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TAXI & PH BILL OBSERVATIONS

AND NOW FOR SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT...

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



Last month was exciting and interesting. We hosted the legislation Q&A seminar at **PHTM EXPO**, featuring the broadest spectrum of views and experts we have ever seen on stage, including Ruth Cadbury, Chair Of The Transport Select Committee, James Button and Mike Smith from the Institute of Licensing, David Hunter from TakeMe, Andrew Wescott from Veezu, and, of course, your very own David Lawrie and Steven Toy from the National Private Hire and Taxi Association. Click here to watch.

The King's Speech

Imagine our delight at having sight of the King's Speech, which was published literally hours before our panel. The contents are fully detailed below, together with some my observations *in blue*, but, in short, the overall view is: *"Taxi Legislation is broken - rip it up and start again,"* as has been suggested several times over the years by various stakeholders.

Draft Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Bill

- Taxi and private hire vehicle (PHV) laws are outdated. The Government will make every day journeys safer, fairer, and easier.
- It will strengthen public safety, remove barriers for disabled passengers, and reflect how people travel today, including the use of booking apps.
- By supporting a growing and innovative sector while making streets safer - especially for women and girls - the Bill will deliver taxi and private hire services people can trust.

Let us not forget that the service must also offer greater protection for drivers, not only against attacks, but also by addressing what action the authorities take when things go wrong in order to protect our hard-working drivers and operators.

- This growing, nationally operating sector is regulated through an outdated and fragmented framework, leading to inconsistent standards, safeguarding risks, and ineffective enforcement.

National standards will help, but further legislative measures are needed to align licensing with journeys, enable information sharing, and ensure resources are matched to risk and activity. The draft Bill provides the necessary framework to address these systemic issues.

What does the Bill do?

- These reforms aim to modernise taxi/PHV laws.
- The draft Bill will be put forward for pre-legislative scrutiny, allowing the Government to seek expert views from a range of stakeholders and create the strongest legislation possible.

This process has already started, with consultations held not only by the Transport Select Committee last year, but also through the devolution and empowerment legislation in January, alongside stakeholder meetings and the creation of a working group to develop this new approach. The first meetings have already taken place, involving 18 representatives from a wide spectrum of organisations, including operators, councils, council representatives, and driver representatives - myself included.

- The Bill will:
  - Modernise taxi and private hire law to reflect the way people travel today, replacing a patchwork of outdated, Victorian-era rules with a single, consistent framework across England that passengers and drivers can trust.

For clarity, the only legislation dating from the Victorian era is the Town Police Clauses Act 1847, which did not address private hire at all. The legislation that included private hire was introduced in 1976 outside London, and not until 1998 in inner London. Even those laws, however, are now old enough to require serious reform.

Some people have interpreted this as meaning a single-tier system, abolishing either taxis or private hire and creating one combined licensing system.

TAXI & PH BILL OBSERVATIONS

This is not what is being stated here. The proposal is for a national standard for both sectors, not the elimination of one or the other.

- *Be the final step in delivering on the commitment to legislate in response to Baroness Casey's National Audit on Group-based Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. It will:*
  - *Fix a fragmented system that has not always protected passengers as it should.*

We will be suggesting that "and drivers" is added here.

- *Strengthen public safety and accountability by setting clear requirements for obtaining and holding licences.*
- *Improve the efficiency of licensing and the use of strong, consistent enforcement powers, with funding for enforcement matched to where services are delivered.*

Many people will have heard me repeatedly state that national standards aimed only at drivers, vehicles, and operators - without also regulating efficiency, processing times, and fees for local or unitary authorities - will do little to end or reduce licence shopping, because that is not what "shopping" actually means in practice. It would appear this issue is now being recognised.

We have already seen proposed amendments suggesting national powers to suspend licences with immediate effect for 48 hours, which raised nationwide concerns over who would fund such measures. Here we now see suggestions that funding will be implemented to cover those costs.

Baroness Casey was clear that inconsistent taxi and PHV licensing creates vulnerabilities that can be exploited by grooming gangs. Reforming the system is therefore considered essential to strengthen safeguarding and disrupt potential exploitation.

- *Give regulators stronger enforcement powers so swift and effective action can be taken when drivers or operators breach licence conditions, helping to raise standards and tackle poor or unsafe practices.*
- *Improve transparency and information sharing nationwide by mandating the use of a national database of all licensed vehicles, drivers, and PHV operators, enabling licensing authorities to better protect the public and giving passengers greater confidence in the system.*

I must admit that I had previously misunderstood this issue in recent meetings, genuinely believing that "NR3" referred to a national register covering the three licence types. In fact, it does not. I therefore raised the question: why not, and could it not be expanded to do exactly that? Here we see that idea becoming part of the proposed new framework - excellent news.

- Deliver more accessible services for disabled passengers by strengthening existing protections and removing barriers to travel, helping to ensure that those who rely most heavily on taxis and PHVs are not left behind.

We can only hope this approach will be supported by matched funding, as such vehicles are extremely expensive to purchase and insure, while often experiencing little to no actual demand or use. We also hope that the comments made by Transport for All during the Transport Select Committee inquiry - specifically that "in rural areas, the supply should be proportionate" - are properly considered.

We have published several articles on this topic over the years, explaining why there is no justification for 100% wheelchair-accessible vehicle (WAV) policies.

- Provide a consistent customer experience wherever people travel, so passengers can expect safe, reliable, and properly regulated services whether travelling locally or across local authority boundaries.

In honesty, this effectively means "no major change", as this is already largely the case. Policies and conditions are already reasonably aligned, with only minor local adjustments permitted under the relevant sections of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 to cater for regional differences.

- Support a thriving, professional sector by creating clearer rules to enable fair competition while supporting the wider economy - from the night-time economy to shift workers and local businesses.

This section echoes the Regulators' Code 2014, which states that regulators must support and encourage the development and growth of small businesses within their region.

- These measures will create a modern, joined-up taxi and PHV system in which people are confident in their safety and experience wherever they travel, and where powers, data, and accountability sit in the right place to act when standards fall short.

Again, this appears to suggest the expansion of the NR3 database to include enforcement actions taken against licence holders, alongside national enforcement powers. However, this should not be confused with a single-tier system: taxis and private hire will remain two separate licence types.

Territorial extent and application

- The draft Bill will extend to England and Wales and apply to England only.

It is not entirely clear whether this is a drafting error or simply unclear wording, as it appears contradictory. The Bill will apply only to England, although it may later be mirrored or adopted by the Welsh Government. In truth, however, the Welsh Government is already ahead in this area, having worked on national standards and policies for some time. This could suggest that both systems may ultimately align or support one another.

Key facts

- The taxi and PHV sector is large and growing. As of 1 April 2024, there were 313,000 licensed vehicles and 381,100 licensed drivers in England, continuing a long-term upward trend according to Government statistics published in 2024.
- Regulation outside London remains rooted in legislation dating back to the Town Police Clauses Act 1847, designed for locally operating horse-drawn vehicles.

For clarity, as previously stated, only hackney carriage (taxi) legislation originates from the Victorian-era 1847 Act. Private hire did not exist at that time - indeed, neither did the motor vehicle. The private hire sector emerged only after the invention of the telephone and was not regulated until 1976.

This point is not strictly referring to case law, although many examples do exist. Rather, it refers to the Plymouth Act, the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, and the later-adopted London legislation of 1998, all of which vary in significant ways.

For example, in London, a PHV is considered a private hire vehicle only when on duty, which is why only a roundel is required in the front and rear windows, and why a non-badge holder may drive the vehicle when it is off duty. Outside London, however, the principle is effectively "once licensed, always licensed", meaning plates are required and the vehicle may only be driven by a licensed badge holder at any time.

- Licensing standards and practices vary widely between authorities, including decision-making, fees, conditions, and enforcement activity.
- While national standards are expected to improve consistency and reduce incentives for drivers and operators to license outside the areas in which they work, they are unlikely on their own to resolve the issue entirely.

As stated above, we have consistently argued that unless national standards also regulate licensing practices themselves, the reforms will achieve very little. It is encouraging to see these concerns reflected here.

- Without a closer alignment between where licences are issued and where journeys take place, enforcement resources and activity remain misaligned, limiting effectiveness and undermining public confidence.
- Weaknesses in regulation disproportionately affect groups with fewer transport alternatives, increasing equality and safety risks.
- According to Government statistics, 8% of taxi and PHV journeys in 2024 were for education purposes, many relating to SEND provision.
- Taxis and PHVs are disproportionately used by disabled people, women, lower-income households, and those without access to a car.
- People with mobility difficulties make almost 70% more taxi or private hire journeys than those without. Women make around 25% more trips than men. People without access to a car make almost four times as many taxi or PH journeys, while households in the lowest income quintile make around 50% more journeys than higher-income households.
- Major safeguarding reviews, including those led by Baroness Casey, have identified taxi and PHV licensing as vulnerable to exploitation where oversight is inconsistent and information is not effectively shared.

TAXI & PH BILL OBSERVATIONS



In our view, it is important to remember that Baroness Casey's first review took place in 2012 - three years before any suggestions of deregulation - and had nothing to do with cross-border working, or, to use the more accurate term, "predominant out-of-area use".

Enforcement alone is unlikely to achieve meaningful change, as the powers already exist but are often underused. We need better ways to tackle predominant out-of-area work, which is why Intended Use Policies (IUPs) should be extended to all licence types. This approach specifically addresses out-of-area private hire work and has consistently succeeded in reducing it where implemented.

Using this approach would also support other strategies that have repeatedly failed over the last 50 years, such as the Section 75(1)(a) LGMPA approach and the ABBA approach. Without IUPs, those measures alone are unlikely to succeed.

- 52% of all taxi and PHV journeys support economic activity, education, or essential services, underlining the importance of effective regulation.
- When licensing, enforcement powers, and resources sit with authorities that do not host the majority of the activity, enforcement capacity becomes diluted and intervention becomes more difficult.
- Safeguarding reviews consistently show that information silos reduce the ability to identify and respond to risk.
- Current legislation does not mandate information sharing. Work is already underway to expand existing databases, but for this to be effective their use must become mandatory in order to support proportionate and lawful information sharing across authorities, operators, and the public.
- The Law Commission stated: "The outdated legislative framework has become too extensive in some respects, imposing unnecessary burdens on business and artificially restricting the range of services available to consumers; and insufficiently comprehensive in other ways, undermining the fundamental goal of protecting the travelling public."
- The Local Government Association has "long called for the urgent introduction of a comprehensive Taxi and PHV Licensing Reform Bill to replace the current outdated legislation and make the licensing system for taxis and PHVs fit for the 21st century."

As we can see, there is a huge amount to discuss, create, develop, and ultimately adopt nationally - and then locally across the proposed 70 unitary authorities.

Work has begun, meetings have started, and it has been suggested that this could all be completed by November this year - a huge task, with many issues still to address:

- Age limits for vehicles
- Additional vehicle requirements such as fire extinguishers, first aid kits, seating layouts, CCTV, and tinted windows
- Out-of-area predominant use (cross-border working)
- National standards
- National enforcement
- DBS checks
- VAT treatment of the sector
- Medical records and reports
- Overseas records for foreign nationals
- Criminal conviction policies

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EXECUTIVE VEHICLE LICENSING:

WHEN EARLY ASSURANCE MEETS REFUSAL

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



From enquiry to refusal: a common executive licensing scenario

This scenario is increasingly common in private hire licensing, particularly among experienced drivers moving into the executive market. A driver identifies a commercially sensible opportunity: higher-value work, more stable contracts, and improved margins. The logical next step is the acquisition of a vehicle capable of meeting executive licensing criteria.

In many cases, the driver approaches the licensing authority in advance. Detailed enquiries are made, often supported by vehicle specifications, and a written response is received confirming that the proposed vehicle would be suitable for executive licensing. That exchange is retained and relied upon. It demonstrates a considered effort to engage with the regulatory framework before incurring significant financial liability.

However, the position is not static. Between that initial exchange and the submission of a formal application, policy may change. The change may be subtle, such as a refinement of vehicle standards, or more substantive, such as a narrowing of what qualifies as "executive." Critically, such changes are not always communicated directly to those who have previously sought guidance. Nor are they invariably reflected on the authority's website with any immediacy.

The driver, acting on the basis of earlier confirmation, proceeds to reconfirm their intention to purchase. No warning is given. There is no indication that the position has shifted. A finance agreement is entered into, a deposit and a multi-year contractual commitment are made. The application is then submitted.

It is at that stage that the divergence becomes apparent. The vehicle is refused for executive licensing. In many instances, a standard private hire licence is offered instead. From the authority's perspective, the decision reflects the application of current policy. From the driver's perspective, it represents a material departure from what they were previously told, with immediate financial consequences.

Advice, discretion, and policy change

The central difficulty is that doing everything "right" does not eliminate regulatory risk. Early engagement, written confirmation, and apparent alignment with policy are all sensible steps. They are, however, not determinative. Licensing advice, even when provided in writing, does not bind the authority when it comes to the formal determination of an application.

This reflects the structure of the licensing regime. The authority is required to determine each application on its merits at the time it is made, applying the policy and standards then in force. Earlier correspondence forms part of the context, but it does not override that obligation. The decision-maker must be satisfied, at the point of determination, that the relevant criteria are met.

In this context, drivers often look to the concept of legitimate expectation. In broad terms, it recognises that where a public authority has made a representation, an individual may seek to rely on it. In licensing practice, however, the scope of that principle is limited. General advice, preliminary views, or officer-level confirmations will rarely give rise to an enforceable expectation, particularly where policy has been revised.

Discretion is central to how these cases are approached. Authorities are afforded a wide margin in determining whether a vehicle meets executive standards. That discretion includes the ability to depart from earlier informal positions, provided the decision is properly reasoned and grounded in current policy. The existence of discretion is not controversial; the difficulty arises where its exercise appears inconsistent, unexplained, or detached from prior engagement with the applicant.

This is particularly evident in approved vehicle lists. Although often described as non-exhaustive, they are frequently treated in practice as definitive. Vehicles not on the list may be refused without meaningful consideration, despite earlier indications of suitability.

Where specific guidance has been given on an unlisted vehicle, a subsequent refusal raises questions about the exercise of discretion. The issue is not simply whether the authority can refuse, but whether it has properly engaged with its prior representations and the individual circumstances of the application.

A recent matter I advised on illustrates the point. The authority had amended its executive vehicle policy prior to the application being made. However, that amendment had not been reflected on the authority's website. The publicly available policy continued to display the previous criteria. The driver had relied on that information, together with earlier written confirmation from the licensing department, in proceeding with the purchase.

In those circumstances, it is difficult for an authority to assert that the driver ought to have been aware of the change. Regulatory systems depend on the accessibility and accuracy of published information. Where the only publicly available source continues to reflect an outdated position, it cannot readily be said that an applicant has failed to inform themselves. While this does not necessarily prevent refusal, it is a factor that ought to be taken into account when assessing the fairness and proportionality of the decision.

Reliance and financial exposure

The financial consequences of these situations are significant. Weekly liabilities of several hundred pounds, coupled with deposits and long-term finance agreements, create a level of exposure that cannot easily be mitigated. These are not discretionary expenditures; they are investments made on the assumption of a particular licensing outcome. Where that outcome does not materialise, the impact is immediate and ongoing.

It is also important to recognise that a standard private hire licence is not always a viable alternative. Vehicles acquired for executive work are often selected with a specific business model in mind. The revenue assumptions underpinning that model do not necessarily translate to standard private hire operations. The distinction is not merely regulatory; it is commercial.

From a legal perspective, the tension lies between the need for authorities to retain flexibility and the expectation that individuals can rely, to some extent, on what they are told. The balance is not easily struck. Authorities are entitled to change policy and to apply revised standards to new applications. However, they are also expected to act consistently, transparently, and with proper regard to the information they have provided.

Challenging decisions and understanding regulatory risk

Where there is a disconnect between published policy, officer advice, and ultimate decision-making, the basis for that decision may be open to scrutiny. The existence of an appeal right, or the opportunity to request a hearing before a licensing sub-committee, becomes particularly relevant in such cases. The focus shifts from the outcome itself to the process by which it has been reached.

It should not be assumed that the availability of a standard licence precludes challenge. Where a higher-tier application has been refused in circumstances engaging reliance, inconsistency, or procedural fairness, there may be grounds to examine whether the authority has properly exercised its discretion.

These issues arise regularly and merit careful consideration where significant financial commitments are contemplated. The risk is structural: decisions follow commitment, not precede it; advance advice is not binding; and policy may change without effective notice. In practice, the greatest exposure arises not from non-compliance but from reliance, whether on informal assurances, outdated published policy, or assumptions that prior approval guarantees future outcomes.

These are matters that frequently come before licensing sub-committees and, where necessary, on appeal. They engage questions of evidential sufficiency, consistency, and the proper exercise of discretion.

I specialise in transport regulatory and licensing law, including representation before licensing sub-committees and the Magistrates' Courts. Where there is concern about a licensing decision that appears inconsistent with prior advice or published policy, I am able to advise and, where appropriate, provide representation.

ELECTRIC FLYING TAXIS TO HIT UK SKIES BY 2028 UNDER NEW GOVERNMENT PLAN

The UK government has announced a massive £46.5 million investment to fast-track the future of flight, aiming to get electric flying taxis into routine use across the country within the next two years. The funding, delivered through the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), is designed to cut through red tape and build the digital foundations needed for "advanced air mobility" to become a common sight by 2028.

A significant portion of the cash will create a new tracking system - described by Security Minister Dan Jarvis as a "numberplate system for the skies" - which will allow police to identify drones and flying taxis in real-time. Aviation Minister



Keir Mather said the investment will "unlock barriers to growth that will create jobs, lower emissions and further the UK's world-leading aviation reputation."

The push for flying taxis is part of a wider plan to modernise British airspace, with experts predicting the industry could be worth £103 billion by 2050. Industry leaders have welcomed the move, with Stuart Simpson, CEO of Vertical Aerospace, stating the investment is a "step towards positioning the UK at the leading edge" of the electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) sector.

By streamlining the application process and speeding up safety approvals, the government hopes to make the UK a global hub for high-tech transport. Sophie O'Sullivan of the CAA noted that the current work is "laying the foundations for commercial operation in the future," ensuring that when flying taxis do take off, they meet the highest possible safety standards.

ELECTRIC AIR TAXIS TAKE TO THE SKIES OVER NEW YORK IN LANDMARK TEST

Joby Aviation last month successfully completed a week of demonstration flights in New York City, marking a major step toward launching a commercial flying taxi service.

The company's electric aircraft travelled from JFK Airport to various heliports across Manhattan, proving it could slash a one-hour commute in heavy traffic to a trip of less than 10 minutes.

The flights are part of a special pilot programme aimed at speeding up the arrival of electric vertical takeoff and landing (eVTOL) technology. These quiet, battery-powered craft are designed to beat city congestion



by ferrying passengers directly to airports and urban hubs.

Joby stated that the New York tests allowed them to fly "real flight routes and real environments in one of the world's most dynamic cities."

The testing campaign is critical for measuring "acoustics and performance metrics that are critical to unlocking the urban aerial ridesharing market." By showing that the aircraft can operate safely and quietly in a crowded city, the company moves closer to final government approval.

International competition is heating up, with countries such as China and the UAE also racing to launch similar services as early as this year. In the U.S., major players are already lining up to support the technology; Delta Air Lines has already invested $60 million into a partnership with Joby to eventually offer passengers premium air taxi transfers in New York and Los Angeles.

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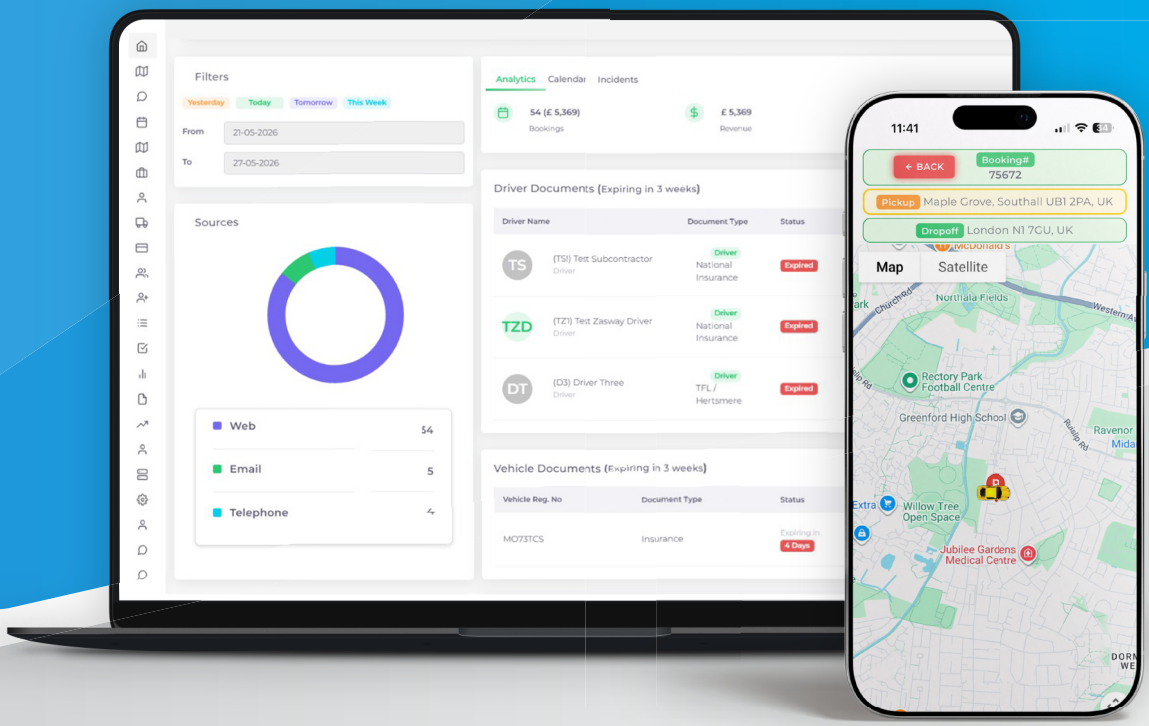

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CHANCE REUNION ALLOWS GLASGOW DRIVER TO THANK PASSENGER WHO SAVED HIS LIFE

A Glasgow taxi driver has been reunited by total coincidence with a passenger whose casual advice saved his life from aggressive prostate cancer. During the summer of 2024, driver Brian Kelly, 66, picked up Tam Hewitt, a 76-year-old volunteer for Prostate Cancer UK. During the journey, Mr Hewitt spoke about the importance of getting checked for the disease.



Despite having no symptoms, Mr Kelly felt compelled by the chat to visit his GP and request a PSA blood test. The test led to the discovery of two cancerous sites, one of which was aggressive.

Because it was caught early at stage two, Mr Kelly underwent successful treatment in June 2025 and was back at work in a week.

He credited the volunteer for his survival, but it wasn't until December 2025 that fate brought them together again when Mr Kelly was randomly dispatched to pick up a fare at Mr Hewitt's house. After loading the car, the driver finally got to share his news. "I just shook his hand and said 'by the way, I just want to thank you for saving my life'," Mr Kelly said.

The experience has transformed the driver's own daily routine. "Anyone who gets into my car who's over a certain age, I have the conversation with them," Mr Kelly said. "I just throw out: 'You're of a certain age, have you had this PSA blood test?'"

One in eight men will get prostate cancer, however, it's curable if found early.

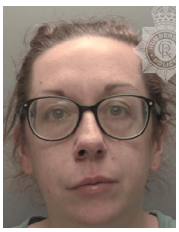
"TRUSTED FRIEND" JAILED FOR DESTROYING HULL TAXI FIRM IN £670K FRAUD

A "cruel and devious" company director has been jailed for four years after stealing more than £671,000 from a Hull taxi firm to fund her secret cocaine and gambling addictions.

Gemma Phoenix, 44, admitted to abusing her position at Hull Cars Ltd in a betrayal that left the company's owner "devastated" and forced him to sell his life's work.

Phoenix had worked for the business for a decade and was so highly regarded that her boss considered it a "no brainer" to promote her to director.

However, between March 2023 and August 2024, she used her control over the accounts to divert roughly £10,000 every single week into her own bank account. To avoid being caught, she gave the payments legitimate-looking names in company records. The fraud was uncovered when staff noticed their pension contributions had stopped. When the owner finally confronted her, Phoenix confessed to the theft.



The financial hole she left was so deep that the owner had to remortgage his home and take out a £100,000 loan just to keep things afloat and pay his staff. Ultimately, he was forced to sell the business for half of its true value.

"When I discovered what Gemma had done, I felt like my stomach had been ripped out," the 63-year-old owner told the court. "I felt absolutely betrayed and taken advantage of. I looked on her as a friend, not just an employee. I had so much trust in her."

He added that it was "devastating to no longer have the business that I worked so hard to build."

In court, it was revealed that Phoenix was trapped in a "spiral" of addiction. Her lawyer stated that she feels "deep shame" and "is so very, very sorry for what she did."

Despite her previously clean record and a letter of apology, the judge handed down a four-year prison sentence, noting the "shocking breach of trust" that destroyed a successful local company and ruined her friend's livelihood.

While Phoenix offered an apology in court, the damage to her former coworkers was already done.

JOHN WORBOYS COULD HAVE MORE THAN 1,000 VICTIMS SAYS CARRIE JOHNSON

Carrie Johnson, the wife of former PM Boris Johnson, has warned that the number of victims targeted by rapist John Worboys could be "up to 1,000." Johnson, who was a student when she encountered Worboys in 2007, helped bring the serial sex attacker to justice.

She revealed that news of the Parole Board recently refusing Worboys release brought a "huge relief" to many survivors. The board stated that he "continues to represent a high risk of committing further serious sexual offences against women."

Worboys is currently serving a life sentence for drugging and assaulting women in his taxi. His routine involved pretending he had won money and offering his passengers spiked drinks.

He was first convicted in 2009 for offences against 12 women, but received a life sentence in 2019 after more victims came forward regarding older crimes spanning from 2000 to 2008.

Speaking on Good Morning Britain, Johnson said: "His crimes span from 2000 to 2009 and he was a cab driver for that duration, so there could be up to 1,000, if not more than that," she said.

Johnson explained that a recent ITV dramatisation of the case has prompted even more women to contact her, believing they were also targeted. She urged others to come forward, noting that many women might not have realised they were drugged at the time.

Sharing her own ordeal, Johnson recalled waiting for a night bus in Chelsea when Worboys offered her a £5 ride. Inside the cab, he offered her champagne to celebrate a casino win, "Thankfully though I didn't drink it," she previously wrote. Instead, she secretly poured the drink onto the floor.

Worboys later stopped in a dark area, climbed into the back seat, and forced her to drink vodka. After she told him her mother was waiting for her, he dropped her off and gave her his phone number. Once inside her house, Johnson passed out fully clothed in the bathtub.

She later identified Worboys in a police lineup and handed over his phone number, which helped secure his conviction.



AIRPORT DROP-OFF CHARGES

AIRPORT	5 mins	10 mins	15 mins	20 mins	30 mins
ABERDEEN	£7.00	£7.00	£7.00	£12.00	£22.00
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BELFAST INT	£5.00	£5.00	£8.00	£8.00	£13.00
BIRMINGHAM	£7.00	£7.00	£7.00	£12.00	£24.00
BOURNEMOUTH	£8.00	£8.00	£8.00	£8.00	£8.00
BRISTOL	£8.50	£8.50	£10.50	£10.50	£13.00
CARDIFF	£3.00	£3.00	£6.00	£6.00	£9.00
CITY OF DERRY	£1.00	£1.00	£1.00	£2.50	£2.50
CORNWALL NEWQUAY	FREE	FREE	£3.00	£3.00	£3.00
EAST MIDLANDS	£5.00	£5.00	£5.00	£10.00	£20.00
EDINBURGH	£8.50	£8.50	£13.50	£18.50	£28.50
EXETER	£6.00	£6.00	£6.00	£7.50	£7.50
GLASGOW	£7.00	£7.00	£7.00	£12.00	£22.00
GLASGOW PRESTWICK	£4.50	£4.50	£4.50	£4.50	£4.50
HUMBERSIDE	FREE	FREE	FREE	£5.00	£5.00
GUERNSEY	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE
INVERNESS	£3.80	£3.80	£3.80	£3.80	£3.80
ISLE OF MAN	FREE	FREE	FREE	£3.00	£3.00
JERSEY	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE	£1.00
LEEDS BRADFORD	£8.00	£8.00	£10.00	£10.00	£13.50
LIVERPOOL	£6.00	£6.00	£10.00	£10.00	£25.00
LONDON CITY	£8.00	£13.00	FINE	FINE	FINE
LONDON GATWICK	£10.00	£10.00	£15.00	£20.00	£30.00
LONDON HEATHROW	£7.00	£7.00	FINE	FINE	FINE
LONDON LUTON	£7.00	£7.00	£12.00	£17.00	£27.00
LONDON SOUTHEND	£8.00	£8.00	FINE	FINE	FINE
LONDON STANSTED	£10.00	£10.00	£10.00	£28.00	£28.00
MANCHESTER	£5.00	£6.40	£25.00	£25.00	£25.00
NEWCASTLE	£6.00	£6.00	£12.00	£12.00	£12.00
NORWICH	£6.00	£6.00	£6.00	£6.00	£6.00
SUMBURGH	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE
SOUTHAMPTON	£7.00	£7.00	£7.00	£7.00	FINE
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CROSS-BORDER HIRING, CONSUMER LAW, & FAILURE OF LICENSING AUTHORITIES TO PROTECT THE PUBLIC

Article by Christopher Johnson
Veteran London hackney driver

The fundamental duty of any licensing authority is clear: to protect the public. That duty sits at the heart of the private hire regulatory framework. Local authorities are entrusted not only to license drivers, vehicles, and operators, but to ensure that those they license comply with the law and operate in a manner that is safe, transparent and accountable.

However, what we are now witnessing across England is a systemic failure to uphold that duty.

The rise of cross-border hiring

Cross-border hiring is no longer an exception-it has become the norm.

Passengers booking a vehicle in one area are increasingly being supplied with drivers and vehicles licensed by entirely different authorities, sometimes many miles away. While this practice is lawful, it creates a regulatory disconnect with serious implications for public safety and accountability.

The issue is not simply cross-border hiring itself. The issue is that passengers are not being properly informed.

Private hire operators are "traders" - and the law is clear

Private hire operators are traders within the meaning of consumer protection law. That classification carries legal obligations, particularly at the pre-contract stage.

Under:

- The Consumer Contracts (Information, Cancellation and Additional Charges) Regulations 2013 (CCRs)
- The Consumer Rights Act 2015
- The Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Act 2024

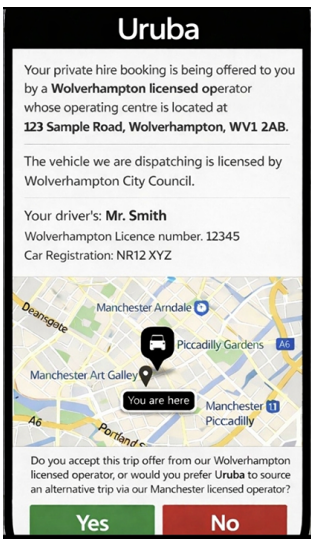
Operators must provide material information:

- Clearly
- Prominently
- Before the consumer is bound by the contract

This is not guidance - it is law.

What compliance should look like - the passenger app

To demonstrate what lawful compliance looks like in practice, I have produced a mock passenger app screen. It shows a passenger located in Manchester being offered a booking which is fulfilled by a Wolverhampton-licensed operator, driver and vehicle. Crucially, it clearly discloses:



- The licensing authority of the operator (Wolverhampton)
- The operator's operating centre address
- The driver's licensing details
- The vehicle registration and licensing authority
- A clear consumer choice before accepting the booking

This is precisely what is required under Regulation 10 and Schedule 2 of the 2013 CCRs, alongside the transparency requirements of Section 68 of the Consumer Rights Act 2015.

It ensures that the passenger understands, before entering into the contract, who is providing the service and which authority is responsible for regulation and enforcement.

At present, no major operator app presents this information in a clear and prominent way.

The reality: a systemic failure of disclosure

In practice, passengers are not told:

- Where the operator is licensed
- Where the vehicle is licensed
- Which authority is responsible for enforcement

This is a material omission under consumer law.

Passengers are therefore making transactional decisions without the key facts necessary to make an informed choice.

FAILURE TO PROTECT PUBLIC

The role of licensing authorities: a failure to enforce

This is not simply an industry issue - it is a regulatory failure.

Licensing authorities:

- License private hire operators as "fit and proper"
- Yet fail to ensure compliance with consumer law
- Do not require transparent pre-contract disclosures
- Do not audit booking platforms adequately
- Do not take enforcement action

This represents a nationwide failure to regulate operators as traders.

A second failure: duty to inform the public

Licensing authorities also have a duty to actively inform and protect the public. To illustrate what this should look like, I have produced a second visual: a public safety notice for Manchester City Council.



This notice clearly explains:

- That Manchester-licensed vehicles are subject to local enforcement and safety checks
- That vehicles licensed by other authorities are not enforceable by Manchester City Council
- That regulation and safety standards may differ
- That passengers should understand who is licensing their journey

This type of public-facing communication should be visible:

- At transport hubs
- Across digital platforms
- In the night-time economy
- At bus stops

Instead, such messaging is almost entirely absent.

The accountability gap

The combined effect of these failures is stark:

- Passengers are not informed at the point of booking
- They are not informed by public authorities
- Enforcement responsibility is fragmented and unclear

This creates a system where journeys may be:

- Arranged by an operator in one area
- Driven by a vehicle licensed in another area (if the booking is subcontracted)
- Taking place in a third area
- With no clear local accountability

The consequences for public safety

This is not a theoretical concern.

It results in:

- Reduced regulatory oversight
- Limited local enforcement capability
- Passenger confusion
- Erosion of trust in the licensing system

Most importantly, it undermines the very purpose of licensing: public protection.

The need for national intervention

This issue requires urgent attention from:

- The Department for Transport (DfT)
- Transport Ministers
- National policymakers

There must be:

- Clear direction that private hire operators comply with consumer law at the pre-contract stage
- Enforcement expectations placed on licensing authorities
- Recognition that transparency is fundamental to safety

Conclusion

The law is already in place. Operators must provide clear, prominent, pre-contract information. Licensing authorities must ensure they do.

The two accompanying visuals demonstrate:

1. What a legally compliant booking process should look like
2. How the public should be informed about cross-border risks.

What is missing is not legislation - but enforcement, leadership, and accountability.

Until that changes, passengers will continue to book journeys without knowing who is responsible for their safety.

And that is a failure that can no longer be ignored.

BRITONS CLOSER TO BOOKING DRIVERLESS TAXIS AS GOVERNMENT OPENS PILOT APPLICATIONS

Passengers across Britain could be booking taxi and bus-style self-driving vehicles later this year as applications officially opened on 22 May, for operators to run autonomous vehciles (AVs).

The new government pilot scheme marks a major milestone toward fully commercial passenger services, allowing prominent technology and transport firms - including Wayve, Uber, and Waymo - to test bookable driverless journeys.

Proponents argue the cutting-edge technology will transform the British economy and society. Ministers project the AV sector could create thousands of high-skilled jobs and unlock billions of pounds by 2035, while Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders Chief Executive, Mike Hawes, noted automated services could be worth £3.7b a year by 2040.

Beyond financial growth, the services aim to dramatically improve transport accessibility and freedom for older adults and disabled passengers.

Safety remains the central focus of the initiative, particularly as government data shows human error currently contributes to 88% of collisions on UK roads.

The pilots will gather vital real-world evidence on how these vehicles navigate everyday traffic, busy streets, and passenger safety. Before hitting the roads, operators must pass rigorous government approval processes, including strict safety and cyber security threat assessments.

Additionally, local transport authorities, such as TfL, must grant local consent to ensure services align with regional priorities.

The initiative follows a government Call for Evidence on autonomous regulations that closed in March. Learnings from these upcoming pilots will directly shape the final rules for wider, permanent deployment.

London is poised to be at the forefront of this transport revolution. Sarfraz Maredia, Global Head of Autonomous Mobility & Delivery at Uber, said: “London has long been a pioneering city for Uber, where we’ve launched some of our biggest innovations, and we can’t wait to give people in the capital the chance to experience autonomous rides this year.”

Ben Loewenstein, Waymo’s Head of Policy and Government Affairs for the UK and Europe, praised the initiative, saying: “The UK is leading the way in enabling the safe deployment of pilot AV services.”

He added that Waymo, which already provides over 500k weekly rides across 11 US metro-politan areas, hopes to soon join London’s network to “demonstrate the safety, accessibility, sustain-ability benefits of battery-electric AVs.”

Ultimately, the government views the pilot as a safe stepping stone toward a radically different transport landscape.

Roads and Buses Minister Simon Lightwood said: “Self-driving vehicles represent a transformative opportunity for Britain, opening up independent travel for disabled people and older adults, whilst driving growth and creating high-skilled jobs across the UK.

“This pilot scheme brings that future closer, giving passengers the opportunity to experience self-driving travel first-hand while ensuring safety always comes first.”

EUROPE’S FIRST ROBOTAXI SERVICE HITS CROATIAN STREETS

Croatian company, Verne, has launched what it claims is Europe’s first commercial robotaxi service, beginning a phased rollout in Zagreb. Backed by Uber and using technology from the self-driving firm Pony.ai, the service has been operating ten AVs for limited customers since early April.

Despite similar services being available in China and the US for years, multiple companies are still competing to bring autonomous taxi services to European roads.

While a human “operator” remains behind the wheel for safety, Verne aims to move to completely driverless trips by the end of 2026.

The service is currently limited to specific zones, including the city centre and the airport. Verne CEO Marko Pejkovic explained that “expansion is gradual, with each new zone introduced only after detailed validation and once the system is proven reliable in real-world conditions.”

Verne is already in talks to expand to 11 other cities across the UK, Europe, and the Middle East.

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LONDON DRIVERLESS TAXI TRIAL FACES CALLS FOR IMMEDIATE SUSPENSION OVER SAFETY CONCERNS

A controversial trial of Waymo's driverless taxis in London has come under fire, with critics demanding the programme be halted following a high-profile safety breach.

The Brent Green Party has launched a petition urging Mayor Sadiq Khan to suspend the pilot, arguing that the AVs "do not meet the minimum safety standards" required for city streets.

The outcry follows a recent incident in Harlesden where a Waymo vehicle drove directly into a police cordon during a double stabbing investigation.

While Waymo - a subsidiary of Google's parent company, Alphabet - stated the car was in manual mode with a "validation driver in full control," the lapse has fuelled fears about the technology.

Newly elected Green Party councillor Amandine Alexandre labelled the footage "deeply concerning," stating: "The fact that such vehicles can operate without impunity, putting police investigations at risk of compromise, is beyond rational reasoning."

Opponents of the trial are also raising alarms over a lack of public consultation and potential job losses among professional drivers.

Cllr Suzanne Gallagher described the rollout as a "data collection exercise" being "imposed" on the community without their consent.

The situation mirrors recent events in New York City, where robotaxi trials were paused due to similar safety fears and a lack of stakeholder support.

Waymo has defended its presence with a company spokesperson arguing that while scepticism "is natural," it usually "fades" once the public becomes accustomed to the cars. To address accountability, the firm highlighted the UK's Automated Vehicles Act 2024, which ensures that when a car is fully autonomous, "liability rests with the manufacturer or software developer."

City officials remain divided on the issue. Former Brent Council Leader Muhammed Butt suggested it would be "irresponsible" not to engage with a global business bringing significant investment to the borough, though he stressed that engagement "is not a blank cheque."

Meanwhile, a spokesperson for Sadiq Khan said he is "determined to harness the opportunities" of new tech but insisted that safety and public transport networks must not be compromised.

The DfT remains supportive of the sector, claiming AVs "could unlock billions" for the UK economy by 2035. However, officials reiterated the Waymo fleet is currently in a testing phase only, carrying no passengers and requiring safety drivers behind the wheel at all times.

CHINESE EV XPENG BEATS TESLA TO MASS PRODUCE ROBOTAXI

In a major shift for the global AV market, Chinese automaker XPeng has officially started mass-producing its first robotaxi, beating rival Tesla to the assembly line.

XPeng is the first Chinese automaker to achieve this milestone using entirely in-house hardware and software. Instead of building a futuristic pod without a steering wheel, XPeng is saving money and speeding up production by using its existing GX vehicle platform, which also builds its flagship consumer SUV.

However, the inside is completely redesigned for passengers, swapping out the driver's seat for "gravity seats, privacy glass, and independent rear displays."

Technically, the vehicle is designed for advanced Level 4 autonomy but defiantly avoids expensive LiDAR sensors and HD mapping. Instead, it uses a "pure vision solution" powered by cameras and the company's own VLA 2.0 AI model. This system runs on four custom Turing AI chips, which XPeng claims "compresses response latency to a blistering sub-80 milliseconds."

By controlling everything from the microchips to the factory floor, XPeng gains a massive cost advantage over its rivals.

The company plans to start public pilot tests later this year to test real-world conditions.

If all goes well, XPeng aims to launch fully unsupervised, driverless rides "without on-site safety officers by early 2027," putting it directly against Tesla's Cybercab pro-gramme, which is already showing production-spec vehicles and scaling infrastructure in the US.

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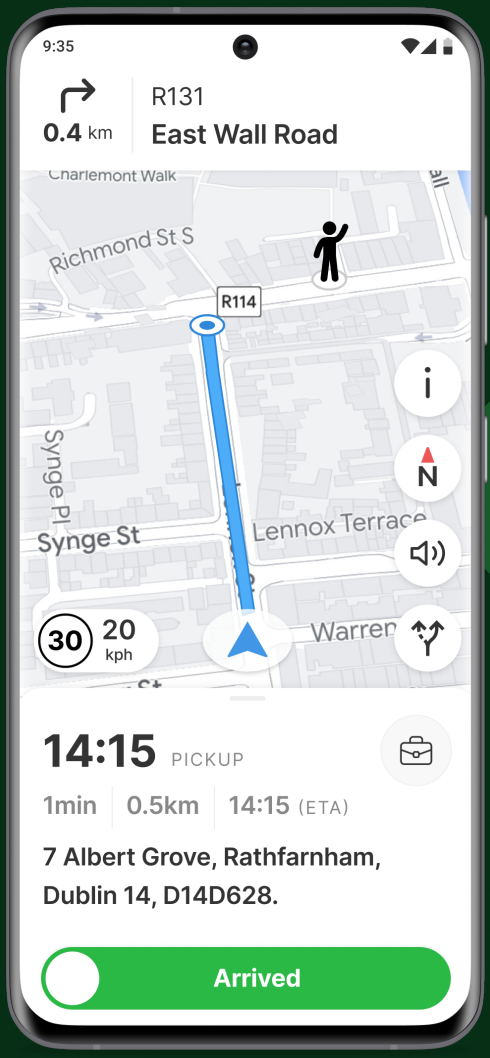

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iCabbi | TAXI ALLIANCE

HOW TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE DRIVERS CAN MAKE THE MOST OF HOLIDAY TRAVEL

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



Summer brings opportunity, disruption and the occasional seat that feels like it has been preheated in a pizza oven. For taxi and private hire drivers, the warmer months can mean stronger airport work, more leisure trips, later-night demand and a welcome chance to replace school-run routines with holiday travel revenue.

But it also brings new pressures: heat, dehydration, traffic, tired passengers and the challenge of delivering great service when everyone is hot, late or wearing flip-flops that probably should have stayed at the beach. Here's how drivers can make summer work for them while staying safe, professional and in good spirits.

Holiday travel: summer's big opportunity

For many drivers, summer changes the shape of the working week. The regular rhythm of school runs may fade, but that does not necessarily mean demand drops. In many areas it simply shifts. Airport transfers, railway station pickups, hotel journeys, seaside runs, city-centre evenings and family visits all tend to pick up when holiday season gets going.

Industry data also shows that private hire remains the dominant part of the market, with growth in driver licences and app-based bookings continuing to reshape how journeys are sourced and managed. That matters because summer passengers are often planning around flights, weekend breaks, attractions and events rather than the school bell.

That shift can be good news for drivers who plan ahead. UK summer travel demand has remained strong, with holidaymakers taking shorter but frequent trips, domestic travel still important, and airports preparing for very busy peak periods.

In practical terms, that means more pre-booked work, more luggage, more early starts and more customers who begin the journey cheerful and end it nervously asking whether Terminal 2 is definitely Terminal 2. Drivers who understand local airport patterns, allow extra time for congestion and communicate clearly about pickup points can turn summer stress into repeat business.

No school runs? no panic

School runs can be the bread-and-butter work that gives structure to the day, so when the holidays arrive, it's easy to feel that a dependable slice of income has vanished. The trick is not to wait for the market to come to you. Summer rewards drivers who think in blocks of demand: airport mornings, shopping and appointment runs through the day, attraction and hotel traffic in the afternoon, then restaurant, pub and event work in the evening. Instead of one fixed routine, summer often offers several smaller peaks.

A practical summer strategy might include encouraging advance bookings for airport transfers, reminding regular passengers that you are available for holiday journeys, and identifying local hotspots such as hotels, caravan parks, train stations, retail centres and family attractions. Keep an eye on local events calendars too. A concert, festival or race day can do more for your takings than three mornings outside the school gates. The key is flexibility. If winter is about routine, summer is about being in the right place before everyone else has had the same idea.

Keeping cool: health matters in hot weather

Hot weather can affect anyone, and drivers are not exempt just because the windows are down and the radio is playing summer classics. Public health guidance warns that overheating, dehydration, heat exhaustion and, in severe cases, heatstroke are real risks in hot conditions. Heat affects concentration, comfort and decision-making, all of which matter when you are working long hours in traffic. The human body relies heavily on sweating to lose heat, and dehydration makes that much harder.

For drivers, the basics matter. Carry plenty of drinking water and sip regularly through the day rather than waiting until you feel thirsty. The AA has advised carrying at least a litre of water per person when

SUMMER ON THE RANK



travelling in extreme heat, and that is sensible guidance for drivers too, especially if delays or breakdowns leave you parked up longer than expected. Wear light, loose clothing where possible, use air conditioning sensibly, keep the vehicle ventilated, and take regular breaks in shade when work allows. If you can, avoid the hottest part of the day for non-essential journeys and make sure your coolant, tyres and fluids are checked before a heatwave really bites.

Drivers should also know when to pause the shift. Warning signs of heat exhaustion can include dizziness, headache, heavy sweating, cramps, nausea and weakness. If those signs appear, cooling down quickly is not optional; it is essential. Stop somewhere safe, drink water, rest in a cooler place and do not try to push through for the sake of one more fare. There is no heroic award for becoming unwell in a lay-by with a warm bottle of water and a melted chocolate bar. Professional driving means recognising when safety comes before earnings.

Cabin comfort and customer care

Summer passengers are often a mixed bunch: families with too many bags, tourists who are not sure where they are, business travellers trying to stay calm, and children who have reached that magical holiday state known as 'tired but somehow louder'. In that environment, good customer care becomes a competitive advantage. A clean vehicle, polite greeting, help with luggage, clear confirmation of destination and a calm manner all go a long way. When people are hot and rushed, basic courtesy feels premium.

Little touches matter more in summer. If the car has been standing in the sun, take a moment to cool it before loading passengers where possible. Check that seat surfaces are not uncomfortably hot, keep the inside tidy, and be ready with practical information: expected journey time, likely traffic, the best drop-off point and any airport or event access rules. If passengers are anxious, reassurance helps. If they are chatty, be friendly. If they are silent, do not feel obliged to provide a one-person Edinburgh Fringe preview. Reading the room is part of the service.

This is also the season when one good job can lead to several more. Holidaymakers who need an outbound airport run may also need a return pickup. Hotel guests may need restaurant transfers. Families visiting relatives may need repeat local journeys. A driver who is reliable, presentable and easy to deal with is far more likely to be remembered, recommended and booked again. In a market where technology continues to shape customer expectations, the human side of the service still makes the biggest difference.

A season to work smarter

Summer in the taxi and private hire trade is not simply a quieter version of the rest of the year. It is a different market with different habits, pressures and opportunities. The school-run gap can be filled. Holiday travel can be profitable. Customer care can turn one-off fares into loyal business. And a driver who looks after their own health is far better placed to look after everyone else. In short: drink water, plan ahead, stay flexible, keep the car cool and never underestimate the earning power of a well-timed airport booking.

Because while summer may bring traffic jams, sticky steering wheels and passengers asking to be dropped 'just where all the suitcases are', it also brings real opportunity for drivers who prepare properly. The winners will not necessarily be the ones who work the longest. They will be the ones who work the smartest, keep their standards high and avoid becoming a cautionary tale involving sunstroke, airport queues and a packet of melted wine gums.

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HERO VAN DRIVER RESCUES OBLIVIOUS TAXI PASSENGERS FROM M60 VEHICLE FIRE

A modest van driver has shared how he saved a taxi driver and two passengers who were completely unaware that their vehicle had burst into flames on the M60.

The driver was travelling along the motorway in Greater Manchester near Simister Island on Thursday when he spotted flames coming from the cab.

Acting quickly, he pulled up alongside the taxi to warn the driver. "I drove near him and told him he needed to pull over - he was not aware of the fire," the van driver said.

After the taxi pulled over, the van driver jumped in to help, noting that one of the two passengers was disabled. He safely helped everyone out of the burning



vehicle and called 999.

To ensure their safety, he loaded all three people into his own van and drove them to a secure area away from the blaze to wait for emergency services. "I was amazed how quickly the firefighters arrived," he later remarked.

According to the rescuer, the taxi driver appeared to be around 20 years old and had noticed a warning light before the fire took hold. "He said he noticed a problem with his oil light but thought he could leave the motorway at the next services," the van driver explained.

The young driver was left shaken by the ordeal. "He was very shocked. I'm used to seeing this kind of thing on the motorway but I don't think he has ever seen a car on fire on the motorway before," the van driver added.

Thanks to the quick-thinking intervention, the taxi driver and both passengers escaped the incident entirely unharmed.

BRITAIN'S 'UNSUNG HEROES': TAXIS HAILED AS ESSENTIAL SAFETY NET

A new study has revealed that taxi drivers are a vital lifeline for millions of people across the UK, though nearly half of the public believes these drivers don't get the credit they deserve.

According to a survey of 2,000 adults by Opinion Matters for Acorn Insurance, 82% of people consider taxi drivers essential to their local communities, acting as a reliable safety net when public transport fails or emergencies strike.

The research highlights that taxis are often used for more than just convenience; they are a critical tool for independence.

Around 80% of respondents noted the role drivers play in supporting elderly passengers and those with mobility issues. Furthermore, the human side of the job is highly valued, with over 70% of Gen Z and Millennials reporting they have turned to a taxi driver for help during a difficult or important moment in their lives.

Despite this deep reliance - with 29% of people saying they would struggle to manage without them - the profession often feels overlooked. The survey found that 44% of UK adults believe drivers are underappreciated, while 31% say the role is frequently taken for granted.

Mike Lloyd, Chief Executive of the Acorn Group, emphasised that drivers are "part of the fabric of everyday life in the UK" and are there for people during the moments that matter most.

"What stands out from this research is just how much people in the UK rely on taxi drivers, often without thinking about it," Lloyd said. "Taxi drivers provide more than transport: they offer reassurance, consistency and a service that many people depend on to go about their daily lives."

He added that the industry has a responsibility to champion these workers. "This survey is about recognising that contribution and making sure taxi drivers across the UK get the credit they truly deserve," he said.

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MAN CHARGED AFTER CABBIE STRANGLED AND ROBBED IN CARLTON, NOTTS

A suspect has been charged after a cabbie was strangled and robbed while working in Carlton, Notts. The terrifying assault took place around 9:50pm on 28 April 2026, while the victim was driving a customer along Carlton Hill Road.

Following a disagreement inside the vehicle, the driver pulled the car over. At that moment, the passenger reportedly strangled the driver from behind and snatched a bag of coins.

As the driver desperately attempted to drive away to escape, the passenger continued to grip his throat, causing the vehicle to spin out of control. Once the car stopped, both men got out, with the driver fleeing on foot and the passenger ran off with the float.

Police arrested and charged 33-year-old Joshua Campbell, of no fixed address, with robbery, intentional strangulation, and causing danger to road users.

Mr. Campbell appeared at Nottingham Magistrates' Court on 19 May, where he was remanded in custody. He is scheduled to make his next appearance at Nottingham Crown Court on 16 June 2026.

Detectives condemned the violence and hoped the swift arrest would comfort the victim.

DRUNKEN PASSENGER PUTS KNIFE TO CABBIE'S THROAT IN TERRIFYING JOURNEY FROM FILEY

A cabbie was subjected to a terrifying ordeal when a drunken passenger held a knife to his throat and grabbed the steering wheel of his moving vehicle. Karl Cairns, 37, carried out the assault while travelling from Filey to Scarborough in November 2024.

Cairns, who has 89 previous offences, got into the cab carrying a box of alcohol, pulled out a knife, and asked the driver: "I've got a knife. Do you want me to stab you?" When the driver pleaded that he was a family man, Cairns temporarily pocketed the weapon.

The journey quickly escalated into chaos along the A165. While the taxi was doing 50mph, Cairns opened the passenger door three times, hanging by the handle and shouting: "I'm going to jump."

He later pulled the knife out again, holding it to the driver's throat and then to his own throat. Then as they approached Scarborough, Cairns grabbed the steering wheel and pulled it toward the kerb. The driver managed to get control of the vehicle before Cairns leaped out and fled, leaving the knife.

Cairns appeared at York Court Court on May 15, after pleading guilty to threatening a person with a blade and carrying a knife in public.

The court heard that Cairns suffers from mental disorders and substance misuse. His barrister noted Cairns had improvement due to community rehabilitation.

Judge Sean Morris described Cairns's behaviour as "shocking" and stated he had originally intended to send him to prison.

However, citing a psychiatric report and Cairns's progress, the judge deferred sentencing for six months to see if Cairns could stay out of trouble and find a job to pay compensation to the victim.

Warning Cairns that "one misstep, and you will be locked up," the judge adjourned sentencing until November 13.

STOKE CABBIE THREATENED WITH GUN IN TERRIFYING ROADSIDE INCIDENT

Armed police launched a major manhunt after a taxi driver was threatened with a gun near Festival Park. The cabbie was working on Forge Lane in Etruria when the frightening encounter unfolded.

Firearms officers rushed to the scene following the incident, at 7:50pm on May 14. Using intelligence to track the gunman, armed police later surrounded a suspect in Newcastle's High Street and seized an imitation BB gun.

A 28-year-old man from Stoke-on-Trent was arrested on suspicion of possessing an imitation firearm with intent to cause fear of violence.

A Police spokeswoman confirmed: "He has been released on bail with conditions whilst we investigate."

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THE IMPORTANCE OF DRIVING LICENCE CHECKS IN THE TAXI INDUSTRY

Article by CheckedSafe
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www.checkedsafe.com

Driving licence checks are one of the most important responsibilities within taxi fleet management and private hire operations. Whether an operator has a small fleet or manages hundreds of drivers, ensuring that every individual behind the wheel holds a valid and appropriate driving licence is fundamental to safety, compliance and protecting passengers. While licence checking might not be the most exciting job on the to-do list, it plays a huge role in reducing risk and keeping professional standards high.

Taxi drivers spend far more time on the road than the average driver. Long hours, busy environments, changing traffic conditions and the responsibility of transporting the public create a level of exposure that requires careful oversight. A driving licence is not simply proof that someone passed a test years ago; it is a live record that reflects endorsements, penalty points, disqualifications and licence validity. Circumstances can change quickly, and without regular checks, operators may unknowingly allow an unsuitable or non-compliant driver to continue carrying passengers.

Passenger safety sits at the centre of the issue. People stepping into a taxi/PHV expect that the person driving has been properly vetted and remains legally entitled to operate a vehicle. Families placing children in taxis, business travellers relying on transport to meetings and vulnerable passengers travelling alone, all place trust in taxi operators, expecting that vehicle to be safe, and the driver fit to drive. Driving licence checks help protect that trust by creating a system of account-ability and reassurance.

Compliance is another major factor. Taxi operators operate within a heavily regulated environment, and local licensing authorities often place clear obligations on businesses to ensure drivers remain legally compliant. Failing to identify a driver who has exceeded penalty point thresholds or had their entitlement removed could expose a company to significant legal and reputational consequences. Beyond potential fines or enforcement action, incidents involving unlicensed or disqualified drivers can create long-lasting damage to public confidence.

Insurance considerations also make licence checking essential. Insurance policies are typically based on the assumption that all drivers are legally entitled to drive. If a business unknowingly allows someone with a revoked or invalid licence to continue operating, insurance complications may arise in the event of an accident. Claims processes can become more difficult, financial exposure can increase and businesses may face unexpected costs that could have been avoided through proper licence checking processes.

Operational efficiency also benefits from regular licence checks. Manual processes relying on paperwork, spreadsheets or occasional visual inspections can leave gaps. Human error remains a risk in any administrative process, particularly when businesses are managing large numbers of drivers. Structured licence checking processes like CheckedSafe's driving licence checking service provide greater visibility, and take all the admin burden out of licence checking, with fully remote checks and automatic re-checks for just £1.60 per check!

The taxi industry continues to evolve. Technology, passenger expectations and regulatory standards continue to raise the bar for professional transport operators. Businesses increasingly recognise that compliance is not simply about avoiding penalties. It forms part of building a stronger operation, protecting brand reputation and demonstrating professionalism.

Regular licence checks also help create a stronger safety culture. Drivers understand that standards matter. Operators demonstrate commitment to responsible fleet management. Passengers gain confidence that safety remains a priority rather than an afterthought.

Ultimately, driving licence checks are not simply another compliance exercise to tick off a list, they form an important safeguard that protects passengers, drivers and businesses alike. In an industry built around public trust and reliability, maintaining confidence starts with ensuring that every driver on the road remains properly licensed, legally compliant and fully entitled to carry out the role entrusted to them.

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ROUND THE COUNCILS

CORNWALL:

TAXI ZONE SYSTEM CALLED "RIDICULOUS"

The leader of Cornwall Council has voiced his support for dezoning taxis in Cornwall calling the current system "ridiculous."

During a cabinet meeting on May 6, local leaders debated whether to scrap Cornwall's six separate taxi zones in favour of a single, countywide area.

The debate centres on a government recommendation to create one large licensing zone. Currently, taxis are restricted to picking up passengers within their specific zones.

Council leader Leigh Frost, who represents Bodmin, highlighted the absurdity of the current boundaries. He noted that a Bodmin taxi driver dropping someone at Bodmin Parkway station cannot legally pick up a return passenger because the station sits in a different zone.

"That is ridiculous," Councillor Frost said, adding that he also finds the different price scales across the county unfair.

However, the plan has faced significant pushback. A public consultation revealed that 299 people wanted to keep the zones, while only 99 supported the merger.

Opponents, including many taxi drivers, fear that "dezoning" would see drivers abandon rural villages to chase busier trade in lucrative towns such as Falmouth and Newquay.

Cllr David Saunby warned that a single zone could even spark "taxi wars" between rival operators and questioned the point of a consultation if the council ignores the majority view.

Supporters of the change argue it would create a "level playing field" against apps such as Uber, whose drivers can already work across the whole county.

Cllr Thalia Marrington explained that removing the boundaries would stop drivers from having to drive back empty to their home zone after a drop-off. "Removing zones may remove the dead mileage for some drivers... This could reduce fuel waste and emissions, and potentially allow the driver to earn more too," she told the meeting.

Supporters also believe a single system would be simpler, fairer, more efficient and could shorten waiting times for passengers as well as enable a single fare tariff across Cornwall and give drivers more flexibility.

While some fear for rural services, council members were told that other English authorities who moved to a single zone did not see the long-term negative impacts that critics predicted.

Despite the push for change, the council's scrutiny committee has strongly recommended keeping the existing zones, arguing that the government's "one-size-fits-all" approach is better for cities than for a rural county like Cornwall.

Because a move to a single zone cannot be reversed once it is made, the cabinet voted to delay their final decision. This will allow for more detailed analysis of how it would affect fares and the specific concerns raised by local drivers.

As Councillor Dan Rogerson noted during the heated debate, a consultation is not a referendum but a way to gather evidence before making a final call on the future of Cornwall's transport.

DENBIGHSHIRE:

RE-DESIGN: LICENCE PLATES & BADGES

Taxi licence plates and driver badges across Denbighshire are getting a fresh look as the local authority transitions to a new manufacturing supplier. Denbighshire County Council has taken the opportunity to completely re-design its taxi driver badges, vehicle plates, and door stickers, with the new system rolling out over the coming weeks.

The council will introduce the updated layout in a phased, year-long changeover. To ensure a smooth transition, existing taxis will keep their current plate design until their licence is up for renewal.

However, any new vehicles joining the fleet and any operators renewing their licences from mid-April 2026 onwards will receive the brand-new layout. Council officials have assured residents that seeing two different styles on the roads is a normal part of the crossover process.

Local authorities want to make sure both the public and the taxi industry are aware of what to expect as the new designs hit the streets.

Emlyn Jones, the council's head of planning and public protection, explained the purpose of the announcement and thanked those affected.

"We would like to notify taxi businesses and service users of the changes we are making to the taxi licensing plates and driver badges," Jones said. "We appreciate their patience whilst these changes are being made."

EDINBURGH:

TEST CENTRE OPEN/ADVERTISING SCREENS

A new testing facility for Edinburgh's taxis and PHCs is finally set to open its doors this summer following years of delays. City councillors were told at a recent meeting that the South Gyle site should be operational by May or June once final "snagging lists" are completed. The project has been plagued by problems, including faulty concrete work that had to be redone and issues securing enough power for the building.

Originally estimated to cost £1 million in 2021, the final bill has soared to £2.3 million. Council officials blamed the hike on inflation and the rising cost of equipment since the pandemic.

The new centre is desperately needed to replace the ageing Murrayburn facility, which has been struggling with a half-closed roof since 2022. Because of safety concerns, that site has been limited to only two inspection ramps, forcing staff to work overtime to handle the 4,000 vehicle tests required each year.

The new facility will double capacity with four ramps and dedicated training spaces. For a short time, both centres will run at once to help clear the backlog.

Meanwhile, Edinburgh's taxi fleet may soon feature digital advertising screens as local councillors prepare to vote on a new proposal. The company behind the move, LA Trading, is seeking permission to install the devices on the driver's side of the internal safety barriers, a service it provides in Manchester and Brighton.

While the screens would be optional for drivers, the firm has promised strict controls over what passengers see. According to documents submitted to the council, there will be no ads featuring alcohol, tobacco, gambling, or vaping. The company also guaranteed that no content would "defame" race, gender, religious belief, or lifestyle. The screens are designed to operate without sound and can be switched off instantly if a passenger requests it.

To sweeten the deal, LA Trading offered the council free airtime for health and safety messages, claiming they could reach 1.2 million riders a month if their initial goal of 200 installations is met.

Despite these promises, council officers have raised some minor concerns. A report noted that the screens might result in "some reduction" of a driver's ability to monitor the "general wellbeing" of their passengers.

However, licensing officials did not formally object to the plan, provided the screens meet safety standards. They have recommended that each screen be individually inspected at the city's taxi testing centre for a fee of £77.

Addressing safety worries, LA Trading insisted the hardware is secure and would "not become a missile" in the event of a crash. The firm added that the screens are attached with simple adhesives to ensure they do not damage the vehicles or void manufacturer warranties.

CHELMSFORD:

STATION TAXI PERMIT SCHEME DROPPED

Chelmsford City Council is set to officially scrap a taxi permit scheme next month in an effort to increase the number of hackney carriages available at the new Beaulieu Park Station.

Following a six-month trial, the council initially suspended the £200 permit charges to allow drivers to use the rank for free. Now, a formal decision notice published on 24 April 2026 confirms the complete removal of the permit scheme for all licensed taxis.

The change is expected to be finalised on 19 June 2026 after the mandatory notice period concludes. Private hire vehicles will continue to use the standard pick-up area rather than the taxi rank.

Beaulieu Park Station opened last October as the first new railway station on the Great Eastern Mainline in over a century. It was designed to relieve pressure on Chelmsford's main station and serve the expanding Chelmsford Garden Community.

While permit schemes are typically used to keep station ranks manageable, the council's review showed the extra restriction is not currently needed despite growing passenger numbers.

Paul Brookes, Director of Sustainable Communities, explained that the trial allowed the council to adapt to real-world traffic flows. "Early concerns that the taxi rank might become clogged haven't been borne out and although the initial permit scheme was introduced with the best intentions, we could only agree with local taxi drivers that there's little need for it right now," Brookes said.

Brookes welcomed the collaboration with the local transport industry to improve the station's layout. "I'm grateful for the feedback we've had from local taxi firms - removing the permit scheme will enable any hackney carriage licensed by the council to use the rank, making it easier for taxis to meet demand for their services."

WEST SUFFOLK:

EMISSIONS RULES REPLACE AGE LIMITS

West Suffolk Council has approved a new policy that judges taxis and private hire vehicles by their emission levels rather than their age. Starting 1 July 2026, the updated rules will require all new vehicles joining the local fleet to meet the strict Euro 6 emissions standard, which limits harmful pollutants such as Nitrogen Dioxide and particulates.

The policy also accommodates the newly introduced, even higher Euro 7 standard.

The decision scraps a 2022 policy that required all new taxis to be less than five years old. The shift follows Department for Transport guidance, which states that vehicle emissions, not vehicle age, should be the main factor for licensing authorities.

The council previously removed the upper age limit for existing vehicles, choosing instead to manage emissions through regular vehicle testing.

The move has strong backing from local drivers. During a public consultation in March, more than 84% of respondents voted in favour of the change.

Currently, around 520 vehicles - representing 90% of West Suffolk's taxi/PH fleet - already meet the Euro 6 standards. The remaining 10% will not be forced to upgrade immediately, as the new rule only applies to new vehicles joining the fleet.

While the council also asked drivers about eventually phasing in the Euro 6 standard for existing vehicles during their annual licence renewals, no start date has been set.

Although two-thirds of drivers supported introducing this change either immediately or by 2027, the council acknowledged it would create a financial burden for the owners of the roughly 58 vehicles that do not currently meet the standard.

ROSSENDALE:

CRACKDOWN ON CHARGING FOR CARDS

Rossendale Borough Council has launched a crackdown on taxi drivers who are illegally charging passengers extra for paying by card.

The local authority acted after residents reported that some drivers were adding surcharges - often around 10 per cent or more - to the final bill.

A spokesperson for the council thanked the public for providing evidence, stating: "Adding a surcharge for paying by card is illegal under the Consumer Rights (Payment Surcharges) Regulations."

The authority warned that as of May 1, any driver caught adding these fees may face prosecution, as the practice is considered a "criminal offence."

The council has already begun licensing reviews and notified Trading Standards about the reported incidents. Officials are advising passengers to agree on a fare before starting their journey whenever possible and to refuse any additional card fees.

HASTINGS:

TAXI AGE LIMIT EXTENSION CONSULTATION

Hastings Borough Council is set to launch a public consultation on plans to let certain taxis stay on the road for longer.

Under the new proposals, the age limit for eight-seater vehicles and wheelchair-accessible vehicles (WAVs) would be extended from 10 to 15 years, while age limits for electric and hydrogen vehicles could be scrapped entirely.

Council officers backed the move, pointing out that the "financial barrier to entry" for new specialised vehicles has hit an "unprecedented high," with some models now costing over £63,000.

Experts argued that modern commercial vehicles are built to last, noting that "modern chassis and engines are designed to maintain peak performance well into their second decade if properly maintained."

Officials warned that forcing drivers to retire expensive cars too early acts as a "disproportionate depreciation tax" which can lead to higher fares or fewer accessible vehicles for disabled passengers.

For green vehicles, they suggested that strict age limits would be "inappropriate, counterproductive and result in higher costs to the trade and ultimately passengers."

To ensure safety despite the increased age, any taxi over five years old would still have to pass two MOTs a year and an annual council inspection.

The council would also look at introducing a report from an approved independent garage, covering a vehicle's: structural integrity; mechanical performance; corrosion and bodywork; safety systems; and (where relevant) wheelchair-access equipment.

The six-week consultation is expected to begin following the local elections.

ROUND THE COUNCILS

ABERDEEN:

SPLIT OVER KNOWLEDGE TEST

A debate has broken out in Aberdeen over whether taxi drivers should continue to take a traditional street knowledge test, following a major public consultation that left opinions deeply divided.

Out of roughly 1,800 responses gathered by Aberdeen City Council, 45.5% voted to keep the test, while 43.1% argued it should be scrapped entirely. Alternatives, such as creating a modified test or removing it solely for private hire drivers, received minimal support, pulling in just 4% and 7.4% of the vote respectively.

The division highlights a clash between the traditional taxi industry and modern ride-hailing giant Uber. Uber has actively pushed for the test to be axed, arguing that removing it would allow more drivers into the trade and better meet customer demand.

However, local taxi representatives insist the current system is "working" and needs no adjustment.

According to the council's report, those supporting the status quo emphasised the need for "maintaining standards and reducing the reliance on sat-nav technology."

Conversely, those against the test argued that modern technology has made the assessment outdated and viewed it as a "barrier to entering the trade."

While some respondents noted that other cities do not require such tests, council officials clarified that the knowledge test remains standard practice across other major Scottish cities.

The consultation also highlighted public confusion regarding the city's taxi licence limit, which is capped at 1,079, though only 484 drivers are currently licensed.

The report noted a "degree of misunderstanding," explaining that while many people wanted the limit changed to fix the struggle of finding a taxi at peak times, altering the cap would have little impact since current driver numbers are already well below the limit.

While taxi availability has previously been labelled a "real issue," Chris Douglas, director of Aberdeen Taxis, noted a recent rise in driver numbers and reiterated that the system is functioning well.

However, Bob Keiller from the business group Our Union Street suggested the data might heavily reflect industry self-interest rather than public sentiment.

Pointing out that 600 responses flooded in on the very first day, Keiller noted that a previous survey showed about half of the participants were connected to the industry.

EAST LOTHIAN:

PLANS FOR NEW TAXI RANKS

East Lothian Council has unanimously agreed to launch a public consultation on plans to install more taxi ranks in towns and housing areas across the county.

The decision by the council's Licensing Sub-Committee comes in response to a direct request from a local taxi operator calling for an increase in the number of official stances.

The initiative has drawn strong support from local officials who view the service as an essential part of the community.

At a committee meeting in Haddington, Councillor Lee-Anne Menzies championed the vital role that drivers play, stating: "I think we all forget that taxis are part of the public transport infrastructure."

She strongly criticised regular drivers who treat the ranks as standard parking spots, adding, "It's not just another parking space. For people who have mobility issues taxis are a lifeline."

However, the committee highlighted a major hurdle that neither the council nor the police can easily fix: the illegal use of taxi ranks by ordinary motorists. Licensing officers revealed that the council's parking attendants currently lack the legal powers to issue Fixed Penalty Notices to people who park in taxi bays.

A police officer at the meeting confirmed that the force supports the creation of new ranks but warned that policing them comes down to "hours and manpower." He noted that certain locations, such as an existing rank outside a chemist in Tranent, are particularly "contentious" because motorists are often trying to access the pharmacy.

"It's not great for police to be moving people on that don't keep very well or have mobility issues," he explained.

In addition to expanding the ranks, Provost John McMillan and committee chair Colin McGinn urged local drivers to form an official taxi operators association to give the trade a stronger, unified voice in the county.

Welcoming the upcoming community consultation, Provost McMillan emphasised that everyday motorists need to change their habits. "For many people who need it, a taxi is the only way they can get around, and drivers should respect these stances," he said.

"I think we should approve this for the next step of consultation."

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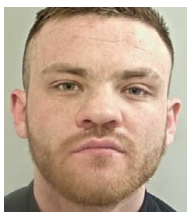
JUST DESERTS

SHORT-LIVED FREEDOM: SERIAL FARE DODGER JAILED AFTER TARGETING CHORLEY CABBIE

A 25-year-old man is back behind bars after he refused to pay for a taxi ride in Chorley shortly after being released from prison.

Leroy Teasdale pleaded guilty to making off without payment during a hearing at Preston Magistrates on April 14, where he was sentenced to two months in jail.

The court heard that Teasdale, who has a history of targeting local taxi drivers, was also ordered to pay the victim £100 in compensation.



This latest incident follows a series of serious run-ins with the trade in the Bamber Bridge and Leyland areas.

Earlier this year, Teasdale was the subject of a public manhunt by Lancashire Police following a terrifying incident where a driver was robbed at knifepoint.

In that case, Teasdale allegedly used the name 'Jamie' to book a ride before threatening the driver with a blade and forcing him to transfer £250 via a banking app.

He was eventually arrested on a string of charges, including robbery and kidnap, and was returned to prison before committing this most recent fare evasion.

HUDDERSFIELD MAN TO PAY COMPENSATION AFTER VICIOUS ATTACK ON CABBIE OVER PARKING

A 32-year-old man from Huddersfield has been ordered to pay compensation and perform community service after a violent assault on a taxi driver. The attack took place on Ruskin Grove in the Sheepridge area on March 31, 2024, following what was described as a parking "dispute."

Kirklees Magistrates' Court heard that Bilal Khan punched and kicked the driver, Almas Haider, in the face and body. The assault left the victim with a black eye, bruising, and cuts to his face.

Khan pleaded guilty to a charge of assault occasioning ABH. The prosecutor told the court that the violence stemmed from a disagreement over a parking space.

As part of his sentence, Khan was ordered to pay the driver £500 in compensation, along with a £114 surcharge and £85 in costs. He must also complete a 12-month community order and carry out 150 hours of unpaid work.

PEEBLES MAN SPARED JAIL AFTER STRIKING TAXI DRIVER WITH WINE BOTTLE

A 21-year-old man from Peebles has avoided a prison sentence after hitting a female taxi driver on the head with a wine bottle, leaving her permanently disfigured.

Cameron Sinclair was a teenager at the time of the attack, which took place in November 2024 after he had been part of a large wedding party travelling back from Edinburgh. The court heard that the incident began when the driver noticed someone had been sick in her taxi. Although Sinclair admitted he was responsible, he refused to clean the mess when asked.

He then struck the woman with a wine bottle, breaking her glasses and causing a severe cut to her eyebrow that had to be glued at Borders General Hospital.

Sinclair also caused a disturbance at the hospital, where he assaulted another man.

Sheriff Peter Paterson noted that the only reason Sinclair was not being sent to jail was "due to his age and the direction the courts have been given regarding that."

The court had previously delayed the sentencing for six months to monitor Sinclair's conduct.

After hearing that Sinclair had stayed out of trouble during that time, Sheriff Paterson ordered him to complete 200 hours of unpaid work. The community service was handed down as a direct alternative to a custodial sentence for the assault, which resulted in the victim's "severe injury and permanent disfigurement."

JUST DESERTS

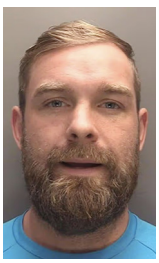
FORMER KIRKBY CABBIE JAILED FOR DEALING DRUGS MONTHS AFTER BRUTAL ASSAULT ON CABBIE

A former taxi driver and "persistent offender" with 14 prior convictions for 28 offences, has been jailed for two years after turning to class A drug dealing.

Kieran McKechnie, 37, of Kirkby, was sentenced at Liverpool Crown Court after being caught operating in the "Lil T" drugs line to pay off a £1,300 cocaine debt.

The case sheds fresh light on McKechnie's violent criminal history within the taxi trade, including a terrifying and racially motivated attack on an active cab driver. In November 2019, McKechnie was picked up from a pub by Delta taxi driver Mohammed Ammanulah.

Tension quickly escalated when McKechnie aggressively questioned the driver about his nationality, demanding to know if he was English and asking, "do you think I'm an idiot?".



The confrontation turned violent when McKechnie repeatedly punched Mr Ammanulah while the vehicle was in motion, causing the driver to lose control and hit the accelerator. After the car finally stopped, McKechnie issued a chilling threat, warning the victim: "Let's talk. You're in Kirkby, and around here we will shoot you."

Reflecting on the traumatic assault, Mr Ammanulah later stated that his life would "never be the same after the attack." McKechnie was subsequently jailed for 14 months for the assault and dangerous driving.

McKechnie's own history behind the wheel was equally chaotic. In 2016, while working as a Delta taxi driver, he took his vehicle on a frantic two-mile pursuit through Kirkdale and Walton, hitting speeds of up to 80mph after discovering his partner was seeing another man. The high-speed rampage ended when he smashed his Vauxhall Astra into a stationary car and fled the scene.

In his latest court appearance, the defence argued that McKechnie had been forced into dealing after gang members threatened to burn his mother's house down.

Recorder Mark Bradshaw refused to suspend the prison sentence, telling McKechnie: "The scourge of drug dealing causes misery to families and communities. You have contributed to that by way of your offending."

HAMILTON MAN JAILED AFTER BRUTAL KNIFE ATTACK ON TAXI DRIVER OVER £6 FARE

A 36-year-old man has been sentenced to 30 months in prison following a terrifying assault and robbery of a taxi driver in Hamilton.

Robert Mitchell was jailed at the town's sheriff court on May 8 after admitting to the attack, which was sparked by a dispute over a small upfront fare.

The incident took place on Mill Road last August after the driver asked for a £6 payment in advance. Mitchell became "irate" and pulled an eight-inch knife from his pocket, shouting: "I'm going to kill you."

After punching the driver on the head and body and stealing up to £150 from the car's console, Mitchell chased the victim outside the vehicle and struck him on the head with the blade.

The driver managed to call the taxi office, saying he'd been hit, and the police were contacted

He was later treated in hospital for two head wounds.

Sheriff Colin Dunipace condemned the violence, telling Mitchell: "This was an appalling attack on a gentleman trying to go about his work. Taxi drivers are very vulnerable given the nature of their employment and a significant custodial sentence must be imposed."

While Mitchell's lawyer described his behavior as "inappropriate," the court noted his previous record of violent crime.

The court also heard a separate case involving 30-year-old Taylor Grey, who admitted to assaulting another taxi driver on the same road just hours later.

Grey, who shouted abuse and tried to punch a cabbie during another fare dispute, will be sentenced next month.

Mitchell's prison term was backdated to August to account for time already served in custody.

REVIEWMASTER NOW AVAILABLE ON CORDIC DISPATCH SYSTEM

Article by Taxisolutions
taxisolutions.co.uk



Taxi and private hire operators now have an exciting new opportunity to strengthen their business, as ReviewMaster is officially available within the Cordic dispatch system.

This latest development is designed to help operators get more out of their day-to-day journeys by turning them into valuable opportunities to grow their reputation, attract new passengers, and improve overall service quality. With everything integrated directly into the Cordic system, there is no need for additional processes or manual follow-ups, making it a seamless addition to existing workflows.

For many taxi firms, maintaining a strong online presence has become increasingly important. Passengers often rely on Google reviews when choosing a service, and businesses with higher ratings and consistent feedback are far more likely to stand out. By utilising this integration, operators can naturally generate more passenger reviews, helping to boost their Google ratings and build trust within their local area.

Another key benefit for operators is the ability to gain clearer insight into their service performance. With regular feedback coming in, firms can better understand what they are doing well and where improvements can be made. This allows business owners to make informed decisions that can enhance the passenger experience and encourage repeat bookings.

The integration also supports business growth by increasing online visibility. A strong presence on Google, backed by positive passenger reviews, can lead to more bookings, improved retention, and a stronger reputation in a competitive market. For operators looking to expand or strengthen their position, this provides a clear advantage.

To help operators experience these benefits first-hand, ReviewMaster is currently offering a 1-month free trial for Cordic users. This allows taxi firms to explore the system, see the impact on passenger feedback, and understand the value it can bring to their Google presence and overall reputation, with no initial commitment.

Importantly, all of this happens in a way that fits naturally into the existing dispatch process. There is no disruption to operations, allowing teams to focus on delivering excellent service while building their online reputation in the background.

The launch of ReviewMaster within the Cordic dispatch system highlights a continued focus on supporting taxi firms with practical tools that deliver real results. With ReviewMaster now available on Cordic, operators can take a step forward in boosting their Google reviews, improving passenger satisfaction, and driving long-term growth.

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M2M TAXIBOT: A GAME-CHANGER

PHTM EXPO MILTON KEYNES 2026: OUR MOST SUCCESSFUL SHOW TO DATE

By M2M TaxiBot
www.m2mtaxibot.com

PHTM EXPO 2026 in Milton Keynes will go down as a landmark moment for our team a show defined by record-breaking engagement, meaningful conversations, and the strongest industry response we've ever seen. From the moment the doors opened, taxi operators from every corner of the UK flocked to our stand to explore how TaxiBot and our Smart Messaging platform are transforming the way fleets communicate, operate, and grow.

This year wasn't just busy - it was exceptional. The volume of operators who came specifically to see us to discuss automation, customer engagement, and operational efficiency showed just how rapidly the industry is evolving and how ready fleets are to embrace technology that delivers real, measurable benefits.

TaxiBot takes centre stage

TaxiBot was the star attraction throughout the two-day event. Operators were eager to see how our automation engine handles bookings, customer queries, and notifications across WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook Messenger, all without requiring passengers to download an app.

- Live demos ran back-to-back as operators watched TaxiBot:
- Respond instantly to customer messages
- Capture bookings directly through social media channels
- Reduce missed calls and unhandled enquiries
- Integrate seamlessly with dispatch systems
- Deliver guaranteed notifications with industry-leading reliability

The reaction was overwhelmingly positive. Many operators told us they were losing jobs daily because customers increasingly prefer messaging over phone calls. TaxiBot's ability to meet passengers where they already are on their favourite messaging apps resonated strongly with fleets of all sizes.

Smart Messaging: a game-changer for taxi operators

Alongside TaxiBot, our Smart Messaging service drew huge interest from operators looking to modernise their communication strategy. With features like automated updates, broadcast announcements, customer retention tools, and multi-channel engagement, Smart Messaging is helping fleets:

- Reduce no-shows
- Improve customer satisfaction
- Boost repeat bookings
- Streamline driver-passenger communication

Many operators told us they'd been searching for a solution that could unify messaging, automation, and dispatch integration and Smart Messaging delivered exactly that.

TaxiBot Lite competition

One of the highlights of **PHTM** 2026 was our TaxiBot Lite subscription competition. With a huge number of entries from operators across the UK, the excitement built steadily throughout the show.

We're delighted to announce that the winner was Paul Newbery from Elite Cars Liverpool. Paul walked away with a 12-month TaxiBot Lite subscription, giving his team access to powerful automation tools designed to increase efficiency, reduce admin workload, and capture more bookings through social channels. We're thrilled to support Elite Cars as they bring TaxiBot Lite to Liverpool a city with a vibrant, fast-moving transport landscape that's perfect for message-based booking.

A show that sets a new standard

PHTM EXPO 2026 wasn't just our busiest year it was our most impactful. The conversations we had, the partnerships we strengthened, and the enthusiasm we saw for automation reaffirmed our mission: to help taxi operators thrive in a digital-first world. To everyone who visited our stand, thank you. Your feedback, ideas, and passion for innovation drive everything we build. And to Paul and the Elite Cars team congratulations again. TaxiBot is coming to Liverpool, and we can't wait to see the results.

TaxiBot

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Thank You To Everyone That Entered!

CRITICS AND NORTH YORKSHIRE MP BLAST COUNCIL OVER RESTAURANT "TAXI" ROW

A small North Yorkshire restaurant has become the centre of a national debate after top media figures and a local MP lined up to attack a council's decision to ban free lifts for diners.

The Michelin Guide-listed Hansom Restaurant in Bedale was told by North Yorkshire Council that its complimentary lift service was illegal without a formal private hire licence, sparking accusations of "petty officialdom."

Chef Ruth Hansom-Rigby started the service because local transport is so unreliable that guests were often left stranded. Her partner, Mark, would drive them home for free to ensure they were safe.

However, the council found out and said the couple would need a PH licence, even though they did not charge extra for the lifts.

She admitted the council's intervention felt "a little bit annoying" and "a little harsh," adding, "we're not trying to steal anybody else's business - we're literally doing it for people who can't get a taxi."

The story caught the attention of celebrity food critic Giles Coren, who slammed the council in his column for The Times. Coren, who previously had to hitchhike from Northallerton to reach the restaurant, wrote: "Yeah, you sue her, you absolute local heroes. You teach Ruth and Mark a lesson for being great at their jobs, for treasuring their customers, for trying to create a little joy and make ends meet in a collapsing world."

The story led to an editorial in The Times, which said: "North Yorkshire Council must get over its obsession with red tape."

Former Sun Editor Kelvin Mackenzie also waded in on X, with the story also appearing in The Telegraph, Daily Mail and The Guardian.

Local MP Kevin Hollinrake called the situation "mad" on social media, arguing the restaurant was simply using common sense in an area with no trains or Ubers.

However, Karl Battersby, the council's director for environment, stated that while the lifts might seem helpful, they create "serious risks" without proper checks. He said the rules are in place to protect customers.

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BRADFORD PH BOSS FINED AFTER BLAMING SOFTWARE ISSUE FOR UNLICENSED DRIVER

The boss of a private hire company has been ordered to pay nearly £1,000 after claiming a computer glitch caused him to employ a driver without a valid PH licence.

Imran Khan, 43, the operator of Aireside Private Hire, failed to attend his hearing at Bradford Magistrates Court on 22 May.

The case was subsequently proven in his absence, revealing that one of his drivers, Khalid Bashir, continued working for several weeks after his licence had expired.

The issue came to light late last year when Bradford Council officials blocked Mr Bashir's licence renewal after discovering an undeclared offence on his record. Imran Hussain, prosecuting for the council, explained: "While checking as part of the renewal process, officers noticed an offence from January 2023 that had not been declared by Mr Bashir."

With the renewal halted, Mr Bashir was left without a licence, yet an investigation showed he kept working from Oct 7 to Nov 9.

"An investigation found that Mr Bashir carried on operating as a private hire driver, even though he had no licence to do so," Mr Hussain said. "That led to an investigation into the operator, who was asked to give reasons as to why they allowed a driver to work for them despite his licence having expired."

When questioned by council officers, Khan blamed technology for the oversight. Mr Hussain stated: "He told officers that a mistake had occurred – at the time Aireside Private Hire was undergoing a software update, and this was the reason the expired licence hadn't been picked up."

However, the prosecution argued that Khan had already been explicitly warned about the upcoming expiration date.

Mr Hussain told the court: "The defendant still knew and still had a responsibility to ensure the licence had been updated."

Magistrates found Khan guilty in his absence. He was fined £220, ordered to pay a victim surcharge of £88, and landed with the council's full legal costs of £600, bringing his total financial penalty to £908.



THE TAXI INSURER'S TENACITY AND FLEXIBILITY DELIVER "AMAZING SERVICE"

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



Robert Jabbari began working as a private hire vehicle driver in Edinburgh 20 years ago, mainly taking tourists to and from the airport. In the past few years, he's driven an MG HS, finding the extra space offered by the SUV welcome, but recently decided to upgrade to a nine-seater Mercedes Vito – and that's when he ran into an issue with his insurance broker.

Because his new vehicle was worth around £45,000, his broker informed him that they wouldn't be able to offer him cover it as its value exceeded their threshold. Fortunately, his broker's representative passed his details to Amar Perviz at The Taxi Insurer.

Amar's tenacity pays off

"A couple of hours later, Amar called me," explains Robert. *"He took over and said he'd talk to their panel of insurers to see what level of premium he could arrange."*

Amar sourced several quotes, one of which Robert agreed to, despite it being several hundred pounds more expensive than the premium for his MG HS. But Amar was dissatisfied with that result, particularly as a couple of insurers had failed to provide any quote at all, and told Robert he'd make further enquiries and come back to him with a better offer.

"He really went above and beyond, because he didn't have to do that," says Robert. *"I'd already agreed. He contacted one of the insurers who hadn't provided a quote, asked them to do so and managed to secure a premium that was £300 cheaper. I was surprised, because it was actually cheaper than what I was paying previously for a nine-seater."*

Temporary cover facilitates sourcing of new vehicle

As if that wasn't enough, Amar also arranged two-week cover for £56 for Robert's MG HS to allow him to continue working in it while he arranged collection of the Mercedes Vito from Knottingley, near Leeds.

The rules in Scotland regarding tinted glass in taxis had complicated Robert's search for a new vehicle, which led to him buying his Mercedes Vito from south of the border.

Robert would normally have part exchanged the car he was selling, but he didn't want to risk doing so with the owners of the Mercedes Vito, as they'd never seen it and lived hundreds of miles away.

Amar explained that Robert would need to cancel the existing policy for his MG HS once he'd received the new policy for his Mercedes Vito, and then enquire about the two-week cover for his MG HS that Amar had arranged.

"I was dreading it, because I thought it was going to be a headache and I'd have to go through a load of questions," confesses Robert. *"But again, Amar had arranged everything so well that, when I phoned up, it was all done in five minutes. It was really easy.*

"Amar gave me absolutely amazing service. He really fought my corner. I couldn't believe how much he look after me and got me the best deal."

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WORLD CUP 2026 IS A HUGE OPPORTUNITY FOR TAXI COMPANIES

Article by Phil Holloway
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The FIFA World Cup 2026 is set to be one of the biggest sporting events on the planet, and for UK taxi companies, it could also become one of the biggest booking opportunities of the summer.

The tournament begins on Thursday June 11, with hosts Mexico taking on South Africa in Mexico City at 8pm UK time, and runs across the USA, Canada and Mexico before concluding at the MetLife Stadium in New Jersey on Sunday July 19, after an incredible 104-game tournament.

With England and Scotland both part of the expanded 48-team competition, football fever across the UK is expected to be enormous.

What makes this World Cup interesting for the taxi industry is the time difference

Unlike previous tournaments where many matches kicked off during working hours, a large number of games during World Cup 2026 will take place during UK evening hours. This means millions of fans will be heading out after work to pubs, bars, fan zones, beer gardens, restaurants, BBQs, and house parties to watch matches with friends and family.

And when the game finishes, many people will need a safe and reliable taxi home. This creates a major opportunity for taxi operators to market themselves around key fixtures and position their company as the go-to transport option during the tournament.

Some of the biggest dates expected to generate huge demand include England's Group L matches:

- Wed June 17 - England vs Croatia, Dallas 9pm UK time
- Tue June 23 - England vs Ghana, Boston 9pm UK time
- Sat June 27 - Panama vs England, New York 10pm UK time

These are the types of nights where pubs will be packed from early evening, fan parks will be full, and towns and cities across the UK will have thousands of supporters enjoying the atmosphere late into the night.

Taxi companies that market correctly around these events could significantly increase bookings, app downloads, and local brand awareness. The businesses that succeed will be the ones that start preparing early rather than waiting until the tournament begins.

Here are three simple marketing ideas taxi companies should consider during the World Cup:

1. Create football-themed social media content

Use your Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and LinkedIn channels to post regularly about the tournament. Match countdowns, score predictions, *"book your ride home"* graphics, and football-themed competitions can massively increase engagement and visibility during the tournament.

2. Promote safe journeys home

After evening kick-offs, many supporters will be travelling home late after drinks at pubs or fan zones. Push messaging around convenience, reliability, and getting home safely after the match. Simple messaging such as *"Enjoy the football we'll handle the journey home"* works extremely well.

3. Partner with local venues

Pubs, sports bars, and fan zones will all be promoting World Cup events. Taxi companies should look to partner with venues for cross-promotion opportunities, including social media collaborations, branded competitions, and venue-to-home transport offers.

The World Cup only comes around every four years, and with evening kick-offs perfectly suited to UK nightlife and social activity, World Cup 2026 could become a golden opportunity for taxi companies willing to market proactively and stay visible throughout the tournament.

If you want more help with marketing for your taxi business get in touch today with the team here at Hollogram.

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SHAME SHAME

HIGHLAND CABBIE JAILED FOR 81 MONTHS AFTER RAPE OF VULNERABLE TEEN PASSENGER

A 50-year-old cabbie who raped an 18-year-old passenger before dumping her in freezing temperatures has been sentenced to six years and nine months in prison.

David Brown, of Croy, Inverness-shire, picked up the teenager following a night out in Inverness on December 3, 2023.

Although the victim lacked the full fare, Brown told her: "That's fine and that he would give me a lift anyway." Instead of taking her home, Brown drove past her destination and took her on a rural tour.

During the journey, the victim recalled that Brown put his hand down her unzipped puffer jacket, grabbed her breast, and said: "Oh you've been hiding this from me," causing her to freeze in fear.



Data recovered from Brown's own car tracking system proved he drove around the outskirts of Dingwall before pulling into a remote lay-by near a farm, where the attack took place.

Sentencing Brown at the High Court in Stirling, Judge Lord Renucci condemned the attack on the "vulnerable" teenager.

Lord Renucci told Brown that his victim was entitled to expect a safe ride home, but instead faced "a terrifying ordeal" where Brown took advantage of her inebriation "for your own sexual gratification."

Following the assault, Brown drove the teenager back to Dingwall and "dumped her out of your taxi in the very early hours of the morning" in sub-zero temperatures.

A sympathetic Tesco staff member spotted the shivering girl and opened the store early to shelter her from the cold. The victim later contacted the police, who managed to track down Brown.

Brown denied the rape charge throughout a three-day trial in Edinburgh, maintaining that the sexual encounter was consensual and instigated by the victim - a claim Lord Renucci noted was firmly "rejected by the jury."

Along with his prison sentence, Brown has been placed on the Sex Offenders' Register for life.

OXFORD MAN RISKS FACIAL PARALYSIS AFTER TAXI DRIVER ATTACKED HIM FOLLOWING DISPUTE

A man has been left with a fractured jaw and the looming threat of permanent facial paralysis following a violent confrontation outside a library in Oxford. The incident, which occurred on March 23, reportedly began when the man questioned a taxi driver for parking in a disabled bay without a Blue Badge.

The victim, who has requested anonymity, claims the situation escalated rapidly after he offered to help the driver avoid a ticket.

According to his account, the driver reacted with hostility, pushing him across the road and eventually shouting that the victim had assaulted his wife - who had intervened in the argument - before delivering a punch to the face.



While the injured man was initially treated by library staff, his condition worsened significantly overnight.

After finding he could no longer eat and feeling his jaw "dropping," he sought emergency surgery. However, his recovery has been plagued by complications, including a painful abscess that required a second operation and a five-day hospital stay.

The long-term outlook remains uncertain for the Oxford resident, who must now use wooden spatulas to stretch his jaw.

"I could be permanently paralysed as there's no guarantee there won't be nerve damage through the impact," he said. "They said to give it 18 months but if the nerve sensations don't return on that side of the face then that's that."

Oxford City Council has confirmed the driver is licensed through the local authority and stated they are working with Thames Valley Police to investigate the matter under council enforcement procedures.

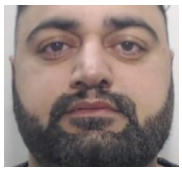
Police have confirmed that no arrests have been made yet and they are appealing for witnesses.

SHAME SHAME

PREDATORY MANCHESTER PH DRIVER JAILED FOR HORRENDOUS ABDUCTION AND RAPE OF STUDENT

A Manchester PH driver has been handed a 16-year extended sentence after picking up a vulnerable university student and raping her in what a judge described as an "horrendous incident."

Muhammad Nasir, 40, had logged off his booking system when he targeted the 20-year-old victim outside a city centre nightclub. Instead of taking her home, Nasir drove the victim in the opposite direction to Chorlton, where the assault took place over several hours.



At Manchester Crown Court, Judge Suzanne Goddard KC branded Nasir a "dangerous and predatory sex offender," stating: "I am satisfied... that you deliberately picked up a clearly drunken lone female with the intention of taking sexual advantage of her."

The judge added that the case serves as a warning about the dangers of using vehicles "which have not been officially booked through the proper channels."

The victim, who waited nearly five years for justice, told the court that Nasir's betrayal of trust had a profound impact on her life.

Nasir, a father-of-three, denied the charges but was found guilty by a jury. He was sentenced to 12 years in prison and an extra four years on licence on 5 May.

FORMER MAYOR OF BRACKNELL JAILED FOR HELPING SON HIDE EVIDENCE OF TEEN TAXI RAPE

A former Mayor of Bracknell has been jailed for three years after helping her son conceal evidence that he raped a 15-year-old girl while she was blacked out.

The teenager woke up in the backseat of his car with no clothes on and she could not remember what had happened.

Naheed Ejaz, 61, used a "conspiracy of silence" to protect 41-year-old Diwan Khan, a chauffeur in her family taxi business, while police were at her door.

The court heard that Khan, who often accompanied his mother to official events as her "Consort," drugged his victim with MDMA in vodka before raping her in the back of his car.

He filmed the attack and used the video he filmed of him having sex with her, choking and slapping her in the face, to threaten the girl, telling her he would "slit her throat" if she told anyone.

When police arrived at their home



in September 2024, Ejaz blocked the entrance for over 90 seconds. During this time, she and Khan spoke in Urdu so they could discuss what to do with the phone which contained damning evidence.

They avoided using the word "phone," which is the same in English. Khan referred to the device as a "big bell," to which Ejaz replied, "keep silent, I know." The phone, which contained footage of the assault, was never found.

Jailing Ejaz at Winchester Crown Court, Judge Rufus Taylor said she showed "no remorse" for her actions. He told her: "You, Naheed Ejaz, may not have known initially why he wanted you to hide [the phone], but your son told you in Urdu 'Some motherf****r girl has lied about her age to me' and you chose to protect him."

The judge added that because of her help, "there was a real risk Khan might have avoided prosecution for the rape of an unconscious child."

The victim, who failed her GCSEs following the attack and later attempted suicide, described how the incident ruined her life. In a statement, she said: "I just wanted to end my life so the pain would go away."

Prosecutors noted that while Ejaz had been described as an "advocate for women's rights," her "mother's love" for her son led her into criminality.

Khan was sentenced to 12 years in prison for the rape and was handed a three-year concurrent sentence for perverting the course of justice. He will serve eight years in prison before a parole board can consider whether it is safe to release him.

UNDERCOVER STING LEADS TO CONVICTIONS AND £2,500 FINES FOR READING PRIVATE HIRE DRIVERS

Two private hire drivers have been prosecuted and hit with more than £2,500 in combined fines and costs after being caught illegally picking up passengers without prior bookings in Reading.

The convictions follow successful undercover test purchase operations by Reading BC's licensing team in the town centre and outside a casino.

The first driver, 42-year-old Shafqat Ali, was caught after agreeing to drive an undercover officer to Wokingham for a £60 fare without a booking.

On 1 May 2026, Reading Magistrates' Court found Mr Ali guilty of plying for hire and driving without insurance. He was fined £180 and ordered to pay £500 in costs alongside a £72 victim surcharge.

The court also added eight penalty points to his driving licence, which triggered a six-month driving disqualification due to a previous six-point endorsement.

The second prosecution stemmed from a separate covert operation in central Reading in June 2025. Officers approached Amit Malik, a private hire driver licensed by Wokingham BC, who agreed to take them to Market Place in Wokingham for an unbooked £35 fare.

At a hearing on 11 May 2026, Malik was fined £225 for plying for hire and £594 for driving without insurance. He was also ordered to pay a £328 victim surcharge, £1,640 in costs, and received eight penalty points on his licence.

TORBAY TAXI DRIVER ISSUED FINAL WARNING AFTER STRING OF SPEEDING TICKETS

A Torbay taxi driver has been handed a formal written warning after racking up three speeding tickets in just nine months.

The driver appeared before a council sub-committee after collecting nine points on his licence, including two offences caught by the same controversial camera in Newton Abbot just four days apart.

The driver told the committee he was unaware of the first ticket when he received the second on Ashburton Road, where the speed limit had recently been cut from 40mph to 30mph.

He explained he was on a new school run and had not sped intentionally, admitting his mistake to officials.

During the hearing, he also addressed concerns about parking outside designated zones and refusing a fare to an intoxicated woman with a child.

In their report, councillors noted that "members felt that the respondent appreciated the gravity of these offences occurring in the course of his professional duty." However, they expressed disappointment that the driver failed to notify the council of his tickets within the required 48-hour window.

The speed camera involved has faced heavy criticism for being nearly invisible, though police and local authorities defend it, noting nine injury collisions have occurred on that stretch of road in five years.

While some critics argue the camera does not meet regulations, supporters insist drivers should "own the consequences of their actions" and slow down.

The driver's written warning will remain on his record for three years, and he has been ordered to study the council's taxi policies to ensure future compliance.

LIVERPOOL HC DRIVER'S LICENCE REVOKED FOR REFUSING WHEELCHAIR CUSTOMER

A taxi driver recently attended a Licensing Committee hearing following complaints, including the refusal of a customer in a wheelchair. Following consideration of the case, the Committee decided to suspend the driver's licence for 4 weeks.

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BANNED WHITE HORSE DRIVER HANDED SUSPENDED SENTENCE AFTER FORGING DOCUMENTS

A former Oxfordshire taxi driver has been convicted of fraud and insurance offences after he went to extreme lengths to fake his credentials. Stuart Thomas Sharp, 54, appeared at Reading Magistrates' Court where he admitted to forging his taxi licence, badge, and vehicle plate to trick an operator into believing he was still legally allowed to work.

A member of the public reported a man they had previously had an "altercation" with working as a taxi driver. Sharp was spotted picking up/dropping off a passenger in a vehicle with a taxi roof sign and a counterfeit licence plate.

A search of council records revealed the vehicle had not been licensed with the council since August 2023 and Mr Sharp had not been licensed as a 'taxi driver' since January 2023.

When council officials later asked him to return his official documents, Sharp claimed he had simply thrown them away.

In sentencing, magistrates agreed that these were serious charges, covering a long period of time, with planned deceit.

Sharp was sentenced to 24 weeks in prison, suspended for 12 months, with 8 points added to his driving licence for operating without insurance. He also has to pay a victim surcharge of £156 and a costs of £900, totalling £1,056.

TAXI LICENCE REFUSED AFTER CONWY PRIVATE HIRE DRIVER FAILS TO REPORT CRASH

A PHV licence has been rejected by Conwy County Council after the operator failed to report that the car had been involved in a crash.

Members of the general licensing committee voted overwhelmingly to refuse the application for a Skoda Octavia following a series of rule breaches and safety suspensions.

The application was submitted by Barry Dimelow of Lyn-An Ltd, a company that has been operating for "about 20 years."

Under Conwy's strict licensing rules, all PHVs must be under five years old and kept in an "exceptionally good mechanical and bodily, interior, and exterior condition." Crucially, operators are legally required to report any accident within 72 hours.

The committee heard that the Skoda had previously had its licence suspended in November last year on the grounds of "public safety" due to a cracked rear light. While the light was fixed, the car's bodywork remained under scrutiny. When council officers followed up on the vehicle's condition in January 2026, they discovered it had been involved in a crash that was never reported.

Mr Dimelow defended the oversight by stating: "I didn't know it needed to be reported because there was no other vehicle in the incident. The driver clipped the wall."

However, councillors questioned how an experienced operator could be unaware of the regulations.

Because the required accident report was never made, the vehicle's previous licence expired and was automatically revoked in March 2026.

ACCRINGTON PH DRIVER FINED AFTER BEING CAUGHT IN BLACKPOOL STING

An Accrington private hire driver has been fined and received penalty points after he was caught illegally picking up passengers in Blackpool.

Danyal Masood, 31, admitted to plying for hire and driving without insurance during a hearing at Lancaster Magistrates' Court.

The prosecution was part of a major crackdown by Blackpool Council targeting drivers who "rank up" or take fares from the street without a prior booking.

Masood had agreed to take a fare from undercover council officers posing as customers.

The court ordered Masood to pay a £300 fine, a £120 victim surcharge, and £725 in costs.

He also had eight points added to his driving licence.

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

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

EXPO reflections 2026: momentum builds as reform moves centre stage

Firstly, I want to thank the **PHTM** team, exhibitors and attendees for another excellent Expo in Milton Keynes. As always, it proved to be one of the key events in the licensing calendar, but this year carried an added sense of anticipation and energy following the announcement of new taxi and private hire legislation in the King's Speech on the opening day.

There was a real buzz around the venue from the outset. Conversations on stands, in seminar rooms and across the exhibition floor all seemed to return to the same topic: the long-awaited reform of taxi and PHV legislation is now firmly on the horizon.

I thoroughly enjoyed my time on the Institute of Licensing (IoL) stand and contributing to the seminar discussions. It was particularly encouraging to speak with so many members of the trade and suppliers about the work of the IoL. Hopefully, that engagement will translate into more operators, drivers and officers joining and benefitting from improved professional licensing knowledge, something that will be increasingly important as reform progresses.

Seminar highlights: a sector ready for change

Turning to the seminar in which I participated, this was a Q&A session on the state of legislation. The panel featured representatives from operators Take Me and Veezu, the **NPHTA**, James Button and myself from the IoL, and in somewhat of a coup, Ruth Cadbury MP, who is the Chair of the House of Commons Transport Select Committee Inquiry into the Licensing of Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles.

As ever, the discussion was lively, insightful and if anything too short, given half the chance we could still be there taking about taxis.

Many of the questions related to common themes, out-of-area working, inconsistency between authorities and how the National Standard and enforcement powers enacted in the **English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill** (discussed in May's **PHTM**) will work in practice.

With the King's Speech confirming forthcoming legislation, the conversation moved beyond frustration and into cautious optimism that some of these long-running disparities may finally be addressed.

One area that did give me pause for thought was that some of the questions raised were on topics that have already been explored in depth within my articles in **PHTM**. That underlines just how important it is for those in the trade to keep themselves properly informed, particularly at a time when the legislative landscape is evolving so quickly.

There is a wealth of support available to help with this. The Institute of Licensing offers a wide range of taxi licensing training, conferences, publications and regular updates, all designed to ensure that **both** licensing officers **and licence holders** stay up to date with the latest developments and expectations. Taking a small amount of time to engage with these resources, including the regular articles in **PHTM**, can make a significant difference in levels of understanding and staying ahead of change.

As a simple starting point, I would encourage anyone with an interest in licensing to sign up to the IoL's free weekly Licensing Flashes, which provide timely updates and insight direct to your inbox.

You can use this link to subscribe to receive our Licensing Flashes: https://shorturl.at/Z4ljs

However, despite the diversity of topics, one clear and consistent message emerged from the session: the industry wants, and needs, greater consistency.

This is something that representatives from the DfT and devolved administrations could not have missed, particularly given the timing of the King's Speech announcement.

From conversation to legislation

There was absolutely no getting away from the excitement of the potential new laws which many of us have been asking for for so long. What made this year's Expo particularly notable was not just the discussion itself, but the change in tone. In previous



years, conversations around reform have often felt speculative or distant. This year, they felt immediate and tangible.

The announcement in the King's Speech that the Government will bring forward a **Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Reform Bill** marks a pivotal moment for the sector. This is no longer a question of whether comprehensive reform will take place, but when and how.

The proposed Bill is expected to:

- Replace the current patchwork of legislation with a single, consistent national framework, modernising a system widely regarded as outdated and fragmented
- Strengthen public safety and safeguarding, including in response to Baroness Casey's findings on vulnerabilities linked to inconsistent licensing regimes
- Introduce stronger and more consistent enforcement powers, building on those already established in the 2026 Act (discussed further in this article)
- Mandate improved data sharing, including a national database of licensed drivers, vehicles and operators
- Enhance accessibility and remove barriers for disabled
- Reflect modern travel patterns, including app based booking models and cross border working

Importantly, the Minister described the Bill as the *"final step"* in delivering the Government's reform agenda, suggesting that the measures already introduced through the **English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act** represent only part of a broader programme of change.

For those of us involved as licensing practitioners, this raises both opportunities and challenges. The move toward a unified national framework could finally address longstanding inconsistencies between licensing authorities, but it also raises important questions about local flexibility, resourcing, implementation, and the practical realities of enforcement within a national system. For drivers and operators, this is likely to mean clearer expectations, but also tighter scrutiny. Those already operating to a high standard should benefit from a more level playing field, while poor practice will face increased challenge.

For everyone, be it local authorities, licence holders, suppliers or passengers, this represents the most significant opportunity in decades to address long-standing issues such as cross-border working, uneven standards, and inconsistent enforcement.

As we await further detail and formal consultation on the proposed legislation, it is clear that engagement across the sector will be essential. Events like the **PHTM EXPO** play a crucial role in bringing together those perspectives and ensuring that both trade and regulators have a voice in shaping what comes next.

This year's event captured that perfectly: a sector reflecting on its challenges, but also energised by the prospect of meaningful change.

I am already looking forward to next year's Expo, by which time we may well be discussing not just proposals, but the practical realities of a newly reformed taxi and private hire framework.

Drivers, operators and licensing officers alike are now beginning to consider what reform will mean in practice:

- Will national standards reduce unfair competition?
- How will stronger enforcement powers be applied?
- What will change for day-to-day licensing operations?

These are no longer abstract questions. They are part of the sector's near future.

The World Cup effect: demand, extended hours and public expectation

Moving on from the anticipation of the Expo, as the summer temperature begins to rise, so too does the thermometer of excitement as the FIFA World Cup approaches.

Major sporting events have always tested the resilience of the taxi and PHV trade, and the upcoming World Cup will be no exception.

With matches broadcast in the USA across varying time zones, there is a strong likelihood of:

- Extended licensed hours in many areas to cover Home Nation fixutres
- Late-night peaks in demand after matches
- Increased reliance on taxis and PHVs as public transport reduces overnight

For the licensed trade, the opportunity is clear, but so too is the responsibility. Post-match demand often coincides with alcohol consumption, increased passenger volumes, pressure on pricing and availability; and of course public behaviour in towns and cities depending on the result.

What is clear is that a professional, reliable taxi service during these periods is not just commercially beneficial, it is essential to supporting local night-time economies and ensuring people get home safely.

Flags on vehicles: pride, promotion and perception

With international football comes national pride and inevitably, the question of flags on vehicles which tend to appear at the time of major sporting tournaments.

Many licensed drivers will understandably want to display support for their team. However, the issue is no longer as straightforward as it once was. In the past couple of years, the phrase "taking back the flag" has emerged in public discourse. It reflects an awareness that national symbols, such as the St George's Cross, have, at times, been associated with political or cultural tensions rather than simple sporting pride.

What this means for taxi drivers

Displaying a flag with national pride with generally be understood and accepted in most areas, but drivers should consider:

- Licensing conditions: some authorities regulate signage, advertising, or vehicle appearance. Its always best to check with your local authority if you're not sure.
- Public perception: passengers may interpret symbols differently depending on context.
- Professional neutrality: taxis are a public service. Visibility of strong personal messaging can risk alienating customers.

Practical advice

- Keep flags temporary, tasteful, and clearly linked to sporting events
- Avoid anything that could be perceived as political or confrontational
- Ensure flags do not obstruct visibility or vehicle safety
- Check local licensing guidance before displaying

Done appropriately, a flag can create a sense of shared enthusiasm and conversation with passengers. Done poorly, it can undermine the professional image the trade works hard to maintain.

Moments of national excitement such as a World Cup highlight just how vital the taxi and private hire trade is. But they also remind us that visibility matters. Whether it's the standards we operate to or the symbols we display, everything contributes to public trust.

The IoL – open to everyone in the trade

Finally, in keeping with the earlier theme, I want to reiterate the message that I shared at the Expo: the Institute of Licensing is not just for councils.

The IoL brings together:

- Licensing authorities
- Taxi and PHV trade representatives
- Operators
- Legal professionals
- Industry suppliers
- Enforcement specialists

Our aim is to create a broad, collaborative environment where ideas, challenges and best practice can be shared openly.

The IoL provides two major publications free to members:

- LINK (Licensing Information News & Knowledge): quarterly, sector-wide updates
- The Journal of Licensing: three editions per year, covering legal matters, case law and professional commentary

Members also gain access to regional events, most of which are free, providing excellent opportunities to hear from experts, ask difficult questions, and network with peers.

And finally, the IoL's communications network, including rapid "licensing flashes" and the member discussion forum, ensures professionals stay informed in real time.

If you work in or alongside the taxi and PHV sector, then by definition you are involved in licensing, and the IoL is here to support you.

For further details, and to make sure **you don't get left behind** visit:

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Horsham

In the April **PHTM** I wrote about Horsham District Council suspending a private hire operator for two weeks for breaking the triple-lock subcontracting rule. This was about a Horsham operator using a PH driver/vehicle for which it did not hold an operator licence. There was no other information on this as Horsham council decided to hide the details from the public. But why? Surely this is of public interest to know which operator of a company acted irresponsibly. The following is the FOI request I sent in:

"Under the Freedom of Information Act I am requesting the following information: on February 2nd 2026, the Horsham DC Licensing Committee suspended a licensed private hire operator for two weeks for breaking the subcontracting rules. As this is of public safety interest please provide the name of the company."

Horsham wrote back defending its decision to withhold the name of the operator stating:

"We hold information in relation to these contracts. However, we are withholding it in accordance with the exemption at Section 43(2) of the FOI Act regarding commercial confidentiality. Section 43(2) exempts information whose disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person (an individual, a company),

"We consider that the balance of the public interest lies in applying the Section 43(2) exemption and withholding the name of the private hire operator. To clarify, it is for the reasons set out above that we do not publish details of hearings or any details over and above the summary information reported to the Licensing Committee."

I wrote back disagreeing with the decision, quoting various points such as Horsham taking part in the Food Standards Agency Hygiene Rating system, where a low standard level could easily be party to 'prejudice' or someone's commercial interests. This is on the basis that a food business would effectively be named whether good or bad.

Additionally I quoted a well-known bus company being fined £600,000 following a conviction for a tragic health and safety breach in the Crown Court. As well as another bus operator fined almost £30,000 over faults. Both of these were named in the media. My next step is to appeal via the ICO.

Fares

Here in Brighton & Hove we have not had a fare review for over two years and currently we are 36th position in the **PHTM** Hackney Fares Table, whereas normally we have floated around the top 15 or so.

I have dealt with the fares for a number of years, but told everyone about four years ago that I wouldn't be carrying on with it as it was very time consuming. I was effectively doing it by myself with many necessary protracted emails being sent back and forth between the other trade reps.

So, having not had a fare review for two years, there were rumblings that we now needed one, especially with the fuel situation being what it is. A couple of reps got together and came up with just adding 50p to the flags and nothing on the mileage. We currently have three flags, 6am to 9pm: £3, 9pm to midnight: £4 and midnight to 6am: £5 plus a rate of £3 per mile. However, with a proposed added 50p to the current flags this meant that only the shorter trips would increase and there would not be anything significant on the longer trips.

Whilst I am sure they were trying to do their best, and without going into the trade politics, I could not resist putting my big feet forward as I considered that hiking the flags is the best way to put people off jumping in a local cab. This is because the trade here has dramatically changed, with Uber now very well established in the city, along with the out-of-town Uber slaves out-numbering the local licensed fleet easy 4 to 1.



Uber really has had a major impact here and when it is offering huge discounts to new users, such as a fare between Brighton station and Hove Station for less than £3, where the metered fare is around £9. Some would call this predatory pricing.

So, I got together with a trade colleague of mine, Dan Pinkus, and between us we came up with an alternative fare proposal that left the flags as is, but increased the mileage rate from the current £3 per mile to £3.30. This is all worked out on an Excel file comparing the current fares and our proposed fares with the percentage increase showing over 10 miles. So, the initial flags stay the same but as previously it has a short distance before it starts tripping over. We put forward that it trips at 161 yards and then drops at each 161 yard. We use 30p increments.

Our proposal gave an average increase of around 7.3% on Tariff 1, whereas the initial proposal of hiking the flags was around 8.3% based on ten miles. The major difference being that with the hike in the flag this gave a huge 16.67% increase as soon as the customer got in the cab, whereas ours was 0%. Our proposal gave a two-mile fare of £9.30 compared to the hiked only flag of £9.50. But, it's all about the psychology as to what the customer sees when they get in the cab and the meter is slapped on.

To cut it short, the trade reps accepted this with just a minor tweak. We are also going from £20 per hour waiting time to £25. At the time of writing this is still going through its process to be presented to the council, and because of the Licensing Committee timings it looks like a special meeting needs to be arranged.

I totally agree that at some point the flags will have to change, but when drivers rely on rank and street work and there are Uber slaves queuing up or swooping in when the trains arrive, nothing would be more off-putting then a hike in the flag to put the punters off... well, in my opinion.

Lastly on the fares....Our Trade Forum meetings can be an eye-opener; at the last meeting, fares were on the agenda and discussed, along with a projected slide show of all the figures. One trade rep then asked the Uber rep if Uber was also going to put its fares up! I really had to bite my tongue! I mean, what a question to ask Uber! I have no doubt that Uber will actually cut fares even more when our new rate comes in. Mind you, we had another trade rep tell everyone that he went up to parliament (I think he was claiming he meant he was at one of the Select Committee meetings) and then warned the trade reps that the government is looking at a national private hire licence as a point of fact!

Well, that was news to me! Insert the appropriate scornful looking emoji here!

The Portsmouth Saga

Portsmouth continues to churn out private hire vehicle/driver licences to predominantly work here without the compulsory door livery because it can't get its act together to order enough magnetic door signs (which should be banned anyway). It certainly seems to be well on its way to be the licensing centre of the south. What gets my goat is that we have Portsmouth PHVs parked up next to Brighton & Hove hackneys in driveways. So even some of the local trade are happy to encourage OOTs working here.

What with being flooded with OOTs, Uber cutting fares to the bone to starve out the local trade and London cab drivers using our ranks for a day's free parking when they come down for a paddle (which is cheaper than a PCN) is it time to give up?

Well, I use to love the job, then I just liked it and now I just tolerate it. Mind you, some colleagues here use to love me, then just like me and now only just tolerate me....

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

It was fantastic seeing everyone at the Expo and we were glad to help with some very interesting questions. Below are a few of these questions - not all of which relate to ongoing cases but are hypothetical questions from drivers trying to protect themselves. We absolutely support educating drivers to help them stay within the law and were always more than happy to answer any hypothetical questions you may have.
If you need any advice on motoring matters, please email advice@pattersonlaw.co.uk or call us on 01626 359800 for free legal advice.

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Q If I get 12 points will I automatically be disqualified and will I lose my taxi licence?

A *It depends on the licensing authority. Usually, when someone hits 12 penalty points, there are two separate and distinct sets of proceedings.*

Firstly, the police will prosecute and take you to court. You will then receive court papers and likely a hearing to attend, where the Magistrates' Court will consider disqualifying you from driving for a minimum of 6 months for totting up 12 points within 3 years.

However, there are likely to be separate and distinct proceedings with the licensing authority, depending on its own conditions and how many points it allows you to have. It is likely to have a committee meeting to discuss your taxi licence.

We have seen many cases where the Magistrates' Court has agreed not to ban someone and has allowed them to keep driving with 12 points, but despite that, the council has still revoked the taxi licence.

Q I always used to think that if I received a speeding ticket after 14 days it was invalid, but I've read some of your articles saying that's not always the case. So when can I reject a speeding ticket if it's out of date?

A *The 14-day rule is complex. You are correct that if someone is recorded speeding, a letter must be sent within 14 days. But just because you didn't receive it doesn't mean that it's automatically invalid. There are various exceptions to the 14-day rule, for example:*

- If you are not the registered keeper;
- If you have moved address but not updated your logbook;
- If the keeper is the author of their own downfall (for example, if it's wrongly registered);
- If there is an accident then no letter is even required;
- If the police couldn't find the name and address within 14 days.

And even then, if you think that none of the exceptions apply and it was genuinely late, there is still a requirement to nominate the driver, then reject the fixed penalty or course you are offered and argue the point in court.

So yes, these are complex arguments that will require close scrutiny.

Q If someone is hogging the middle lane on the motorway, could they be prosecuted for driving without due care and attention?

A *Yes. Driving without due care (or careless driving) is where the standard of driving falls below what's expected of a careful and competent driver. It does depend on the facts of the case – the traffic conditions and whether there was time/room for the vehicle to pull into the other lane.*

But generally, if a driver has been sitting in the middle lane for some time when the left lane is clear, the police may well suggest that the standard of driving falls below what's expected.

We don't see it too often, but we do come across these cases every now and again. Usually, they're dealt with by way of a driver improvement course or a fixed penalty of 3 points.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS



Q Why don't cyclists get points for going through red lights?

A *Because they're not motor vehicles. The **Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988** is the piece of legislation that sets out the penalty points/disqualifications drivers will receive, but these are reserved for motor vehicles and not for bicycles.*

However, if a bicycle is electric, and its motor is above 250W and capable of propelling it at above 16mph, then that could be considered a motor vehicle, and the rider could get points.

Q Can I use my PDA whilst driving, if I use it just for accepting fares and not for making calls?

A *No. We all know that using a phone whilst driving is illegal, but the actual wording of the law is that it is an offence to use "a hand-held mobile telephone or other hand-held interactive communication device".*

"Other hand-held interactive communication device" is defined as a device which is capable of transmitting or receiving data – whether those capabilities are enabled or not. Because a PDA device is capable of accepting and transmitting data, it would be considered a communication device, meaning that holding and using it whilst driving is an offence.

We therefore always recommend that any such devices are securely mounted in a cradle, and if for any reason you do need to pick it up – even because it's fallen on the floor – that you pull over to the side of the road to do so.

Q Please can you advise me whether or not e-scooters are illegal?

A *Yes. Unless of course they are the official scooters available for hire. E-scooters are almost always considered 'motor vehicles' and so cannot be used on pavements, and cannot be used on the road without everything a motor vehicle needs (e.g. a licence, insurance, brakes, etc.).*

We have dealt with hundreds of cases involving e-scooters where the riders have been prosecuted for driving without insurance, or even drink-driving where people were riding them whilst above the limit.

There are a few exceptions to this rule – for example, disability scooters and certain electric bicycles where the motor is only capable of propelling them at 15mph and has a lower power output of 250W. But generally speaking, any privately bought electric scooter should only be used on private property.

Q My friend told me about 'slingshotting'. Rather than queuing in traffic to turn left at a roundabout you cruise down the right lane, go all the way around the roundabout, and then signal left to take the exit you should have been queuing for. Is that illegal?

A *There's no specific law to prevent this. But in certain circumstances it could be considered "inconsiderate", which is an offence under **section 3 of the Road Traffic Act 1988**, the same section that covers driving without due care and attention.*

It is an offence if you cause 'inconvenience to other road users'. So if a police officer sees you or if you are caught on dash cam using a roundabout in a way that is not intended, but simply to skip the queue, you could be prosecuted.

The offence carries the same sentence as driving without due care and attention, so minor cases would be dealt with by way of a driver improvement course or a fixed penalty of 3 points, but court cases could end up with up to 9 penalty points and a £1,000 fine.

THE NATIONAL HACKNEY FARES TABLE

JUNE 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
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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	GLASGOW	£9.30
15	CARRICK	£9.20
16	LEWES	£9.20
17	ST ALBANS	£9.15
18	GUERNSEY	£9.10
19	WORTHING	£9.10
20	HERTSMERE	£9.08
21	EDINBURGH	£9.00
22	MAIDSTONE	£9.00
23	MID SUSSEX	£9.00
24	ORKNEY	£9.00
25	READING	£9.00
26	TONBRIDGE & MALLING	£9.00
27	DACORUM	£8.98
28	BRENTWOOD	£8.90
29	CHELTENHAM	£8.90
30	EAST LOTHIAN	£8.90
31	MIDLOTHIAN	£8.90
32	REIGATE & BANSTEAD	£8.90
33	SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE	£8.90
34	STROUD	£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
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	HARLOW	£8.00
94	HORSHAM	£8.00
95	NORTH YORKSHIRE	£8.00
96	NOTTINGHAM	£8.00
97	RIBBLE VALLEY	£8.00
98	RUSHCLIFFE	£8.00
99	SHROPSHIRE	£8.00
100	SOUTH AYRSHIRE	£8.00
101	SOUTH GLOUCESTER	£8.00
102	TANDRIDGE	£8.00
103	YORK	£8.00
104	FIFE	£7.98
105	DENBIGHSHIRE	£7.90
106	HINCKLEY & BOSWORTH	£7.90
107	ROTHER	£7.90
108	STEVENAGE	£7.85
109	ADUR	£7.80
110	BRACKNELL FOREST	£7.80
111	DORSET	£7.80
112	GLOUCESTER	£7.80
113	ISLE OF MAN	£7.80
114	LEICESTER	£7.80
115	NORTH SOMERSET	£7.80
116	ROCHFORD	£7.80
117	RUSHMOOR	£7.80
118	SOUTHEND ON SEA	£7.80
119	SOUTH HAMS	£7.80
120	STOCKPORT	£7.80
121	SURREY HEATH	£7.80
122	SWANSEA	£7.80
123	WAVERLEY	£7.80
124	MELTON	£7.75
125	CHELMSFORD	£7.70
126	HIGH PEAK	£7.70
127	NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE	£7.70
128	WEALDON	£7.70
129	WINDSOR & MAIDENHEAD	£7.70
130	STRATFORD ON AVON	£7.68
131	NORTH TYNESIDE	£7.65
132	RENFREWSHIRE	£7.65
133	WARWICK	£7.65
134	ASHFORD	£7.60
135	BIRMINGHAM	£7.60
136	BRISTOL	£7.60
137	CONWY	£7.60
138	DUMBARTON & VALE OF LEVEN	£7.60
139	GREAT YARMOUTH	£7.60
140	KERRIER	£7.60
141	KINGS LYNN & WEST NORFOLK	£7.60
142	MONMOUTHSHIRE	£7.60
143	SCOTTISH BORDERS	£7.60
144	SOLIHULL	£7.60
145	SOMERSET	£7.60
146	THREE RIVERS	£7.60

POSITION	TARIFF ONE 2 MILE FARE COUNCIL	
147	WEST SUFFOLK	£7.60
148	BATH & N. E. SOMERSET	£7.50
149	MILTON KEYNES	£7.55
150	BEDFORD	£7.50
151	ANGUS	£7.50
152	CARDIFF	£7.50
153	CHESTER	£7.50
154	EPPING FOREST	£7.50
155	GOSPORT	£7.50
156	MID SUFFOLK	£7.50
157	SHEFFIELD	£7.50
158	SOUTH NORFOLK	£7.50
159	TAMESIDE	£7.50
160	BRAINTREE	£7.40
161	CANTERBURY	£7.40
162	EAST HAMPSHIRE	£7.40
163	EAST RENFREW	£7.40
164	LIVERPOOL	£7.40
165	PORTSMOUTH UA	£7.40
166	SUNDERLAND	£7.40
167	S. LANARKSHIRE (CAMBUS/R'GLEN)	£7.40
168	STAFFORD	£7.40
169	TEWKESBURY	£7.40
170	WEST LOTHIAN	£7.40
171	WEST OXFORD	£7.40
172	WIRRAL	£7.40
173	NEW FOREST	£7.35
174	NEWARK & SHERWOOD	£7.32
175	BLACKBURN	£7.30
176	DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL	£7.30
177	KINGSTON-UPON-HULL	£7.30
178	NORTH KESTEVEN	£7.30
179	NORWICH	£7.30
180	SOUTH CAMBRIDGE	£7.30
181	VALE OF GLAMORGAN	£7.30
182	MORAY	£7.26
183	TEIGNBRIDGE	£7.26
184	NUNEATON & BEDWORTH	£7.25
185	PERTH & KINROSS	£7.25
186	CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE	£7.25
187	CALDERDALE	£7.22
188	BASILDON	£7.20
189	CASTLE POINT	£7.20
190	DERBY	£7.20
191	FAREHAM	£7.20
192	HAVANT	£7.20
193	LUTON	£7.20
194	NORTH WARWICK	£7.20
195	SOUTH LAKELAND	£7.20
196	WEST NORTHANTS	£7.20
197	CHESTERFIELD	£7.16
198	DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY	£7.15
199	TAMWORTH	£7.14
200	ARGYLL & BUTE	£7.13
201	CANNOCK CHASE	£7.10
202	COTSWOLD	£7.10
203	CRAWLEY	£7.10
204	HIGHLAND	£7.10
205	ISLE OF WIGHT	£7.10
206	OLDHAM	£7.10
207	RUGBY	£7.10
208	HARBOROUGH	£7.09
209	ABERDEENSHIRE	£7.06
210	BABERGH	£7.00
211	BROMSGROVE	£7.00

POSITION	TARIFF ONE 2 MILE FARE COUNCIL	
212	WEYMOUTH & PORTLAND	£7.60
213	WINCHESTER	£7.60
214	CARLISLE	£7.00
215	CARMARTHENSHIRE	£7.00
216	INVERCLYDE	£7.00
217	MACCLESFIELD	£7.00
218	NEWPORT	£7.00
219	PEMBROKESHIRE	£7.00
220	WELWYN HATFIELD	£7.00
221	COMHAIRLRE NAN EILEAN SIAR	£7.00
222	SANDWELL	£6.92
223	BURY	£6.90
224	CLYDEBANK	£6.90
225	EAST DUNBARTONSHIRE	£6.90
226	FYLDE	£6.90
227	NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME	£6.90
228	NORTH AYRSHIRE	£6.90
229	WORCESTER CITY	£6.90
230	ABERDEEN CITY	£6.80
231	BARROW IN FURNESS	£6.80
232	BLACKPOOL	£6.80
233	BOSTON	£6.80
234	BRIDGEND	£6.80
235	BROXTOWE	£6.80
236	CEREDIGION	£6.80
237	EAST STAFFORDSHIRE	£6.80
238	EAST SUFFOLK (SOUTH)	£6.80
239	EDEN	£6.80
240	ELLESMERE PORT	£6.80
241	MANSFIELD	£6.80
242	MID DEVON	£6.80
243	NORTH NORFOLK	£6.80
244	NORTH NORTHANTS	£6.80
245	SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE	£6.80
246	TENDRING	£6.80
247	TRAFFORD	£6.80
248	WIGAN	£6.80
249	WOLVERHAMPTON	£6.80
250	CHARNWOOD	£6.75
251	WALSALL	£6.75
252	MALVERN HILLS	£6.72
253	BLABY	£6.70
254	CONGLETON	£6.70
255	OADBY & WIGSTON	£6.70
256	ROTHERHAM	£6.70
257	STIRLING	£6.70
258	DUDLEY	£6.60
259	FOLKESTONE & HYTHE	£6.60
260	KNOWSLEY	£6.60
261	LANCASTER	£6.60
262	NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE	£6.60
263	S. LANARKSHIRE (E. KILBRIDE)	£6.60
264	SOUTH TYNESIDE	£6.60
265	SALFORD	£6.60
266	ST HELENS	£6.60
267	WAKEFIELD	£6.60
268	BASSETLAW	£6.50
269	EREWASH	£6.50
270	GEDLING	£6.50
271	HALTON	£6.50
272	ROSSENDALE	£6.50
273	SEFTON	£6.80
274	TORFAEN	£6.50
275	DONCASTER	£6.48
276	HYNDBURN	£6.42

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

WORLDWIDE TAXI FOCUS

from Ireland

DUBLIN CABBIE TO PAY €12K AFTER REFUSING BLIND COUPLE & GUIDE DOG

A Dublin taxi driver has been ordered to pay €12,000 in compensation to a blind couple after refusing to pick them up because they were accompanied by a guide dog. The Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) ruled that the driver, Abiodun Dongo, discriminated against Lisa O'Donovan and Anthony Clarke on the grounds of disability following the incident at Heuston Station on December 27, 2024.

The couple, who had just arrived on a train from Cork, testified that Mr. Dongo shouted at them in an "aggressive and abusive manner" before winding up his window and driving away. They told the commission they were left feeling "hugely embarrassed and humiliated" by the encounter.

WRC adjudication officer, Valerie Murtagh, found the couple to be credible witnesses, noting that the dog was clearly wearing its working uniform. She ruled that the refusal caused "unnecessary upset and humiliation" and ordered Mr. Dongo to pay each partner €6,000.

This ruling follows a separate hearing at Dublin District Court earlier this year, where Mr. Dongo was fined €1,000 and ordered to pay legal costs.

Although the driver claimed he was allergic to dogs, he left the scene only after picking up a different passenger. Judge Anthony Halpin described the driver's behaviour toward the couple as "disappointing and wholly unacceptable."

from Trinidad

CABBIE DEFENDS HIMSELF IN CARJACKING; SUSPECT DEAD

A Saturday morning carjacking attempt turned fatal in Sangre Grande when a 30-year-old taxi driver fought back against his attackers, leaving one suspect dead. The incident unfolded around 5am when according to investigators, the driver picked up two male passengers at a local bar. Upon reaching a supermarket, the men told the driver to pull over.

Police reports state that the front-seat passenger then "struck the driver in the mouth with a glass bottle," causing injuries, and tried to climb into the driver's seat to steal the vehicle. In response, the driver grabbed a fillet knife from his door pocket and "stabbed the passenger once in the upper right chest." Following the struggle, both attackers fled the scene on foot.

The injured driver immediately drove to the police station, reported the incident, and handed the knife over to officers before heading to the hospital for medical treatment. Shortly after, police received reports of a man lying motionless near a restaurant. A passing man and woman spotted the injured suspect and helped transport him to hospital, where he was pronounced dead.

from Spain

WOLVERHAMPTON PHV SPOTTED IN SPAIN GOES VIRAL



A TikTok video has taken the internet by storm after capturing a Wolverhampton-registered PHV driving through the middle of Spain. The viral footage, posted on 8 May, by @Geoffbuycars, has racked up nearly a million views as people flock to see the unexpected British vehicle abroad.

In the video, a man spots the UK-registered Toyota Estima and can be heard laughing in disbelief. "I think this is one of the best things I have ever seen," the narrator says. "That ladies and gentlemen is a UK-registered Toyota Estima, but do you know what the best bit is? It's a taxi. Guess where it is registered? Wolverhampton... What the heck is a Wolverhampton-registered taxi doing in the middle of Spain? That's absolutely brilliant."

The bizarre sighting has sparked hundreds of humorous comments and theories across social media. Poking fun at the extreme detour, one user joked that the driver was: "just avoiding the M6 Toll." Another quipped: "That's one expensive Uber ride," while a third added to the jokes about the council's widespread licensing, commenting, "Wolverhampton cabs actually are everywhere but Wolverhampton."

WORLDWIDE TAXI FOCUS

from China

SHENZHEN CABBIE HAILED A HERO AFTER SAVING DISTRESSED PASSENGER



A 57-year-old taxi driver in Shenzhen, China, has been praised as a hero online after his quick thinking and compassionate actions saved a young woman from a potentially tragic situation.

The incident unfolded earlier this month when a woman in her 20s boarded Lu Jianjun's taxi and requested a ride to the seaside at Shenzhen Bay. Lu grew concerned when the passenger began crying and making negative phone calls. As they neared the coast, her distress escalated. Sensing danger, Lu decided to detour away from the coastline to comfort her, offering to take her to a nearby park for fresh air instead.

Dashcam footage captured Lu trying to soothe the woman, advising her, "You must not do anything foolish, do you understand? It's not worth it."

When the passenger began crying louder, Lu called the police. The situation quickly spiralled out of control when the woman suddenly opened the car door and insisted on getting out. Lu tried to persuade her to stay, promising, "I'll send you back home for free, I'll take you back, okay?"

He then followed her on foot through the rain, successfully coaxing her back into the taxi. However, minutes later, she became agitated again, pushed Lu away, and ran onto the road. Lu immediately updated the police with her description and last known location, joining the search himself.

Police officers eventually located the woman and ensured she was reunited with her family once her mood stabilised.

Internet users have widely commended Lu for his alertness and determination to help. Reflecting on the incident, the driver remained humble about his lifesaving efforts. "It's part of our responsibilities as a driver. Money doesn't matter. Saving a life is more important than anything else," Lu said.

from Malaysia

MALAYSIAN CABBIE INVESTIGATED AFTER PASSENGER LEAPS FROM CAB



A 47-year-old taxi driver in Malaysia is at the centre of a police investigation after a terrified passenger threw herself out of his moving vehicle on a busy highway.

The dramatic incident, which occurred around 9:30 am on May 1, was captured on dashcam footage showing the woman leaping onto the tarmac, sending her shoes and phone flying as following motorists braked hard to avoid her.



The passenger told authorities her anxiety escalated because she believed the driver had been watching her repeatedly through the rear-view mirror without explanation.

North Klang district police chief Vijaya Rao stated that the woman's fear of the driver's behaviour became so great that she felt she had to jump, resulting in minor injuries.

Following the leap, the driver immediately brought the red cab to a halt.

While the driver has since cancelled the trip and filed a formal report with the police, he could face serious legal consequences.

Officials noted that if any wrongdoing is proven, the driver may be charged under provisions of the Penal Code for an act "endangering life or personal safety."

The woman was assisted at the scene by a passing motorist who took her to a clinic for treatment.

Police are currently working to locate the passenger to complete their inquiry into the driver's actions and the events leading up to her desperate escape.

PHTM

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Breaking news stories

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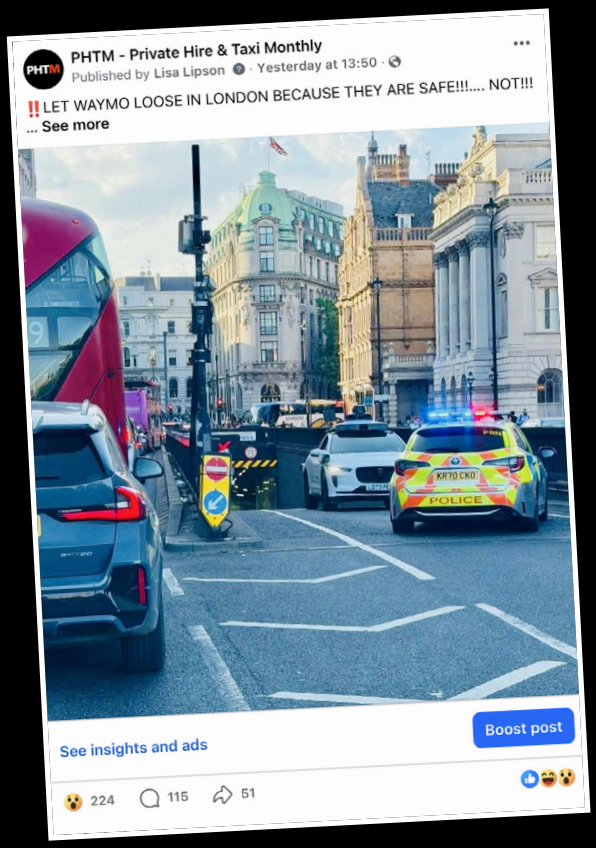

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WORLD CUP FEVER TO GRIP THE UK - IMAGINE WHAT IT WILL BE LIKE IN ...LISBON!

WHAT A SUMMER OF SPORT we have, and it all starts here in June.....AND PRIDE OF PLACE HAS TO GO TO THAT BEHEMOTH, **THE FIFA WORLD CUP**, over God knows how many days and over God knows how many games, but it starts on 11 June and finishes on 19 July..STREWTH!!

And my Nap of the event is...the **SELECAO**!!! but not the Brazilians, but rather the Portuguese and at a mouthwatering 16/1

YES, having looked at the groups, and there's an awful lot of imponderables and assumptions, but if you win your group, then your side of the draw will no longer be affected and it is clear FIFA has loosely divided it up as a European v Americas final.



To that end, in one half you are likely to get France, Spain, Germany and the Netherlands and in the other half, the two Latin American giants, England and **PORTUGAL**... and they are battle hardened and full of great players, notably the aforementioned Ronaldo, but also Bruno (Man U), Vitinhna (PSG)and a host of European stars.



Incidentally Thomas Tuchel is receiving a lot of criticism for essentially being ruthless and German!! Whereas I think it is a master stroke; his selection of Toney will be a winner and his non selection of Harry, Phil and Cole will be proven to be right.
It's about a squad, a team and a belief, not about a player's individual talent.

Hats off to our Fuhrer!

England has more of a chance now than before and I have a sneaking admiration for him and them. 8/1 is fair value but not worthy of my alternate pick.



For that it's off to the land of the rising sun, and a punt on **JAPAN** at 66/1 can't go unbacked!

Now there is a squad who play for each other. What side they land in is debateable but I assure you they will want to be avoided.

AND FINALLY... DON'T WISH TO CROW... BUT, back in February's column I advanced the tip that Josh Rock would come bottom of the Premier League Darts table at a stonking 12/1!!

With the regular season now complete, where did he finish? Bottom of course!!! I hope you followed me in..

BUT THERE'S MORE!!

Before the first red had been potted at the Crucible in the Snooker World Championship, last month's column offered three tips..

They were...

- Wu Yize at 20/1.. WINNER
- Shaun Murphy at 16/1.. LOSING FINALIST
- And John Higgins at 25/1.. SEMI FINALIST!!!

Talk about a 147 clearance!!!!

AND THERE'S STILL MORE!!

I also tipped the 1,000 Guineas winner, True Love at 10/1 and the 2,000 Guineas third, Distant Storm (advised e/w) at 12/1



Who's the man?? Why Bernie the Book of course!!

Until next month

Good punting

Bernie the Book

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