operators to survive.

While Addison Lee is preparing for the future by testing self-driving technology in Asia and planning to add various robotaxi brands to its own fleet, Griffin remains wary of the competition. He stressed that regulators need to ensure a “handful of players don’t come in... and make it unachievable for the existing operators.”

Although the US and China are currently ahead in the driverless race, Griffin believes London must act now to balance new tech with the survival of the traditional cabbie.

THE UNCERTAIN FUTURE FOR 1.5 MILLION U.S. DRIVERS IN THE AGE OF ROBOTAXIS

While the promised revolution of self-driving cars didn’t come in 2018 as predictions suggested, the steady march of technology is finally forcing a reckoning for those who earn their keep behind the wheel. A new report by Law Bear reveals that the stakes are incredibly high, with over 1.5 million U.S. citizens depending on driving for income, including “200 thousand taxi drivers and 1.3 million rideshare workers.” As companies like Waymo pour billions into the sector, economists warn that “automation-induced unemployment tends to disproportionately affect service sectors,” potentially creating a “cascading effect” on local taxes and real estate in major cities. Safety and legal liability remain the

primary roadblocks to widespread adoption. Although Waymo’s fleet has logged over 200 million miles, “the number of car accidents keeps climbing, too.” Texas leads the nation with 861 recorded robotaxi crashes, followed by Arizona with 263. Beyond standard collisions, AVs have sparked “national outrage” by blocking emergency vehicles and causing logistical nightmares. These incidents raise a thorny legal question that may take a decade of lawsuits to answer: “Who is responsible when a Robotaxi crashes? The manufacturer, the operator, or the software developer?”

The transition also brings a silent threat to passenger privacy. Dozens of police warrants have

already been filed for vehicle footage, often without passengers knowing they are being recorded. “Privacy analysts warn that AV data collection could erode trust faster than technical glitches,” leaving users to wonder who owns their travel data and if it can be “subpoenaed in civil disputes.” As states such as California and Arizona lead the way in regulation while others lag behind, the industry still faces massive “scaling, regulatory, and economic hurdles.” For the millions of Americans currently driving for a living, the future depends on whether they can successfully lobby for “retraining programmes or wage protections” before the human driver becomes a thing of the past.

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THE ROAD TO SUCCESS

WHY EVERY PRIVATE HIRE AND TAXI PROFESSIONAL NEEDS TO BE AT THE PHTM EXPO

Article by Rev'd Paul Newbery
The Elite Family
www.elite-liverpool.co.uk
paul@elite-liverpool.co.uk



The PH and taxi industry is not for the faint of heart. Between dodging potholes that could swallow a Prius whole, decoding the mumbled destinations of 2am revelers, and trying to permanently banish the ghost of last night's garlic kebab from the back seat, it is a fast-paced, relentlessly demanding trade. It is incredibly easy to get stuck behind the wheel or buried in the dispatch office, focusing solely on the next job, the next ring of the phone, or the next driver complaint.

But if you want to truly thrive - and not just survive the daily grind - stepping out of your local bubble is not just recommended; it is essential.

That's exactly why attending annual trade events, particularly the **PHTM EXPO**, is a mandatory pit stop for anyone serious about this business.

The real power of peer networking

When most operators hear the word "networking," they immediately think of job sharing - building a Rolodex of trusted out-of-town firms to pass off excess work to, or setting up safety nets for when you are short on cars. While that is certainly a valuable aspect of the trade, treating the **PHTM EXPO** simply as a glorified job-exchange market misses the bigger picture entirely.

True networking at these events is about **advice, tips, and trick sharing**. It is about standing next to a fleet operator from Glasgow or a veteran driver from Southampton and having the sudden, comforting realisation that you're dealing with the same headaches.

Over a coffee (or a much-needed pint) at the venue, you can pick the brains of people who have been in the trenches for decades. You will find out how they are handling local licensing hurdles, what they do when a local council suddenly changes the emissions goalposts, or how they successfully stop their drivers from "accidentally" turning down Friday night bookings because they don't like the pickup area.

The unwritten rule of the expo: The best advice isn't always found on a stage; it's often found at a high-top table in the catering area, swapping war stories with someone who has already solved the problem you are currently losing sleep over. These organic, off-the-record conversations yield the kind of practical, battle-tested advice you will never find in an official operations manual or a local council handbook.

Unlocking new features in dispatch systems

Dispatch software is the beating heart of any modern taxi firm. But let's face it, keeping up with the rapid pace of technological change can feel like a full-time job. Are you still running your fleet on a tired server humming loudly in the corner of your office? Are your staff overwhelmed during the Friday night rush, dropping calls because the system can't keep up?

At the **PHTM EXPO**, you aren't just looking at glossy brochures or sitting through a laggy Zoom presentation; you're getting hands-on with the developers, engineers, and account managers of the industry's leading dispatch systems. This is your chance to discover brand-new features that can completely revolutionise your day-to-day operations. Walking the exhibition floor allows you to explore the cutting edge of dispatch tech:

- **Next-level automation:** See live demonstrations of passenger apps that are so intuitive, they can push your automated booking rate past the 25% or even 50% mark. Every booking made on an app is a phone call your office doesn't have to answer.
- **Voice AI and smart IVR:** Discover how AI is finally getting good enough to handle routine: "Where is my taxi?" calls, freeing up your human staff to handle complex bookings and driver support.
- **Intelligent auto-allocation:** Watch algorithms in action that calculate traffic, driver hours, and vehicle types in milliseconds, drastically reducing dead mileage and keeping your drivers earning rather than burning fuel.
- **Holding providers accountable:** More importantly, doing this face-to-face means you can look the tech providers in the eye and tough questions about system crashes when it rains, hidden onboarding costs, and what their customer support actually looks like at 3am on a Sunday.

THE ROAD TO SUCCESS

Knowledge is power

Running a PH business often means acting as a mechanic, a logistics coordinator, a customer service rep, and a legal scholar all at once. The regulatory landscape is constantly shifting under our feet. Enter the expert seminars and the invaluable mingling opportunities at the expo. This isn't just a trade show; it's a masterclass in industry survival and growth. At the **PHTM EXPO**, you have unparalleled access to industry experts who are actively shaping the future of the trade.

- **Navigating the red tape:** Have you been losing sleep over the new HMRC digital platform legislation? Are you confused about how cross-border regulations and geofencing actually affect your business? The expo features dedicated Q&A sessions designed to translate complex legislative jargon into plain English.
- **The Great Debate:** One of the cornerstones of the event is the open discussions dubbed "The Great Debate" - where operators tackle massive, existential issues, such as how local, independent firms can fiercely and successfully compete with massive, heavily funded multinational ride-hailing apps.
- **Off-the-record advice:** Beyond the formal seminars, the real magic happens in the aisles. You get to mingle with licensing experts, taxation specialists, and legal advisors in an informal setting. It's an incredible opportunity to get a quick, honest opinion on a regulatory headache without having to pay a hefty hourly consultation fee.

An ecosystem of support

When you are buried in the day-to-day running of your firm, it is incredibly easy to adopt a bunker mentality. You put out the immediate fires and you stick with the suppliers you know, even if they aren't giving you the best deal anymore. The **PHTM EXPO** breaks down those walls by introducing you to a room full of companies whose sole purpose is to make your life easier and your business more profitable. These aren't just salespeople; they are eager partners who understand that their success is entirely dependent on your success.

- **Fleet upgrades without the guesswork:** Need to upgrade your fleet? You can compare the latest purpose-built EVs, hybrid standard taxis, and WAVs side-by-side. You can sit in them, check the boot space and talk directly to specialist dealers who understand taxi finance and local authority emissions mandates.
- **Insurance lifelines:** Struggling with skyrocketing fleet insurance premiums? Specialist taxi insurance brokers are there to sit down, look at your specific

setup, and offer tailored advice on reducing costs.

- **Safety and compliance:** Dashcam and CCTV vendors help you secure your vehicles, protect your drivers from false claims, and lower your insurance liabilities.
- **Operational outsourcing:** From telecom providers offering unbreakable data sims for your driver devices, to outsourced call centres ready to take your overflow calls when you are short-staffed, the expo floor is a thriving ecosystem of solutions.

Every single booth represents a potential shortcut to running a smoother, safer, and much more lucrative business.

A massive shout-out to Liza

Of course, none of this would happen on its own, so a massive, echoing shout-out has to go to Liza, who organizes the **PHTM EXPO** every single year. Liza works tirelessly behind the scenes to pull this mammoth event together, somehow keeping her finger on the exact pulse of what the trade needs to see, hear and discuss. Frankly, she deserves an industry medal for putting up with all of us every May and making sure the event goes off without a hitch.

The bottom line

Taking a day or two out of your schedule to travel to Milton Keynes might feel like lost revenue in the short term. It is hard to step away from the business - but the return on investment is absolutely undeniable.

You leave the expo not just with a bag full of supplier brochures, squishy stress balls, and enough branded freebie pens to last your office until next year, you leave with actionable strategies, new tech capabilities, and a renewed sense of purpose. The **PHTM EXPO** isn't just an exhibition; it is a vital annual pit stop to refuel your business strategy and connect with the people who understand your trade best.

If you want to stay relevant, competitive, and profitable in a trade that never sleeps, make sure your calendar is blocked out for the next expo. The knowledge, connections, and tech upgrades you bring back to the office will easily cover the cost of the trip - and the inevitable stop at the M1 services on the way home.

If you want to attend the **PHTM EXPO**, visit: www.phtm.co.uk/register to reserve your place.

Paul from the Elite Family will be there and is looking forward to meeting you all! If you want to join a great family of networking and peer-to-peer advice, then email: family@elite-liverpool.co.uk

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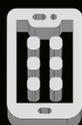
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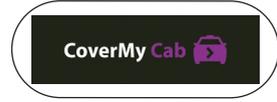
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ROUND THE COUNCILS

ABERDEEN:

CONSULTATION ON KNOWLEDGE TEST

Aberdeen City Council is asking residents to help decide the future of the city's taxi industry, including whether to get rid of the difficult "street knowledge" exam. The move comes as the Granite City struggles with a severe driver shortage, with only 508 licensed taxis currently operating - less than half of the 1,079 allowed under the city's official limit.

The knowledge test has faced heavy criticism recently, with campaigners claiming it makes it "too difficult for drivers to enter the trade," leading to "lengthy queues during peak hours" at taxi ranks and making it harder for ride-hailing apps to find drivers.

The council is now questioning whether drivers who only take pre-booked fares and use sat-navs should still be forced to memorise every street in the city.

The consultation also asks if all drivers should have to accept card payments; if traditional driver dress code is still necessary plus officials are considering relaxing rules on which firms can pick up at the airport.

Take part in the survey here:

<https://taxi-private-hire.commonplace.is>

NORTH YORKSHIRE:

NEW WAV TAXI RULES INTRODUCED

North Yorkshire council leaders have approved a new policy to increase the number of WAV taxis, even as critics warn the move could hurt rural communities and the elderly. Under the new rules, any new application for a HV licence must be for a vehicle that is either a WAV, zero-emission, or a hybrid.

The council is attempting to address a major shortage, noting that only 60 WAV HCs are currently licensed across the entire county.

Cllr Richard Foster, who oversees environmental management, stated: "We have an issue around disability and access to vehicles, but we also realise there are challenges to the trade, especially the hackney carriage trade from app-based firms, both in our county and from across borders."

However, operators have hit back, claiming the high cost of these vehicles will push drivers out of business. Lisa Ridsdale, of Take Me Group, argued the policy is "out of touch with rural reality." She pointed out that a standard car costs around £20,000, whereas WAVs or EVs can cost up to £90,000 when financed.

"Requiring all new or replacement taxis to be WAV, EV or hybrid might work in cities, but here it's impractical and potentially devastating," she said. She warned the financial burden would lead to fewer drivers and longer waits for the very people the council aims to help.

Richard Fieldman, of the North Yorkshire Taxi Drivers Group, had expressed disbelief at the proposal, stating: "The taxi trade is already in a massive decline due to Uber and one thing and another, and what they're trying to do will just finish us off." He warned that the financial and operational burden would lead to a mass exodus from the profession.

The new policy also introduces new requirements for private hire companies to identify a passenger's accessibility needs before a booking is confirmed.

The council is also ditching the old 10-year age limit for taxis and PHVs, replacing it with a requirement to meet Euro 6 emission standards.

To help fulfil school and social care travel, the council will also offer restricted PH licences for drivers who only work those specific contracts.

Officials plan to review the policy in one year to see if the number of accessible taxis has actually grown.

SOUTHAMPTON:

TAXI LIMIT TO STAY SAME

Southampton city councillors have voted to maintain a strict limit on the number of HCs allowed to operate in the city, keeping the total capped at 283 vehicles.

The decision follows an independent survey which confirmed there is currently no evidence of "unmet demand" from the public. Taxi drivers, who have been vocal about the lack of space at designated ranks, welcomed the move.

Perry McMillan, a rep for Unite the Union, expressed relief that officials "saw sense," noting that the trade is already struggling with lack of rank space. He said drivers are often forced to drive around aimlessly because existing ranks are already "full up with cars." Licensing service manager Russell Hawkins warned the committee that lifting the cap would cause "quite a lot of ill feeling", especially since the data does not support the need for more cars. However, the meeting also highlighted concerns regarding accessibility.

Cllr Sue Blatchford pointed out that some residents still struggle to find WAV taxis at ranks. While Southampton requires all new licences to be for accessible vehicles, only about 70 of the current 283 taxis meet this standard.

ROUND THE COUNCILS

PORTSMOUTH:

WOLVERHAMPTON A 'DODGY OUTFIT'

Portsmouth's licensing chief has sparked a row after labelling Wolverhampton Council a "dodgy outfit" over claims that lax safety rules are allowing risky PHVs onto the city's streets. During a meeting on 23 March, a detailed report was considered which compares the two cities' rules on driver checks, vehicle standards and enforcement rules for PH/HC drivers and operators licensed by each council.

Wolverhampton has a reputation for a "cheaper and simpler application process," which has led to many drivers operating in Portsmouth under the Midland city's plates leading Portsmouth City Council leaders to raise the alarm.

Under Portsmouth's rules, drivers must have held a full driving licence for at least two years and be 21 before applying. The council also requires enhanced DBS checks every six months and mandatory safeguarding training, plus written and oral English tests.

In Wolverhampton, drivers there must hold a DVLA category B licence for at least 12 months, and there is no minimum age requirement.

In Portsmouth, HCs must be no more than six years old when first licensed and can operate until they are 12 years old. In Wolverhampton, new applications are only accepted for new vehicles but renewals are allowed until vehicles are around 15.5 years old.

In Portsmouth, all drivers are required to undertake a driving assessment, while in Wolverhampton this is only required for HC drivers.

Portsmouth also requires CCTV to be installed in licensed vehicles, with recordings kept for 31 days, while CCTV in Wolverhampton vehicles is voluntary.

The lack of mandatory CCTV was a sticking point for Portsmouth's licensing chair, Cllr Lee Hunt. "I think it's pretty outrageous that they don't have CCTV because it protects the customer and the drivers," he said. "These people up at Wolverhampton seem to be in a dodgy outfit, that's a view that I'm coming to."

Wolverhampton Council hit back, calling the "dodgy outfit" claims "extremely disappointing and ill informed." A spokesperson argued they are legally required to accept applications from anywhere in the country and insisted their standards are among the highest in the UK. They pointed out that they check criminal records daily and have called for the government to fix "outdated" laws that allow this cross-border friction to happen.

DERBY:

VICTORY AS PH AGE RULE RELAXED

Derby city bosses have voted to soften a controversial rule regarding the age of PHVs, following a wave of driver protests after Derby City Council bosses ruled that PHVs should be five years old or less when licensed for the first time. They have now agreed to raise the age limit for newly licensed cars to nine years after drivers argued the strict policy was putting their livelihoods at risk, forcing them to seek licences from other cities.

The five-year rule was initially introduced to ensure cars were in top condition and met emissions standards. However, drivers claimed the financial pressure was too great, especially since many were already choosing to get licensed in places such as Wolverhampton to avoid Derby's tougher requirements.

Notably, nearly 60% of respondents to a public consultation asked for the age limit to be scrapped entirely to help the trade remain viable.

Cllr Martin Repton supported the change, arguing for a "fair and reasonable system" to keep drivers registered locally, stating: "At the present time, drivers can go outside this authority, and can get a badge to work in this city with cars older than 10 years."

Some committee members argued the maintenance of a car is more important than its age. Cllr Stephen Lakin told the meeting: "I don't think age is any actual limitation – I think it is the condition of the car." He added that as long as a vehicle passes strict safety tests, the specific mileage or age should not matter.

Additionally, councillors struck down a controversial proposal that would have blocked them from attending face-to-face meetings with the taxi trade. Council officers had suggested that future talks should only include senior staff and drivers to avoid "political bias" and "maintain absolute impartiality, fairness, and transparency in the council's licensing functions."

The plan was sparked by concerns that having elected members in the room could be "perceived as interference" and might disqualify them from making official legal decisions later. However, Labour councillors on the licensing committee labelled the idea "ridiculous" during a meeting last month.

Despite legal advice that the plan followed national guidelines, the councillors insisted that they must remain part of the conversation to properly represent the city and its drivers.

ROUND THE COUNCILS: FEES

MERTHYR TYDFIL:

FIRST FEE HIKE IN NINE YEARS PROPOSED

Taxi drivers in Merthyr Tydfil could see their licensing costs jump for the first time since 2017 as the local council moves toward a “full cost recovery” model. Under the new proposals, which were agreed for consultation on March 4, new three-year driver licences would rise from £272 to £312, while PHOr fees for a five-year period could more than double, increasing from £135 to £394.

Council leaders argue the hike is necessary to ensure the licensing service remains sustainable and continues to uphold public safety standards. Cllr Brent Carter, the Labour leader of the council, described the move as a “balanced and responsible” step that acknowledges the financial realities of the service after years of supporting the trade through the pandemic and fuel price spikes.

However, the plans have met resistance from Independent councillors who fear the extra costs could cripple taxi services in outlying areas. Councillor Michelle Symonds warned that for many residents, particularly the elderly and those in rural communities like Bedlinog and Trelewis, taxis are “not a luxury but essential.” She argued that raising fees without a clear plan for rural transport risks leaving vulnerable people stranded, stating that “consultation should follow evidence. Not precede it.”

The council expects the fee changes to generate an additional £13,545 annually from vehicle licences alone. If no objections are raised during the upcoming consultation period, the new price scale will take effect on May 1, 2026.

GLOUCESTER:

15% FEE HIKE OVER NEXT 3 YEARS

Taxi operators in Gloucester are set to pay the price for a long-standing “financial fiasco” at the city council. Following a recent review, officials discovered a 28% shortfall in licensing income, a discrepancy blamed on the chaotic state of the council’s accounts following a 2021 cyberattack.

The digital breach forced bosses to use manual accounting for three years, leading to inaccurate budgets and a £15.5m government bailout.

To bridge the gap, the council plans to hike licensing fees by 15% annually for the next three

years. While the council is legally barred from making a profit on these charges, the current fees no longer cover the basic costs of issuing licences.

Under the new plans, companies with more than 31 vehicles will see fees increase from £1,530 to £1,759 for a one-year operator licence or from £6,120 to £7,038 for five years. A three-year driver’s licence will jump from £251 to £289, while renewals will rise from £210 to £241. Costs for the Knowledge Test and safeguarding training, are also set to increase.

The trade has expressed deep concern over the timing of the hikes. Elena Vlad, from Associated Taxis, noted that a 15% increase is a “significant jump” for those already struggling with high fuel and insurance costs. She said: “Most taxi drivers are self-employed and working long hours just to keep their businesses running. Any increase in licensing fees inevitably puts more pressure on the trade and can make it harder for drivers to stay in the industry.”

“We hope the council continues to work with the trade and ensures that any fee increases are fair, transparent and reflect the real costs involved.”

Despite the pressure on drivers, licensing lead Darren Mountford argued that the 15% rise was “reasonable” compared to an immediate 28% increase, which he described as “massive.” By capping the hike at 15%, the council will effectively absorb the remaining 13% deficit for the next two years.

The committee voted to unanimously approve the fee increases to begin on May 1, 2026, pending a 28-day public consultation.

FOREST OF DEAN:

NEW FEES COMING INTO FORCE

Forest of Dean DC has unveiled a new price list for taxi and PH licences and operators. The updated charges are scheduled to take effect following a 24-day consultation period.

Under the new structure, a fresh licence for a HC or PH driver will cost £326, while those looking to renew will be charged £240. The council has also revised costs for knowledge tests, badge replacements, and licence transfers.

Vehicle fees have seen a similar adjustment, with new HC plates priced at £334 and PHVs at £326.

Operators have also been impacted, with a 5-year licence now costing £522, or £131 for a 1-year option.

The council explained the price hikes are: “necessary to cover administrative and compliance costs.”

ROUND THE COUNCILS: FEES

BARNLSLEY:

DRIVERS SOUND ALARM OVER FEE HIKES

Barnsley taxi drivers are pushing back against plans to raise licensing fees, warning that the extra costs come at a time when many are already struggling.

Last month local councillors considered the proposals which would see the price of a one-year driver's licence climb from £150 to £165, while a three-year licence would increase from £240 to £264. Vehicle licences would go up from £180 to £198, and operator licences would also see increases.

Council officials argue the hike is necessary to cover costs of running the service, including staff time and paperwork. However, some drivers aren't convinced they are getting their money's worth. One driver complained that it was "really hard" to get in touch with the licensing office, claiming it was "never staffed" and that the only visible service provided was a "routine obligation, such as a safety seminar, which achieves very little."

Another driver reported earning as little as £8.16 an hour after expenses, asking: "Haven't we got enough to pay without the licensing fees increasing again?"

The fairness of the current system has also been questioned with one small operator calling the flat fee "totally illogical," as a person with two cars shouldn't pay the same as a huge firm with 150 vehicles.

Final approval on the increases, which would take effect later in the year, is pending review of all consultation responses and the official decision of the regulatory board.

NEW FOREST:

LICENSING FEES HIKE APPROVED

Taxi operators in the New Forest are facing a squeeze on their livelihoods after district councillors approved a rise in licensing fees to cover local authority costs.

The decision, made by the New Forest DC's general purposes and licensing committee on March 6, comes despite warnings from the trade that drivers are already struggling with a "spiralling" cost of living.

Paul Osborne, chairman of the New Forest Taxi Operator and Driver Association, told the committee that the industry is being hit by a wave of financial pressures. "We are already heavily strangled by rising daily costs, main government staffing costings and the cost of living spiralling out of control to name but a few," he said, adding that these factors are "having

a detrimental effect reducing our profits year on year." Mr. Osborne noted that while the fees drivers pay to the council have risen recently, the tariffs have remained frozen since 2022. He argued that "without something in place to allow us to achieve more income... it would be foolish to proceed with further increases in our fees." In response to these concerns, council officers have agreed to fast-track a review of passenger fares, provided enough drivers support the move.

Although some councillors attempted to delay the fee increase, they were outvoted, so the new charges will go ahead alongside the promised fare review.

SLOUGH:

MASSIVE PH OPERATOR FEE RISE

Slough PH operators are facing a massive jump in fees after councillors approved "excessive" fee increases, despite warnings the move could drive businesses out of town. The price of a new one-year licence will surge from £153 to £600 - a 292 per cent hike - while renewal costs for single-vehicle operators will climb from £153 to £548.

The decision sparked a heated debate during a licensing committee meeting, where some officials argued the town is becoming uncompetitive.

Cllr Waqas Sabah criticised the jump, stating: "Surely, we'd want the town to thrive, and we'd want more operators in the town. Not to discourage them by charging them fees which are double what our neighbours are charging."

While nearby Windsor & Maidenhead charges just £318 for the same licence, Slough officials pointed out that major cities such as Manchester charge nearly £2,800. However, Cllr Mohammed Nazir argued that Slough is not comparable to such "large" city authorities.

The council justified the increase by citing the high cost of processing applications and enforcement, which currently takes about four and a half hours per licence at an officer rate of £103 per hour.

Licensing manager Russell Denney-Clarke explained that "if we could process [the applications] quicker then of course the fee would be different," but noted that staff must also conduct physical inspections of operator bases.

Although the council is "not allowed to make any profit" from these fees, the new rates are designed to ensure the local authority recovers its full costs. The changes were pushed through with two votes in favour and five abstentions.

LONGTIME ATTENDEE OF PHTM EXPO FINALLY WINS £1,500 PRIZE DRAW

Article by The Taxi Insurer
0121 296 3092
www.taxiinsurer.co.uk



“If at first you don’t succeed, try, try and try again” is variously credited to Scottish king Robert the Bruce, English educational writer William Edward Hickson and American educator Thomas H Palmer. Whoever deserves the credit for the proverb, it’s certainly advice that Mohammed Arshad has done well to heed.

The taxi driver from Bristol has been dutifully attending the **PHTM EXPO** every year for the last 15 years, travelling up to Milton Keynes with a group of colleagues to make a day of it.

He has visited The Taxi Insurer’s stand most years and entered its prize draw to win £1,500 off his next insurance premium, never thinking that he would win... until last year, that is.

“When I received the call saying I had won, I couldn’t believe it!” he exclaims. “I was ecstatic, to be honest. You always enter these competitions without any expectations, wondering if anyone ever really wins, so it was a lovely surprise!”

Why attend the Expo?

Mohammed has been a taxi driver for virtually half his life now. The former baker and newsagent started out by driving private hire vehicles in 1990 before becoming an independent driver when the **Deregulation Act** was introduced in 2015.

What keeps him returning to the Expo each year? Is it to learn about new regulation, keep abreast of the latest vehicles and technology or to network?

“All three, really,” he explains. “Attending the Expo allows me to keep up to date with any new regulation, get a look and feel for any new technology that could prove useful in the future and also network. The free coffee cups don’t hurt either!”



Attendees also come to the show to hear from and engage with the people who are making the decisions that will impact the future of their industry; test and buy the latest trade vehicles; try out and invest in the latest products and services; and connect and socialise with likeminded colleagues from across the country.

Mohammed will be attending the event once again this year and, yes, he’ll definitely be entering The Taxi Insurer’s prize draw, just in case fortune smiles on him for two years running.

What to do with the money saved?

In a pleasing echo of last year’s prize draw winner, who used the money he’d saved on his insurance premium to travel to India to see his family, Mohammed plans to do something similar.

“I’ve put the money I saved on my insurance towards a holiday to Pakistan to see my family,” he says. “It’s been two years since my last visit, so I’m really looking forward to it.”

The Taxi Insurer will be at **PHTM EXPO** at Arena MK, Milton Keynes, on Wednesday 13 May at 10am–5pm and Thursday 14 May at 10am–3pm. Register here for free entry: phtm.co.uk/register



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THREE ARRESTED AFTER GRIMSBY TAXI DRIVER ROBBED AT KNIFEPOINT

Police have arrested three men following a terrifying daylight robbery where a taxi driver was "threatened with a knife and robbed" in Grimsby.

The incident took place at around 2:20pm on March 15, on Robert Pearson Mews. The driver was

reportedly approached by three men wearing face coverings who "threatened him with a knife and stole £200" before running off.

Fortunately, no injuries were reported following the confrontation. Humberside Police acted quickly, sending officers to search

the nearby area. After spotting three men who matched the descriptions provided, police made several arrests. A spokesperson for the force confirmed that three men aged 30, 32 and 20, were subsequently arrested on suspicion of robbery."

TEENAGE BOY INJURED AFTER YOUTHS PELT TAXIS WITH BRICKS AND STONES IN MIDDLESBROUGH

A teenager has suffered serious facial injuries after the taxi he was travelling in was struck by a brick in Middlesbrough.

The incident occurred at 7:30pm on March 1, when a group of children began throwing objects at passing traffic causing extensive

damage to several vehicles. In this specific attack, the taxi's rear window was shattered, and the boy was struck on the bridge of his nose requiring hospital treatment for his injuries.

Cleveland Police emphasised that these acts go far beyond minor

mischief, stating: "We ask parents to educate their children on the damage and consequences of throwing stones which is not just 'messing around' or anti-social behaviour but can cause serious injury and costly damage to vehicles."

JOYRIDE ENDS IN HANDCUFFS AFTER WOMAN HIJACKS DEREHAM TAXI AND CRASHES INTO CARS

A Wednesday evening turned chaotic in Dereham when a woman allegedly hijacked a taxi and went on a destructive joyride through town.

The incident began around 7:40

pm on March 18 after the woman caught a ride to Commercial Road. According to police, the situation unfolded immediately after the taxi driver dropped her off at her destination. Instead of walking

away, she jumped into the driver's seat and sped off in the vehicle.

The unauthorised trip didn't last long, ending abruptly when she crashed the taxi into "a number of other cars," police reported.

After the collision, the woman was taken to a local hospital for treatment.

Once cleared by medics, officers arrested her on a string of charges, including taking a vehicle without consent, dangerous driving, driving while disqualified, and driving while under the influence of drink or drugs.

She was later transported to the Wymondham Police Investigation Centre for questioning.

MI TAXIS NUNEATON DRIVER ASSAULTED IN BROAD DAYLIGHT

A PHV driver from Mi Taxis Nuneaton picked up a passenger at 8am in the morning. When they reached the destination and he asked for the fare, the thug sitting in the back seat hit the driver on his head with a glass bottle and ran off without paying.

The police say they think they know who he is, but no one has been arrested as yet.

John Igoe, Director of Mi Taxis told PHTM: "It's shocking. Thankfully our driver wasn't badly injured but is obviously shaken by the incident. What is the world coming to? "

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TRADE REPS CALL TO ACTION

ADCU DECLARES STATE OF EMERGENCY FOR 100K LONDON PHV DRIVERS AS WAYMO SET TO LAUNCH

The App Drivers' & Couriers' Union (ADCU) is warning of an unprecedented jobs crisis for London's 100,000 licensed PHV drivers as Waymo, the Alphabet-owned driverless taxi company, prepares to launch a passenger pilot programme in the capital in April, prior to the full scale rollout of its robotaxi fleet in September. Cristina-Georgiana Ioanitorescu, ADCU General Secretary, cautions: *"For years, PHV drivers have kept this city moving. Early mornings, late nights, long hours in traffic, they've done it all. They've carried key workers during the pandemic, helped families get home safely, and supported London's economy every single day.*

"But now, with companies like Waymo preparing to roll out driverless cars across our streets, thousands of livelihoods are being put at risk, and the people in power are not doing enough to protect the workers who will be hit the hardest.

"Let's be clear: This isn't just about technology. This is about fairness, dignity, and the future of work. AVs don't pay rent. They don't support families. They don't contribute to local communities. But drivers do, and they always have.

"Yet the legislation being pushed through now focuses on making the roads ready for robots, while doing almost nothing to make the future safe for workers. There are no retraining programmes, no transition



plans, no income protections, and no guarantees for the tens of thousands of drivers who stand to lose everything.

"We refuse to accept a future where workers are treated as disposable. We refuse to accept a system where technology is used to cut costs at the expense of human lives. And we refuse to let corporations rewrite the rules of our city without the voices of workers at the table."

If AVs are coming, then so must stronger rights, stronger protections, and stronger unions. ADCU is demanding:

- A just transition plan for all PHV drivers
- Job protection guarantees as automation expands
- Fair licensing rules that don't favour billion-dollar tech companies over working people
- Consult with unions before any major deployment of AV fleets
- A commitment that no worker will be left behind in the name of "innovation."

ADCU General Secretary Cristina-Georgiana Ioanitorescu concludes: *"To every driver who feels anxious about the future; you are not alone. To every family who depends on this income; your fight is our fight. And to every politician and corporation watching, understand this clearly - workers built this city, and workers will not be pushed aside. "Together, we will organise. "Together, we will demand fairness.*

"And together, we will make sure that the future of transport in London is a future that includes the people who keep it moving."



www.adcu.org.uk

TRADE REPS CALL TO ACTION

SCOTTISH PH ASSOCIATION CALLS FOR 'HUMAN MOBILISATION' AS ROBOTAXI THREAT LOOMS

The Scottish Private Hire Association (SPHA) has warned that the livelihoods of thousands of licensed drivers across Scotland are under direct threat from the impending arrival of autonomous vehicle (AV) fleets. While tech giants prepare to deploy "robotaxis" on UK roads, the SPHA is demanding that the Scottish Government and local councils be granted explicit powers to block, cap, and strictly regulate the entry of driverless cars into the market.

The SPHA is proposing a radical "Human First" policy framework. Under this model, AVs would never be permitted to compete directly with human drivers. Instead, AVs would only be licensed as a secondary "gap-filler" to support human fleets during extreme peak-demand periods.

Eddie Grice, SPHA General Secretary, said: "We are witnessing the opening salvos of a battle between corporate algorithms and human survival. For decades, the drivers of the Scottish PH and taxi trade have been the backbone of our communities by navigating our cities, supporting the vulnerable and keeping the economy moving. We will not stand by while Silicon Valley attempts to delete the human element from our trade. This is the beginning of a human mobilisation, the mobilisation of dedicated professionals who refuse to be replaced by sensors and code. We are laying down a direct



challenge to every Scottish Council. Stand up for your people or stand with the tech giants. We demand that all councils join our call for the legislative power to cap and block AV numbers.

"Councils must pledge to use these powers to ensure that the human driver fleet always comes first. If a robotaxi takes a fare that a human could have taken, that must be seen as a failure of governance."

While the SPHA supports broader calls for worker protections, their primary focus remains on preventing displacement through strict market control. The SPHA is demanding the creation of licensing powers where councils must have the legal right to reject AV licence applications based on the protection of the human workforce. They are also calling for a "Peak-Only Mandate" where legislation ensures AVs only operate to plug service gaps and never as a

primary fleet. The SPHA also supports prioritising the stability of the trade over "innovation" for innovation's sake and they are also demanding economic impact assessments be carried out to study how AVs drain wealth from Scottish communities and into the hands of corporate tech firms.

"Innovation should improve lives, not destroy them," Grice added. *"This human mobilisation is about more than just cars - it's about the soul of our trade. We are ready to fight for the dignity of every professional driver in Scotland and for the long-term survival of our livelihoods."*



<https://spha.scot>

VISUAL CONTENT CRUCIAL ONLINE

DOES YOUR TAXI BUSINESS LOOK AS GOOD ONLINE AS IT DOES ON THE ROAD? HERE'S WHY IT MATTERS

Article by Taxisolutions
taxisolutions.co.uk



When potential customers search for a taxi firm in 2026, what do they see first? It's not your cars. It's not your drivers. **It's your online presence.**

And if your photos are outdated, blurry, or non-existent, you could be losing bookings before a customer even considers calling. First impressions matter more than ever. High-quality visuals don't just make your business look good, they build trust, show professionalism, and help you stand out in a crowded local market.

At TaxiSolutions, we specialise in **professional photography, videography, and drone services** designed specifically for taxi and PH companies.

Why visual content is so important for taxi firms

Think about it from a passenger's perspective. They're choosing between multiple firms online. One has clear, modern images of clean vehicles, uniformed drivers, and a professional brand. The other has outdated or no visuals at all. Who are they more likely to trust?

Strong visuals help you:

- Build credibility instantly
- Show off your fleet and vehicle quality
- Highlight your professionalism and branding
- Increase conversions from website visitors
- Stand out on Google and social media

In short, better visuals = more bookings.

What TaxiSolutions can do for you

We don't just take photos, we create visual content that helps grow your business.

Professional photography

- High-quality, well-lit images that show your fleet at its best
- Perfect for websites, Google listings, & social media

Videography

- Engaging videos that bring your business to life
- Ideal for promo content, behind-the-scenes footage, or driver highlights
- Helps build trust faster than any text or image alone

Drone footage

- Premium aerial shots of your fleet, premises, or coverage area
- Gives your business a modern, standout appearance

Perfect for growing taxi firms

Whether you're a small local operator or managing a large fleet, professional visuals help position your business at the next level. **Our services are ideal for:**

- Website upgrades
- Social media content
- Google Business profiles
- Driver recruitment campaigns
- Marketing and advertising

Real impact, not just nice pictures

Taxi firms that invest in professional visuals often see:

- Increased website engagement
- Higher trust from new customers
- More direct bookings
- Stronger local brand recognition

Because when your business looks professional, people expect a professional service.

Ready to upgrade your image?

If your current photos and videos aren't doing your business justice, it's time for an upgrade. TaxiSolutions can help you showcase your fleet, your team, and your brand in a way that attracts more customers and sets you apart from the competition.

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M2M SMART MESSAGING

TAXIBOT & SMART MESSAGING: THE FUTURE OF TAXI OPERATIONS

By M2M TaxiBot
www.m2mtaxibot.com



In today's fast-moving transport industry, taxi operators face increasing pressure to deliver faster response times, smoother customer communication, and more efficient dispatching, all while keeping costs under control. Traditional phone-based booking systems simply can't keep up with the expectations of modern passengers who want instant, frictionless interactions. That's exactly where TaxiBot and Smart Messaging services are transforming the game for taxi companies of every size.

TaxiBot is an intelligent, multi-channel, multilingual service automation tool designed specifically for taxi operators. Instead of relying on call centres, manual dispatching, or outdated SMS systems, TaxiBot allows customers to book, track, and manage their journeys directly through WhatsApp, Instagram, Messenger and TikTok plus other messaging platform. For operators, this means fewer missed bookings, reduced admin workload, and a booking system that runs 24/7 without additional staffing.

A smarter way to handle bookings

With TaxiBot, customers can request a taxi in seconds. The system automatically captures pickup and drop-off details, provides fare estimates, and confirms the booking instantly. For operators, this eliminates the bottleneck of phone queues and frees staff to focus on higher-value tasks. Every booking is logged, accurate, and ready for dispatch, no handwriting, no misheard addresses, no delays.

Reduce costs without reducing service

One of the biggest challenges for taxi firms is balancing operational costs with customer expectations. TaxiBot helps operators reduce overheads by automating repetitive tasks such as:

- Booking confirmations
- Driver assignment notifications
- ETA updates
- Journey completion messages
- Payment reminders

This automation means fewer staff hours spent on the phone and more time spent delivering exceptional service. It's a cost-effective upgrade that pays for itself quickly.

Improve customer experience instantly

Passengers today expect convenience. They want to book a taxi the same way in which they order food, check in for a flight, or message friends through apps they already use.

TaxiBot meets customers where they are by integrating seamlessly with WhatsApp.

Customers benefit from:

- Instant booking without downloading an app
- Real-time updates
- Clear communication
- A familiar, user-friendly interface

This leads to higher satisfaction, more repeat bookings, and stronger customer loyalty.

Boost efficiency across your fleet

Smart messaging doesn't just improve customer communication it enhances internal operations too. Operators can send automated updates to drivers, reduce dispatch errors, and streamline the entire workflow.

TaxiBot integrates with existing dispatch systems, making it easy to adopt without disrupting daily operations.

A competitive edge for modern taxi firms

In a market where ride-hailing apps dominate, TaxiBot gives local taxi operators the tools they need to compete. It modernises the customer journey, strengthens brand reputation, and ensures every interaction is fast, professional, and reliable.

TaxiBot isn't just a messaging tool, it's a smarter, more efficient way to run a taxi business. For operators looking to reduce costs, improve service, and future-proof their operations, TaxiBot is the upgrade that delivers immediate results.

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m2m

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DRUNK ATTACKER JAILED AFTER STABBING CHESHIRE CABBIE AND STEALING CAB

A 39-year-old man has been sentenced to six years and eight months in prison after a “terrifying” alcohol-fuelled robbery that left a taxi driver with a stab wound to the leg.

Daniel Eckersley, also known as Daniel Bryan, appeared at Chester Crown Court following the violent incident on December 6, 2025.

The court heard that Eckersley had asked a resident to order him a cab before launching a brutal assault on the driver, punching him and eventually hijacking the vehicle.

The victim managed to call the police, reporting that he had been stabbed by his passenger.

Officers quickly located the abandoned taxi less than three miles away, discovering a knife in the footwell.

Dashcam footage recovered from the vehicle proved to be the undoing of the attacker, as the cameras recorded the moment Eckersley threatened the driver and stabbed him. Police later tracked Eckersley to a nearby pub, where a breath test revealed he was more than three times over the legal driving limit. DC Vickie Wallace praised the use of technology in securing the



conviction, noting that “the footage from the dashcams - capturing Eckersley’s initial threats, the stabbing, and the theft of the vehicle - was vital evidence.”

She added that “no one should go to work expecting to go through such a terrifying situation” and suggested the violence was “undoubtedly fuelled by the considerable amount of alcohol” the defendant had consumed. Eckersley, who gave no comment during police interviews, pleaded guilty to robbery, possession of a knife, drink driving, and driving without insurance.

WIDNES MAN AVOIDS JAIL AFTER RACIALLY MOTIVATED ATTACK ON TAXI DRIVER

A 62-year-old man from Widnes has been handed a suspended sentence after launching a violent, racially motivated assault on a taxi driver. Brian Clare pleaded guilty to racially aggravated assault at Warrington Magistrates Court following the incident, which began when he asked the driver where he was from.

The court heard that after the driver replied he was from Palestine, Clare began hurling abuse, telling him to “go back to your own country” and “you have come here to make money and kill people.”

The situation escalated when Clare refused to leave the vehicle.

According to prosecutor Mark Baker, Clare punched the driver in

the back of the head, stuck his fingers down the man’s throat, and dug his nails into the victim’s ears until they bled. He also headbutted the driver’s nose after getting out of the car.

Defence solicitor Mark Lever stated that Clare was “extremely remorseful” and that his actions were influenced by views regarding Hamas although he could not recall a great deal about what happened.

Lever argued the outburst was out of character, stating: “It should be taken as only an incident for this offence. It’s not a view that he



takes on a regular basis.”

He also noted that Clare’s previous convictions were decades old, dating back to the 1980s and 90s. While the chair of the bench, Russell Malley, agreed the crime was serious enough for a prison sentence, he decided to suspend it. “We believe that this has passed the custody threshold, however you will not be going to prison today,” Malley said, noting a “realistic prospect of rehabilitation.”

Clare was given an 18-week sentence, suspended for a year, was ordered to complete 15 Rehabilitation Requirement Days, go on an alcohol monitoring tag for 90 days and he must pay £400 in compensation to the driver.

JUST DESERTS

FOUR-YEAR PRISON SENTENCE FOR CAMBS MAN WHO STOLE TAXI AT KNIFEPOINT

A Papworth Everard man has been jailed for four years after a “terrifying” midnight robbery where he held a knife to an Uber driver’s neck. Jason Edgar, 40, summoned the PHV to Riverside Road in Huntingdon just after midnight on November 28, but the journey quickly turned into a life-threatening ordeal for the driver. After initially trying to pull the driver out of his seat, Edgar

climbed into the back of the car and pressed a blade against the victim’s throat. He ordered the driver to shut off the car’s CCTV cameras and forced him to drive toward Cambourne. Once they reached Ermine Street South, Edgar told the man he was



stealing the car and demanded the keys. The driver, a man in his 40s who “feared for his life,” handed over the vehicle and walked away to call for help. Police were able to track Edgar down in the early hours of the morning and was arrested. On Friday, March 13, at Huntingdon Law Courts, Edgar was sentenced to prison after pleading guilty to robbery and possession of a knife.

VIOLENT DRUNK GIVEN 80 WEEKS IN JAIL FOR TERRIFYING RACIAL ATTACK ON DURHAM CABBIE

A drunk passenger subjected a Durham cabbie to a violent, racially-fuelled assault. Jonathan Olley, 38, lashed out at the driver on a trip from the city centre to West Cornforth after the cabbie struggled to locate the address. The court heard that Olley was so

heavily intoxicated at the start of the journey that the driver insisted on a £20 upfront payment. As the trip progressed, Olley’s behaviour turned aggressive. He



snatched the driver’s phone and launched a physical assault, punching the man repeatedly in the head and face, knocking his glasses off. During the struggle, Olley reportedly threatened to kill the driver and his family if he was not taken to his destination. The victim was left with facial injuries and was described as being “trapped” in his own vehicle during the ordeal.

While Olley’s defence argued that he was an alcoholic with no memory of the incident and felt “ashamed” of his actions, the judge emphasised the vulnerability of the driver, who was forced to continue the journey in a lonely area with no help nearby. Olley, of Gateshead, pleaded guilty to racially aggravated assault causing actual bodily harm. As Olley was already serving a suspended sentence, the judge handed down a total of 80 weeks in prison for the assault and the breach of his previous court order.

JAIL FOR RENFREW THUG WHO POINTED REPLICIA PISTOL AT DRIVER’S FACE

A 31-year-old man who threatened to shoot a PH driver in the head during a “terrifying” confrontation has been jailed for 26 months. Gary Todd was high on street Valium when he pointed an airsoft pistol, designed to look like a real American self-loading handgun, at driver Mr. Awais. The incident began at midnight on December 1, when the driver refused to allow a dog into his vehicle. The court heard that Todd became aggressive, shouting and swearing

at the driver for rejecting the pet. During the assault, Todd brandished the gold-coloured replica and made racist threats. The driver fled and called for help, leading police to declare a firearms emergency and seal off the road. Armed officers stormed a property after Todd tried to evade capture by climbing through a window. The replica gun was recovered and found to be broken. The Sheriff told Todd: “This is an offence of the utmost seriousness.”

SHAME SHAME

TAXI GANG JAILED AFTER SMUGGLING HUNDREDS OF MIGRANTS FROM UK TO FRANCE

A group of cabbies who helped a criminal gang smuggle hundreds of migrants out of the UK in the back of lorries has been sentenced. The operation was led by 54-year-old Madjid Belabes, an Uber Eats driver who pocketed nearly £290,000 by charging people £1,200 each to be transported to mainland Europe.

Between late 2022 and 2023, Belabes organised 26 trips, at one point leading to the discovery of 58 people hidden in a single vehicle by French officials.

The syndicate specifically recruited cabbies because their presence on the road would not look suspicious to police if they were stopped with multiple passengers.

These drivers would pick up migrants in London and ferry them to secluded lay-bys in Kent,



where they were loaded into HGVs. While Belabes was jailed for 10 years 9 months in November, his associates Samir Zerguine and Mohamed Issaoun received prison terms of two years and 23 months respectively at Kingston Crown Court on March 13. Three other men in the plot: received suspended sentences.

NCA investigators used phone records and CCTV to dismantle the

network, noting that the gang treated human beings like “commodities.”

NCA officer John Turner highlighted the callous nature of the crime, stating: “Belabes and these taxi drivers didn’t care about the potentially fatal dangers facing migrants hidden in lorry trailers. Their only concern was making money.”

Prosecutors emphasised that the plot was driven by “pure greed” and represented a serious breach of border security. Andrew Hudson of the CPS warned that while this specific case did not end in tragedy, “smuggling people across borders in lorries is highly dangerous.”

Authorities have pledged to remain relentless in dismantling similar organised crime rings that put lives at risk for profit.

CARDIFF CABBIE BANNED AFTER COLLISION LEAVES PEDESTRIAN WITH LIFE CHANGING INJURIES

A Cardiff cabbie has been handed a driving ban and a community order after ploughing into a pedestrian and running over his leg during a botched turn.

Khalid Gadalseed, 50, was behind the wheel of a Mercedes Vito in September 2023, when he struck Ioan Williams in Cardiff city centre. The impact knocked Mr. Williams to the ground before the vehicle drove over him, leaving him with a broken leg that required surgery to install plates and screws.

The court heard a harrowing account of the aftermath from Mr. Williams, who spent nine days in

the hospital and was forced to move into his mother’s home.

“The impact caused a severe injury to my left leg and significant damage,” Mr. Williams stated. “There was a possibility I might never walk again. Hearing that was extremely distressing.”

The victim described a gruelling recovery involving three months in a wheelchair, constant pain, and the eventual breakdown of his relationship. “I have lost my independence, physical ability and been put under emotional and financial strain,” he added.

Defending Gadalseed, who has no

previous convictions, barrister Matthew Comer argued that the defendant was a sole carer for his children and deeply sorry for the incident, describing it as “really a horrible accident.”

However, Recorder Angharad Price rejected that characterisation during sentencing, telling Gadalseed: “This wasn’t an accident. Your lapse of concentration led to serious injuries which have had a profound effect on your victim.”

Gadalseed was sentenced to a six-month community order with a curfew and was disqualified from driving for 12 months.

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SHAME SHAME

LICHFIELD PRIVATE HIRE DRIVER SPARED JAIL AFTER JUDGE COUNTS OUT FATAL 5-SECOND LAPSE

A private hire driver has narrowly avoided prison after hitting and killing a pedestrian on a Birmingham ring road.

Walter Burke, 63, was found guilty of causing death by careless driving following a trial that featured a dramatic courtroom demonstration of his failure to react.

The incident occurred early on October 21, 2023, Jasbir Singh, 59, walked into the middle of the A4540 Boulton Middleway.

The court heard that Mr. Singh was intoxicated, with a blood alcohol level twice the legal driving limit. While the road was wet, visibility was described as good, and other motorists had successfully steered around the pedestrian.

Burke, driving a SEAT Toledo at approximately 30mph, did not slow down or move out of the way.

At Birmingham Crown Court on March 12, Judge Peter Cooke highlighted the length of time Burke had to react by counting aloud to five. "Just think about being at the wheel of a car doing 30mph and not paying attention for one... two... three... four... five. Is that momentary?" the judge asked.

Prosecutors stated that while Burke's brake lights flashed, he did not actually decelerate or take evasive action until after the impact. Burke later claimed he thought someone had thrown a brick at his car and did not realise he had hit a person.

Joey Kwong for the defence,



argued that Burke was "deeply distressed" and has suffered significantly since the accident.

"He expresses remorse and repeatedly states he is sorry. He maintains the collision was an accident," Kwong said, noting that Burke has stopped driving and now struggles with his mental health.

Judge Cooke described the case as a "hazard" created by the victim that required other drivers to "take proper care." He stated there was "absolutely no excuse" for Burke's failure to see Mr. Singh but decided to suspend the prison sentence by "the narrowest of margins."

Burke was sentenced to 16 months in prison, suspended for two years. He must also complete 240 hours of unpaid work and is banned from driving for five years.

HASTINGS CABBIE CONVICTED OF MULTIPLE SEXUAL ASSAULTS AGAINST PASSENGERS

A self-employed cabbie is facing a prison sentence after being found guilty of a series of "predatory" sexual offences against women in Hastings.

Abdulhamid Alammur, 34, from St Leonards, was convicted following a trial at Lewes Crown Court on March 6, in relation to a 2024 attack that came to light during a separate investigation.

The court heard that on November 29, 2024, a woman in her 30s booked a cab to take her home from a friend's house. Alammur picked her up but, instead of taking

her to her destination, drove her to a secluded location where he sexually assaulted her. The offences were only discovered while police were investigating a separate sexual assault reported by another woman in April 2025.

Alammur was already in custody for the April allegations when he was charged for the November incident. In a trial held in October 2025, he was convicted of sexual assault regarding the April case. Following his most recent trial, a jury found him guilty of sexual assault and causing a person to engage in

non-penetrative sexual activity for the November 2024 attack. He was cleared of false imprisonment.

DC Christina Bales, of the Hastings Safe-guarding Investigation Unit, praised the survivors for their bravery, stating: "These were serious and predatory offences committed against women who should have felt safe. I would like to commend the victims for their courage in coming forward and supporting the investigation."

Alammur remains in custody and will be sentenced for all convictions on a date yet to be fixed.

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ALL THINGS LICENSING

Article by Mike Smith, Senior Specialist for Licensing and Community Safety at Guildford Borough Council and Vice-Chair of the Institute of Licensing South East Region:
www.instituteoflicensing.org

Please note that this article represents my own views which are not presented as the views of the Institute of Licensing or Guildford BC.

A joyride through archaic taxi laws: furious driving, cockfighting, & a long overdue review

Like many TV viewers I've been enjoying the Young Sherlock series on Amazon Prime recently which harks back to a simpler age where taxis were operating in their original form; the horse and cart. In fact, Sherlock Holmes was first published in 1887, some 40 years after the main law governing hackney carriages, the **Town Police Clauses Act 1847** came into effect. The year 1847 also saw the publication of *Wuthering Heights* currently in its latest incarnation in cinemas, and also the peak of the Irish potato famine.

Worryingly, if you ever feel that modern regulation can be a little... quirky... you may be surprised to hear that the **Town Police Clauses Act 1847** is still the main law governing hackney carriages today.

Yes, while we now have electric vehicles, contactless payments and app bookings; the legal foundations of the taxi trade remain laid down at a time when the biggest transport innovation was "*a slightly faster horse*" and bear baiting, cockfighting, and furious driving were all considered pressing public policy concerns, and in true Victorian style, Parliament solved this by putting everything in one Act.

In this month's article, being April where it is traditional to play a prank or two at the beginning of the month, and at a time where we are eagerly anticipating some form of legislative change, I thought I would take a light-hearted look at some of the Victorian era quirks in what remains the cornerstone of taxi laws in the 21st Century.

Victorian legislators: solving every problem in one go

The 1847 Act is a marvel, a sort of swiss army knife of public order law. Among the offences it still lists:

- Bear baiting
- Bull baiting
- Cockfighting
- Obstructing a street with a piano
- Furious driving
- Improper sweeping

- Lighting fireworks disorderly
- And of course, regulating hackney carriages

It is genuinely the case that the same legal instrument used today to control taxi fares also contains detailed instructions on what to do if someone starts a cockfight in the high street.

Why? Good question! Perhaps the Victorians didn't categorise and wanted a deliberately flexible law, so they simply wrote every public nuisance they could think of into a single document and sealed it with a wax stamp.

Originally the Act addressed indecent exposure, obscene publications and prostitution, forming the early part of public morality legislation. Turning to hackney carriages, the Act empowers 'Commissioners' to licence hackney carriages within prescribed distances, regulate drivers and enforce penalties for unlicensed operation. Licences must be registered, renewed annually and maintained by proprietors with provisions for suspension or revocation for offences.

Plying for hire

The 'Commissioners mentioned' in the Act were, at the time, local improvement commissioners, trustees, or similar bodies authorised to regulate policing, paving, lighting, and watching in specific towns or districts. They were responsible to make sure hackney carriage services were licensed, and that no one was '*plying for hire*' without being duly permitted, much like local authorities today.

Picture a dimly lit Victorian street, the kind where the pale glow of gas lamps barely pushes back the night. The lamps hiss softly, their glass globes haloed with mist rising from the damp cobblestones. A light fog sits close to the ground, swallowing sound and softening everything it touches. Through the gloom stands a lone hackney carriage, its painted lacquered body catching the wavering gaslight in dull, amber reflections. The horse stamps the ground now and then, sending up small puffs of steam from its nostrils as it waits. Its harness jingles faintly, the only sign of movement on an otherwise still street.

There is no reason for such a carriage to be here unless it is plying for hire. Hackney carriages were working vehicles. Drivers wouldn't loiter in the cold simply for leisure. And this one is positioned exactly where one would expect: just outside a theatre whose evening performance has recently ended. The theatre

ALL THINGS LICENSING



doors have spilled their last few patrons onto the street. Their excited chatter fades into the darkness as they hurry toward their destinations. The façade of the theatre looks almost ghostly under the gas lamps that flank the entrance.

But the carriage waits, its driver perched high on the box seat, silhouetted by the faint backlight of the theatre doorway behind him. He's wrapped in a heavy coat and a well-worn top hat pulled low, keeping watch for latecomers or lingering playgoers seeking a ride home.

The street is otherwise quiet. Shops are shuttered tight; windows are dark. This is not a place where carts would be left unattended, nor where horses and wagons would be idling unless there was profit to be made. A working hackney is a purposeful presence its very being here announces its role. In the Victorian cityscape the hackney carriage isn't just transportation, it is a familiar beacon of the era, an unmistakable sign of a cabman waiting for trade in the hours when the theatres empty and respectable citizens hurry home.

It is upon this background that 'plying for hire' prosecutions are still instigated today.

Section 62: when you lose your taxi... and your horse

One of my particular favourites is Section 62, which deals with the problem of drivers "abandoning" their hackney carriage. The Act provides that:

1. If a driver abandons their carriage,
2. The police may seize it,
3. Take it, the horse and any harness, to a stable,
4. And then charge the owner for the privilege.

This power still exists today and is something many licensing officers use in cases where drivers leave their vehicles unattended on the taxi rank to nip to the shops or use other local facilities. Imagine the modern equivalent of this enforcement process:

"Dear Sir,

We located your unattended hackney carriage outside Greggs and have safely accommodated your Toyota Prius. Please collect it from the station and settle your flat bed truck recovery and parking fees."

Byelaws: the model regulations we somehow still use

Alongside the 1847 Act, councils still rely on DfT model byelaws – some of which feel like they were drafted with a quill pen while someone argued with their manservant. A few of my favourites from the model byelaws include:

1. Drivers must behave in a "civil and orderly manner": Translation: no scowling at passengers or being rude, even the ones who insist on paying with a £50 at 2am.
2. Drivers must be "clean and respectably dressed" Timeless advice, though Victorian "respectable dress" probably involved far more bowler hats and waistcoats.
3. No passenger may wilfully soil/damage the carriage Originally intended for muddy boots and misbehaving livestock. Today: mostly kebabs or perhaps that last tequila before you left the pub which never ends well.
4. Drivers must provide "reasonable assistance with luggage"

Once meant helping with trunks, hat boxes, and crates of chickens. Now: manoeuvring 35kg wheeled suitcases designed by an aerospace engineer in an airport short-term drop-off where you are charged for the privilege.

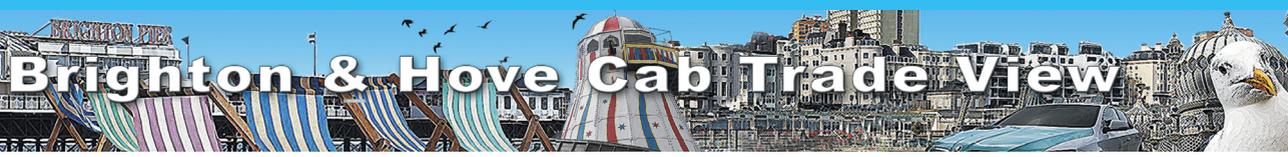
In conclusion: a Law with Victorian charm - but not for much longer?

As we hopefully move toward modernisation, it's worth appreciating the idiosyncratic history behind taxi law. After all:

- Few professions can say they're governed by legislation that also prevents cockfighting.
- Fewer still rely on a law allowing police to stable horses.
- And absolutely nobody else is waiting for a 19th century statute to be reviewed so it can stop double handling rules on fireworks and hackney fares.

Change is coming; but until the new framework arrives, the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 remains our wonderfully eccentric if not somewhat frustrating regulatory companion.

And long may it continue preventing furious driving in the meantime.



Andy Peters

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I recently met up with Sian Berry, Green Party MP for Brighton Pavillion along with my trade colleague Jeff Howell, from Streamline Taxis, jointly presenting 80 years of local trade experience between us (I keep saying I must get a proper job). Joining us was Green Cllr Kerry Picket, who is a regular attendee at our Trade Forum meetings, and arranged by the delightful Matt from the Green Party Hub in Brighton.

This followed an email I sent to Sian regarding the current trade issues, forever mistakenly referred to as 'cross-border hiring' which is actually 'predominantly out of area working' (as I keep banging on about) and the government's death wish on the trade where it intends to remove local licensing and hand it over to Transport Authority faceless entities.

We learnt that Sian comes from a family taxi business background in Cheltenham and actually worked in a taxi office in her teens (paper, pen and radio) so that was good to know! I won't go into every detail that we spoke about but it covered a good hours' worth of Jeff and me moaning about what is going on with hundreds of out-of-town cars predominantly working here and emphasising the recent increase of Portsmouth cars working in breach of their respective licensing conditions (more on this further down).

Real emphasis was made on the growing dreaded fear that is spreading in the trade here and across the country of the government clearly preferring to support Uber in its pledge to take over the trade and completely control it. Am I exaggerating? No, the evidence being presented each week clearly shows this along with this government clearly despising localism.

Sian was very keen to attend our next Trade Forum bun fight, if available, which is encouraging, but I could not assure her that I would be on my best behaviour.

Jeff and I considered that the meeting with Sian and Kerry was productive, even if it was to just have the opportunity to provide information from a local perspective on how things are. Ironically, when we both left the meeting and stepped outside, two Chichester, three Lewes and one Portsmouth PHVs passed us by the doorway in convoy. I thought I saw the driver of the last one stick two fingers up to us... or that could have been much over-active imagination.

At this point I do need to state that I also wrote to Peter Kyle, Labour MP for Hove and Portslade, who is my MP, and also Chris Ward, Labour MP for Brighton Kemptown and Peacehaven. I explained in detail about the trade issues and Peter Kyle was good enough to provide me with a supportive response including: *"Hopefully you remember that I was a supporter of what I called 'levelling the playing field' to help taxis against the rise of Uber. I now regularly see many, many out of town cars, so I also take your point. I love that Brighton and Hove taxis take such pride in their work/cars/role in the City."*

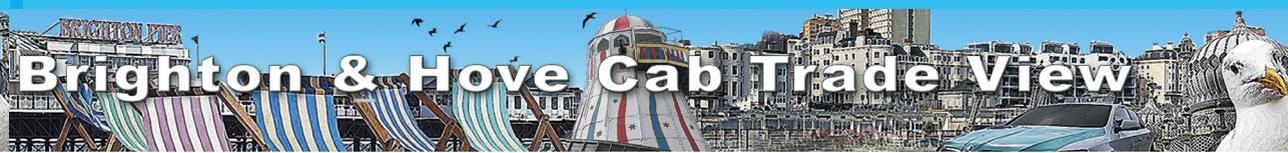
I did not receive a response from Chris Ward MP.

Increasing number of Portsmouth PHVs

Last month I wrote about councillors in Portsmouth who stated concerns regarding the amount of Wolverhampton PHVs working in their city, which is quite ironic really because we have seen an increase in Portsmouth PHVs here. But the rub is that many of these Portsmouth drivers actually live in Brighton & Hove, similarly many Chichester, Lewes and Southampton PHV drivers live here too. Quite clearly these drivers do not have ability, or cannot be bothered more likely, to reach the required level to gain a Brighton & Hove licence and so choose to go to softer areas to gain a licence and then predominantly work here.

And what's the reason for that? Well, it's unquestionably down to those areas such as Portsmouth not requiring an extensive topographical Knowledge Test like we have in Brighton & Hove, applied equally to drive a PHV or hack on a Dual Driver Badge, because councillors in those areas fully advocate that satnav is best! I won't dwell on that point because I could fill up several pages, but my usual response to this is that if you go to a three star Michelin restaurant you don't expect the chef to look up on YouTube how to cook your dinner.

However, recently there's been a clear pattern of Portsmouth drivers blatantly removing door livery, which is a condition of licensing, and over the past three weeks I've provided six reports of drivers doing this. Now to give Portsmouth licensing credit where it's due, I've received replies stating the drivers have been warned and gratitude for providing the reports, requesting I continue sending them. My reply to this was: *"OK, but that I shouldn't have to"* - this highlights the issue of allowing magnetic door signs that can be easily removed when the driver works predominantly out-of-sight and out-of-mind of respective local licensing enforcement, if that actually exists in the first place!



Brighton & Hove Cab Trade View

A major issue here is that we see cars without any rear plates or door signs, obviously working for Uber, completely unidentifiable with obvious clues such as no smoking stickers in the window. It is categorically the wild west in the streets and repeated throughout the country! It's like a time warp before the LGMPA 1976 allowed local authorities to control the unlicensed PH drivers and cars.

Magnetic council identification door livery signs are clearly a public safety issue that can be removed as demonstrated, and consequently used on non-licensed cars for criminal activity, and the sooner licensing authorities cotton onto this the better! Ironically, those drivers that were warned were told that any future complaint about missing door signs would result in having to have permanent sticker type ones. Hey Portsmouth! How about just banning magnetic door signs then time will not be taken up with ensuring that Portsmouth phv driver comply with vehicle licensing conditions!

Horsham

On 2 February 2026, Horsham DC Licensing Committee suspended a licensed private hire operator for two weeks for breaking the triple lock subcontracting rules. This was about a Horsham operator using a PH driver/vehicle for which it did not hold an operator licence. There was no other information on this as Horsham council decided to hide the details from the public. So, I did an FOI request for the details of the operator. Horsham council wrote back: *"We hold information in relation to these contracts. However, we are withholding it in accordance with the exemption at Section 43(2) of the FOI Act regarding commercial confidentiality. Section 43(2) exempts information whose disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person (an individual, a company, the public authority itself or any other legal entity). This is a qualified exemption and is subject to the public interest test. We therefore have to balance the public interest in withholding the information against the public interest in disclosure"*

There was further blah, blah, blah....What a load of rollox!

It is unequivocally in the public interest to be fully aware of what operator/cab company decided to blatantly break the law and I will be following this up with a cunning plan to force Horsham to reveal the full details. Should that fail then I will take it further with the Information Commissioner's Office.

I usually use Uber

I did an office job (Streamline) via our app to go around about 1.5miles, which on the meter would be about £8. Picked up the lady, had a nice chat and then came the dreaded words: *"I normally use Uber"*. So, with gritted teeth I politely said: *"OK, what made you use Streamline this time"*. She replied: *"The Uber app price was £25"* and continued: *"When the price is too high I use you"*.

I get this so often and I gave my usual response by slamming on the brakes, and shouted: *"GET OUT!"* Or rather that is what I wanted to do, but of course being fit and proper, I just carried on with the conversation being pleasantly polite, saying: *"Well, if customers only use us when Uber is surge pricing then eventually you won't have the choice because Uber is determined to wipe the local companies out"* This did sink in and she concurred with that and then also told me that she had a couple of experiences with Uber drivers not looking like their photos. I explained that the chances of getting a Brighton and Hove PH driver/vehicle with local council-controlled CCTV on Uber was probably around a five-to-one chance. I further explained that Uber uses drivers from other areas that our licensing department has no control over. I think that it sank in, just as the meter clicked over to £8.

At the time of writing this, having got home around 2am, I had been sitting on the rank at Hove station, waiting for the last commuters to arrive, with several out-of-town cars appearing and also waiting for them. I saw a young couple across the road doing the usual of looking at a phone. They now walk over to me and half get in the car asking: *"How much to Holland Road?"* I reply: *"Around £8 on the meter."* She says: *"Uber is showing £6"*. This is the gritted teeth situation again, so I say: *"Get Uber then"*. But they get in anyway and she says: *"I thought it was all Uber"*. What went through my mind could not be printed so I simply and calmly said: *"No"*.

I was spot on with the £8 and all was good and they thanked me as I got out. But if Uber was only showing £6 then what was the driver getting? At a minimum 20% commission that would be just £4.80, and this was just after midnight. Well, good luck to them if they are willing to slave away at twenty-year-old fares because whilst I have no doubt that Uber drivers make a good living, there must be so much more wear and tear with all the extra miles needed to make up low priced fares.

Am I right or wrong here?

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Here at Patterson Law, we have recently had several cases of people being prosecuted for “causing serious injury by careless driving”. The offence itself is very serious, carrying a minimum 12-month disqualification, and in most cases a community order such as unpaid work, and in serious cases, prison.

It sounds very serious, and most people think they will never be prosecuted for it – but the facts of most cases are quite innocuous, and it really could happen to anybody. For example if you accidentally run into the back of someone and they fracture their arm (a scenario that could happen to any of us) that’s enough for prosecution and a minimum 12-month ban.

So this month, we look at the offence itself and what professional drivers can do to protect themselves.

The offence

Historically, where the standard of someone’s driving has fallen below what is expected, there are one of two offences that the police can prosecute:

- The first is careless driving, which carries between 3–9 penalty points as well as financial penalties.
- The second is dangerous driving, where the standard of driving falls far below what’s expected, and which carries a minimum 12-month ban and an extended retest.

These offences have been around for decades and were the two main charges brought against bad driving.

In 2012, the government created a new offence of “causing serious injury by dangerous driving”, where if your driving was particularly dangerous and serious injury was caused, you would not just receive a minimum 12-month disqualification, but would also most likely go to prison.

But for many years after that, there was a significant gap between people who caused serious injury where their driving was careless and perhaps only received 5 or 6 penalty points, and those who caused serious injury where their driving was dangerous, who would end up in prison and be banned for years.

So in 2022, the government introduced a new offence of “causing serious injury by careless driving” to bridge that gap.

What is careless driving?

Section 3ZA of the Road Traffic Act 1988 states that “a person is to be regarded as driving without due care and attention if ... the way they drive falls below what would be expected of a competent and careful driver.”

Every case is dealt with on its own facts. Generally speaking, the Highway Code is a good place to start. A breach of the Highway Code does not automatically mean that your driving is careless, but likewise, always following the Highway Code will not automatically protect you from prosecution. It all depends on the specific circumstances, and driving without due care and attention can be something as serious as overtaking on a blind bend or as minor as accidentally clipping a kerb when turning into a side street.

What is serious injury?

Section 1A of the Road Traffic Act 1988 states: “serious injury means physical harm which amounts to grievous bodily harm.”

Grievous bodily harm (GBH) usually means very serious injury – but it is not limited to ‘life-changing’ injuries. A significant cut to the skin is likely to be considered ‘serious’, as will a broken bone. Injury to a finger could also amount to grievous bodily harm where the victim is a professional musician.

Causation is another important point. You do not necessarily have to be the main cause of the serious injury, simply “a” cause.

For example, if you have a minor bump with another vehicle and, in most cases, both parties would walk away unharmed, but the other driver was not wearing their seatbelt and, as a result, suffered serious injury, you could still be liable. Even though the other driver was the main cause of their own injuries, you contributed to that outcome and could therefore be prosecuted.

Sentences

It is in sentencing that things can become quite concerning.

Generally speaking, sentencing works in categories depending on two factors: **harm** and **culpability**. The following table sets this out, followed by a list of relevant factors. You identify where the offence sits within the table and work from there.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Harm	Culpability		
	A	B	C
Harm 1	Starting point 1 year's custody	Starting point 26 week's custody	Starting point High level community order
	Category range 26 weeks - 2 years' custody	Category range High level community order - 1 year's custody	Category range Medium level community order - 26 weeks's custody
Harm 2	Starting point 26 week's custody	Starting point High level community order	Starting point Medium level community order
	Category range High level community order - 1 year's custody	Category range Medium level community order - 26 week's custody	Category range Low level community order - High level community order

Culpability A:

- Driving was just below the threshold for dangerous driving

Culpability B:

- Unsafe manoeuvre or positioning
- Engaging in a brief but avoidable distraction
- Driving at a speed inappropriate for the prevailing road or weather conditions
- Driving impaired by alcohol and/or drugs
- Driving a vehicle which is unsafe, or where the driver's visibility or control is obstructed
- Driving while impaired due to a known medical condition and/or in disregard of medical advice
- Driving without adequate sleep or rest

Culpability C:

- Just over the threshold for careless driving
- Momentary lapse of concentration

Harm 1:

- Particularly grave and/or life-threatening injury caused
- Injury results in lifelong dependency on care or medical treatment

Harm 2:

- All other cases

The offence in practice

Let's put this into practice:

Example 1

A driver passes a cyclist slightly too closely. The cyclist is startled, falls off their bike, and breaks their elbow. The only wrongdoing on the part of the driver was passing a little too closely. Legally, this person may still be guilty. They were "a" cause of the injury, and the broken elbow is sufficient to amount to serious injury.

Applying the sentencing guidelines, this would be considered low-level (Culpability C, Harm 2), but the driver could still expect a 12-month ban and around 100 hours of community service.

It seems incredible that something so minor can have such serious consequences, especially for a professional driver. However, that is the current position in law.

Example 2

A driver is travelling in moderate traffic approaching a red light. They glance down at a phone in a cradle, distracted by a text message. The driver then rear-ends the vehicle in front, causing a broken neck. The other driver remains in hospital for several weeks and requires ongoing care at home.

Applying the sentencing guidelines, this would fall under Culpability B ("*a brief but avoidable distraction*") and potentially Harm 1. This means a starting point of a Category B1 offence – a custodial sentence of around 6 months.

What can I do to protect myself?

The best thing any driver can do is drive carefully. Never become distracted by your phone. Follow the Highway Code. Give cyclists plenty of space. Do not exceed the speed limit. Avoid doing anything that could be criticised by the police.

You never know when a scooter may appear in your blind spot, when a pedestrian may step out, or when the car in front may brake suddenly. If an accident occurs and you were using your phone or speeding, the police will look for fault immediately.

We always recommend using a dash cam. We deal with many cases where trials hinge on witness evidence alone and credibility. Dash cam footage can quickly clarify events and has, on many occasions, exonerated our clients.

In the worst-case scenario, if you are prosecuted, seek legal advice immediately. If you have any questions about traffic law, please feel free to contact us, details below.

If you need any advice on motoring matters, email advice@pattersonlaw.co.uk or call 01626 359800 for free legal advice.



THE NATIONAL HACKNEY FARES TABLE

APRIL 2026

RISE IN 2026	
RISE IN 2025	
RISE IN 2024	
RISE IN 2023	
RISE IN 2022	RISE IN 2019
RISE IN 2021	RISE IN 2017
RISE IN 2020	RISE IN 2015
NO SET FARE	

UPDATED DAILY
www.phtm.co.uk

NATIONAL AVERAGE
2 MILE
HACKNEY FARE
TARIFF ONE
7.42

POSITION	TARIFF ONE 2 MILE FARE	
	COUNCIL	
17	WORTHING	£9.10
18	HERTSMERE	£9.08
19	EDINBURGH	£9.00
20	MAIDSTONE	£9.00
21	MID SUSSEX	£9.00
22	ORKNEY	£9.00
23	READING	£9.00
24	TONBRIDGE & MALLING	£9.00
25	DACORUM	£8.98
26	BRENTWOOD	£8.90
27	CHELTHENHAM	£8.90
28	EAST LOTHIAN	£8.90
29	MIDLOTHIAN	£8.90
30	REIGATE & BANSTEAD	£8.90
31	SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE	£8.90
32	STROUD	£8.90
33	UTTLESFORD	£8.90
34	VALE OF WHITE HORSE	£8.90
35	TORRIDGE	£8.79
36	BRIGHTON & HOVE	£8.70
37	EAST DEVON	£8.70
38	RESTORMEL	£8.70
39	SEVENOAKS	£8.70
40	SWINDON	£8.70
41	WOKING	£8.70
42	SHETLAND ISLES	£8.64
43	CAMBRIDGE CITY	£8.60
44	TEST VALLEY	£8.60
45	TUNBRIDGE WELLS	£8.60
46	WEST BERKSHIRE	£8.60
47	BCP	£8.52
48	PENWITH	£8.52
49	CLACKMANNAN	£8.50
50	EAST AYRSHIRE	£8.50
51	SLOUGH	£8.50
52	WYRE	£8.50
53	COLCHESTER	£8.40
54	EAST SUFFOLK (NORTH)	£8.40
55	EASTLEIGH	£8.40
56	LEEDS	£8.40
57	MEDWAY	£8.40
58	SOUTHAMPTON	£8.40
59	WATFORD	£8.40
60	DARTFORD	£8.30
61	HUNTINGDONSHIRE	£8.30
62	LINCOLN	£8.30
63	RUNNYMEDE	£8.30
64	SWALE	£8.30
65	TORBAY	£8.30
66	WILTSHIRE	£8.25
67	BASINGSTOKE & DEANE	£8.20
68	BROXBOURNE	£8.20
69	EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE	£8.20
70	EAST HERTS	£8.20
71	GRAVESHAM	£8.20
72	HART	£8.20
73	MANCHESTER	£8.20
74	NORTH HERTS	£8.20
75	WOKINGHAM	£8.20
76	FOREST OF DEAN	£8.13
77	HASTINGS	£8.10
78	IPSWICH	£8.10
79	OXFORD CITY	£8.10
80	PLYMOUTH	£8.10
81	DUNDEE CITY	£8.08

POSITION	TARIFF ONE 2 MILE FARE	
	COUNCIL	
82	MOLE VALLEY	£8.08
83	BRECKLAND	£8.00
84	BUCKINGHAMSHIRE	£8.00
85	CHICHESTER	£8.00
86	COVENTRY	£8.00
87	DOVER	£8.00
88	EAST LINDSEY	£8.00
89	HARLOW	£8.00
90	HORSHAM	£8.00
91	NORTH YORKSHIRE	£8.00
92	NOTTINGHAM	£8.00
93	RIBBLE VALLEY	£8.00
94	RUSHCLIFFE	£8.00
95	SHROPSHIRE	£8.00
96	SOUTH AYRSHIRE	£8.00
97	SOUTH GLOUCESTER	£8.00
98	TANDRIDGE	£8.00
99	YORK	£8.00
100	DENBIGHSHIRE	£7.90
101	HINCKLEY & BOSWORTH	£7.90
102	ROTHER	£7.90
103	STEVENAGE	£7.85
104	ADUR	£7.80
105	BRACKNELL FOREST	£7.80
106	DORSET	£7.80
107	EASTBOURNE	£7.80
108	GLOUCESTER	£7.80
109	LEICESTER	£7.80
110	NORTH SOMERSET	£7.80
111	ROCHFORD	£7.80
112	RUSHMOOR	£7.80
113	SOUTHEND ON SEA	£7.80
114	SOUTH HAMS	£7.80
115	STOCKPORT	£7.80
116	SURREY HEATH	£7.80
117	WAVERLEY	£7.80
118	MELTON	£7.75
119	CHELMSFORD	£7.70
120	HIGH PEAK	£7.70
121	NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE	£7.70
122	WEALDON	£7.70
123	WINDSOR & MAIDENHEAD	£7.70
124	STRATFORD ON AVON	£7.68
125	NORTH TYNESIDE	£7.65
126	RENFREWSHIRE	£7.65
127	WARWICK	£7.65
128	ASHFORD	£7.60
129	BIRMINGHAM	£7.60
130	BRISTOL	£7.60
131	CONWY	£7.60
132	DUMBARTON & VALE OF LEVEN	£7.60
133	FIFE	£7.60
134	GREAT YARMOUTH	£7.60
135	ISLE OF MAN	£7.60
136	KERRIER	£7.60
137	KINGS LYNN & WEST NORFOLK	£7.60
138	MONMOUTHSHIRE	£7.60
139	SCOTTISH BORDERS	£7.60
140	SOLIHULL	£7.60
141	SOMERSET	£7.60
142	THREE RIVERS	£7.60
143	WEST SUFFOLK	£7.60
144	WEYMOUTH & PORTLAND	£7.60
145	WINCHESTER	£7.60
146	BATH & N. E. SOMERSET	£7.50

POSITION	TARIFF ONE 2 MILE FARE	
	COUNCIL	
1	LONDON (HEATHROW)	£14.00
2	EPSOM & EWELL	£13.40
3	TfL	£13.40
4	LUTON AIRPORT	£12.60
5	GUILDFORD	£10.00
6	JERSEY	£9.65
7	CARADON	£9.60
8	NORTH CORNWALL	£9.60
9	ARUN	£9.50
10	SPELTHORNE	£9.50
11	ELMBRIDGE	£9.50
12	EXETER	£9.50
13	GLASGOW	£9.30
14	CARRICK	£9.20
15	ST ALBANS	£9.15
16	GUERNSEY	£9.10

POSITION	TARIFF ONE 2 MILE FARE	
	COUNCIL	
147	MILTON KEYNES	£7.55
148	BEDFORD	£7.50
149	ANGUS	£7.50
150	CARDIFF	£7.50
151	CHESTER	£7.50
152	EPPING FOREST	£7.50
153	GOSPORT	£7.50
154	MID SUFFOLK	£7.50
155	SHEFFIELD	£7.50
156	SOUTH NORFOLK	£7.50
157	TAMESIDE	£7.50
158	THANET	£7.50
159	BRAINTREE	£7.40
160	CANTERBURY	£7.40
161	EAST HAMPSHIRE	£7.40
162	EAST RENFREW	£7.40
163	LEWES	£7.40
164	LIVERPOOL	£7.40
165	PORTSMOUTH UA	£7.40
166	SUNDERLAND	£7.40
167	S. LANARKSHIRE (CAMBUS/R' GLEN)	£7.40
168	STAFFORD	£7.40
169	TEWKESBURY	£7.40
170	WEST LOTHIAN	£7.40
171	WEST OXFORD	£7.40
172	WIRRAL	£7.40
173	NEW FOREST	£7.35
174	NEWARK & SHERWOOD	£7.32
175	BLACKBURN	£7.30
176	DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL	£7.30
177	KINGSTON-UPON-HULL	£7.30
178	NORTH DEVON	£7.30
179	NORTH KESTEVEN	£7.30
180	NORWICH	£7.30
181	SOUTH CAMBRIDGE	£7.30
182	VALE OF GLAMORGAN	£7.30
183	MORAY	£7.26
184	TEIGNBRIDGE	£7.26
185	NUNEATON & BEDWORTH	£7.25
186	PERTH & KINROSS	£7.25
187	CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE	£7.25
188	CALDERDALE	£7.22
189	BASILDON	£7.20
190	CASTLE POINT	£7.20
191	DERBY	£7.20
192	FAREHAM	£7.20
193	HAVANT	£7.20
194	LUTON	£7.20
195	NORTH WARWICK	£7.20
196	SOUTH LAKELAND	£7.20
197	WEST NORTHANTS	£7.20
198	CHESTERFIELD	£7.16
199	TAMWORTH	£7.14
200	ARGYLL & BUTE	£7.13
201	CANNOCK CHASE	£7.10
202	COTSWOLD	£7.10
203	CRAWLEY	£7.10
204	HIGHLAND	£7.10
205	ISLE OF WIGHT	£7.10
206	OLDHAM	£7.10
207	RUGBY	£7.10
208	HARBOROUGH	£7.09
209	ABERDEENSHIRE	£7.06
210	BABERGH	£7.00
211	BROMSGROVE	£7.00

POSITION	TARIFF ONE 2 MILE FARE	
	COUNCIL	
212	CARLISLE	£7.00
213	CARMARTHENSHIRE	£7.00
214	INVERCLYDE	£7.00
215	MACCLESFIELD	£7.00
216	NEWPORT	£7.00
217	PEMBROKESHIRE	£7.00
218	SWANSEA	£7.00
219	WELWYN HATFIELD	£7.00
220	COMHAIRLRE NAN EILEAN SIAR	£7.00
221	SANDWELL	£6.92
222	BURY	£6.90
223	CLYDEBANK	£6.90
224	FYLDE	£6.90
225	NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME	£6.90
226	EAST DUNBARTONSHIRE	£6.90
227	WORCESTER CITY	£6.90
228	ABERDEEN CITY	£6.80
229	BARROW IN FURNESS	£6.80
230	BLACKPOOL	£6.80
231	BOSTON	£6.80
232	BRIDGEND	£6.80
233	BROXTOWE	£6.80
234	CEREDIGION	£6.80
235	EAST STAFFORDSHIRE	£6.80
236	EAST SUFFOLK (SOUTH)	£6.80
237	EDEN	£6.80
238	ELLESMERE PORT	£6.80
239	MANSFIELD	£6.80
240	MID DEVON	£6.80
241	NORTH NORFOLK	£6.80
242	NORTH NORTHANTS	£6.80
243	SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE	£6.80
244	TENDRING	£6.80
245	TRAFFORD	£6.80
246	WIGAN	£6.80
247	WOLVERHAMPTON	£6.80
248	CHARNWOOD	£6.75
249	WALSALL	£6.75
250	MALVERN HILLS	£6.72
251	BLABY	£6.70
252	CONGLETON	£6.70
253	OADBY & WIGSTON	£6.70
254	ROTHERHAM	£6.70
255	STIRLING	£6.70
256	DUDLEY	£6.60
257	FOLKESTONE & HYTHE	£6.60
258	KNOWSLEY	£6.60
259	LANCASTER	£6.60
260	NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE	£6.60
261	S. LANARKSHIRE (E. KILBRIDE)	£6.60
262	SOUTH TYNESIDE	£6.60
263	SALFORD	£6.60
264	ST HELENS	£6.60
265	WAKEFIELD	£6.60
266	BASSETLAW	£6.50
267	DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY	£6.50
268	EREWASH	£6.50
269	GEDLING	£6.50
270	HALTON	£6.50
271	ROSSENDALE	£6.50
272	SEFTON	£6.80
273	TORFAEN	£6.50
274	DONCASTER	£6.48
275	HYNDBURN	£6.42
276	BLAENAU GWENT	£6.40

POSITION	TARIFF ONE 2 MILE FARE	
	COUNCIL	
277	COUNTY OF HEREFORD	£6.40
278	CREWE & NANTWICH	£6.40
279	DERBYSHIRE DALES	£6.40
280	NORTH AYRSHIRE	£6.40
281	NORTHUMBERLAND	£6.40
282	WEST LINDSEY	£6.40
283	EAST RIDING	£6.35
284	WARRINGTON	£6.35
285	ANGLESEY	£6.30
286	BARNSELY	£6.30
287	DARLINGTON	£6.30
288	GATESHEAD	£6.30
289	SOUTH HOLLAND	£6.30
290	SOUTH RIBBLE	£6.30
291	REDDITCH	£6.25
292	CHORLEY	£6.20
293	COPELAND	£6.20
294	FALKIRK	£6.20
295	FENLAND	£6.20
296	NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE	£6.20
297	S. LANARKSHIRE (HAMILTON)	£6.20
298	WYCHAVON	£6.20
299	WYRE FOREST	£6.14
300	BRADFORD	£6.10
301	NEATH PORT TALBOT	£6.10
302	S. LANARKSHIRE (CLYDESDALE)	£6.10
303	NORTHERN IRELAND	£6.06
304	ALLERDALE	£6.00
305	BOLTON	£6.00
306	GWYNEDD	£6.00
307	KIRKLEES	£6.00
308	NORTH WEST LEICESTER	£6.00
309	PETERBOROUGH	£6.00
310	POWYS	£6.00
311	PRESTON	£6.00
312	RHONDDA CYNON TAFF	£6.00
313	TELFORD & WREKIN	£6.00
314	THURROCK	£6.00
315	HARTLEPOOL	£5.90
316	NORTH LANARKSHIRE	£5.90
317	STOKE-ON-TRENT	£5.90
318	VALE ROYAL	£5.90
319	AMBER VALLEY	£5.80
320	FLINTSHIRE	£5.80
321	LICHFIELD	£5.80
322	MERTHYR TYDFIL	£5.80
323	NORTH EAST DERBYSHIRE	£5.75
324	CAERPHILLY	£5.70
325	ROCHDALE	£5.70
326	STOCKTON ON TEES	£5.70
327	ASHFIELD	£5.60
328	MIDDLESBROUGH	£5.60
329	WREXHAM	£5.60
330	PENDLE	£5.50
331	REDCAR & CLEVELAND	£5.50
332	SOUTH KESTEVEN	£5.30
333	STAFFS MOORLANDS	£5.20
334	WEST LANCASHIRE	£5.20
335	CHERWELL	£5.08
336	BURNLEY	£5.00
337	BOLSOVER	£4.60
338	MALDON	N.S.F.
339	RUTLAND	N.S.F.
340	SOUTH DERBYSHIRE	N.S.F.
341	WEST DEVON	N.S.F.

WORLDWIDE TAXI FOCUS

from USA



NYC TAXI SMASHES INTO FLOWER SHOP, TRAPPING PEDESTRIANS

Two women are recovering after a yellow taxi spiralled out of control and jumped a curb in Manhattan, hitting a storefront and plunging one victim into a basement.



The terrifying crash was captured on security footage showing the vehicle veering off the road and slamming into a deli and flower shop. Passengers and



witnesses described a scene of sudden “carnage” as the car plowed through pedestrians, glass, and debris. Brenna, a passenger inside the taxi at the time, recalled the moment the vehicle left the pavement: “Everything was normal and then all of a sudden, we hit the flower shop like it felt super... hard.”

Upon exiting the cab, she realised the gravity of the situation, adding: “We had no idea what happened... We saw someone on the ground. We saw someone was under the car.”

The impact was so violent that one woman was thrown onto the street while the other disappeared into the building’s cellar. A witness named Anthony, who was eating nearby, helped locate the trapped woman. “We tried calling her name and then we heard a little whisper: ‘I’m right here, I’m right here,’” he said.

Responders eventually moved the taxi to free the victims, both of whom were hospitalised along with the driver.

While the Department of Buildings found no structural damage to the property, the storefront and cellar were badly hit, leading officials to order the area sealed for safety. Reflecting on the chaos of the city streets, Anthony remarked: “Walking in Manhattan, it’s crazy.” Police and city inspectors are currently investigating what caused the driver to lose control.

NEWARK UBER DRIVER DONATES KIDNEY TO PASSENGER

An Uber driver, Tim Letts, 33, donated one of his kidneys to his 71-year-old passenger, Bill Sumiel, after meeting him during a ride from a dialysis centre in Newark, to his home. Sumiel told him that he had been on the waiting list for a transplant for more than three years and was suffering from kidney failure due to chronic diabetes.



Moved by the man’s story and strength during the conversation, Letts offered him his own organ, they began compatibility tests and, after being found compatible, the transplant surgery was successfully performed, which allowed Sumiel to leave dialysis behind and return to his normal life.

Currently, they both stay in touch and their friendship remains strong after the procedure, which has been described as an act of extraordinary generosity.

from Spain



SPANISH CABBIE ARRESTED AFTER ATTACK ON TOURIST FOR BURPING

Police in Fuengirola have arrested a 51-year-old taxi driver following a violent confrontation triggered by a passenger burping in his vehicle. The incident, which took place on February 23 along the popular seafront promenade, left a 65-year-old Irish tourist with serious head and facial injuries.

Authorities report that the driver became enraged by the passenger’s behaviour and ordered the man and his friend out of the cab. As the victim exited, the driver allegedly “punched him to the ground,” causing him to strike his head on the curb.

Emergency services found the holidaymaker with a bloody nose and a “large head wound” before rushing him to the Costa del Sol Hospital. The driver, held on suspicion of a “crime of wounding,” has been released on bail while the investigation continues.

from Australia



NEW \$3,000 FINES FOR CABBIES WHO MISTREAT DISABLED PASSENGERS

Taxi drivers in New South Wales are facing a massive crackdown on poor behaviour, with new fines of up to \$3,000 for those who refuse travel subsidies or mistreat passengers in wheelchairs. The strict measures aim to close “a long-standing gap in enforcement” that previously allowed some drivers to decline valid discount payments without facing any real penalty.

Under the new rules, the fine for starting the taximeter before a wheelchair user is safely secured has skyrocketed from \$300 to \$3,000. Authorities noted this practice unfairly hiked up fares for vulnerable riders. Drivers who refuse to accept the state’s 50 per cent travel subsidy docket or mistreat those with assistance animals also face the heavy new penalties. Minister for Disability Inclusion, Kate Washington, stated that people with disabilities should be able to travel “without concern over payment disputes or poor treatment,” noting that taxis are vital for getting people to work and social events.

The reforms aren’t just about penalties; they also aim to make pricing clearer for everyone. A new flat fare of \$60 has been set for trips between Sydney Airport and the central business district to end arguments over costs. While most drivers do the right thing, Transport Minister John Graham said the new laws send a “clear message” about the standards expected in the industry. Industry leaders have backed the move, with NSW Taxi Council Chief Executive, Nick Abraham, emphasising the importance of ensuring drivers who break the rules “are held accountable.”

significant travel disruptions as drivers from the “New Image Land Transportation” organisation refused to provide services. The group is protesting a new bill that would officially allow digital platforms to operate in federal zones, a move the drivers see as a direct threat to their livelihoods.

The taxi sector is demanding a written guarantee that current laws - which theoretically restrict apps from federal areas - will be upheld rather than changed to favour tech companies. “The entire sector will be present on the airport roads indefinitely, until the authorities give us a written commitment that the current law will not be modified and that the current legal framework will be respected,” the drivers stated. They argue that while they have followed strict regulations for years, authorities have failed to stop illegal competition from app-based drivers.

from Cyprus



PROTESTS AND THREATS OF AIRPORT CHAOS OVER ‘PIRATE’ TAXIS IN CYPRUS

Taxi drivers across Cyprus have brought their grievances to the streets of Nicosia and issued an ultimatum for an indefinite strike at Larnaca and Paphos airports. In a major show of force, a convoy of drivers moved from the GSP stadium to the transport ministry, parliament, and the presidential palace to protest against unlicensed “pirate” taxis and deteriorating infrastructure. The drivers are demanding immediate government intervention to stop illegal competition that they claim is “the cancer in this sector.”

The protests in the capital turned tense when drivers discovered Transport Minister, Alexis Vafeades, had left the ministry shortly before their arrival. “Once again, the minister has left, he did not stand up to face our colleagues,” said taxi union president Konstantinos Konstantinou. “He fled and we are very disappointed.” The union argues that while licensed drivers pay VAT and social security, illegal operators work “without taxi licences, with private vehicles, illegally, without insurance and a criminal record check.” The dispute has now escalated to the country’s main gateways, with drivers threatening to shut down airports unless the ministry addresses poor conditions and “piracy” by a strict deadline. Drivers are calling for better queuing spaces, basic facilities like toilets and bins at airports, and the right to use bus lanes.”

from Mexico



CABBIES BLOCK AIRPORT OVER APP DRIVERS DISPUTE

Taxi drivers shut down main access roads to Terminals 1 and 2 at Mexico City International Airport (AICM) in a major protest against the government's support for ride-hailing apps such as Uber and DiDi. The blockade, which began at 9am on March 11, caused

PHTM

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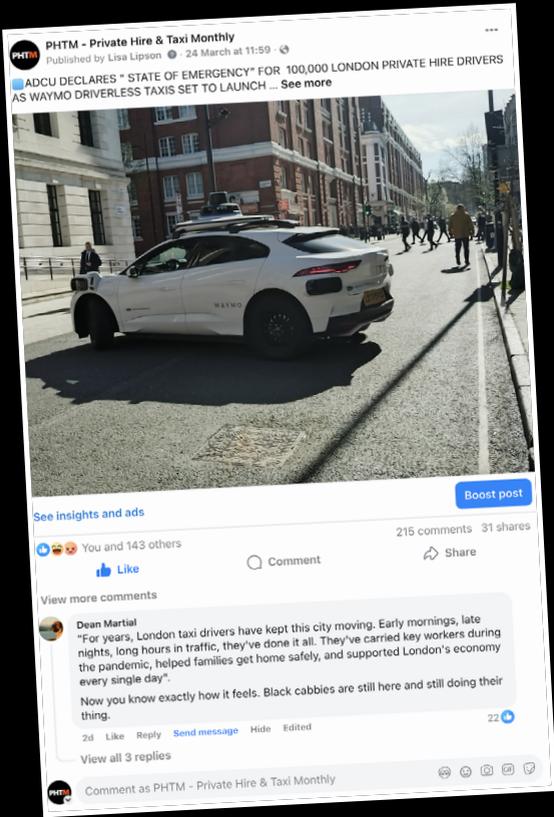
UPLOADED DAILY TO FACEBOOK

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like us...



43,580
of you already
have!!

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ACCOUNTANTS

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LIV GOLFERS TO SERVE IT UP TO PGA WHAT A STAR IS OUR MONTY

April beckons and with it a fantastic month for sports fans. The Masters in golf, the FA Cup and UEFA competitions reach their meaningful stages, the Grand National in racing and that's not forgetting the heroes of the green baize at the Crucible.

Strewth!

But first, to last month at Cheltenham. Followers of mine will know that I based my selections on a mythical 100 units and my return on investment was a staggering 187 units! That's nearly 90% profit over a week, something Goldman Sachs would love to achieve!

But enough of self-praise - first to Augusta and...

THE MASTERS

There is no doubt that LIV Golf has been viewed as the lesser of the golf tours with its players seen as mercenaries and only interested in lesser events, lesser rounds and for significantly more money. And?

But now they are competing again in the marquee events and I think the two superstars of the tour, **BRYSON DE CHAMBEAU** and **JON RAHM**, could well contest the Masters at 14/1 and 16/1 respectively. Both are in great form, Augusta plays to their strengths in that it's familiar and very, very long, and both Scottie Sheffler and Rory are lacking form, putting poorly and probably carrying niggles.

So, back with confidence outright and in speciality markets.

FA CUP and EUROPE

With the quarter finals taking place as we go to print, there is always the danger of a banana skin moment, but at the prices I think **ARSENAL** can overcome their loss to Man City in the EFL Cup and give some delayed comfort to their fans.

While I can't see them winning in Europe, I think the domestic double will satisfy their supporters and at 2/1 for Wembley vindication, I think the price is more than fair.



Now we are at the quarter final stage in Europe's three competitions, my final musings are as follows...

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE: PSG - 5/1

EUROPA LEAGUE: FC PORTO - 9/2

CONFERENCE LEAGUE: STRASBOURG - 7/2

N.B. The treble pays a whopping 148/1, although I would advocate a Trixie.

GRAND NATIONAL

Long known as a great trainer, Henry de Bromhead goes to the National with a live one in **MONTY'S STAR** and at 20/1, cannot be easily dismissed. The National is not the lottery it once was, and Monty has been laid out for the race. If he beats the McManus battalions, then he is in with a great each way chance, especially as some firms will be giving odds for the first six. Admittedly, the win odds suffer with a reduced price but as the saying goes: "You takes your money..." (etc. etc. etc.)



As a saver, **PANIC ATTACK** for the Skeltons at 33/1 is a must, which will certainly tie up a first trainers championship for Dan.

SNOOKER WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

Is Ronnie on the comeback trail? Possibly. Can Zhao defend his title? More likely. Can Judd become the juddernaut again? IMHO...No. But who will embrace the cauldron that is the Crucible? My three against the field are..

WU YIZE at a tempting 12/1

SHAUN MURPHY at a generous 16/1

And rolling back the years **JOHN HIGGINS** at 25/1

I can hardly wait..

Until next time...

Good punting



Bernie the Book

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