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VEEZU BACKS CAB9: Q&A

Responses by Josh Ryan
Chief Operating Officer
www.veezu.co.uk

veezu.

1. Why has Veezu chosen to back Cab9 specifically, and why now?



Cab9 is a leading player in the dispatch market and brings a wealth of expertise and technological know-how to Veezu's existing business. While we are proud of the business that Veezu has developed into over the last 13 years, our ambition is to change the way private hire and taxi services are delivered to passengers, driver partners and business customers. This requires a strong focus on technology and innovation, which made Cab9 the obvious choice when it came to a partner.

Veezu is a national operator with ambitions to continue growing and providing passengers with a modern private hire service. Without our own dispatch technology, there are limitations on how far we can take our growth and the services we can offer. With this investment, Veezu is in pole position to take on the multinational ride-hailers and show that a bricks-and-mortar business that has its roots in the Welsh Valleys can fight toe to toe with the major players.

2. What does this mean in practice for operators using Cab9 day to day?

Operators should expect more of what they already value in terms of features and functionality, delivered faster. The investment will advance the development of Cab9's dispatch platform and apps, specifically around data and insights, winning passengers and keeping them. It is also about ensuring driver-partners have technology that maximises their earnings and minimises their issues.

3. Cab9's CEO, Tarpit Grover, stays in post. How involved will Veezu actually be in running the business, and what reassurance can you give operators worried about disruption?

Continuity has been a key consideration in how this investment is structured. Cab9 will continue to

operate under its own brand and leadership, separate from Veezu. On a day-to-day basis, Veezu and Cab9 will operate a customer/supplier relationship. Tarpit Grover will remain CEO and continue to lead the business, its product development and its customer relationships. Tarpit also remains a significant shareholder, reflecting his ongoing commitment to the long-term success of the business, its customers and its people. As he has put it, the people, passion and product thinking behind Cab9 are not going away - they are being strengthened.

4. How does this fit Veezu's wider growth strategy and its ambitions for transport across the UK?

Veezu has grown significantly through a series of strategic acquisitions, and as the company has scaled, technology has become integral to the way in which it serves passengers and supports driver-partners. This reflects a deliberate, long-term investment in the infrastructure on which the sector depends.

5. Dispatch is changing fast. What does this investment let Cab9 do on that front that it could not do alone?

The dispatch software behind our sector is undergoing its biggest shift in a generation, with AI and automation presenting enormous opportunities. The aim is straightforward: operators who rely on Cab9 keep pace with this change.

AI and technology aren't delivered by ambition alone. They take sustained investment to build, train and maintain, and the pace of change is only likely to increase. A capital injection helps put Cab9 in a position to invest ahead of demand rather than fund development from day-to-day operating cash, bring its product roadmap forward and keep delivering innovation. That is what this investment is intended to support: the capacity to keep developing Cab9's platform and services over the long term.

6. If operators take one message from this, what should it be?

The sector cannot stand still while larger, overseas ride-hailing platforms take more of the market. Technology is key to competing, and this investment speeds up what Cab9 is already delivering.



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ROBOTAXIS...ROBOTAXIS

ADCU CALLS FOR HALT ON LONDON ROBOTAXI TRIALS OVER SAFETY AND JOB FEARS

The App Drivers and Couriers Union (ADCU) has issued urgent demands to both the London Assembly and PM Andy Burnham to immediately pause upcoming AV pilots in the capital.

The union warns that rolling out commercial robotaxi trials - including planned September tests involving Silicon Valley giants Waymo, Uber, and Wayve - risks treating Londoners as "guinea pigs for unproven technology."

The union argues that the city must conduct full safety, economic, and equality assessments before any further expansion is permitted. A central concern for the union is the catastrophic economic blow the technology could deal to the city's more than 105,000 licensed PH drivers. With many workers

aged over 40, displacement could cause severe hardship, especially as any new jobs created by these systems are more likely to support overseas data centres than secure British employment.

The ADCU argues that innovation should serve the public good rather than the financial interests of tech giants, demanding a legally enforceable "just transition" plan to protect the existing drivers.

Beyond economic fallout, the ADCU points to significant risks regarding public safety, rising traffic congestion, diminished accessibility for vulnerable passengers, and a worrying lack of democratic accountability for near misses or accidents.

Describing the potential impact as "potentially the biggest threat to

drivers' livelihoods in living memory," ADCU General Secretary Cristina-Georgiana Ioanitescu stressed that the union is not anti-technology, but argued that "innovation must not come at the cost of workers, passengers or the public interest."

Ioanitescu stated that workers "deserve better than to have their livelihoods sacrificed in the interests of Silicon Valley technology companies."

She added that driverless cars must be independently proven to be "demonstrably safer than a professional human driver" before taking to the streets.

Navigating London's complex roads presents distinct challenges the union insists autonomous tech has yet to master.

BAIDU AND LYFT LAUNCH LONDON ROBOTAXI TESTS AHEAD OF PLANNED 2027 ROLLOUT

Chinese technology giant Baidu has officially begun testing autonomous vehicles on the streets of London, marking the latest escalation in the race to deploy self-driving taxis across the UK capital. The trials, which launched on Tuesday, 28 July, with human safety operators behind the wheel, are being conducted in partnership with ride-hailing giant Lyft and Freenow, the German taxi and multi-mobility app that Lyft acquired in 2025.

The testing stems from a strategic partnership formed last year to integrate Baidu's custom-built Apollo Go RT6 robotaxis onto Lyft's

platform across key European markets. For now, a fleet of dozens of test vehicles is operating within the London borough of Brent as the companies work alongside local authorities, including TfL and the Centre for Connected and Autonomous Vehicles (CCAV), to satisfy regulatory requirements.

London has rapidly turned into a battleground for autonomous vehicle technology. Google's sister company Waymo began testing its own self-driving cars with safety drivers in the city in April, while Uber and its partner Wayve plan to launch a London robotaxi service later this year. Pending official

approval, Baidu and Freenow by Lyft expect to allow the general public to hail robotaxi rides starting in 2027.

When the service goes live, Freenow by Lyft intends to run a hybrid network where self-driving vehicles work alongside existing human drivers operating traditional taxis and PHVs.

Highlighting the effort to reassure transport workers, Thomas Zimmermann, CEO of Freenow by Lyft, said: "As a platform with deep roots in the taxi industry, our priority is ensuring that autonomous technology supports the professional drivers who keep London moving."

ROBOTAXIS...ROBOTAXIS

LONDON ROBOTAXI PUSH SPARKS ALARM OVER HIDDEN AI BIASES & PASSENGER SAFETY DEFICIENCIES

Plans to launch driverless taxi services across London later this year have come under intense scrutiny after AI experts warned the vehicles might fail to spot pedestrians depending on what they are wearing.

The revelations emerged during a recent London Assembly meeting, raising serious doubts about whether the automated technology is truly ready for the capital's complex streets. Safety specialists have flagged alarming blind spots in how these AVs recognise people.

Professor Siddhartha Khastgir, Head of Safe Autonomy at the University of Warwick, revealed that experimental evidence shows sensors can easily fail based on a person's appearance. "We have experimental evidence from our collaborators in Canada who have shown that, depending on a pedestrian's clothing, the sensors may or may not detect them," Khastgir said, noting that thick winter clothing is a known trigger. Further academic data underscores systemic biases within the software. Research from King's College London reveals that AVs are c. 20% more likely to detect adults than children, and just over 7.5% more likely to spot white people than ethnic minorities.

This discrepancy stems from flawed training data, as the open-source image galleries used to programme the vehicles do not accurately represent a diverse public.

Professor Khastgir stressed that training data must include variables ranging from skin tone and hair colour to reflective

clothing and summer shorts so that "this bias is not part of the detection process."

Beyond external road hazards, the assembly meeting exposed sharp disagreements regarding in-cabin passenger security.

When asked how a driverless car would protect a passenger from assault or harassment, Ben Loewenstein, Waymo's UK Head of Policy, suggested that cabin movement or an undone seatbelt would alert a remote team member to "beam into the car" and check on passengers or call emergency services.

Labour's Transport Spokesperson on the London Assembly, Elly Baker AM, argued that a remote monitor cannot replace the intuition of a human driver who can spot uncomfortable, quiet interactions that do not involve major thrashing or seatbelts being undone, adding: "I'm not hearing

the level of concern about how serious this is at this stage."

Baker also voiced strong concerns about the lack of transparency regarding the tech's broader impact on public transport and the livelihoods of professional human drivers. "What we heard raises serious doubts about whether this technology is actually ready for London," she stated.

A Waymo spokesperson strongly denied any suggestion that the company is dismissing the threat of abuse. "Safeguarding is critically important, and strong protections and support for passengers are at the core of our operations," the spokesperson said. The company maintained that any reports of threatening behaviour are met with robust protocols, including 24/7 human rider support and direct emergency service access, promising to ensure strict protections are established from day one.

ZOOX GAINS GROUND ON WAYMO IN 2026 ROBOTAXI RACE

Amazon-owned Zoox is picking up speed in the robotaxi market, increasing its share of monthly active users from 15% to 25% during the first half of 2026. According to app tracker Apptopia, Zoox roughly doubled its active rider base over the six-month period. This growth comes as the company expands its footprint in Austin and Miami and widens services areas in San Francisco and Las Vegas. Meanwhile, market leader Waymo saw its dominant share of monthly

active users dip from 79% in January to 69% in June. While it still grew its total active users by 15% on a larger base across 11 US cities, it faced temporary service pauses in May due to flooding and construction hurdles. Despite losing some market share to Zoox, Waymo "grew several times over" with those aged 17 to 25. This is seen as an encouraging sign for Waymo as "younger riders age into the highest-value years for a category built on habit."

THE NEW CORDIC DISPATCH

THE DISPATCH MARKET HAS CHANGED - SO HAVE WE

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THE BURNHAM EFFECT

TAXI LICENSING UNDER ANDY BURNHAM: WHAT OPERATORS SHOULD EXPECT

By Layla Barke-Jones
Aaron & Partners Solicitors
www.aaronandpartners.com



Not long after the House of Commons Transport Committee issued its report calling for a modernised taxi and private hire vehicle licensing framework that reflects the scale and influence of app-based operators, Andy Burnham has stepped into office. Burnham has championed intervention from politicians into taxi licensing whilst Mayor of Manchester, will this translate into legislative change for the private hire and Taxi industry?

With Andy Burnham as Prime Minister, taxi and private hire firms should probably expect a more interventionist, locally accountable licensing regime rather than a light-touch continuation of the current system. He has repeatedly described England's taxi/PHV framework as "broken" and has pushed to end or restrict "out-of-area" licensing.

However, whilst this was cited as a major project for Burnham as mayor, with national issues of defence, health, the treasury and justice on his hands he may well find this slips down the agenda.

The parliamentary committee though is up and running and has recently published its report highlighting major concerns. The report: **Raising the standard: licensing of taxis and private hire vehicles**, is one of the clearest indications yet that the regulation of taxis and PHVs is likely to change materially.

Its central message is straightforward: the market has modernised faster than the law. Ride-hailing apps, cross-border booking models and nationally recognisable platform brands have reshaped how passengers book journeys and how drivers obtain work. Yet the core licensing framework still rests on legislation that was not designed for today's technology-led operating models.

More than 260 licensing authorities currently apply their own standards, with variations across driver checks, vehicle requirements, accessibility, local knowledge testing, CCTV policies and complaint

processes. That fragmentation matters because app-based operators do not fit neatly within the geographical assumptions of the older regime.

Cross-border working has become commonplace, with Wolverhampton becoming the licensing authority of choice for many operators and drivers. Andy Burnham has spoken loudly of his desire to see more localised "license where you operate" rules.

Burnham has argued that drivers and vehicles should not be licensed hundreds of miles away from where they mainly work, because it weakens local enforcement and accountability. This would particularly affect PH operators relying on large pools of out-of-area licensed drivers. One Manchesterism he was keen to introduce as mayor was more local or regional control over private hire licensing, allowing combined authorities more power over taxi and private hire standards, enforcement, accessibility and vehicle conditions.

The Government has already indicated its intention to legislate for national minimum standards. The Committee welcomes that direction but warns against standards becoming "low by default".

Whilst Burnham previously highlighted concerns on out-of-area work causing harm to livelihoods and public safety, the Committee acknowledges that outright prohibition of out-of-area working would be impractical.

The report though accepts that extensive out-of-area working can undermine local accountability and make enforcement harder. It also points to concerns about licence shopping, where drivers or operators may be incentivised to obtain licences from authorities perceived to be faster, cheaper or less onerous.

What future licensing conditions may cover

The Committee's recommendations give a useful indication of where future licensing conditions may land. Operators should pay particular attention to enhanced DBS checks, safeguarding training, clearer "fit and proper" decision-making, police and licensing authority information sharing, a mandatory national database, potential in-vehicle CCTV,

THE BURNHAM EFFECT

disability awareness training, wheelchair-accessible vehicle provision and a single national complaints portal.

Preparing for the future?

A Burnham premiership is unlikely to mean deregulation for taxi and private hire firms. Based on his Greater Manchester record, it would more likely accelerate reform towards local accountability, tougher controls on out-of-area licensing, stronger enforcement powers and a more integrated view of taxis as part of the public transport system.

For traditional taxi firms, that may be welcome. For national (especially app-based) private hire platforms, it would require early engagement, stronger compliance infrastructure and a clear case for how digital operating models can support, rather than undermine, local standards.

The Committee appears committed to engaging with reforming the sector. The detail of any new licensing conditions will matter. However, operators do not need to wait passively for legislation. A sensible first step is to map current compliance systems against the Committee's likely reform themes: driver checks,

document expiry, complaints handling, serious incident escalation, licensing authority liaison, accessibility, cross-border working, data governance and audit trails.

Our view

The report does not signal the end of flexible private hire operating models. It signals the end of any assumption that those models can continue to be regulated by implication under a framework designed for a different era. This view is likely to be charged by the premiership of Andy Burnham who has already engaged with the issue in his time as Manchester Mayor. Change is coming.

The most effective operators will be those that treat reform as a strategic opportunity rather than a defensive compliance exercise. By engaging early, demonstrating strong governance and helping shape practical national standards, platforms can protect the flexibility that passengers and drivers value while supporting the higher, more consistent safety standards that Government and Parliament are now clearly seeking.

Link to original article: <https://shorturl.at/UV340>

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Here's what it means for you

If you're a self-employed private hire or taxi driver and you earned over £50,000 last tax year, mark 7 August 2026 in your diary. That's when your first Making Tax Digital (MTD) quarterly update is due to HMRC. Over 864,000 sole traders and landlords nationally are in the same boat, and plenty of them will be drivers.

First thing to get straight: it's £50,000 gross, not profit. That's your total fares and platform/ operator earnings before fuel, insurance, PCO licence, vehicle finance, servicing - the lot.

Don't assume you're in the clear just because your actual take-home is well under £50k. Plenty of drivers gross well over that and clear a fraction of it once costs come out, but HMRC only cares about the top-line figure from your 2024/25 tax return.

Check that number before you decide this doesn't apply to you.

What you actually have to do

This isn't a tax return - HMRC has been clear about that. It's a short digital summary of your income and expenses, sent through approved software, covering 6 April to 5 July 2026 (some drivers work to calendar quarters instead - 1 April to 30 June - so check which one applies to you). Done properly, it takes about ten minutes.

The catch is "*done properly*." If you've been logging your fuel, tyres, servicing, insurance and licence renewals as you've gone along, this really is a quick job. If you're planning to reconstruct three months of receipts the night before the deadline, it won't be.

Some software includes a checking tool called HMRC Assist, which flags likely mistakes before you submit - handy, but you're still responsible for what actually goes to HMRC.

The upside nobody mentions

After each update, the software gives you an estimate of what you'll owe. For a trade where earnings swing week to week - fuel prices, demand, commission changes - that's actually useful. Instead of one nasty surprise every January, you get a running total and a chance to put money aside as you go.

No fine this time - but don't get comfortable

Miss the 7 August deadline and nothing happens this year - HMRC isn't issuing penalty points for late quarterly updates in year one. But that grace period ends after this year.

From year two, each missed quarterly update earns a penalty point, and once you hit four, that's a £200 fine. Your annual Self-Assessment return is unaffected by any of this - it's still due 31 January, and late returns and late payments are still fined as normal.

The quarterly updates sit alongside your tax return, not instead of it.

Where this is heading

This is only going one way. The £50,000 threshold drops to £30,000 from April 2027, and £20,000 from April 2028. If you're a full-time driver, there's a decent chance you'll be caught within the next two years even if you're not now - so getting into the habit of digital record-keeping sooner rather than later will save you a headache down the line.

What to do before 7 August

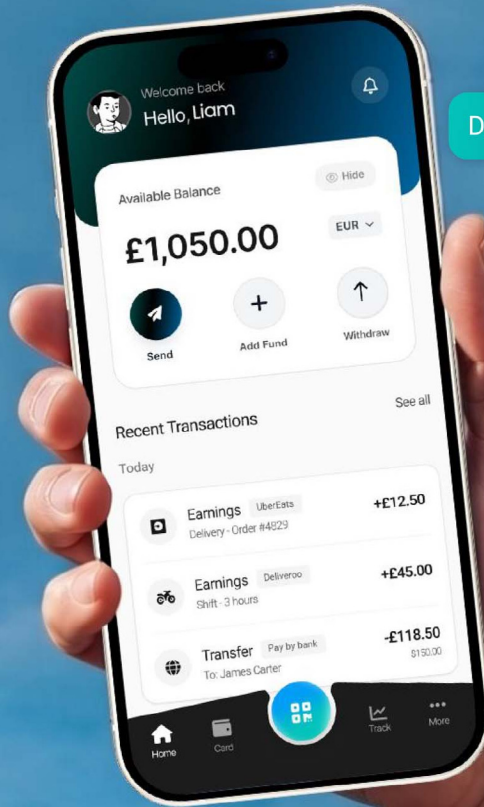
Check your gross income for 2024/25. If it's over £50,000, confirm you're signed up to MTD, that your software's on HMRC's approved list, and that your fuel, insurance, and vehicle costs for the last three months are logged and ready to go.

If you haven't signed up yet, you still can via [GOV.UK](https://gov.uk),

OR - GO TALK TO YOUR ACCOUNTANT!!

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Gary



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MAKE IT HAPPEN

VALUE YOURSELF, VALUE YOUR TEAM, AND MAKE IT HAPPEN

Article by Rev'd Paul Newbery
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Running a private hire or taxi business is not for the faint-hearted. One minute you are looking at bookings, the next you are dealing with a driver who has misplaced a set of keys, a customer who believes "five minutes away" is a binding legal contract, a licensing email that looks like it was written during a thunderstorm, and a vehicle that has chosen Friday afternoon to develop a mysterious warning light.

And somewhere in the middle of all that, you are meant to lead, inspire, plan, recruit, retain, comply, grow, sleep, eat something green, and remember where you put your mug of tea. It is no wonder that many operators feel as though owning a company simply means you buy more paracetamol than everyone else.

But here is the truth that often gets buried beneath call volumes, school runs, airport transfers and late-night problem solving: you are not alone. Operators may own the company, but they are still part of the team. In fact, they are often the person the team most wants to support - if only they knew how.

1. Valuing yourself is not selfish - it is operational common sense

In this trade, there is a quiet badge of honour attached to being constantly available. The phone is never really off. The WhatsApp groups never truly sleep. The words "quick question" are rarely quick and frequently arrive just as your dinner is going cold. Many owners start believing that if they are not personally involved in every decision, every complaint, every driver query and every awkward booking, then they are somehow failing.

Valuing yourself means recognising that your energy, judgement and health are business assets. You would not send a vehicle out with bald tyres, an empty tank and a dashboard lit up like Blackpool Illuminations, so why send yourself into every day in the same condition?

Transport bodies and trade associations continue to highlight the value and pressure of the sector, from changing regulation and safety rules to recruitment,

accessibility and environmental challenges. In other words, the job is important - and important work needs leaders who can think clearly, not just survive loudly.

2. Your team cannot read your meter

Operators often say: "My team knows I'm busy." They do. They can see the missed lunch, the late replies, the tense walk into the office, and the look you give the printer when it jams again. What they may not know is what you actually need from them.

Your people may care more than you realise. Dispatchers, controllers, admin staff, drivers, supervisors and managers often love the business because they have helped build its reputation. They know the regular passengers. They know which driver prefers early starts, which account customer always changes the pick-up time, and which street name sounds simple until a sat nav turns it into a treasure hunt.

But if owners never open up, the team is left guessing. They may sense stress but not know whether to offer help, stay quiet, take initiative or avoid making eye contact until the storm passes. Silence can accidentally train good people to stand back when what you really need is for them to step forward.

Being the owner does not remove you from the team. It gives you responsibility, yes, but not superpowers. Despite what some customers believe, operators cannot bend time, duplicate cars by shouting at a screen, or personally control every set of temporary traffic lights in town. You are still human. You still need backup. And a strong team wants to be trusted with more than just the easy bits.

3. Delegation is not dumping - it's development

Delegation sometimes gets a bad name because it is mistaken for offloading. Done badly, it sounds like: "Here, you deal with this nightmare while I pretend I never saw it." Done well, it says: "I trust you with something meaningful, I will give you the context you need, and I am here if you genuinely need support."

For operators, delegation can feel risky because the business often carries your name, your reputation and your bank account. You may worry that no one will handle things exactly as you would. That is probably true. They may do it differently. Sometimes they may even do it better, which is annoying but useful.

MAKE IT HAPPEN

Start by delegating outcomes, not confusion. Instead of saying: *"Sort the drivers,"* try: *"Please review next week's driver cover, identify any gaps by Wednesday, and bring me two options."* Instead of saying: *"Deal with complaints,"* try: *"Please log complaints, respond within our standard wording, and flag anything involving safety, licensing or repeat issues."* Clear expectations reduce mistakes and give people confidence.

Delegation also creates resilience. If only one person knows how to manage a key account, renew documents, handle school contracts or reconcile driver payments, then the company is vulnerable. If several people know the system, the business can breathe. The goal is not to make yourself unnecessary; it is to stop making yourself the bottleneck.

4. Charging your batteries helps others find their spark

You cannot empower others if your own battery is flashing red. That does not mean you need a two-week retreat, a Himalayan singing bowl and a phone-free lifestyle. It does mean building small, realistic habits that stop your energy from disappearing completely.

Charging your batteries might mean protecting one evening a week, taking a proper lunch away from the booking screen, turning off non-urgent alerts for an hour, walking round the block before answering a difficult email, or asking a manager to bring solutions rather than just problems. It might mean admitting to the team: *"I am stretched this week, and I need help with these three things."* That sentence is not weakness. It is leadership with the bonnet open.

When owners model healthy behaviour, teams learn that responsibility does not have to equal martyrdom. Drivers take breaks more seriously. Controllers feel able to ask for backup before they burn out. Managers stop hiding problems until they have become full-blown operational fireworks. A rested leader gives permission for a healthier culture.

5. Making it happen: from good intentions to daily practice

The good news is that valuing yourself and your team does not require a complete reinvention of the business. It starts with a few repeatable habits.

- Hold a short weekly team check-in. Ask what is working, what is stuck, and where support is needed.
- Name the pressure points. If licensing, recruitment, complaints or cash flow are heavy, say so in an appropriate way.

- Delegate one real responsibility each week. Choose something meaningful, explain the outcome, and agree when to review it.
- Create a *"bring me options"* culture. Encourage people to arrive with possible solutions, not just a flaming parcel of problems.
- Celebrate quiet competence. Notice the person who prevented the issue, not only the one who rescued it dramatically at 11pm.
- Protect recovery time. Put it in the diary like an airport transfer for someone very important -because it is.

A business where the owner carries everything may function for a while, but eventually the suspension starts to creak. A business where responsibility is shared, communication is honest and people are trusted to contribute can move faster, recover better and serve customers with more confidence.

6. The operator is not the emergency exit

There'll always be moments when the owner has to step in. That's part of the job. But if every issue automatically becomes yours, the team never grows and you never recover. Leadership is not being the emergency exit for every situation. Leadership is building a team that knows where the exits are, how to read the map, and when to shout if the building is genuinely on fire.

The PH and taxi industry is full of pressure, personality and unpredictability. It is also full of people who care deeply: about passengers, drivers, colleagues, local communities and the companies they help keep alive. Owners sometimes forget that the care flows both ways. Your team may not know exactly how to support you, but many of them would if you gave them the chance.

So value yourself enough to rest. Value your team enough to trust them. Delegate enough to develop them. Communicate enough to let them in. Then make it happen - not by doing everything yourself, but by building a company where everyone understands the destination, shares the load, and occasionally remembers to put the kettle on before the next crisis arrives.

Owning the company does not mean carrying the company alone. It just means you are the one who usually knows where the spare paracetamol is kept.

If you want to join a valued family with members who hug and empathise then please email: paul@elite-liverpool.co.uk – support and friendship and sharing the cost of those headache pills is only the start of the journey.



Last month, iCabbi Taxi Alliance's Love Local Taxi & Private Hire Week took place in association with **CMAC** and **Minicabit**. The nationwide campaign was created to celebrate the incredible contribution of local taxi and private hire operators, drivers and fleets, while raising awareness of the vital role the industry continues to play in towns and cities across the UK.



The campaign was also proudly supported by **M2M TaxiBot**, **Safe Systems CCTV**, **Acorn Insurance**, and **Edge Rentals**.

Love Local Taxi & Private Hire Week was created to shine a spotlight on the people behind the industry, celebrate the positive impact fleets have on their local communities, and encourage the public to support their local taxi and private hire operators.

Throughout the week, fleets from across the country hosted a wide range of community-focused events. Central Cars Thanet raised money for a local charity, Price First Taxi celebrated its team and customers with a staff appreciation day and family fun day, Maize Transport welcomed customers and neighbouring fleets for a tour of its solar charging facility, Take Me joined the Wellingborough Parade, and MMA Transfers held a driver recruitment day.

Love Local Taxi & Private Hire Week is an initiative of the **Taxi Alliance** – a joint venture between iCabbi and the independent taxi and private hire industry across the UK and Ireland. Since its launch in 2022, the Taxi Alliance has grown to represent more than 44,000 licences, bringing together independent fleets with a shared mission: to defend and grow their businesses through collaboration, innovation, and a stronger collective voice for the industry.

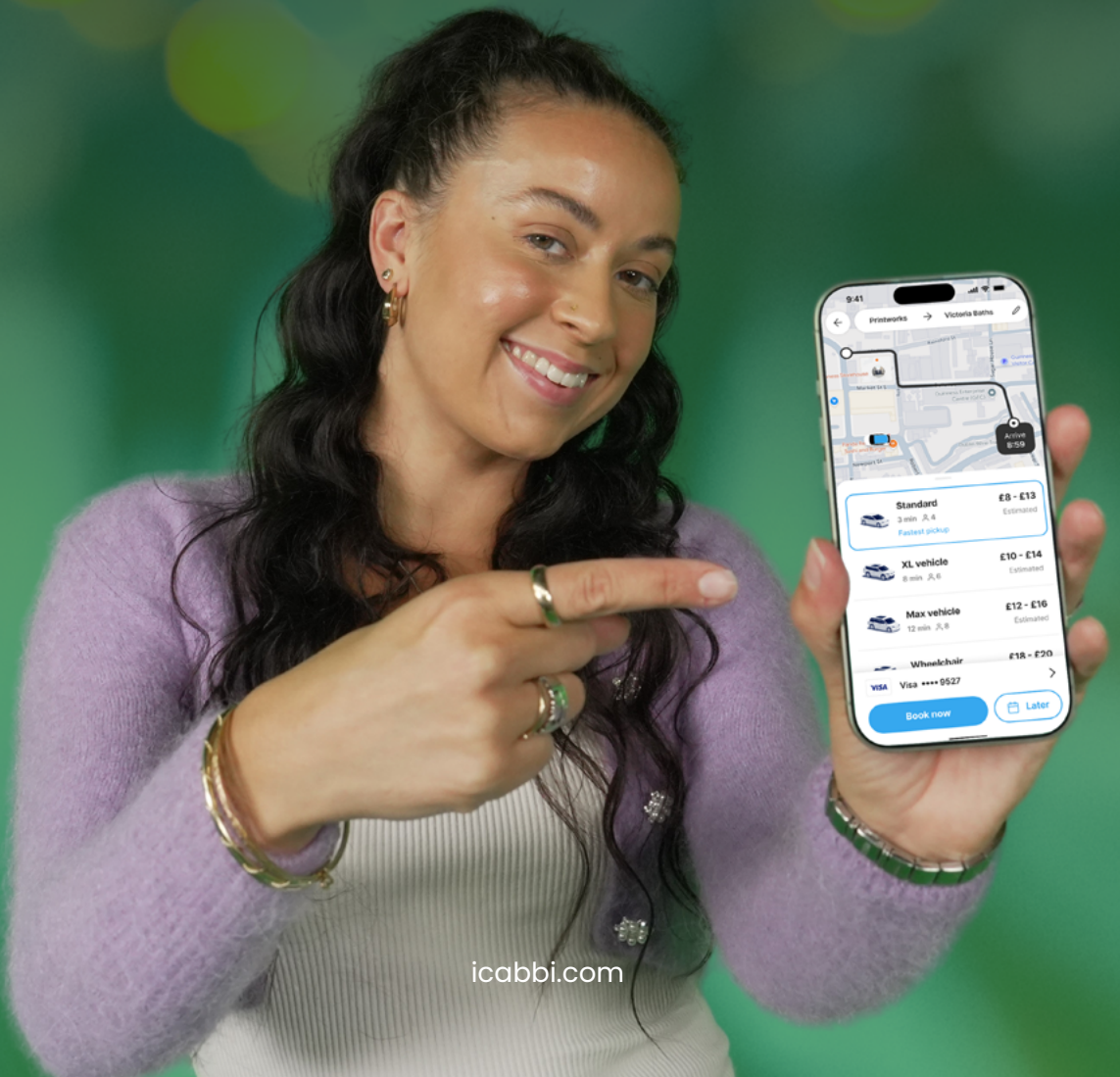


By bringing fleets together under one national campaign, Love Local Taxi & Private Hire Week not only celebrated the industry's rich heritage but also reinforced its importance for the future. As communities continue to depend on trusted local transport, the campaign showcased why supporting local taxi and private hire businesses has never been more important.



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CHAOS AT HIGHLAND COUNCIL AS RESIGNATIONS & BACKLASH FOLLOW DECISION ON RAPIST'S LICENCE



The Highland Council has been plunged into crisis following a deeply controversial, closed-door decision to allow jailed rapist David Brown to retain his operator's licence.

On 15 May 2026, Brown, 50, was sentenced to six years and nine months in prison and placed on the Sex Offenders' Register for life. He had been found guilty after a three-day trial in Edinburgh of raping an 18-year-old customer he picked up in Inverness in December 2023, before abandoning her in a remote area in sub-zero temperatures.

Although his personal driver's licence was revoked, six male councillors on the licensing committee voted to let him keep his operator's licence. This allowed his vehicle to be used as a taxi business, just five weeks into his sentence, outvoting four female colleagues and overriding explicit objections from Police Scotland and council officials.

The male councillors argued that the decision was intended to protect Brown's wife from financial hardship, as she relied on the business for her income.

While former SNP committee member Chris Birt stood by his vote, stating: "I stand by that

decision, as it was lawful, ensured public safety, and was just," the ruling sparked intense political fallout and public outrage.

After criticism of the decision, the chairman, Sean Kennedy, along with John Grafton, Duncan Macpherson and Willie MacKay resigned from the committee. Independent councillor MacKay has also resigned as a councillor, while Grafton has been expelled by the Scottish Liberal Democrat group on the Highland Council. Chris Birt has since been suspended by the SNP.

Former committee chairman, Sean Kennedy, admitted he was "haunted" by how the vote affected the victim, while councillor John Grafton issued an apology, acknowledging: "With the benefit of hindsight and information not available on the day, I now believe this was not the right decision.

"I would like to apologise to the victim and their family for any distress this may have caused, that was not my intention."

The decision sparked widespread condemnation, triggering a public protest in Inverness's Falcon Square and an online petition demanding the licence be revoked, which gathered thousands of signatures.

Public safety advocates and politicians strongly criticised the vote, with SNP MSP, Maree Todd, calling it "incomprehensible." Nicola Love of Rape Crisis Scotland argued: "We don't think that it is in any way appropriate for someone who was not only convicted of a sexual offence, but somebody who



was convicted of a sexual offence using the guise of his taxi, to be allowed to operate a taxi."

Romy Rehfeld of Rape and Sexual Abuse Service Highland added that such decisions "cause real additional distress to survivors and risks forcing them to relive their trauma," demanding answers on why police objections were ignored.

Protest organiser Claire MacKay called for full transparency and audits, asserting: "Women need to know that when they get into a taxi in the Highlands they are safe." MacKay

In response to the uproar, the council's chief legal officer initiated a formal Notice of Referral on the grounds of potential "contravention of law" or "maladministration leading to injustice," sending the licensing decision to a full council meeting for review.

Mandatory legal training is also being implemented for local politicians, while remaining male councillors who supported the decision face potential votes of no confidence.

Meanwhile, the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service confirmed that Brown intends to appeal both his rape conviction and his prison sentence.

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CHECKEDSAFE APPOINTMENT

CHECKEDSAFE APPOINTS DR MIKE GALVIN TO LEAD NEXT PHASE OF GROWTH

Article by CheckedSafe
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www.checkedsafe.com



CheckedSafe, the leading digital compliance and fleet safety technology provider, has announced the appointment of Dr Michael Galvin DBA MBA as Non-Executive Chairman of the Board.

The appointment marks another important milestone in Checked-Safe's continued growth and reinforces the company's commitment to strong corporate governance, strategic expansion, and innovation across the transport and fleet compliance sectors.

Dr Galvin brings extensive board-level, commercial and industry expertise to the role. He has built a distinguished career spanning more than 40 years across the road transport, private hire and taxi industries. He was also recently appointed as a Commissioner at the Independent Transport Commission, where he plays an active role in shaping discussions around the future of transport.

As Non-Executive Chairman, Dr Galvin will support the Board and leadership team as CheckedSafe continues to strengthen its position as a trusted partner for fleet operators, transport providers and businesses across multiple sectors. The company currently serves more than 1,500 customers and has established itself as a recognised leader in digital vehicle compliance, driver safety and operational oversight solutions.

CheckedSafe's technology helps organisations improve safety standards, streamline compliance processes and meet increasingly complex legislative and regulatory requirements. Its solutions help businesses protecting employees, drivers, road users and the communities in which they operate.

Commenting on his appointment, Dr Michael Galvin said: "I am delighted to be joining Checked-Safe at such an exciting stage of the company's development. CheckedSafe has built an out-standing reputation for innovation, compliance excellence and improving safety outcomes across the transport sector. Its products play an important role in helping organisations ensure the safety of their teams, drivers, road users and wider business operations, while supporting

compliance with legislation and regulation.

"I look forward to working closely with the Board and Management Team to support the company's continued growth and expansion into new markets."

CheckedSafe Co-Founders Gary Hawthorne and Darran Harris said: "We're delighted to announce the appointment of Dr Michael Galvin as Chairman of the CheckedSafe Board. With a career spanning over 40 years in the road transport, private hire and taxi industries, Dr Galvin brings a wealth of knowledge, leadership and expertise to our Board.

"Safety remains the number one priority for the public, employers and licensing authorities across the UK, Europe and global markets. CheckedSafe's products and services empower fleet professionals and operators to strengthen their service offering, while helping to ensure compliance with the highest vehicle and driver safety standards.

"We look forward to the next chapter with Dr Galvin's expertise as we continue to drive innovation and raise safety standards across the transport industry."

The appointment reflects CheckedSafe's focus on ensuring the Board is appropriately constituted to support the company's long-term ambitions and maintain the highest standards of governance. As the business continues to grow, expand into new sectors and develop new product capabilities, strong leadership and effective oversight remain central to its strategy.

While CheckedSafe continues to build on its success within commercial fleet operations, the company is also expanding its presence into additional transport markets, including private hire and taxi operations, bringing its proven expertise in digital compliance, vehicle safety and operational efficiency to a wider customer base.

With a strong platform for growth, an expanding customer portfolio and an ongoing commitment to innovation, CheckedSafe remains focused on helping organisations improve safety, reduce risk and achieve compliance across increasingly complex operating environments.





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ONE TAP TOO FAR...

CAN TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE DRIVERS ACCEPT JOBS ON A PHONE WHILE DRIVING?

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



The modern taxi and private hire trade is now inseparable from mobile technology. Bookings are commonly allocated through apps. Navigation is usually screen-based. Passenger contact may be routed through operator platforms. Drivers may be expected to respond promptly to job offers, revised pick-up information, destination changes, operator messages and passenger communications.

That operational reality does not relax the law on mobile phone use. It often sharpens the regulatory risk. For a licensed taxi or private hire driver, an allegation of unlawful device use is rarely confined to the fixed penalty regime. It may also become evidence considered by a licensing authority when assessing whether the driver remains a fit and proper person to hold a licence. Where the conduct occurs while carrying passengers, while plying for hire, while undertaking booked work, or as part of repeated app-based driving behaviour, the licensing implications may become more serious.

The statutory starting point is **Regulation 110 of the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986**. An amendment to the regulations in 2022 widened the offence so that it is no longer confined to interactive communication in the narrower pre-existing sense. The amended regulation refers to devices capable of transmitting and receiving data, even where that capability is switched off or temporarily unavailable. The amendment also widened the concept of “*use*”, including activities such as illuminating the screen, unlocking the device, checking the time, checking notifications, accessing an application, accessing the internet, taking photographs or video, and making or rejecting a call.

The Department for Transport's public guidance expresses the position in more direct terms: it is **illegal to hold and use a phone, sat nav, tablet or other device capable of sending and receiving data while driving**.

The guidance also confirms the standard fixed penalty consequence of six penalty points and a £200 fine.

For taxi and private hire drivers, that means a driver must not: pick up a phone to accept or reject a booking. They must not hold the device to read fare information, check a destination, review a passenger message, respond to an operator, or browse available work while the vehicle is being driven. The fact that the interaction is work-related does not remove it from the scope of the offence. A booking app is not treated differently because it forms part of the driver's means of earning a living.

When may a driver use a device?

There are limited circumstances in which a device may lawfully be used. The clearest is when the vehicle is safely parked. That is not the same as being stationary in ordinary traffic. A driver stopped at traffic lights, queuing at a junction, waiting in congestion, or paused momentarily in the running lane remains engaged in driving for these purposes.

Government guidance identifies limited exceptions, including use of a handheld device to call 999 or 112 in a genuine emergency where it is unsafe or impracticable to stop. It also identifies circumstances involving safe parking, contactless payment in a stationary vehicle, and remote parking functions. Hands-free use may be lawful, but only where the device is not held during use. Examples include Bluetooth, voice command, dashboard holders, windscreen mounts, mats, and built-in sat nav systems.

The practical difficulty for the licensed trade lies in the boundary between a handheld offence and the wider duty to drive safely. A driver may avoid the specific handheld mobile phone offence because the device is secured in a cradle and is not being held. That does not mean the driving is necessarily lawful or professionally defensible. The device must not obstruct the driver's view, and the driver must remain in proper control of the vehicle. Regulation 104 of the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 remains relevant where a device, mount, screen, cable or driver behaviour interferes with proper control or a full view of the road and traffic ahead.

ONE TAP TOO FAR...



The Highway Code reinforces that distinction. Rule 149 states that drivers must exercise proper control of the vehicle at all times and must not pick up and use a handheld phone or similar device while stationary in traffic. Rule 150 warns against distraction from in-vehicle systems, including satellite navigation and screen-based information, and advises drivers to stop safely where necessary. Those provisions are not merely theoretical for the trade. They are often the language used by police officers, licensing officers and committees when assessing whether a driver's conduct was compatible with professional driving standards.

App bookings and mounted devices

The most difficult practical question is whether a driver may accept or reject a job by tapping a phone or tablet fixed in a dashboard cradle.

The answer requires care. If the device is properly secured, does not obstruct the driver's view, and is not held at any time, the strict handheld mobile phone offence may not be made out merely because the driver briefly touches the mounted screen. That distinction between holding a device and interacting with a fixed device is important. It should not, however, be overstated.

A mounted device is not a safe harbour. If accepting or rejecting a booking requires the driver to read fare information, assess a pick-up location, compare the destination, scroll through job details, type a response, or make a decision based on screen-based information while the vehicle is moving, the driver may still face an allegation of careless driving or failing to remain in proper control.

Section 3 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 creates the offence of careless and inconsiderate driving. Section 3ZA provides that a person is to be regarded as driving without due care and attention where the manner of driving falls below what would be expected of a competent and careful driver.

That is the legal framework within which app-based work must be judged. The question is not whether the driver was trying to earn a living, whether the app imposed a short acceptance window, or whether the interaction took only a few seconds. The relevant questions are whether the device was held, whether the driver's view or control was affected, whether attention was diverted from the road, and whether the standard of driving fell below that expected of a competent and careful driver.

There is no official "*one-second rule*". A brief tap on a properly mounted device may be materially different from holding a phone, reading several lines of text, scrolling through an app, or typing a message. But that is a practical risk distinction, not a legal exemption. Once the driver begins to read, assess, scroll, type or select between options while the vehicle is moving, the regulatory risk increases significantly.

The Highway Code's stopping distance material shows that at 30 mph, a vehicle has a typical thinking distance of 9 metres and a total stopping distance of 23 metres. Put another way, 30 mph is about 13.4 metres per second. That means a one-second glance away from the road is roughly the length of a large bus, and a two-second glance is broadly comparable to travelling the length of a 25-metre swimming pool without proper observation. This is not a legal stopwatch test, but it illustrates why reading job details, scrolling through an app or deciding whether to accept a booking while moving may support an allegation that the driver was not in proper control or was driving without due care and attention.

Drivers should also avoid gripping, steadying or partly holding the device while tapping the screen. Where a driver's hand wraps around the phone or cradle, the factual distinction between a mounted device and a handheld device may become contested. In practice, cases often turn on what the officer saw, what any camera footage shows, where the device was positioned, and whether the driver's explanation is consistent with the physical evidence.

ONE TAP TOO FAR

The safest professional position is therefore straightforward. If a booking requires reading, thought, selection, rejection, messaging or manual response, the driver should stop safely before dealing with it. A properly mounted device may reduce one category of risk. It does not remove the duty to drive with due care and attention.

Licensing consequences

For an ordinary motorist, six penalty points and a £200 fine are serious. For a taxi or private hire driver, they may be occupationally significant.

A licensed driver depends not only on a DVLA driving entitlement, but also on the continuing confidence of the licensing authority. Road safety, compliance with legal obligations, honesty in reporting matters, and professional judgment are all relevant to the fit and proper assessment. A mobile phone offence may therefore become part of a wider regulatory evaluation.

The Department for Transport's Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards are particularly important. They state that, where an applicant has a conviction for using a handheld mobile telephone or handheld device while driving, a licence should not be granted until at least five years have elapsed since the conviction or completion of any sentence or driving ban, whichever is later. That guidance is directed to applicants, but licensing authorities may also treat such offending as highly relevant when considering existing licence holders, renewals, reviews and enforcement action.

Outside London, private hire driver licensing is generally governed by the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. A private hire driver's licence should not be granted unless the authority is satisfied that the applicant is a fit and proper person. Section 61 also gives authorities the power to suspend or revoke a driver's licence on specified grounds, including "*any other reasonable cause*". Hackney carriage driver licensing follows its own statutory route, but the practical regulatory exercise is similar: the authority must assess whether the driver remains suitable to be licensed in light of public safety and the facts before it.

A single fixed penalty will not always lead to suspension or revocation. Licensing decisions are fact-sensitive and must be proportionate. The authority will

usually consider the nature of the conduct, whether passengers were being carried, whether there was poor driving, whether there was a collision or near miss, whether the driver has a previous motoring or licensing history, and whether the matter was promptly disclosed. Repeated offences, concealment, minimisation, or evidence of routine app interaction while moving may all aggravate the position.

Non-disclosure often causes particular difficulty. Many licensing policies and licence conditions require drivers to notify the authority of convictions, fixed penalties, cautions, penalty points, arrests, charges or other relevant matters within a specified period. Where a driver fails to notify, the authority may treat the failure as a separate concern about honesty, openness and compliance. In some cases, that failure may become more damaging than the original offence.

For newly qualified drivers, the practical consequence may be immediate. Six points within the first two years after passing the driving test can result in the revocation of the driving licence under the new driver regime. Without a DVLA entitlement, a taxi or private hire driver cannot lawfully continue driving licensed vehicles.

Operator systems & regulatory exposure

This issue should not be viewed solely as a matter of individual driver behaviour. Operators also have regulatory exposure where their systems, expectations or working culture encourage unsafe device interaction.

An operator may not physically compel a driver to touch a phone while driving, but dispatch design and commercial pressure can materially influence behaviour. Systems that require drivers to respond quickly to detailed on-screen offers, review multiple data points while moving, or engage with passenger messages during a journey create foreseeable risk. Where an operator finds themselves subject to review following an incident, the licensing authority may examine not only the driver's conduct, but also the operator's policies, training, app configuration, supervision and response to known risks.

A written mobile device policy is useful only if it reflects operational reality. It should prohibit handheld use while driving, require devices to be securely mounted, make clear that devices must not obstruct the driver's view, and confirm that drivers must not read, type or respond

ONE TAP TOO FAR



The practical answer

Taxi and private hire drivers can use technology. They cannot allow technology to compromise driving standards.

A driver should not hold a phone while driving. Traffic lights and queues should not be treated as opportunities to check the app. Job details, passenger messages and operator instructions should not be read while moving. Devices used for navigation or booking information should be properly mounted and positioned so that they do not obstruct the driver's view. Voice features, audio alerts and auto-accept functions should be used where appropriate. Where a booking requires reading, judgment or manual response, the driver should stop safely before dealing with it.

A very brief tap on a properly mounted device may be materially different from holding a phone or scrolling through an app. But it is not an official rule, and it is not a defence to careless driving. The device must not be held. The driver's view must not be obstructed. Proper control must be maintained throughout. Once the driver begins "massaging the screen", reading details, selecting between options, or typing a response, the conduct may quickly move from operational convenience into road traffic and licensing risk.

A fare is not worth six penalty points, a £200 fine, a licensing referral, or the loss of a driver's livelihood. The more serious point is that licensing authorities are not concerned only with punishment after the event. They are concerned with future risk. A driver or operator who treats mobile device use casually may find that a single incident becomes a broader inquiry into judgment, compliance and public safety.

Where these issues arise, they require careful handling. The factual evidence, the precise nature of the device use, the driving circumstances, the licence conditions, the local authority policy and the driver's disclosure obligations may all affect the outcome. I specialise in transport regulatory and licensing law, including representation before licensing sub-committees, Traffic Commissioners and appellate courts and tribunals. Drivers, operators and transport managers facing investigation, licence review, refusal, suspension, revocation or public inquiry arising from mobile phone use, app-based working practices or wider compliance concerns are welcome to make contact for advice or representation.

to booking or passenger information while moving. But the policy must also be reflected in dispatch systems, driver onboarding, refresher training, disciplinary processes and the operator's own expectations about acceptance rates and response times.

Technology may assist where used properly. Voice prompts, audio job allocation, auto-accept functions, built-in vehicle systems, Apple CarPlay, Android Auto and properly positioned mounts may reduce risk. They do not remove the underlying legal test. The driver remains responsible for control of the vehicle. The operator remains responsible for ensuring that its operating model does not generate avoidable public safety concerns.

The practical implications are significant. These issues commonly arise after a roadside stop, a police report, dashcam footage, a passenger complaint, an insurance incident, or a licensing authority review. A driver confronted with an allegation engaging the fit and proper test may need to address both the motoring law position and the licensing consequences. An operator whose dispatch arrangements are said to encourage driver distraction may need to demonstrate that its systems are designed around legal compliance and public safety, not merely commercial efficiency.

GREEN MEANS GO

GREATER MANCHESTER LAUNCHES £2M GRANT SCHEME TO HELP PH DRIVERS GO GREEN

The Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) is introducing a new financial support package to help local private hire drivers upgrade to cleaner, lower-emission vehicles.

Under the newly approved Private Hire Vehicle Support Fund, eligible drivers can apply for grants of up to £2,500 to replace their older cars. The initiative, which is expected to officially launch this September, marks a major shift by regional leaders who decided in late June to ditch a previously considered loan model in favour of an entirely grants-based system.

The total cost of the grant-only scheme is expected to reach a maximum of £1.98m across the

city region. While this is slightly higher than the £1.85m maximum estimated for the hybrid loan and grant model, an official report revealed the switch was made to avoid complex risks.

The report noted that “having considered the risks associated with the loan component, it is recommended that the previously agreed PHV Support Fund is revised by removing the loan element and moving to a grant-only model.”

This change helps the authority avoid administrative costs and bad debt write-offs associated with managing loans.

Local leaders have strongly backed the move as a fairer way to tackle air pollution. Bolton South and

Walkden MP Yasmin Qureshi said: “After the last Tory government tried to impose a charging Clean Air Zone on Greater Manchester, the GMCA with Andy Burnham as Mayor, found another way by showing an investment led approach, focused on lowering emissions with a publicly controlled bus network and supporting our local taxi drivers, could achieve better results.”

She added that the grant scheme “supports local drivers and ensures that more drivers are licensed here in Bolton and other local towns where we have stricter oversight,” concluding that investing in the future is far better “than taxing hard working people for driving as part of their job.”

GOVERNMENT CONFIRMS THE TERMS OF ITS NEW ELECTRIC VEHICLE EXCISE DUTY (eVED) SCHEME

- Pay-per-mile scheme will START 1st April 2028
- Applies to electric cars, plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs) and hydrogen fuel cell cars
- 3p per mile for EVs, 1.5p per mile for plug-in hybrids

From launch, EVs and hydrogen fuel cell cars will pay three pence per mile, while PHEVs will pay a lower rate of 1.5 pence per mile as those drivers also pay fuel duty. However, the eVED rate will increase every year in line with the consumer price index.

Legislators say that an EV driver covering 8,000 miles per year will pay £240 in eVED, while a petrol or diesel car driver would pay £480 annually in fuel duty alone. But

high mileage drivers are going to get hit hard by the changes.

Cover 20,000 miles in your electric car, for example, and you'll need to fork out £600. And that's in addition to the flat £200 VED rate EV drivers currently pay to keep their cars on the road.

Patrick Gallagher, CEO at Addison Lee, said: “Confirmation that eVED will proceed from April 2028 as a pay-per-mile charge on EVs/PHEVs is a blow to our industry, at a time when operators need support, not new charges.

“Taxi/PH drivers deliver essential, high-mileage, door-to-door transport services and play a critical role within the wider public transport system. A uniform pay-per-mile

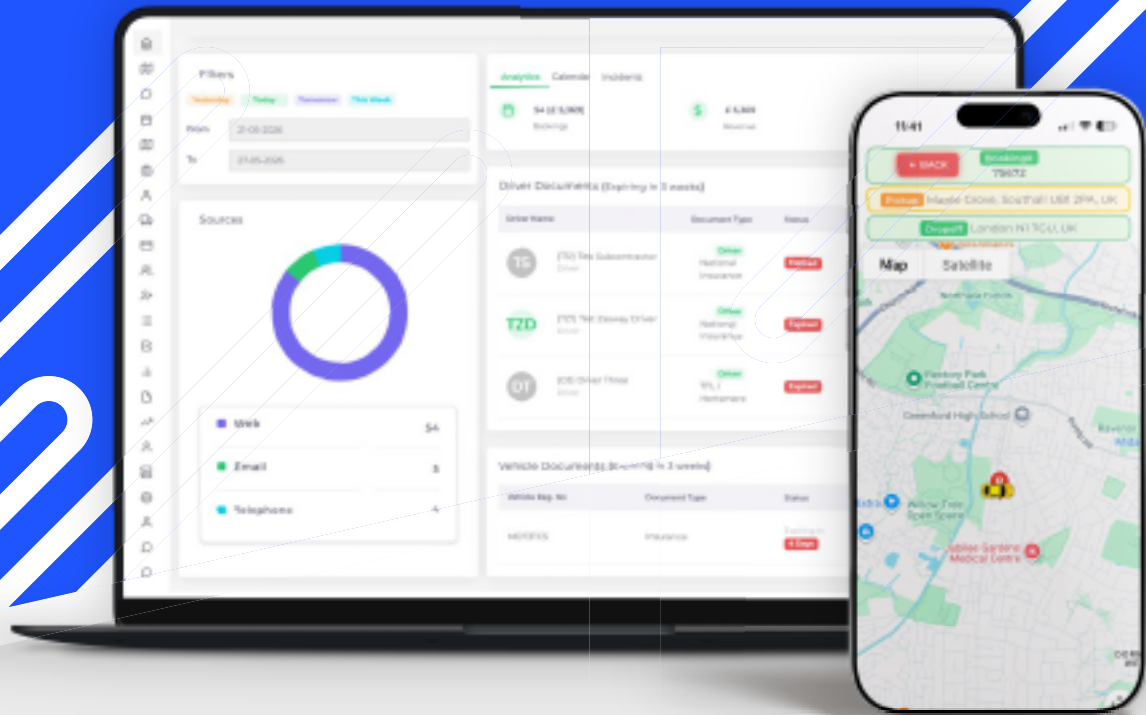
charge that doesn't differentiate between private and commercial use risks placing a disproportionate burden on our sector.

“Addison Lee estimates this levy would cost EV drivers on our fleet up to £840 a year, and plug-in hybrid drivers £420 – on top of the £4,700 a year removing London's congestion charge exemption already adds to EV running costs.

“We're also concerned about cross-border hiring, where drivers from outside stringent areas, running ICE vehicles, undercut those of us who've invested in cleaner fleets to meet higher standards.

“The last thing operators need is more costs, complexity, and administrative burden.

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- 🗨 Two-Way Driver Chat

JUST DESERTS

NINE YEARS' JAIL FOR COLCHESTER THUG WHO LEFT CABBIE FOR DEAD IN SAVAGE STREET ATTACK

A young cabbie was left with life-changing injuries, including a fractured skull, a broken nose, and a brain haemorrhage, after passenger Brodie Farrell launched a brutal, unprovoked assault and abandoned him unconscious in the road. Farrell, 26, of Colchester, boarded the taxi in the city centre before violently attacking the driver upon arriving at his destination in Highwoods. During the onslaught, Farrell repeatedly punched and kicked the driver, dragging him from the vehicle and continuing the beating before fleeing the scene with the driver's phone and cash. The victim, a father of young children, was found by a passing motorist who called emergency services. The driver was rushed to



the hospital, where he underwent emergency surgery for a bleed on the brain. He spent weeks in intensive care and continues to suffer from severe cognitive impairment, memory loss, and physical disability. Farrell was arrested after police traced his movements through CCTV and DNA left in the taxi. During his trial, the prosecution

described the assault as “an act of sheer, gratuitous brutality against a vulnerable worker.”

Detective Inspector Antony Alcock condemned Farrell's actions, stating: “This was a senseless and extraordinarily violent attack on an innocent man who was simply trying to earn a living. Farrell showed a complete disregard for human life, leaving his victim severely injured in the dark.”

At court, Farrell pleaded guilty to grievous bodily harm with intent and robbery. A judge sentenced him to nine and a half years in prison, noting that the “savage and cowardly” attack had devastated the victim's life and left deep physical and psychological scars.

UBER PASSENGER JAILED AFTER RACIAL ABUSE AND ASSAULT ON DRIVER DURING SMETHWICK TRIP

A teenager who shouted racial abuse at an Uber driver and punched his seat during a chaotic journey has been jailed for three weeks.

Omari Thomas, 19, from Rowley Regis, launched into the aggressive tirade after the driver confronted him and a female passenger over suspected drug taking in the back seat of the vehicle on May 16 last year. Birmingham Magistrates' Court heard that the dispute began when Thomas sniffed a white substance while his female companion inhaled what was

believed to be laughing gas from a balloon whilst on the back seat of the car on their way to a McDonald's in Cape Hill, Smethwick.

Prosecutor Alexander Moyler told the court that after the driver informed the pair: “You can't do that in my car,” Thomas became aggressive and punched the back of the driver's seat.

Then a second punch slipping through to strike the back of the victim's head.

The driver turned the taxi around to return to the original pick-up location in Rowley Regis, leaving

him in “fear of his safety.”

During the return drive, Thomas hurled racial abuse at the driver, shouting: “You kidnapped me you curry b****d.”

Thomas later pleaded guilty to racially aggravated assault by beating and admitted that the language he used was “unacceptable.”

Magistrates sentenced Thomas to three weeks in prison following the court hearing.

His sentence will be served consecutively to a separate seven-year prison term he is currently serving for a firearms offence.

JUST DESERTS

JAIL FOR ABERDEEN MAN WHO HELD KNIFE TO TAXI DRIVER'S NECK IN TERRIFYING ROBBERY

A 33-year-old man who subjected a taxi driver to a “terrifying experience” by holding a knife to his neck has been jailed for four years.

Peter Garland was a passenger in the vehicle when he pulled out the weapon, held it to the driver's neck, made violent threats, and chased the victim before robbing him of his mobile phone, which was later recovered.

The attack took place on October 6 last year at Rowan Road in Aberdeen after Garland and a group of others called a taxi to travel to another address. Following the incident, Garland admitted his guilt to an acquaintance, saying: “I was the one with the knife. It is all on me.”



Sentencing him at the High Court in Edinburgh, Lady Haldane noted that the crime was a serious offence committed against a background of persistent criminality. The judge stated that Garland, currently a prisoner at Grampian jail, would have faced a six-year sentence if he had not pleaded guilty. Pointing out that Garland is assessed as a high risk to reoffend, Lady Haldane told him: “In this

case, protection of the public is clearly a significant factor.”

In addition to his prison term, Garland will be monitored under a two-year community supervision order upon release.

Defence counsel Neil Shand said the unemployed 33-year-old is remorseful and recognises the severe impact the crime had on the driver. Shand noted that Garland acknowledges his adult life has been “largely unproductive” but added that “he does have a degree of insight into his behaviour.”

The court also heard that Garland has recently qualified as a hairdresser and has been using his skills as a barber to help other inmates.

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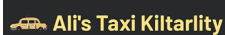
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SCOTTISH LOOPHOLE THREAT

UNLICENSED OPERATORS EXPLOIT THE 1982 ACT WHILE AUTHORITIES TURN A BLIND EYE

Article by Alistair Turner
Ali's Taxi Kiltarlity



For years, legitimate taxi and private hire drivers across Scotland have played by the rules. We undergo rigorous medicals, pass background checks, pay our licensing fees, and now navigate the mandatory HMRC tax checks. But a dangerous loophole in the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 is allowing unlicensed operators to eat into our trade with zero oversight - and the authorities are looking the other way.

Under the 1982 Act, exemptions were originally carved out to allow wedding and funeral cars to operate without a standard taxi or private hire car (PHC) licence. The law loosely translates this exemption as being on exclusive hire to one client for a minimum of 24 hours. While wedding and funeral cars fit this naturally, it is now being heavily exploited by self-proclaimed "chauffeurs" and "tour operators" running daily hires.

The issue has spiked following the introduction of HMRC tax checks for licence renewals. Drivers who couldn't or wouldn't comply with the tax checks have simply migrated to this unregulated sector. The reality on the ground is brazen. In one local case, an operator and his driver who both failed the mandatory medical checks required to hold a taxi or PHC licence simply continued operating under the exemption. They didn't even bother to take down the company branding or the roof sign, and one vehicle was spotted running a fake plate. This isn't a grey area; it is blatant unlicensed operating.

Yet, attempts to get authorities to enforce the law have hit a brick wall. At major local events such as the Belladrum Tartan Heart Festival, an annual music and arts festival, held on the Belladrum Estate in Kiltarlity, these unlicensed operators run rampant.

When the issue was flagged directly to police officers directing traffic on site, the response was that it "wasn't their issue." Calls to 101 have yielded nothing. Promises from licensing committee meetings - including one from a Sergeant Patterson over a year ago who said she would get in touch - have vanished into thin air.



Worse still is the reaction when drivers try to protect their livelihood. When documentary evidence of this illegal local operation was posted online, the response wasn't a police crackdown on the unlicensed vehicle. Instead, the licensed driver who posted it received a phone call from the police, accusing them of harassment and warning that they could lose their own licence because the post was "affecting the operator's revenue stream."

Public safety is at the heart of this issue. While the public and media rightly scrutinise the vetting process for licensed drivers when something goes wrong, they are completely blind to the fact that an unvetted individual - even someone freshly released from prison - can set themselves up as a "tour operator" tomorrow. They can drive families around with no medical checks, no criminal record background checks, and no council oversight.

Years of emails, photo and videos sent to council members, licensing staff, and the police prove that the authorities have been warned repeatedly. If a major incident occurs involving one of these rogue operators, the paper trail will show that the trade raised the alarm, and the system failed to act.

It's time for the Scottish Government and local councils to close the 1982 Act loophole before a tragedy forces their hand. It's worth noting that David Brown, the convicted rapist allowed to keep his operator's licence by Highland councillors, could leave prison and operate under this exemption....!!



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CHARGE DROPPED AGAINST ISLE OF MAN CABBIE ACCUSED OF ASKING FOR SEXUAL FAVOURS

A cabbie accused of committing an act against public justice has had the case against him withdrawn. Adrian Erive Santos, 45, from Ramsey, appeared at Douglas Courthouse on 21 July. Santos had been charged after reportedly asking his lone female customer to perform sexual acts

on him in exchange for free travel. Footage from the alleged exchange which took place on the 27 June, was recorded and shared to social media. However in an update provided to the court the prosecutor said, after repeated engagement with the police, the complainant was not supportive of

a prosecution.

He said it was 'evidently clear' that the complainant was 'vital' for any prosecution and therefore he had 'very little option' but to ask for the matter to be withdrawn.

Releasing Mr Santos from his bail conditions, the Deputy High Bailiff also awarded his costs.

BRADFORD PH DRIVER TO APPEAL AFTER LOSING LICENCE OVER ALLEGED PASSENGER ASSAULT

A Bradford PH driver, Mohammed Mohammed, 37, has had his licence revoked following allegations that he assaulted a passenger during a dispute over a late pick-up.

According to Bradford Council, the passenger claimed Mohammed pulled the vehicle over and "punched the victim multiple times in the face." The allegations

were supported by photographs of an injury to the passenger's lip that required stitches.

While Mr Mohammed admitted to a verbal argument, he denied the altercation became physical.

West Yorkshire Police investigated the report but indicated "there is insufficient evidence to proceed" with a prosecution.

However, Bradford Council's taxi licensing team revoked his licence in February under "the principle of public protection," concluding he was not a fit and proper person to drive. Mohammed has launched an appeal to regain his licence, which is scheduled for a contested hearing at Bradford Magistrates Court on November 11.

GLASGOW PHV DRIVER DODGES JAIL AFTER BEING CAUGHT WITH £148,000 IN CRIMINAL CASH

A 44-year-old PH driver who was caught with over £148,000 of "dirty money" hidden inside his car has avoided a prison sentence. Irfan Sarwar had initially kept the cash at his luxury home in Glasgow before being intercepted by police during a targeted surveillance operation in Maryhill.

NCA officers had been keeping tabs on Sarwar when they spotted him and a child entering his home. He emerged shortly after, alone, and walked back to his Toyota private hire vehicle.

Prosecutor Ryan Watson told the court that officers "saw he was carrying a bag for life which appeared to be weighted" and watched as "Sarwar placed the bag inside and drove off."

Police quickly tailed Sarwar and searched his car while he was stuck in traffic on Garscube Road. Mr. Watson noted that "there was a bag in the footstool which had a large quantity of cash," which turned out to be "three bundles of cash containing £148,555."

Following his arrest, Sarwar pleaded

guilty at Glasgow Sheriff Court to possessing criminal property.

He explained to authorities that he was struggling financially when he was approached by a group of Albanian men outside a pub two months prior. He claimed a man named Vino "offered him £200 to pick up and drop off the package," an offer he accepted due to his money troubles.

Sheriff Owen Mullan ordered Sarwar to complete unpaid work and put him on a six-month electronic tag between 6pm and 6am.

GLASGOW CABBIE WRONGLY JAILED FOR 10 MONTHS OVER MURDER BID SUES POLICE SCOTLAND

An innocent Glasgow cabbie has launched a six-figure lawsuit against Police Scotland after spending ten months in prison for a gangland murder bid he had nothing to do with.

Scott Troy, 43, was arrested at his home and accused of being a getaway driver following a violent attack on shopkeeper Mohammed Arif in Pollok on August 13, 2023.

Mr Arif ultimately had to have his leg amputated after being shot and stabbed by a masked gang wielding machetes and knives.

In reality, Mr Troy - who had worked with his base for nearly a decade - was simply responding to a routine fare sent by his bosses to collect four men from the area.

He was completely unaware of the violent crime that had just taken place. Despite his boss confirming



the booking to authorities, Mr Troy was remanded in custody at Barlinnie prison for almost a year before prosecutors finally agreed he was not part of the plot.

"That night I was doing my usual shift - I had no idea things were going to pan out the way they did," Mr Troy explained. "It really was the wrong place at the wrong time."

He added: "The first I knew of any wrongdoing was when the police came to my house and cuffed me on the spot. I was completely innocent, and I pleaded with the

officers, but they wouldn't hear it." The legal action in the Court of Session seeks damages for psychological harm and the long-term impact on his career and personal life. "I was wrongly arrested, spent ten months in Barlinnie, and my name was publicly trashed. That kind of experience changes you," Mr Troy said.

While Mr Troy was cleared, the actual gang members were heavily sentenced. Liam McDonald was jailed for 14 years and Dylan Haldane for 13 years for the attempted murder, while a third man, William Dickson, was jailed for more than nine years after pleading guilty.

Commenting on the lawsuit, a Police Scotland spokesperson said: "As this is an ongoing legal case it would be inappropriate to comment."

UNLICENSED PH OPERATOR OFFERING ILLEGAL RIDES VIA FACEBOOK HAS VEHICLE SEIZED IN DONCASTER

An illegal private hire operator offering unlicensed rides over Facebook has been taken off the road after a joint sting by Doncaster Council and South Yorkshire Police.

The operator first came to the attention of authorities after advertising fares on social media. Despite being officially warned by the council that they needed proper licensing, vehicle testing, and insurance, the company brazenly continued to operate illegally.

In response, undercover licensing compliance officers posed as customers and booked a ride to

catch the operator in the act. When the driver arrived at the designated pickup point, police and council officers were waiting. The vehicle was immediately seized after it was confirmed the driver was unlicensed, the operator was unauthorised, and the car lacked the necessary insurance.

Following the seizure, City of Doncaster Council is urging the public to always use licensed taxi services for their own safety.

"Drivers who are unlicensed undermine those who uphold professional standards and adhere to the law," said Cllr Gemma

Cobby, Cabinet Member for Regulation and Enforcement.

"They are unvetted, often uninsured, and unsafe. That is why our diligent licensing and compliance teams work hard to keep them off the roads. As this recent case shows, we will catch them."

Cllr Cobby reminded passengers that all licensed drivers must carry an identity badge with the council's logo, and their vehicles must clearly display a licence number and official plate. She urged anyone with concerns about an operator or driver to report them to the council immediately.

PREVENTING COURIER FRAUD

Article by Khaqan Mumtaz
Report Fraud Protect Services
City of London Police



Taxi and private hire drivers play an important role in identifying suspicious activity and helping to protect individuals from losing further money and high-value goods in courier fraud. This is because they are often one of the few people who encounter victims whilst the fraud is in progress. This article aims to equip you with the valuable opportunity to build your knowledge and confidence to recognise potential victims and intervene appropriately where necessary helping to prevent significant financial harm.

What is courier fraud?

Courier fraud involves offenders contacting victims, usually by telephone, falsely claiming to be from the police, a bank, or another trusted organisation. Victims are persuaded they are assisting in an investigation and are instructed to withdraw large sums of cash or purchase high-value items, which are then handed over to a “courier” who is part of the criminal network.

Report Fraud Statistics (2025)

- Those aged 70 or above make up the majority of courier fraud victims, with those aged between 76-96 accounting for c. 62% of all courier fraud reports.
- 46% of courier fraud victims in 2025 were women.
- Courier fraud reports rose nearly 10% from 2024 to 2025, increasing from 1,721 in 2024 to 1,891 in 2025.
- From 2024 to 2025, the total financial loss to courier fraud victims who reported rose from £19.5 million to more than £21 million, with the average amount stolen per victim now around £15,311.08.
- London & surrounding regions account for c. 65% of all courier fraud victims, with strong transport links enabling offenders to operate across neighbouring counties including Herts, Essex, Surrey and Kent.

The vital role of taxi and PH drivers

Taxi and PH drivers can help to disrupt courier fraud. Victims of courier fraud often use local taxis and PHVs to travel to and from the bank, bureau de change and jewellers as well as their homes.

Couriers also rely on taxis as they may come to towns and cities via train and hire a taxi from a rank to travel to a victim's home in order to collect cash or valuables before returning shortly after to the train station.

This means that taxi/PH drivers are one of the few groups of people to witness unusual patterns of behaviour, in real time, leading to them being able to identify and help prevent an ongoing courier fraud.

Warning signs and how to help

1. Remain vigilant for journeys involving potential couriers or vulnerable passengers.
2. Contact police on 999 if you think you've picked up a suspected courier and state you think a courier fraud is in progress – this will be treated as a priority.
3. Raise awareness among elderly passengers and note any unusual or repeat fares to banks, bureau de change, jewellers or similar businesses.
4. Look out for elderly or vulnerable passengers who appear anxious or distracted.
5. Look out for passengers speaking on the phone throughout the journey, especially if they are being instructed on what to do.
6. Look out for requests to wait outside premises briefly whilst large transactions take place.
7. Look out for passengers requesting quick return trips to stations.

Questions to support passengers

If you have concerns, you're encouraged to sensitively ask:

1. Has anyone claiming to be from the police, your bank, or a fraud team asked you to withdraw or spend this money?
2. Have you been told you are assisting with a police or fraud investigation?
3. Has anyone advised you what to say or do while making this transaction?
4. Has someone arranged to collect money or items from you later?
5. Have you been asked to post money or valuables?

If a customer answers “yes” to any of the above questions, they could be a victim of courier fraud.

Where appropriate, please remind customers that the police and banks will never ask members of the public to withdraw money, purchase goods, or assist with an investigation in this way.

If you believe a fraud is actively taking place and an offender may be nearby, call 999 immediately and state that you suspect a courier fraud is in progress.

Thanks for your support in delivering clear messaging and safeguarding those at risk. For further info, contact Business.Engagement@cityoflondon.police.uk

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INSURANCE TIPS TO HELP DRIVERS COPE WITH A CHALLENGING OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

Article by David Sweeney
Head of Taxi Broking
The Taxi Insurer
www.taxiinsurer.co.uk



PHTM EXPO is always a great opportunity to get together with colleagues from across the taxi and private hire vehicle (PHV) sector to network and catch up on the latest industry issues and developments.

This year's event was no different, although there was one topic of conversation that dominated all others: how it's becoming increasingly difficult for drivers to make ends meet.

As if to underline that point, PHV drivers in Liverpool, St Helens and Wigan recently staged a one-day strike to protest against a 20% commission rate being imposed on their earnings (<https://shorturl.at/9e9Ct>).

And earlier this year, an alternative ride-hailing app was launched in London that gives drivers 100% of the fare, minus £0.50 per ride and a subscription fee of £30 a week (<https://shorturl.at/PUI3v>).

To add to the challenge of dynamic pricing and dynamic commission rates, drivers are now facing the threat of driverless vehicles being on UK streets later this year, which they are naturally pushing back against (<https://shorturl.at/YglITY>).

In the face of increasing commission rates, rising fuel and operating costs, but fares that have remained largely unchanged, it's drivers who are feeling the pinch having to contend with reduced levels of income.

If drivers are continually forced to work extra hours to try and make up for lost revenue or simply break even, how long before they simply decide to leave the trade altogether?

How drivers may be able to lower their premiums

Given that the taxi and PHV sector is among the five industries worst affected by inflation over the past decade (<https://shorturl.at/dWzm9>), it's worth remembering that there are three principal measures that drivers can adopt to help keep their insurance premiums as affordable as possible.

The first of these is to install forward-facing CCTV cameras on their vehicle dashboards. Insurers will generally offer a discounted premium in return for cameras being installed in vehicles because, in the event of an accident, they've got a reliable visual record of an event as it took place.

Insurers understand that drivers are going to be involved in a certain number of accidents – there's no way around that. But if a driver has installed a CCTV camera in their vehicle, it can help the claims department to make an informed decision on liability and settle the claim more efficiently.

The main benefit of settling claims in a timely manner is reduced cost. If a driver is at fault and the other party's driving a hire car, the quicker the insurer can close that claim, the cheaper it is for them, because hire cars can cost up to £300 a day.

The second significant action that drivers can take is to fit their vehicles with telematic devices. Using embedded sensors, telematics constantly monitors vehicle performance, including engine temperature, idling time, tyre pressure and fuel usage. This data is then sent to the insurer, so it can monitor the driver's driving style, and is used to help determine the driver's risk profile, and therefore their premium.

A third way for drivers to potentially keep a lid on their insurance premiums is by working with a taxi insurance broker. These specialists have spent years nurturing relationships with a trusted panel of insurer partners and focus on finding products and policies that meet their clients' requirements and expectations.



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WHY MORE TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE FIRMS ARE CHOOSING REVIEWMASTER

Article by Taxisolutions
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Online reviews have become one of the biggest factors influencing how passengers choose a taxi or private hire company. Before making a booking, many people now check Google ratings to compare local operators, making a strong online reputation more important than ever.

ReviewMaster has been designed specifically for the taxi and private hire industry, helping operators consistently generate more genuine passenger reviews without adding extra work to their day-to-day operations. By encouraging feedback at the right time, firms can build a stronger online presence while continuing to focus on delivering excellent service.

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As more positive reviews appear on Google, operators are finding it easier to build trust with potential passengers, improve their local visibility, and stand out in increasingly competitive markets.

A consistent flow of recent reviews not only strengthens credibility but can also help

businesses appear more prominently in Google Search and Google Maps.

ReviewMaster also provides valuable insight into the passenger experience. Regular feedback helps operators identify what's working well across the business while highlighting opportunities to improve service standards, ultimately supporting long-term growth and customer satisfaction.

To help more operators experience the benefits for themselves, **ReviewMaster is currently offering a 5-week free trial.** It's an opportunity to see how a stronger online reputation can help attract more passengers, increase bookings, and support sustainable business growth, all without any long-term commitment.

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ROUND THE COUNCILS

NORTHUMBERLAND: ALARM OVER POWERS TO MAYOR

Northumberland councillors have raised serious concerns over new government proposals, currently out to consultation, that could strip the county council of its taxi licensing powers and hand them to the North East Strategic Mayoral Authority.

The government argues that because passengers frequently cross “invisible borders” between local authorities, the current system creates “inconsistent” standards. To fix this, ministers want to transfer licensing powers to regional transport bodies, which in the North East means the mayoral authority.

However, local officials are sceptical about how the plan would work. Speaking at a committee meeting on Tuesday 23 June, Councillor Alan Smith admitted he was “struggling to see how it would work in practice,” while committee chairman Councillor Trevor Cessford voiced fears that the responsibility would sit with the mayor while the council would end up doing “all the work.”

A major worry is Northumberland’s massive size and rural nature. Councillor Gordon Stewart, cabinet member for public safety, pointed out that Northumberland is England’s second-largest unitary authority by land area, featuring a unique mix of urban centres and remote, sparsely populated communities.

In his response to the consultation, Stewart warned: “A key concern for our local drivers is they could be forced to travel to a centralised point outside the county to deal with the administration of their licence,” he wrote, adding that this would have a “negative impact.”

The council also doubts whether the mayoral authority has the capability to manage the system, with Stewart noting that the council “understands the North East Combined Authority does not have in place the necessary infrastructure required to operate a licensing scheme of this nature.”

Instead, Northumberland Council is pushing for a “hybrid approach” where the mayoral authority sets the region’s policy, but local councils are paid to actually run the scheme.

While the plans would apply across the whole of England, local officials stress that nothing is final yet. Colin MacDonald, head of public protection, emphasised that “the devil is in the detail” and noted that while the government clearly has a “strong view,” the proposals are still only at the consultation stage.

WIGAN: CABBIES SLAM ‘CRAZY’ AGE LIMIT RULES

A strict council policy is forcing local private hire drivers out of business by banning cars over 12 years old, even if they pass strict emissions and safety tests.

John Moreton, a 63-year-old cabbie from Wigan, faces being unable to use his hybrid vehicle beyond 2026 due to the rule.

Moreton, who drives a “pristine” 17-year-old Toyota Prius that recently passed three separate MOTs, expressed his frustration at the prospect of being forced to buy an expensive replacement. “This rule will put me out of work and onto benefits, it’s crazy,” he said, questioning whether it makes sense to take on £20,000 to £25,000 to finance a new cab at his age.

The policy has created a confusing postcode lottery across Greater Manchester. While Wigan enforces the age cap, neighbouring areas, such as Bolton and Stockport, judge vehicles on actual emissions rather than age.

Moreton described the inconsistency as “ridiculous,” pointing out that someone from outside Wigan could buy his car, license it elsewhere, and legally drive passengers within his own town.

Another local driver shared that they are facing an unfair exit from the industry this October, despite borrowing money to buy their car just two years ago before the rule was implemented.

Independent councillor, Maureen O’Bern, has backed the struggling drivers, arguing that there is “no logic” to the rule and that the council should support safe, long-standing local cabbies.

David Lawrie, director of the National Private Hire Association, also acknowledged the drivers’ frustration, noting that “the level of variation is getting ridiculous.” However, Lawrie suggested a solution might be on the horizon, stating there is a “strong appetite” for an upcoming national standard from the government to level the playing field across the country.

Wigan Council has defended the policy, with assistant director Julie Middlehurst stating that the age limit provides a “clear, consistent, and enforceable framework” to maintain a high-quality fleet and ensure vehicles are safe, reliable, and environmentally sustainable.

While she noted the policy was agreed over four years ago with a fair implementation period, the council has promised to give “further consideration” to the mounting concerns raised by local drivers.

ROUND THE COUNCILS

TEIGNBRIDGE:

LICENSING RULES OVERHAUL PROPOSED

Teignbridge District Council has launched a major public consultation on sweeping updates to its taxi and private hire licensing policy, aiming to boost public safety, elevate trade standards, and help the environment.

Running from Friday, June 26 until midday on Friday, August 7, the council is actively seeking feedback from drivers, operators, passengers, and residents on the draft policy, which marks the first full review of the local licensing framework in over 15 years.

The proposed changes introduce significantly tighter regulations across the board. Drivers will face stricter suitability rules, including new knowledge assessments and language proficiency checks, alongside mandatory training in safeguarding, disability awareness, and spotting county lines drug exploitation.

Vehicle standards will also get tougher, with requirements for daily safety checks by drivers, formal inspections every six months, stricter emission controls, and new guidelines regarding in-vehicle CCTV.

Additionally, the policy expects drivers to predominantly operate within Teignbridge and introduces rules for horse-drawn carriage services.

Councillor Suzanne Sanders, Executive Member for Neighbourhoods, explained that the review aims to keep services safe, reliable, and accessible while maintaining a fair system for workers.

"We want to know whether the proposals strike the right balance between safety, service and reasonable requirements for the trade," Cllr Sanders said.

Residents and stakeholders can review the draft policy and submit their views on the council's website: <https://shorturl.at/quXXO> before the final policy goes to the full council later this year.

FAREHAM:

LICENCES GRANTED DESPITE NO CHECKS

Fareham Borough Council's licensing panel has approved private hire licences for two applicants despite significant gaps in their overseas criminal records, ruling that both men are "fit and proper" to work.

The decisions, made during a meeting on June 16, mark a departure from standard licensing policies due to what councillors described as exceptional

circumstances beyond the drivers' control.

The first applicant, "Mr H," was granted a licence despite a 12-year gap in his history caused by the collapse of the Afghan government.

Born in Afghanistan, Mr H explained he was in education before leaving the country, moving to the United Arab Emirates in 2022 and arriving in the UK in 2025. Because official records were wiped following the Taliban's return to power, he could not provide a certificate of good conduct.

The panel noted that Mr H had a completely clear UK Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check and DVLA driving licence. Councillors concluded that the missing records were not his fault and that there was "no evidence of a risk to public safety."

The second applicant, "Mr G," had his licence approved despite missing background checks from Sri Lanka prior to his move to the UK in 2006.

Mr G told the panel he could not safely return to his home country due to his political stance, and his elderly parents were unable to secure the document for him.

Acknowledging these exceptional reasons, the panel approved his licence but changed the standard terms to restrict it "to the duration of Mr G's right to work in the UK."

STIRLING:

PUBLIC CONSULTATION LAUNCHED

Stirling Council has launched a public consultation to gather feedback on local taxi and private hire services and help shape future improvements.

The review is being conducted alongside traffic consultants LVSA to evaluate the current state of licensed vehicles across the region.

Key issues under review include whether the council should place a cap on the total number of taxis and private hire vehicles, as well as assessing the accessibility and variety of the fleet currently on the road.

The consultation is a statutory requirement under the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982.

Council officials hope the feedback will provide "vital insights to sustain and enhance the services provided by licensed vehicles."

Members of the public have until Sunday, August 9, to share their views. The online survey can be accessed directly through the Stirling Council website: <https://forms.gle/o2hBcgmBXXDKm1NN9>

ROUND THE COUNCILS

AMBER VALLEY:

LICENCES GRANTED DESPITE NO CHECKS

Dear **PHTM**, we are writing on behalf of a group of 12 licensed hackney carriage and private hire operators and drivers based in the Amber Valley licensing area of Derbyshire, to raise an issue we believe may be of interest to operators and drivers in similar situations across the country.

Amber Valley BC has recently relocated its hackney carriage and PHV testing centre to a garage in Sheffield, around 25 miles outside the licensing area. This followed the previous contracted garage, MAN Truck, being unable to continue providing the service due to the unavailability of a qualified tester.

The council's own published contracts register shows this previous contract ran from September 2022 with a one-year extension option attached. Documentation published on the council's website confirms that extension was exercised, meaning the contract was due to run through to 30th June 2026, not 2025 as the base contract term suggested.

Despite this, testing was moved to the Sheffield garage before that confirmed end date, raising the question of whether the contract with MAN Truck was formally terminated early, and if so, on what grounds. Rather than this being planned for through a proper re-tender process, the move has reportedly been handled as an emergency direct award.

The practical impact on drivers has been significant. A round trip of around 50 miles for a routine annual test represents a direct cost in time and fuel for self-employed drivers, and creates real difficulty for those with school transport contracts or other time-sensitive bookings.

There is also a genuine legal concern: under MOT rules, a vehicle that fails its test for a major defect can normally only be driven away if the test took place at the garage where the vehicle is kept, or if a repair has been pre-arranged.

A failure in Sheffield leaves a driver with a vehicle that cannot lawfully be driven the 25 miles back to the licensing area without that arrangement in place, and a dangerous fault would require recovery from Sheffield entirely.

Separately, the council has now introduced a new requirement for taximeter calibration and certification, with the only approved garage for this located in Nottingham, adding a further journey and cost on top of the testing issue.

As a group, we have submitted a formal letter to Amber Valley BC setting out these concerns, including direct questions about the overlap between the confirmed extended contract end date and the date the Sheffield garage's testing arrangement began, and a Freedom of Information request has been submitted asking the council to clarify the circumstances behind the decision, including the handling of the contract's expiry and the process used to appoint the Sheffield garage.

We have also raised the matter with our local Members of Parliament.

We believe this is a situation that may resonate with operators in other licensing areas who have experienced or could face similar changes to testing arrangements, and we would welcome the opportunity to share further detail or documentation if needed.

Yours faithfully

Drivers of Amber Valley

DONCASTER:

ALL WRITTEN-OFF CARS BANNED

Taxis and private hire vehicles that have ever been written off will soon be completely banned from Doncaster's roads under a strict new licensing policy. Members of the City of Doncaster Council's licensing committee voted to outlaw both Category S (structural) and Category N (non-structural) write-offs from operating in the city.

Previously, only the most severely damaged Category A (scrap) and B (break) write-off vehicles were barred from receiving licences.

The new rules will apply retrospectively, forcing current drivers of written-off vehicles to find replacements. While council officers initially proposed a three-year grace period to help drivers transition, committee members voted to slash that window to just 18 months.

Pushing for the faster timeline, Councillor Isaiah-John Reasbeck said: "Three years seems like a long time to get an unsafe car off the road."

Alongside the vehicle ban, the committee approved several other changes to the taxi licensing policy, including a new requirement for all taxis to be fitted with hearing loops to improve passenger accessibility. Other debated changes, including whether to make CCTV mandatory inside all taxis and private hire vehicles, have been deferred to a future meeting.

ROUND THE COUNCILS

CONWY:

STRICT NEW POLICY APPROVED

Conwy County Council's Licensing Committee has endorsed a major overhaul of its taxi and private hire licensing criteria, introducing a strict "zero tolerance risk approach" to protect children and vulnerable adults. The sweeping changes give licensing officers expanded powers to tighten who is considered a fit and proper person to operate a cab in the county.

Under the newly approved policy, decision-makers are no longer limited to criminal convictions alone. They can now factor in non-conviction details and safeguarding-related intelligence when deciding whether to grant, suspend, or revoke a driver's licence. Additionally, any pending applications will be placed on hold until all relevant legal proceedings have completely concluded.

The security overhaul also establishes mandatory enhanced DBS checks, including checks against official barred lists. To maintain continuous vetting rather than relying on one-off screenings, all drivers must subscribe to the DBS Update Service register and remain enrolled for the entire duration of their licence. Updated procedures have also been put in place to ensure officers can trigger swift suspensions or revocations whenever a risk to public safety arises.

RTL - ISLE OF MAN:

DEMAND TO HALT NEW LICENCES

An Isle of Man cabbie has launched a petition urging the government to temporarily stop issuing new taxi licences following a series of alarming safety incidents. Barry Murphy, who has worked in the local trade for 24 years, is calling for an immediate freeze on new Public Passenger Vehicle applications until an independent review evaluates the licensing system. Public confidence has been shaken by recent events, including a July court appearance where a 45-year-old driver was charged with soliciting sexual acts from a lone female passenger in exchange for a free fare. Mr Murphy emphasised that his petition focuses strictly on vetting newcomers. "A number of serious incidents involving licensed drivers in recent years have understandably shaken public confidence," Mr Murphy stated, adding that the goal is not to assign blame but "to establish whether the current system is as robust, transparent and effective as it can be."

The proposed review would examine whether background and criminal record checks are sufficient and if the Road Transport Licensing Committee (RTL) communicates effectively with other government bodies. Mr Murphy noted that if the system is found to be safe, the pause should be lifted immediately, but any necessary safety improvements must be implemented before new licences are granted. "This petition is not intended to unfairly restrict opportunities for prospective drivers," he said. "It is intended to place public safety first."

In response, the Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture (DEFA), which oversees the RTL, announced that officials will launch a detailed review of the legislation governing the taxi trade this summer, focusing on driver checks and the potential use of in-car CCTV. While the DEFA highlighted that drivers already undergo enhanced DBS checks, it confirmed legislative updates will be brought to Tynwald, following September's general election, to create a more modern, effective regulatory framework.

CALDERDALE:

RESTRICTED LICENSING ACCESS PLEDGE

Calderdale councillors have pledged to support exasperated local cabbies who face major challenges getting support due to severely restricted licensing office hours. Cllr Osman Khalil brought the concerns of over 1,000 drivers to the council, pointing out that the office is currently open for just three hours on Wednesdays and three hours on Fridays.

Describing the six hours of access as "an absolute mockery of justice and fair rights," Cllr Khalil highlighted that drivers are simply trying to keep their families going, yet face unfair treatment. He added: "There have been instances where a driver has lost his licence, gone to court and got cleared, yet Calderdale Council will still not reissue a taxi licence."

He formally requested increased opening hours and greater transparency over how applications are handled. Council Leader, Daniel Sutherland, responded with a firm commitment to help the trade, stating that his administration is "really committed to supporting the licensed trade to be able to operate effectively."

Describing drivers as "working class people trying to earn a living," Cllr Sutherland announced he has instructed officers to arrange a trial period for an additional opening slot at the licensing office to facilitate business while broader issues are addressed.

TAXIBOT: LIVE IN NORTH AMERICA

TAXIBOT IS NOW LIVE ACROSS NORTH AMERICA HELPING FLEETS CAPTURE MORE DEMAND

By M2M TaxiBot
www.m2mtaxibot.com



Every missed call is more than an unanswered phone. It is a passenger who may book with another operator instead. During peak periods, weekends, late nights, airport rushes and major events, phone lines can quickly become overwhelmed. Across a month, those missed and after-hours enquiries can add up to a significant amount of lost revenue.

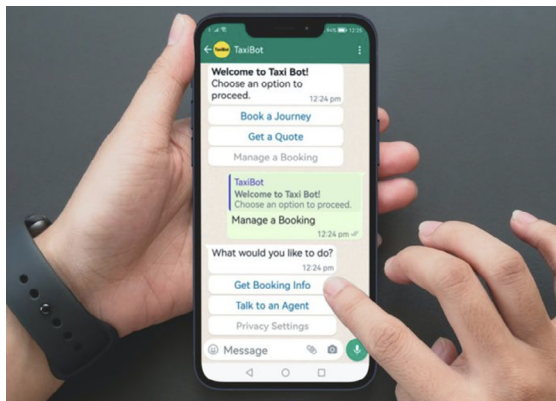
TaxiBot is designed to help fleets recover those bookings without increasing headcount and without asking passengers to download another app.

Passengers can book a ride simply by sending a message through WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger or Instagram. They can type their request or send a voice note, and a fully branded TaxiBot guides them through the booking journey. Once confirmed, the booking is sent directly into the fleet's existing dispatch system.

For the passenger, the experience is simple. There is no app to download, no account to create and no need to wait on hold. For the operator, every conversation can carry the company's branding, helping to deliver a consistent and professional customer experience from the first message.

TaxiBot can support fleets around the clock, capturing after-hours and overflow demand automatically. It can provide quotes, booking confirmations, estimated arrival times and reminders, while also answering common questions such as: *"Where is my driver?"* and *"How much will the journey cost?"* This reduces repetitive calls for dispatch teams and creates more booking capacity without adding extra staff.

Integrated payment links can also allow passengers to pay within the conversation, helping operators create a smoother journey from enquiry to confirmed ride.



TaxiBot is fully integrated with leading dispatch platforms including Autocab, Cordic and iCabbi. That means bookings flow into the systems fleets already use, with no need for teams to manage a separate platform or re-enter booking information manually. Built on more than a decade of transportation industry experience, TaxiBot works as an additional booking channel layered directly onto existing operations.

Messaging is especially effective for airport and hotel travellers, tourists, occasional passengers, event crowds, nightlife customers and younger riders who are often more comfortable sending a message than making a call. **These are exactly the bookings that can otherwise be lost when calling feels slow or inconvenient.**

Now live across North America, TaxiBot is helping US and Canadian fleets capture more demand through the channels passengers already use.

A 15-minute demonstration can show TaxiBot completing a live booking from the first message through to dispatch.

M2M Data Connect supports transportation businesses with connected technology and communication solutions across the UK, Europe, Africa and North America, helping fleets operate more efficiently. It is built for practical, measurable fleet growth.

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LIVERPOOL DRIVERS HIT BY SOARING COMMISSION FEES AS AI CONTROLLED DYNAMIC PAY TAKES HOLD

New Worker Info Exchange analysis of data from 78 Uber drivers in Liverpool, covering more than 1.4 million trips, reveals that the introduction of Uber's AI driven "dynamic pay" system has left drivers working harder, for much less pay.

- Uber driver real pay in Liverpool fell by 7.7% last year
- Driver commission payments to Uber in Liverpool increased from 25.6% of the fare to 30.4% last year

Uber driver pay is down but commission to pay to Uber is up:

The findings, published today by Worker Info Exchange (WIE), show that the average commission paid by drivers in Liverpool rose from 25.6% of fares in 2024 to 30.4% in 2025. The analysis also reveals that Uber charges its Liverpool drivers commission rates that vary greatly between drivers and between trips.

At the same time, average pay per hour for these Uber drivers fell by 7.7% in real terms between 2024 and 2025, after adjusting for inflation.

AI intensifies worker exploitation:

In recent years, Uber has gradually abandoned a pay setting model based on actual duration and distance of a trip in favour of hyper-variable pay determined algorithmically in real time. In 2023, Uber also abandoned its fixed commission model of 25% and made commission setting also algorithmically determined with hyper-variability from driver to driver and trip to trip.



Drivers have increasingly reported that their pay has been reduced, work allocation has become less reliable, commissions have increased, and the entire settlement process has become more opaque and unpredictable.

These technology shifts are part of a global strategy which has driven spectacular financial results for Uber on Wall Street with profits doubling and the share price tripling since 2023.

Algorithmic wage discrimination & the right to know:

The use of AI in dynamic pay setting has opened the door to personalised pay and real time algorithmic wage discrimination. This report builds upon WIE's ground breaking work in 2025 with Oxford University which exposed the unequal treatment of drivers exposed to hidden algorithmic management of this kind.

Under UK employment law, every worker has the right to understand the basis of how their pay is determined but with the method of algorithmic pay and work assignment largely hidden, Uber drivers have little means for holding Uber to account.

Collective legal action claims GDPR violations:

Worker Info Exchange is arranging a collective legal action in the

Netherlands (Uber's European HQ and from where Uber controls Liverpool Uber driver data), seeking an injunction and compensation for Uber drivers affected by the company's dynamic pay system. The claim argues that dynamic pay constitutes automated decision-making under Article 22 of the GDPR, the EU and UK data protection law that gives individuals the right not to be subject to decisions based solely on automated processing that significantly affects them. Many Liverpool drivers have already joined this collective action.

James Farrar, Director of Worker Info Exchange, says:

"This new analysis confirms what Liverpool drivers have been saying for some time. That commission is creeping up, pay is slipping down, and the system is becoming more unpredictable and less transparent with drivers often left earning less than the national minimum wage."

"Every worker in the UK has the absolute right to know the basis on which their pay is calculated and the right to protection from harmful AI driven automated decision making."

"We say that Uber's dynamic pay systems violate the rules and if Uber is allowed to continue to get away with this, such harmful practices will spread throughout the labour market with very serious implications for employment rights."

UBER UPDATE

LONDON BLACK CABBIES AND UBER FACE OFF IN HIGH-STAKES £340 MILLION HIGH COURT BATTLE

Uber is locked in a fierce legal showdown at the High Court as a massive £340m group lawsuit brought by 13,000 London black cab drivers heads to trial.

The legal action, which also includes collapsed PH operators Kabbee and Iride, alleges that Uber unlawfully manipulated its business model and misled TfL to secure its operating licence between May 2012 and March 2018, devastating the livelihoods of traditional taxi drivers. If the court rules in favour of the cabbies, drivers could receive roughly £25,000 each in compensation.

However, rather than immediately defending itself against the fraud allegations, Uber's legal team has launched a procedural counter-

attack aimed at killing the lawsuit before the core evidence is even heard. In preliminary hearings, Uber argued that the entire case is fundamentally "time-barred" under the UK's Limitation Act, which requires civil claims to be brought within a strict six-year window. Because the drivers formally sued in mid-2024 for events that concluded in 2018, Uber asserts the deadline has long passed.

Uber's lawyers claim that cabbies had ample notice to sue years ago, pointing out that TfL publicly detailed Uber's alleged rule-breaking when it temporarily refused to renew its licence in 2017. Uber also pointed to documents showing that the drivers' law firm, Mishcon de Reya, was already gath-

ering information for a potential class-action lawsuit at that time.

Lawyers representing the black cab drivers argue that the six-year clock should be paused because Uber deliberately concealed the true nature of how its smartphone dispatch app worked. They assert that Uber's operational deceit was only fully unravelled in late June 2018 during a Chief Magistrate's appeal hearing, placing their 2024 filing within the legal time limit.

Presiding judge Mrs Justice O'Farrell has already issued a rare costs budgeting order to ensure the thousands of individual cab drivers have clear visibility regarding their financial exposure to legal fees as they fight Uber's vast corporate war chest.



Upgrade Your Private Hire Business

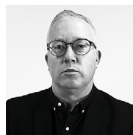
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SUMMER EVENTS ARE YOUR BIGGEST MARKETING OPPORTUNITY THIS AUGUST

Article by Phil Holloway
Marketing Director
Hologram Ltd
www.hologram.com



August is one of my favourite months of the year from a marketing perspective. The weather is usually at its best, schools are on holiday, families are making memories, and towns and cities across the UK are alive with festivals, music events, food fairs, sporting fixtures and community celebrations.

For taxi companies, this isn't just a busy period, it's one of the biggest opportunities of the year to build brand awareness, strengthen community relationships and generate long-term customer loyalty.

One of the biggest mistakes I see operators make is simply waiting for the phone to ring. The companies that really stand out are those that become part of their local community by working alongside event organisers rather than simply transporting people to and from events.

Think about what's happening in your local area during August. Music festivals, family fun days, food and drink festivals, agricultural shows, carnivals, charity events, sporting tournaments and outdoor cinema evenings all attract thousands of visitors. Every one of those visitors is a potential customer.

More importantly, every organiser needs reliable transport solutions.

By approaching local event organisers well in advance, you could become their recommended taxi partner. That could mean your logo appearing on event websites, social media pages, tickets, programmes or promotional material. It could also mean your booking number or app being promoted before, during and after the event.

That's exposure money simply can't buy.

Event organisers are looking for dependable businesses that help improve the visitor experience. If attendees know exactly who to call for transport home, everybody benefits. Visitors enjoy a safer journey, organisers have a trusted transport partner, and your

business gains hundreds or even thousands of potential new customers.

The opportunity doesn't stop there.

Working with event organisers opens the door to collaborative marketing. You could run ticket giveaways on social media, offer exclusive discount codes for event visitors, sponsor a stage or family area, or produce behind-the-scenes content that showcases both your business and the event itself.

This type of content performs incredibly well across Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and LinkedIn because it's authentic, local and relevant.

Even something as simple as posting photos of your vehicles supporting a local festival demonstrates that your business is actively involved in the community. Customers remember companies that support local events, and they're far more likely to book with businesses they recognise and trust.

The key is to think beyond transport. Don't just market taxis. Market experiences.

Show families enjoying a day out. Capture festival-goers arriving safely. Film visitors being dropped off at concerts or collected after an evening of entertainment. Every journey tells a story, and every story is an opportunity to showcase your business.

August is also the perfect time to build relationships that continue long after the summer has ended. Many event organisers run annual festivals, Christmas markets, sporting fixtures and seasonal celebrations throughout the year. A successful partnership this summer could lead to repeat opportunities for years to come.

My advice is simple. Pick up the phone, introduce yourself to local organisers, and ask how you can help. Don't wait to be invited.

The taxi companies that become visible within their communities are the ones that customers remember when they need a journey.

This August, don't just be the taxi that takes people home.

Be the trusted transport partner that helps make your local events a success.



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SHAME SHAME

LEICESTER UBER DRIVER WHO RAPED PASSENGER AT KNIFEPOINT JAILED FOR 16 YEARS

An Uber driver who raped a female passenger at knife point has been sentenced to 16 years in prison after his victim's rapid 999 call allowed police to track and arrest him within an hour.

Adam Daley, 33, from Leicester, targeted the woman in her 20s in December last year. The victim and her friend were outside a Leicester city centre bar when Daley pulled up in his white Toyota Auris and offered to take them home if they booked the ride through the app. After dropping the friend off, Daley began making highly inappropriate, sexual comments to the victim. He then pulled over in a layby claiming he needed to use the toilet. Once stopped, Daley ordered the victim into the front seat, pulled down her top, and forced her to perform a sex act

while threatening her with a knife. After she pleaded with him to stop, Daley abandoned the woman in the layby.

The victim called the police immediately at 5:30am. Officers quickly identified Daley's vehicle and tracked his movements using CCTV and ANPR cameras. Daley was stopped and arrested. As officers moved in, Daley tried to stamp on his mobile phone to destroy evidence.

Detectives later discovered Daley had driven past the victim in the layby three times after the assault. Though forensic tests found the victim's DNA on him, Daley denied the rape, claiming her DNA had transferred to him because she



drank from a water bottle in his car, which he claimed he later used to wash himself.

Additionally, Daley tested positive for cocaine at the time of his arrest and officers found indecent images of children on his phone during their digital investigation.

Following a trial, Daley was found guilty of rape, sexual assault, possession of a knife, and threats to kill. He also pleaded guilty to making indecent images of a child and drug driving.

On 10 July, at Leicester Crown Court, he was sentenced to 16 years in prison, handed a Sexual Harm Prevention Order, a restraining order, and a 20-month driving ban.

An Uber spokesperson condemned the attack, stating: "This was a truly shocking incident."

FORMER BIRMINGHAM TAXI DRIVER JAILED FOR 20+ YEARS AFTER HISTORIC RAPE OF YOUNG GIRLS

A 73-year-old former taxi driver who raped two young girls and made one pregnant has been sentenced to 22 years in prison.

Peter King groomed his victims in the 1990s and 2000s when they were as young as nine and 11, using day trips, clothes, and food to lure them to his Highgate flat. He also targeted a third victim, kissing her when she was just six years old.

King was found guilty of 15 child sex offences, including five counts of rape and ten counts of indecent assault.

He was sentenced at Birmingham Crown Court in June, appearing via

video link from HMP Birmingham. The court heard devastating impact statements from all three victims.

In his sentencing remarks, Judge Roderick Henderson praised the victims as "three strong women whose lives were destroyed."

Highlighting the long-lasting trauma of sexual abuse, Judge Henderson said: "If ever a case illustrated the terrible effect sexual abuse has, this is it. As with so



many people who have been sexually abused, it is not resolved when it is finished. It continued for weeks, months and years later."

He added that such abuse "destroys their trust and confidence" and causes victims to wrongfully feel guilty "when none of it is their responsibility."

Defending King, Rebecca Fairbairn noted that he suffers from significant health issues but has taken a full-time job in custody, achieving 'enhanced status.'

She acknowledged that King is fully aware he may spend the rest of his life behind bars.

SHAME SHAME

CABBIE FROM **SALFORD** JAILED FOR 11 YEARS AFTER RAPING VULNERABLE PASSENGER

A 46-year-old cabbie has been sentenced to 16 years after picking up an intoxicated teenager and raping her in her own home.

Khalafalla Yagoub, from Salford, was found guilty of rape at Manchester Crown Court in June and sentenced on July 13.

He received an 11-year prison term with an additional five-year extended licence, alongside a Sexual Harm Prevention Order and a restraining order.

The court heard that in the early hours of November 29, 2025, Yagoub picked up the 19-year-old victim in an unbooked taxi after she left a Manchester city centre bar at 3 am. The woman was heavily

intoxicated and in no fit state to consent. Yagoub drove her home and raped her inside the property.

In his police interview, Yagoub claimed the encounter was consensual, calling it a "gift" for driving her home.

In the days after the attack, the victim felt unwell. She later received a phone call from Yagoub not knowing who he was. During the conversation, Yagoub spoke about their encounter, with the woman realising that she had been raped while in a vulnerable



and intoxicated state, and with no recollection of what had taken place. While she had some images in her mind, she had believed them to be a dream.

She then reported the incident to the police.

Officers attempted to track Yagoub and could not locate him, but soon found that he was due to travel on flight to Istanbul on 3 December. He was arrested at the airport before he could board and subsequently taken into custody.

During the trial, the victim bravely gave evidence in court. The judge during sentencing noted that Yagoub laughed while the victim read her victim statement.

FORMER BRITISH ARMY TRANSLATOR JAILED FOR RAPE OF TEENAGE PASSENGER IN **EDINBURGH**

A former translator for the British Army who became a private hire driver after arriving in Scotland from Afghanistan has been convicted of raping a teenage passenger in his taxi.

Abdul Nabizada, 35, targeted the 19-year-old student after picking her up from a night out in Edinburgh on November 13, 2021. Instead of driving the woman to her home, Nabizada drove her to a secluded area in Joppa, trapped her in the vehicle, and took her mobile phone before carrying out the assault.

The High Court in Edinburgh heard harrowing testimony from the victim, who had left her friends early to go home.

She told jurors that Nabizada

repeatedly asked her for sex during the journey, despite her saying no and telling him she had a boyfriend.

"He said "can we have sex". He said it would be quick and it would take five minutes. I said no," she testified, adding that he kept apologising but persisted.

She told the court that she kept begging him: "Please stop it. Please stop touching me. It was horrible."

Following the attack, she fled the taxi and hid in nearby bushes before contacting a loved one.

Nabizada, who lived in Edinburgh,



denied all wrongdoing during the three-day trial.

He told the court that he had arrived in the UK in 2016 after working as a tailor and a translator for the US, Danish, and British militaries in Afghanistan. Despite his claims of innocence, the jury returned a unanimous guilty verdict late on 7 July.

Following the verdict, Judge John Morris KC placed Nabizada on the Sex Offenders' Register and remanded him in custody.

Defence lawyer, David Taylor, acknowledged that a prison sentence is inevitable for the crime. Nabizada, who has no previous convictions, will remain in custody until he is sentenced at Edinburgh High Court on 11 August.

GREENOCK CABBIE BANNED AFTER BLUNDER LEAVES COUPLE WITH FRACTURED STERNUMS

A veteran Greenock cabbie has been handed an 18-month driving ban and an electronic tag after a crash left a husband and wife with fractured sternums.

John Quinn, 61, caused the collision on December 12, 2024, when he failed to give way at a junction on Cartsburn Street, smashing his vehicle into a Renault Captur on Ingleston St.

The impact forced the female driver of the Captur to lose control and crash into a stone wall at Dunns MoT Testing Centre.

Both she and her husband suffered facial injuries from the deploying airbags and were

rushed to the Royal Alexandra Hospital in Paisley. In addition to a fractured sternum, the female driver suffered four broken ribs and two head wounds requiring ten stitches, spending two days in a high dependency unit where she needed oxygen to inflate her lungs. Her husband also suffered a fractured sternum, while Quinn himself required stitches to a head wound.

Quinn, who pleaded guilty to causing serious injury by careless driving, had his driving ban reduced from 24 months to 18 months due to his early guilty plea. Defence solicitor Anthony Boland

told Greenock Sheriff Court that Quinn had not driven since the crash and noted his client "has been a taxi driver for 16 years without any blemish on his driving record."

Boland described the incident as a "momentary lapse in concentration" but acknowledged "it led to serious consequences."

Sheriff James Varney accepted that while the harm caused was severe, Quinn's culpability was low. Alongside the driving ban, the Sheriff ordered Quinn to wear an electronic tag and remain at home during specified hours for 24 weeks.

HEREFORDSHIRE SCHOOL CABBIE SUSPENDED OVER UNROADWORTHY VEHICLE CONCERNS

A Herefordshire driver contracted to transport a child with special educational needs has been suspended with immediate effect following serious allegations that their vehicle was completely unroadworthy.

A local taxi driver, speaking anonymously, raised alarms about the council's home-to-school transport contracts, specifically highlighting a vehicle serving Westfield Special School in Leominster. The whistleblower claimed the vehicle was unlicensed as a taxi, uninsured, and had failed its MoT test.

In response to the allegations, a Herefordshire Council spokesperson emphasised that the safety and well-being of children

on school transport "is our highest priority" and stated that the local authority takes any concerns about vehicles, drivers, or operators "extremely seriously."

The council acted immediately once the issues were flagged. "In this case, concerns were brought to the council's attention and immediate action was taken on the same day," the spokesperson said.

"The driver was suspended from carrying out council-funded school transport work and the vehicle was withdrawn from service pending further enquiries," while alternative travel arrangements were quickly arranged for the student.

The incident comes amidst rising

costs and administrative changes for the local authority. In the year ending this March, the council spent approximately £15 million on school transport - an 18 per cent increase from the previous year - with taxis making up half of that total spending.

To combat these issues and tighten control, the spokesperson noted that the council has introduced an in-house school transport service through Hoople. The council stated that this new system "provides greater oversight of vehicle standards, driver training, and safeguarding requirements, helping to ensure safe, reliable transport for children and young people across Herefordshire."

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BRADFORD CABBIE SCRAPS LICENCE REVOCATION APPEAL OVER LEGAL COST FEARS

A banned private hire driver seeking to regain his licence ultimately abandoned his appeal after a court rejected his request for a 12-week delay to find legal representation.

Mohammed Rafiq, from Bradford, was stripped of his licence by council officers who ruled he was no longer a "fit and proper person" to operate a PHV.

The decision came after he accumulated two driving convictions earlier this year: one in March for driving without due care and attention, and another last month for using a mobile phone

while behind the wheel.

When Rafiq appeared at Bradford Magistrates Court on Friday for his appeal, he arrived without a lawyer. He asked the shocked courtroom to adjourn the case for three months so he could consult legal help.

Imran Hussain, representing Bradford Council, strongly opposed any delay, noting that Rafiq would keep his licence while the appeal remained open and stating: "Because of this we would certainly not want to delay matters."

Speaking through an Urdu

interpreter, Rafiq explained that he simply did not have the money for legal advice. Court officials warned him that if he pressed ahead with the appeal and lost, he would face an inevitable and hefty bill to cover the council's costs.

When asked how he would pay such a bill, Rafiq admitted he did not know. Asked whether he still wished to proceed, he initially told the court, "It is up to the bench to decide."

After magistrates reminded him that the choice was entirely his, Rafiq withdrew the appeal on the spot.

THREE MANCHESTER TAXI DRIVERS FINED AFTER OLD TRAFFORD MATCHDAY STING

Three taxi drivers have been fined and given penalty points for illegally picking up undercover officers outside Old Trafford stadium on Manchester United matchdays.

The drivers all held hackney carriage licences issued by Manchester City Council, which meant they were not legally allowed to pick up unbooked passengers within the Trafford area. Because the journeys were not pre-booked, the drivers' vehicle insurance was completely invalidated.

Undercover licensing enforcement officers spotted the taxis with their signs lit up before and after home games against Burnley and Everton. The officers requested trips to the city centre, and once the journeys began, they identified themselves and ordered the

drivers to pull over.

Trafford Council subsequently brought the prosecutions at Manchester Magistrates' Court.

The three drivers faced heavy financial penalties:

Ishtiaq Hussain Bibi, 47, of Manchester, pleaded guilty to illegally plying for hire and driving without insurance after offering a £10 trip to the city centre. He was fined £240, ordered to pay a £96 surcharge and £100 in costs, and received six penalty points.

Minas Tewolde, 58, of Eccles, was found guilty of illegally plying for hire, driving without insurance, and failing to wear his driver's badge. He was fined £660, ordered to pay a £264 surcharge and £580 in costs, and received six penalty points.

Erdan Shifa Mohammed, 50, of Salford, pleaded guilty to similar

offences after asking for £25 in cash for a 4.5-mile trip. He was fined £400, ordered to pay a £160 surcharge and £300 in costs, and received six penalty points.

Councillor Keleigh Glenton, executive member for community safety at Trafford Council, said: "These drivers committed the offence of illegally plying for hire and, in doing so, invalidated their insurance."

She added that the council's enforcement team is dedicated to protecting passengers and supporting rule-abiding drivers. "These cases highlight that courts take a very dim view of this behaviour," Glenton noted. "On top of the financial penalties, the points added to drivers' licences will have a much more lasting impact on them."

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Brighton & Hove Cab Trade View

Andy Peters

Brighton & Hove Cab Trade Association

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Devolution

At the time of writing these ramblings, the government has announced the details of several areas to be merged under devolution. I feel really sorry for the local taxi/PH trades affected by this, not only because of the massive disruption and upheaval this will cause, but also the fear of the unknown. The amalgamation of towns creating unitary authorities will have a massive impact on how those licensed drivers of taxis, PHVs and operators will function, and I really don't think it will be in a good way.

Brighton and Hove, a city, is already a unitary authority with the amalgamation of the two towns of Brighton and Hove in 1995. I remember this very well because I was a Hove hackney driver at the time and to say there was some resentment from the Brighton hackneys would be putting it mildly!

We went through a transition phase of rules whilst this was being sorted out, whereby it was set that for a certain period if you were a Hove hackney driver you could pick up off the streets in Brighton. However, you could not actually stop on the Brighton ranks, but you could pick up from them. The same was in reverse for Brighton hackney drivers. Although thinking about this now, I do wonder if that was actually legal.

Did this transition period go smoothly, well yes and no? I do remember sitting on a long Hove rank, being the only one, and seeing a Brighton hackney swoop in and pick up someone who had reached the back of the rank who was obviously heading for me but had waved the Brighton taxi down. As the driver passed me he just looked at me and grinned. By all accounts there was a lot of this going on from both sides.

Bear with me on this: at that time all Brighton hackneys as they were then, had already changed from any colour car over to the white and aqua boot and bonnet livery, whilst we in Hove had changed over a couple years previously from any colour to white with the council crest in a deep mauve on the doors. On a historical point, both the then separate Brighton Streamline and Hove Streamline Association cooperatives that were each formed in 1936, all had to

have black cars with white bonnets being the Streamline trade mark. This trade mark was also replicated in other areas as well with several Streamline Associations being formed on the same basis. In later years this became any colour cars but still with the white bonnet, although still at the time completely different companies. The decision to give up the white bonnet Streamline trade mark for hackneys to change to a single hackney Brighton livery was quite a big step in those days.

Stick with me, I'm nearly getting to my point; so, eventually all the then Hove hackneys had to change over to the established livery of white with aqua boots and bonnets. This wasn't too bad because we all by then had all white cars, so it was just a question of getting the boots and bonnets painted and I had mine done as soon as I could. There was no rule put in that this had to be done straight away and actually you didn't have to paint the boots and bonnets until you changed your car, so in fact this took a few years for all the ex-Hove hackney fleet to transit to the full Brighton & Hove livery.

Still with me? One other point on this was the issue of the two separate towns having hackneys with the same number, and my number was Hove hackney 85. Originally a Portslade (next door) hackney plate belonging to my brother in-law number 5 but became 85 when Portslade and Hove amalgamated in 1974.

I'm nearly there; so, when Brighton and Hove amalgamated there were two 85 plated hackneys and I was keen to keep that number because we were and still are known by our plate numbers, me being 'Andy 85'. The process was that whichever car was to be licensed first would keep the original plate number, which was mine, and I've been known as 'Andy 85', ever since. Although, I've been known by various other 'affectionate names' within the local trade!

What I'm getting at is that having experienced the transition period here many years ago, and knowing all the issues that arise, including forming a single set of local conditions of licensing (which we call the 'Blue Book' here) other areas will now be facing exactly the same hurdles to get through, due to Devolution and the creation of much larger unitary authorities. Although we still do not know if the government is going for 'Absolute Standards' meaning no council can add extra local conditions, or just 'Minimum Standards' that will still give the new unitary authorities licence to add whatever extra conditions they think fit.



Brighton & Hove Cab Trade View

So, who is going to decide that the livery in town 'A' is going to take precedence over towns 'B' and 'C', and even 'D'? Who is going to look at the local conditions of licensing of all those towns to formulate a single set of conditions? Not only that, but the bigger question is how on earth is the local 'Knowledge' test going to be set-up with these new much larger licensing areas as I can't see keeping zones will be favourable?

Will the local Knowledge test even be scrapped because this would be virtually impossible to undertake? Or will it have to be adapted to take into consideration multiple combined areas instead of just one. If the Knowledge is to be kept for these new areas then will this be the death-knell for the hackney trade with potential new drivers not bothering and just going PH and slaving for the likes of Uber. How will the new single set of plate numbers be administered? And not only must the taxi/PHV plate numbers be administered, but also the driver badge numbers as well? Most importantly, will there be honeypots created that will be flooded with outer areas becoming neglected?

So many questions that need to be answered.

When Brighton and Hove amalgamated in 1995 it became a unitary authority at the time. As such, whilst although still holding my breath, I did consider that with the plans for Devolution we were already in a fortunate position. Although there were talks of creating a massive new unitary authority incorporating Brighton & Hove and expanding west into Worthing and beyond. With that thought in mind this would have been devastating for the local trade here for with absolutely no doubt, the city would be the honeypot for all the hackneys in that massive area flooding in. This is something that will happen now in the newly created unitary authorities around the country.

However, the council here made different plans as it remains the Brighton & Hove Unitary Authority and instead has made a land grab to the east, snatching away small areas of Saltdean, Peacehaven and Telscombe away from Lewes District Council. The government has now given the thumbs up to this, much to the despair of Lewes DC and the people who live in those areas. This will mean, as far as I'm aware that the Lewes hackneys (what's left of them) will not be able to rank up in those snatched areas, although I am not sure how many ranks exist there anyway and I only know of one right on the edge of the current boundary.

But, not only that, I know that there are a few Lewes-based operators in those snatched areas using Lewes PHVs, so what happens with these operators? Well, I presume they will either have to obtain a Brighton & Hove operator licence, as where they currently are will become part of Brighton & Hove, and if they want to continue using their Lewes operator licences will have to seek a base in Lewes somewhere. I put this to Brighton & Hove Cllr Trevor Muten, Cabinet Member for Transport and City Infrastructure, at a trade forum meeting last year, but he had no idea at the time. Mind you, we have pretty much the majority of the Lewes PHVs predominantly working here anyway. So, unless there are the changes to 'predominant working out of area' mistakenly known as 'cross-border hiring', then that will not change.... which of course applies throughout the country.

Sunderland PHV driver

I was looking at a Facebook group when the subject drifted into a Sunderland PHV driver stating that his wife, who does not hold a PH driver licence, drives his PHV. When I told him this was not allowed he replied that Sunderland Licensing had told him it was OK. I told him he was given the wrong information and he came back stating that his insurance company was fine with it.

Well, I couldn't let this drop because:

- 1: He and his wife could get into trouble
- 2: Sunderland Licensing gave him the wrong information.

So being the busy-body that I am, I contacted Sunderland licensing who informed me that this was not allowed and even quoted **Benson v Boyce 1997** which showed they know their stuff. I was also informed that they would investigate who gave out the wrong information.

I got back to the driver to let him know what Sunderland licensing had told me and advised him to seek his own clarification on the matter. Hopefully this has saved him and his wife from any future serious issues.

The point of all of this is that it crops up every now and again on different trade media groups that it seems a lot of drivers/proprietors are pretty much clueless about the trade in which they work.

Over and out from Andy 85

ALL THINGS LICENSING

THE 'FREE TAXI' THAT WASN'T: WHY GOOD INTENTIONS STILL FALL WITHIN PH LAW

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.

Please note that this article represents my own views which are not presented as the views of the Institute of Licensing nor Guildford BC.

Avid listeners to The Jeremy Vine Show on BBC Radio 2 may recently have heard IoL President James Button discussing a story that, on its face, seemed to embody exactly the kind of initiative licensing regimes should encourage. A rural pub landlord, concerned about customer safety, offering lifts home after a night out – free of charge, with only optional charitable donations invited.

It is the sort of idea that resonates instantly: practical, community-minded and rooted in a desire to reduce drink-driving risk. Yet, as listeners will know, the story did not end with quiet praise. Instead, the service was halted by the local authority on the basis that it constituted unlicensed private hire activity.

Predictably, the decision prompted public frustration and accusations of unnecessary bureaucracy. But once the detail is properly understood, this becomes less a story of officialdom stifling goodwill, and more a clear illustration of how well-established licensing principles operate in practice.

A simple idea meets a complex framework

The facts are straightforward. Paul Hartfield, landlord of The Flying Horse in Smarden, Kent, acquired a London-style black cab and began offering customers lifts home after drinking. There was no fixed fare. Instead, passengers were invited to make voluntary donations to a nominated charity.

The service proved popular. Customers appreciated both the convenience and the reassurance of a safe journey home. The charitable dimension added further appeal, reinforcing the perception that this was an initiative driven by public spirit rather than profit.

However, certain characteristics of the operation quickly brought it into the sphere of licensing law. It was not an occasional favour or informal arrangement. It was:

- Regular and structured
- Open to members of the public
- Linked to a commercial business
- Delivered using a vehicle closely associated with licensed taxi work

These are precisely the kinds of features licensing authorities must consider when determining whether an activity falls within the definition of private hire.

Why “free” does not mean exempt

At the heart of the public reaction lies a common misconception: that licensing requirements only apply where passengers are charged a fare.

In reality, the concept of “*hire or reward*”, central to taxi and private hire legislation, has always been interpreted more broadly. Payment is not limited to cash changing hands. The law recognises that reward can take many forms, including indirect or intangible benefits.

In this case, although passengers were not required to pay, the service clearly had the potential to deliver commercial advantage. A pub that can offer customers a safe and convenient journey home is likely to enhance its appeal. It may attract additional custom, encourage longer visits, or strengthen customer loyalty.

None of this detracts from the landlord's intentions. But legally, intention is not decisive. The question is whether the activity delivers a benefit connected to a business. If it does, the absence of a fare does not place it outside the regulatory framework.

When a lift becomes a service

It is often argued in cases like this that the arrangement is no different from giving someone a

ALL THINGS LICENSING



lift home which is a perfectly lawful and everyday occurrence.

The comparison is understandable but ultimately flawed. Informal lifts are characterised by their spontaneity and their basis in existing relationships. They are private, occasional and not offered to the public at large.

By contrast, the pub landlord's scheme displayed the hallmarks of a structured transport service. It was predictable, organised and widely available to customers. Over time, it became something people could rely on, rather than a one-off act of kindness.

That distinction is critical. Licensing law does not exist to regulate private generosity. It exists to regulate services offered to the public. Once an activity crosses that threshold, the regulatory framework is engaged.

The significance of presentation

Another important factor is how the service is presented.

The use of a London-style black cab is not merely a cosmetic detail. Such vehicles carry a strong association with licensed transport. To the public, they signal a regulated environment, one in which drivers are vetted, vehicles are inspected, and journeys are insured appropriately.

When a service adopts that appearance and makes itself available to the public, passengers are likely to assume that the usual safeguards apply. If they do not, a disconnect arises between perception and reality.

Licensing exists to close that gap. It ensures that when a service looks like a taxi or private hire

operation, it operates to the standards expected of a taxi or private hire operation.

Safety at the core

It is important, particularly in cases that attract public sympathy, not to lose sight of the fundamental purpose of licensing: protecting passengers.

The requirements placed on drivers and operators, background checks, medical assessments, vehicle inspections, insurance provisions, etc. are not arbitrary hurdles.

They are safeguards built up over time to ensure that members of the public can travel with confidence.

In the case under discussion, those safeguards were not formally in place. The driver was not licensed as a private hire driver. The vehicle was not licensed for carrying members of the public. There was no operator licence overseeing the activity, nor any guarantee that the insurance arrangements reflected the nature of the use.

Even where the individual involved is entirely trustworthy, licensing cannot rely on personal assurances. It must operate on consistent, verifiable standards.

The wider impact on the trade

There is also a question of fairness.

Licensed taxi and private hire drivers operate within a tightly controlled framework. They incur costs and meet obligations that are fundamental to the system. These range from vehicle compliance and insurance requirements to ongoing regulatory oversight.

Allowing an unlicensed service to operate in a similar manner, even for benign reasons, risks undermining that framework. It introduces a form of competition that is not subject to the same rules.

This is not simply about protecting income, though that is naturally a concern for those in the trade; it is about maintaining a level playing field and ensuring that the regulatory system remains coherent.

ALL THINGS LICENSING

The role (and limits) of local authorities

The involvement of political voices in the debate has highlighted a broader tension within the licensing landscape.

On one hand, there is a clear desire to support community initiatives, particularly in rural areas where transport options may be limited. On the other, licensing authorities are bound by national legislation and statutory guidance.

Councils do not have unfettered discretion to create exemptions whenever a case appears deserving. While certain limited exemptions exist, for example, for wedding or funeral vehicles, these are defined within the legal framework.

To depart from that framework risks not only inconsistency but potential legal challenge. Authorities must therefore apply the law as it stands, even where the outcome may be unpopular.

Is there room for reform?

That is not to say the current system is beyond question.

Cases such as this inevitably prompt reflection on whether greater flexibility could be built into the licensing regime. There may be merit in exploring whether tightly defined exemptions could accommodate genuinely community-focused initiatives, particularly where they address gaps in rural transport provision.

However, any such reform would need to address the same core considerations that underpin the existing system: safety, accountability and fairness. It would need to ensure that passengers remain protected and that the integrity of the licensed trade is preserved.

Crucially, such changes would need to come through legislation, not through ad hoc local interpretation.

A clear, if uncomfortable, outcome

When viewed in isolation, the image of a landlord driving customers home for free, raising money for charity in the process, is hard to criticise. It feels like common sense in action.



But licensing does not operate in isolation. It operates within a structured legal framework designed to address broader risks and ensure consistency across the country.

In this context, the conclusion reached by the local authority should be neither surprising nor particularly contentious.

The service, however well-intentioned, had the characteristics of a private hire operation. It provided transport to the public on a structured basis, delivered indirect commercial benefit, and did so without the safeguards required by law.

Final thoughts

The discussion sparked by this case, amplified by voices such as James Button on national radio, has been valuable. It has shone a light on the balance licensing must strike between enabling innovation and protecting the public. But it also serves as a reminder that good intentions do not, in themselves, create exemptions.

Until such time as the law is revisited, the position remains clear: if a service looks like private hire, operates like private hire and delivers similar benefits, it will be treated as private hire, regardless of whether a fare is charged.

The DfT Guidance is quite clear on this point: Private hire vehicle licensing guidance note - GOV.UK: <https://shorturl.at/58gIT>

That may not always align with public instinct. But it reflects a system designed not for individual cases, but for the consistent protection of all.

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THE CRIMINAL USE OF E-BIKES AND E-SCOOTERS IS VASTLY INCREASING

The use of illegal e-bikes and e-scooters has increased dramatically over the last few years. We are seeing daily news articles about local councils urging the police to take more action to stop people riding them, police forces promising crackdowns, and concerned local residents posting on community pages. In the last month alone, Devon and Cornwall Police, Thames Valley Police and South Wales Fire Service have all issued warnings about their use.

But why is their use concerning so many, and why are they controversial? Indeed, many comment that it's good to see youngsters out enjoying their bikes rather than being stuck inside on screens all day.

The answer mainly lies in the law. A new poll conducted by YouGov in July found that 84% of people in the UK cannot tell the difference between a perfectly legal e-bike and one that contravenes the law. Parents are often completely unaware that their child's new Christmas present could leave them facing six penalty points and a hefty fine. The public's lack of knowledge about how dangerous these vehicles can be is also shocking.

What e-bikes/e-scooters are legal?

Under section 185 of the Road Traffic Act, e-scooters and e-bikes are classed as '*motor vehicles*' and therefore require insurance, a licence and other legal requirements before they can be used on the road. Riding them unlawfully on the road may therefore amount to an offence.

But there are three exceptions to this rule where riding an electric scooter or bike can be legal:

- 1) **EAPCs.** An EAPC is an '*Electrically Assisted Pedal Cycle*' is the legal term for an e-bike that can be treated the same as a conventional pedal cycle, provided the user is age 14 or over. To be classed as an EAPC the cycle must:
 - a. be fitted with pedals that can propel it
 - b. have an electric motor with a maximum continuous rated power not exceeding 250 watts
 - c. cut off electrical assistance when it reaches 15.5 miles per hour (mph)

There are other regulations to consider as well – such as their weight, and the means by which the bike is propelled. We strongly advise that if you are considering purchasing a bicycle with a motor, to carefully check that it's fully road legal.

- 2) **Mobility vehicles.** Mobility scooters and powered wheelchairs are single-seat vehicles with a battery. However, they are specifically registered and regulated as such, so there is no "*getting around*" the law by claiming that your e-scooter is actually a mobility vehicle.
- 3) **Registered scooters.** You can only rent an electric scooter through official electric scooter rental schemes in certain areas of the country. These rental schemes are also known as '*e-scooter trials*' and have their own rules.

You can ride a rented electric scooter on public roads, including cycle lanes, but it is illegal to ride one on a pavement or a motorway.

These are specifically registered scooters that are insured and have registration plates – and you must also have a full or provisional licence to ride one.

Unless you fit into one of these exceptions, generally, riding an electric scooter/bike will be considered illegal.

What happens if I use one illegally?

Most commonly, riders are prosecuted for driving without insurance, which carries 6 penalty points and a £300 fine, or potentially more if the case proceeds to court. They may also face having their scooter seized and, most probably, destroyed.

At Patterson Law, we have seen several concerned parents whose children are facing prosecution for riding these scooters, completely oblivious to the fact that they are illegal. We have even seen prosecutions involving children as young as 12. In those cases, even though the children would not have a provisional licence, the DVLA would create a driving record for them and impose 6 penalty points on it.

Another point that many people don't consider is that because these are classed as motor vehicles, any

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS



manner of traffic offence can be committed whilst riding them. That means if you decide to ride an e-scooter home from the pub having had a drink or three, you could be prosecuted for drink driving and see your licence disqualified for 12 months or even end up in prison!

Why are they so dangerous?

Notwithstanding the riders risking prosecution putting their licences and often their livelihoods at risk, there has also been a sharp increase of accidents over the last few years.

The Guardian reported in May that nearly 500 people were injured in Great Britain last year. This year in Belfast, a senior doctor reported that more than 120 children have been treated for e-bike injuries in the last 24 months. With more bikes and scooters on the road, these figures are only likely to increase.

But that's not the only reason. These are essentially fast vehicles that are easy to ride and nearly impossible to control. Unless they're official e-scooters as part of the inner city schemes, they have no registration plates so they can't be detected. That makes them extremely easy to use for criminal activity – whether that be for drugs or to try to get around a disqualification from driving.

Being small and nimble also makes them incredibly difficult for the police to pull over, which can lead to devastating consequences. We all remember the riots in Wales in 2023 when two teenagers were killed after being knocked off their e-bike by police. A similar incident could have occurred in January this year when

police rammed a 13-year-old off his bike, causing him to slide over the bonnet.

But despite the dangers, the risk of injury and the risk of prosecution, their use continues to increase. More and more children are seen riding them on the roads and all drivers will have their own tales to tell of near misses with an e-scooter.

What is the future of e-bikes?

Earlier this year, Transport Minister Heidi Alexander announced plans to overhaul the UK's e-scooter legislation, making private e-scooters legal with new safety regulations.

The new rules were set to bring in much-needed control and safety standards by regulating their use and making all scooters identifiable through registration plates. Parameters were going to be introduced to regulate safety features, such as mandatory lights for visibility, specific braking systems and hardware that limits top speeds, and riders were to be made subject to the same rules, regulations and offences under the Road Traffic Act.

No news has been forthcoming, however, about whether this new legislation will continue under the new government. Nor have there been any plans announced as to when we can expect this new law to come into effect.

The government must find parliamentary time for the bill to be debated and voted into law, and at the moment, there is no indication as to when this will be.

Until these new laws come in, when can I ride my e-scooter?

Short answer: you cannot. Unless it is an EAPC, a mobility vehicle or a specifically registered e-scooter used as part of the government rental scheme, the use of e-bikes and e-scooters remains illegal in the UK and they cannot be ridden on a road or any other place to which the public has access.

If you have any questions about traffic law, please contact us for free legal advice on 01626 359800 or by **PattersonLaw** THE DRIVER DEFENCE SERVICE email at advice@pattersonlaw.co.uk

THE NATIONAL
HACKNEY
FARES TABLE

AUGUST 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
£7.47

POSITION	TARIFF ONE 2 MILE FARE	
	COUNCIL	
17	CARRICK	£9.20
18	LEWES	£9.20
19	ST ALBANS	£9.15
20	GUERNSEY	£9.10
21	WORTHING	£9.10
22	HERTSMERE	£9.08
23	MAIDSTONE	£9.00
24	MID SUSSEX	£9.00
25	ORKNEY	£9.00
26	READING	£9.00
27	TONBRIDGE & MALLING	£9.00
28	DACORUM	£8.98
29	BRENTWOOD	£8.90
30	CHELTENHAM	£8.90
31	EAST LOTHIAN	£8.90
32	MIDLOTHIAN	£8.90
33	REIGATE & BANSTEAD	£8.90
34	SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE	£8.90
35	UTTLESFORD	£8.90
36	VALE OF WHITE HORSE	£8.90
37	TORRIDGE	£8.79
38	BRIGHTON & HOVE	£8.70
39	EAST DEVON	£8.70
40	RESTORMEL	£8.70
41	SEVENOAKS	£8.70
42	SWINDON	£8.70
43	WATFORD	£8.70
44	WOKING	£8.70
45	SHETLAND ISLES	£8.64
46	CAMBRIDGE CITY	£8.60
47	TEST VALLEY	£8.60
48	TUNBRIDGE WELLS	£8.60
49	WEST BERKSHIRE	£8.60
50	BCP	£8.52
51	PENWITH	£8.52
52	CLACKMANNAN	£8.50
53	EAST AYRSHIRE	£8.50
54	SLOUGH	£8.50
55	WYRE	£8.50
56	COLCHESTER	£8.40
57	EAST SUFFOLK (NORTH)	£8.40
58	EASTLEIGH	£8.40
59	LEEDS	£8.40
60	MEDWAY	£8.40
61	SOUTHAMPTON	£8.40
62	DARTFORD	£8.30
63	HUNTINGDONSHIRE	£8.30
64	LINCOLN	£8.30
65	RUNNYMEDE	£8.30
66	SWALE	£8.30
67	THANET	£8.30
68	TORBAY	£8.30
69	WILTSHIRE	£8.25
70	BASINGSTOKE & DEANE	£8.20
71	BROXBOURNE	£8.20
72	EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE	£8.20
73	EAST HERTS	£8.20
74	GRAVESHAM	£8.20
75	HART	£8.20
76	MANCHESTER	£8.20
77	NORTH HERTS	£8.20
78	WOKINGHAM	£8.20
79	FOREST OF DEAN	£8.13
80	HASTINGS	£8.10
81	IPSWICH	£8.10

POSITION	TARIFF ONE 2 MILE FARE	
	COUNCIL	
82	NORTH DEVON	£8.10
83	OXFORD CITY	£8.10
84	PLYMOUTH	£8.10
85	DUNDEE CITY	£8.08
86	MOLE VALLEY	£8.08
87	BRECKLAND	£8.00
88	BUCKINGHAMSHIRE	£8.00
89	CHICHESTER	£8.00
90	COVENTRY	£8.00
91	DOVER	£8.00
92	EAST LINDSEY	£8.00
93	EAST RENFREWSHIRE	£8.00
94	HARLOW	£8.00
95	HORSHAM	£8.00
96	NORTH YORKSHIRE	£8.00
97	NOTTINGHAM	£8.00
98	RIBBLE VALLEY	£8.00
99	RUSHCLIFFE	£8.00
100	SHROPSHIRE	£8.00
101	SOUTH AYRSHIRE	£8.00
102	SOUTH GLOUCESTER	£8.00
103	TANDRIDGE	£8.00
104	YORK	£8.00
105	FIFE	£7.98
106	DENBIGHSHIRE	£7.90
107	HINCKLEY & BOSWORTH	£7.90
108	ROTHER	£7.90
109	STEVENAGE	£7.85
110	ADUR	£7.80
111	BRACKNELL FOREST	£7.80
112	DORSET	£7.80
113	GLOUCESTER	£7.80
114	ISLE OF MAN	£7.80
115	LEICESTER	£7.80
116	NORTH SOMERSET	£7.80
117	ROCHFORD	£7.80
118	RUSHMOOR	£7.80
119	SOUTHEND ON SEA	£7.80
120	SOUTH HAMS	£7.80
121	STOCKPORT	£7.80
122	SURREY HEATH	£7.80
123	SWANSEA	£7.80
124	WAVERLEY	£7.80
125	MELTON	£7.75
126	CHELMSFORD	£7.70
127	HIGH PEAK	£7.70
128	NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE	£7.70
129	WEALDON	£7.70
130	WINDSOR & MAIDENHEAD	£7.70
131	STRATFORD ON AVON	£7.68
132	NORTH TYNESIDE	£7.65
133	RENFREWSHIRE	£7.65
134	WARWICK	£7.65
135	ASHFORD	£7.60
136	BASILDON	£7.60
137	BIRMINGHAM	£7.60
138	BRISTOL	£7.60
139	CONWY	£7.60
140	DUMBARTON & VALE OF LEVEN	£7.60
141	GREAT YARMOUTH	£7.60
142	KERRIER	£7.60
143	KINGS LYNN & WEST NORFOLK	£7.60
144	MONMOUTHSHIRE	£7.60
145	SCOTTISH BORDERS	£7.60
146	SOLIHULL	£7.60

POSITION	TARIFF ONE 2 MILE FARE	
	COUNCIL	
1	LONDON (HEATHROW)	£15.00
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	EASTBOURNE	£9.60
9	NORTH CORNWALL	£9.60
10	ARUN	£ 9.50
11	SPELTHORNE	£9.50
12	ELMBRIDGE	£9.50
13	EXETER	£9.50
14	STROUD	£9.40
15	EDINBURGH	£9.30
16	GLASGOW	£9.30

POSITION	TARIFF ONE 2 MILE FARE	
	COUNCIL	
147	SOMERSET	£7.60
148	THREE RIVERS	£7.60
149	WEST SUFFOLK	£7.60
150	WEYMOUTH & PORTLAND	£7.60
151	WINCHESTER	£7.60
152	INVERCLYDE	£7.56
153	BATH & N. E. SOMERSET	£7.50
154	MILTON KEYNES	£7.55
155	BEDFORD	£7.50
156	ANGUS	£7.50
157	CARDIFF	£7.50
158	CHESTER	£7.50
159	EPPING FOREST	£7.50
160	GOSPORT	£7.50
161	MID SUFFOLK	£7.50
162	SHEFFIELD	£7.50
163	SOUTH NORFOLK	£7.50
164	TAMESIDE	£7.50
165	CEREDIGION	£7.45
166	BRAINTREE	£7.40
167	CANTERBURY	£7.40
168	EAST HAMPSHIRE	£7.40
169	LIVERPOOL	£7.40
170	PORTSMOUTH UA	£7.40
171	SUNDERLAND	£7.40
172	S. LANARKSHIRE (CAMBUS/R' GLEN)	£7.40
173	STAFFORD	£7.40
174	TEWKESBURY	£7.40
175	WEST LOTHIAN	£7.40
176	WEST OXFORD	£7.40
177	WIRRAL	£7.40
178	NEW FOREST	£7.35
179	NEWARK & SHERWOOD	£7.32
180	BLACKBURN	£7.30
181	DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL	£7.30
182	KINGSTON-UPON-HULL	£7.30
183	NORTH KESTEVEN	£7.30
184	NORWICH	£7.30
185	SOUTH CAMBRIDGE	£7.30
186	VALE OF GLAMORGAN	£7.30
187	MORAY	£7.26
188	TEIGNBRIDGE	£7.26
189	NUNEATON & BEDWORTH	£7.25
190	PERTH & KINROSS	£7.25
191	CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE	£7.25
192	CALDERDALE	£7.22
193	SOUTH RIBBLE	£7.22
194	CASTLE POINT	£7.20
195	DERBY	£7.20
196	FAREHAM	£7.20
197	HAVANT	£7.20
198	LUTON	£7.20
199	NORTH WARWICK	£7.20
200	SOUTH LAKELAND	£7.20
201	WEST NORTHANTS	£7.20
202	CHESTERFIELD	£7.16
203	DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY	£7.15
204	TAMWORTH	£7.14
205	ARGYLL & BUTE	£7.13
206	CANNOCK CHASE	£7.10
207	COTSWOLD	£7.10
208	CRAWLEY	£7.10
209	HIGHLAND	£7.10
210	ISLE OF WIGHT	£7.10
211	OLDHAM	£7.10

POSITION	TARIFF ONE 2 MILE FARE	
	COUNCIL	
212	RUGBY	£7.10
213	HARBOROUGH	£7.09
214	ABERDEENSHIRE	£7.06
215	BABERGH	£7.00
216	BROMSGROVE	£7.00
217	CARLISLE	£7.00
218	CARMARTHENSHIRE	£7.00
219	MACCLESFIELD	£7.00
220	NEWPORT	£7.00
221	PEMBROKESHIRE	£7.00
222	WELWYN HATFIELD	£7.00
223	COMHAIRLRE NAN EILEAN SIAR	£7.00
224	SANDWELL	£6.92
225	BURY	£6.90
226	CLYDEBANK	£6.90
227	EAST DUNBARTONSHIRE	£6.90
228	FYLDE	£6.90
229	NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME	£6.90
230	NORTH AYRSHIRE	£6.90
231	WORCESTER CITY	£6.90
232	ABERDEEN CITY	£6.80
233	BARROW IN FURNESS	£6.80
234	BLACKPOOL	£6.80
235	BOSTON	£6.80
236	BRIDGEND	£6.80
237	BROXTOWE	£6.80
238	EAST STAFFORDSHIRE	£6.80
239	EAST SUFFOLK (SOUTH)	£6.80
240	EDEN	£6.80
241	ELLESMERE PORT	£6.80
242	MANSFIELD	£6.80
243	MID DEVON	£6.80
244	NORTH NORFOLK	£6.80
245	NORTH NORTHANTS	£6.80
246	SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE	£6.80
247	TENDRING	£6.80
248	TRAFFORD	£6.80
249	WIGAN	£6.80
250	WOLVERHAMPTON	£6.80
251	CHARNWOOD	£6.75
252	WALSALL	£6.75
253	MALVERN HILLS	£6.72
254	BLABY	£6.70
255	CONGLETON	£6.70
256	OADBY & WIGSTON	£6.70
257	ROTHERHAM	£6.70
258	STIRLING	£6.70
259	WARRINGTON	£6.65
260	DUDLEY	£6.60
261	FOLKESTONE & HYTHE	£6.60
262	KNOWSLEY	£6.60
263	LANCASTER	£6.60
264	NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE	£6.60
265	S. LANARKSHIRE (E. KILBRIDE)	£6.60
266	SOUTH TYNESIDE	£6.60
267	SALFORD	£6.60
268	ST HELENS	£6.60
269	WAKEFIELD	£6.60
270	BASSETLAW	£6.50
271	EREWASH	£6.50
272	GEDLING	£6.50
273	HALTON	£6.50
274	ROSENDALE	£6.50
275	SEFTON	£6.80
276	TORFAEN	£6.50

POSITION	TARIFF ONE 2 MILE FARE	
	COUNCIL	
277	DONCASTER	£6.48
278	HYNDBURN	£6.42
279	BLAENAU GWENT	£6.40
280	COUNTY OF HEREFORD	£6.40
281	CREWE & NANTWICH	£6.40
282	DERBYSHIRE DALES	£6.40
283	NORTHUMBERLAND	£6.40
284	WEST LINDSEY	£6.40
285	EAST RIDING	£6.35
286	ANGLESEY	£6.30
287	BARNLEY	£6.30
288	DARLINGTON	£6.30
289	GATESHEAD	£6.30
290	SOUTH HOLLAND	£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 Ireland



SEVERE TAXI SHORTAGE LEAVES DUBLIN NIGHTLIFE STRANDED

Efforts to recruit new drivers into Ireland's taxi industry are stalling due to skyrocketing entry test failure rates, leaving Dublin socialisers increasingly stranded after nights out.

Data from the National Transport Authority (NTA) reveals that less than a third of test sittings were passed last year. Out of nearly 11,800 exam sittings, more than 8,100 ended in failure.

Prospective taxi, hackney, and limousine drivers must score at least 75% across two modules covering industry regulations and local geography, but pass rates have hovered between just 31% and 35% over the last three years.

For first-time test takers excluding retakes, the pass rate dropped to roughly 27% last year, with 6,489 out of 8,941 attempts failing. Over a three-year period, nearly 22,000 of 32,700 total sittings resulted in failure. In response to the low pass rates, the NTA updated the area knowledge portion of the exam to better reflect modern GPS technology. An NTA spokesman explained: "The findings showed that, while passengers still expect drivers to have a higher-than-average understanding of local geography, the use of online maps is widely accepted."

Consequently, the revised exam focuses less on strict map memorisation and more on motorways, transport hubs, essential city routes, and major venues.

The resulting bottleneck of new drivers is severely hurting Dublin's nightlife. A survey by the Licensed Vintners Association (LVA) found that six in ten regular socialisers go out less often because getting a ride home is so difficult. Two-thirds of respondents (67%) report struggling to secure a taxi after a night out, with 41% facing frequent difficulties. The shortage hits 70% of men and 71% of adults aged 35 to 54, despite taxis remaining the primary transport choice for 64% of late-night goers.

LVA Chief Executive, Donall O'Keeffe, highlighted the growing crisis, stating: "We've been saying for some time that there aren't enough taxis on the streets at closing time. If this is the extent of the problem amongst those who do go out regularly, then imagine how much it is also concerning those who only

socialise occasionally?"

To fix the deficit, the LVA is urging regulators to permit standard ride-hailing apps in Ireland, similar to those in London and across the EU.

"People deserve to know they can get home safely and quickly at the end of the night," O'Keeffe added.

from Japan



JAPAN'S LARGEST OPERATOR SHUTS DOWN SYSTEMS AFTER CYBERATTACK

The largest operator in Japan, Nihon Kotsu, has shut down parts of its infrastructure following a cyberattack



last month. The company, which generates roughly \$1 billion in annual revenue and operates a fleet of over 8,500 taxis, confirmed that its internal systems were hit by malware.

"We have confirmed that our internal systems were subjected to unauthorised external access," the company announced. "Immediately after detecting the unauthorised access, we implemented emergency measures, including disconnecting systems to prevent further damage."

The shutdown knocked out telephone dispatch services, car hires, web bookings, and reservation management. It also suspended a specialised "labour taxi" service used by pregnant women in Tokyo and several surrounding areas. Nihon Kotsu advised customers to flag down taxis on the street or use the "GO" taxi app instead.

External cybersecurity experts were brought in to investigate the breach and help restore the systems. While Nihon Kotsu is currently investigating whether any data was leaked, the extortion group AiLock has already claimed responsibility for the attack, threatening to leak stolen data "soon."

Customers have been urged to remain vigilant and avoid opening any suspicious email attachments or links claiming to come from the company.

WORLDWIDE TAXI FOCUS

from Vietnam



GENEROUS CABBIE REFUSES FARE TO HELP KIDNEY DIALYSIS PATIENT

In a heart-warming display of compassion, a taxi driver in Vietnam refused to accept payment from the family of a kidney failure patient, telling them



to use the money for her medical care instead.

Bui Thanh Tung had just driven a mother and her son home from Bai Chay Hospital in Quang Ninh province on July 7 when the son attempted to pay the 250,000 VND (around £7) fare. Dashcam footage captured the emotional moment Tung gently shook his head, declining the cash and telling the passenger: "No, I won't take it. Keep the money to buy medicine for your mother."

When the young man insisted on paying, Tung firmly refused again and offered further support, telling him: "If anything happens, call me and I'll come and pick you up."

The visibly moved mother and son thanked the driver before getting out of the car. As they walked away, Tung called after them once more, saying: "Take your mother home. If you need anything, just call me."

Local media reported that the mother requires regular, ongoing dialysis treatment. Her husband works as a construction labourer to support the family and manage her growing medical bills. Tung, who has been a cab driver for four years, explained that he only learned about the family's financial and health struggles while chatting with them during the trip. His kindness did not end with that single ride. The following morning, the woman's daughter reached out to request another trip to the hospital. Although Tung was already carrying a passenger at the time, he made sure to arrange another driver for them. He added that he will gladly continue driving the family for treatment whenever his schedule allows.

Tung shared that he frequently encounters elderly passengers, patients, and struggling families during his work, and he always tries to lend a hand. For him, the greatest reward is not the money, but knowing he has made life a little easier for people facing tough times.

from Italy



CHAOS AS NATIONWIDE ITALIAN TAXI STRIKE GRINDS TRAVEL TO A HALT

A fierce, long-running feud exploded as licensed taxi drivers across Italy launched a 24-hour nationwide walkout on 27 June leaving major transport hubs stranded and travellers scrambling for alternatives. The massive strike represents a major escalation against the government and global ride-hailing apps like Uber. Taxi unions launched the industrial action in direct protest against what they call "savage liberalisation" and "unfair competition." Traditional drivers, who must pay well over €100,000 for strict municipal licences in major cities, are furious that multi-national apps and private hire drivers are using loopholes to dodge the same strict rules, boundaries, and fixed fares.

Drivers also accuse the government of foot-dragging on key reforms, demanding a national registry to clamp down on unauthorised services and increased fares to offset soaring costs. The walkout caused massive gridlock, with standard taxis completely vanishing from Rome, Milan, Florence, Naples, and Turin.

from India



AND FINALLY.....

A taxi driver in Mumbai grabbed a woman by the hair at the last moment as she tried to commit suicide on the Atal Setu bridge...



PHTM

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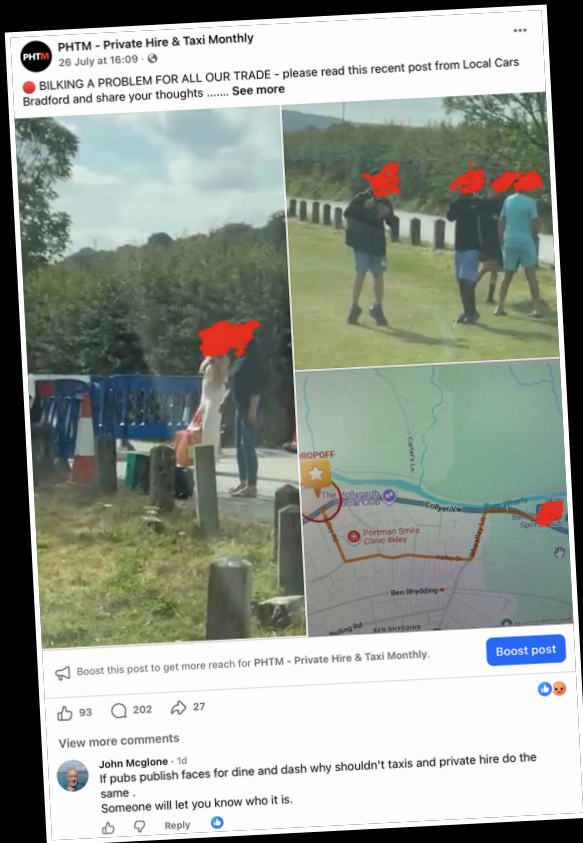
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ALONSO TO WORK HIS MAGIC ON UNDERPERFORMING BLUES

IT COULD BE a changing of the guard this Premier league season with new managers at Man City, Chelsea and Liverpool (and by implication Bournemouth) and a first full season for the incumbents at Spurs and Man Unitedso perversely the sack race should be interesting, given that there are at least (technically) the above none runners!! (especially as perennial managerial swappers Watford and West Ham are not in the equation) However given Todd Boehly's penchant for writing out compensation payments, you never know with things at the Bridge!

Talking of which, **CHELSEA** have certainly caught my eye in recent months in a deliberate attempt to cock a snook at their rivals. Firstly they stole the wonderful talents of Xavi Alonso from under the noses of Liverpool, then they managed to get large compensation from Man City/Enzo Maresca for deserting them mid-season and now, in a deal which was expected to bring Morgan Rogers to Arsenal, they have swooped for the England midfielder. Definitely reminiscent of Donald Trump, Chelsea's owners are looking to bully themselves, once again, onto football's top table.

And with no European involvement this year, their players will be playing substantially less competitive football than all of their rivals.

And what of their perceived opposition?

Arsenal need to find more firepower, which is not to say they won't, but at the moment a title defence at skinny odds looks no value. Add to that the long-term injury to their talismanic defender Saliba and you can see taking odds of 6/4 is foolhardy.

Backing second favourites, Man City, at Burlington Bertie is also something of a leap of faith as surely the outcome of the 130 charges can't be far away and that could mean a points deduction, added to which there is no Pep, and perhaps no Rodri, as Real may come calling. And I can't help feeling that Maresca is merely keeping the managerial seat warm for Vincent Kompany. No, for me it's a transitional season.



As for Liverpool and Spurs, new managers need time to bed into a playing style, although I think the fit at Anfield might lead to some exciting times. As for the Reds of Salford, I think their over-reliance on getting value for money will lead to the doors to the promised land being blocked by Saint Peter of Ineos.

So at 10/1 and at half the odds of the first two, it's CHELSEA for me.

There are, however, other wagers to consider...

TOP MIDLANDS CLUB

In a three horse market, back **FOREST** to finish higher than (the decimated Villa - no Rogers, no Tielemanns, maybe no Digne) and the cash-strapped Coventry at a massive Rofe (4/1).

NUMBER OF PROMOTED TEAMS BEING RELEGATED

Back all three at 11/4 which is a very generous price, available at Bet 365 and Quinn Bet.

AND SO TO THE CHAMPIONSHIP..

West Ham are the universal 2/1 favourites and it is hard not to see why. Admittedly they have seen players move on, but on the plus side they have managed to secure their Captain Marvel, Jarrod Bowen, until at least Christmas, something that could be mirrored by their manager should he not hit the ground running and be sacked by November. Remember every team wants to harpoon the blue whale (Eric Cantona 1996!).

No, far too skinny for me in a very competitive uber-slog.

For me the chances of **BURNLEY** at quadruple the odds (8/1), are far more appealing, especially as they too have the benefits of the Premier Leagues parachute payments and a new manager in the (Vincent Kompany) model of Nicky Hayden, ex of Genk.



Until next month

Good punting

Bernie the Book



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