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AN INTERESTING YEAR AHEAD

Article by Dr Michael S. Galvin
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mobilityserviceslimited.com



The summer has been filled with the sound of people responding to the plethora of consultations issued before the summer break. The August Parliamentary Transport Committee's inquiry into licensing, which is gathering views on safety and regulation, will no doubt spend the autumn taking evidence and developing their report/policy proposals.

The joint UK government unit from the Department for Business and Trade and the DfT, the Centre for Connected and Autonomous Vehicles (CCAV), which will no doubt become very familiar to us, as it promotes the safe development and use of connected and autonomous vehicles is looking to the near future, 2026, when live trials of AVs will begin.

And let's not forget the Pedicab licensing in London consultation.

After a considerable gap between now and the last tranche of consultations and evidence taking, policy makers seem fired up into trying to be seen to do something. In the case of licensing the **Casey Report** may have been the catalyst, but in any event, I guess we should welcome interest in our industry.

The CCAV is driven by the DfT's target of live trials of autonomous vehicles providing '*automated passenger services*' next spring. In all next year is looking increasingly interesting in our world.

Is a consensus forming?

Even some basic analysis of the responses to the Transport Committee consultation suggests that there is the basis of a consensus forming in the industry. Yes, there are still variances, but it does appear from respondents that we need:

- A national licensing system, minimum standards or mandatory maximum standards are still not agreed
- A solution to the cross-border hiring '*problem*' -

the '*problem*' remains vaguer than the solutions that are being offered up from ABBA to a percentage-based approach

- An improved system of conviction tracking. The NR3 appears to be pretty much agreed as a solution subject to becoming mandatory
- Enhanced powers for enforcement officers to stop any licensed vehicle regardless of where they are licensed.

There are of course a whole wish list of individual wants and desires that sit below the substantive points listed above. There are also serious, and I would suggest existential challenges that haven't made the list e.g. multi-apping and worker status issues to name but two which are severely impacting the reliability of the service and will affect its long-term future and viability.

To be realistic any change to legislation is going to need a strong consensus across the industry to have any chance of becoming reality. How to achieve that with such a splintered and fragmented industry is difficult to see. The alternative is that policy makers cherry pick through the responses and whatever evidence is provided, draw their own conclusions and make a change that satisfies the '*we must do something*' response to the **Casey Report** without any real consideration of the industry's needs.

Alternatively, and probably most likely, nothing happens and the latest inquiry into licensing report just joins the shelf which already contains numerous reports gradually moving from relevance to obsolence, including the oft quoted Law Commission Draft Act, Start and Finish Group etc.

Looking back is one approach

Apart from the '*how will any changes be affected by autonomous vehicles*' the questions in the consultation concerning licensing, and from what I could discern the answers, all focus on the past. What's wrong, how can we fix it? But is that enough? The two most recent acts in England and Wales are 50 years and 25 years old respectively. If we are in a 50-year legislative cycle maybe we should be looking forward



as well as learning from the past. But as an industry the majority have no view or if they have, they don't find the time, energy or inclination to do anything about it.

The analysis shows that a small minority belong to a representative organisation through enthusiasm, guilt or the social benefits which leaves policy makers wondering however well points are made, whether when policymakers implement something, the majority of the industry will go nuts. Politicians and policymakers were badly bitten by the **Deregulation Act** which was welcomed by the industry's leaders and has been derided ever since by not only the leaders but about half of the industry. The other half presumably have benefited and are keeping quiet.....until it changes again when it will be their turn to begin shouting loudly.

As a £12-£14bn industry we should be better than this. No one expects complete agreement on everything, but there must be certain baselines that the majority of the industry could coalesce around that would provide a healthier environment in which the industry can grow and prosper.

Surely, we should be looking forward to what the world and our part of it looks like in 10, 20, 30 years and developing policy that wants to keep us relevant? Unfortunately, we don't have the mechanisms and structures in this industry for that and hence we spend the time between legislative change and multiple regulatory alteration trying to convince policymakers to reverse or change the changes that we exercised little or no influence on.

Starting from a radical perspective why don't we seek self-determination? Broad legislation enabling a com-

missioner, board or similar made up from the industry to really get to grips with the challenges and resolve them? If not that, then why are the 'representative' organisations not attracting members to a point where everyone bar a few sceptics actively takes part? Why can't the representative organisations generate the income levels needed to run effective organisations that can fund research, public affairs professionals and people capable of putting together proposals than can become government policy? Perhaps we need a crisis to shift the needle from shoulder shrugging to meaningful representation?

Or maybe not, as if the last ten years hasn't been a crisis and half I don't know what a crisis needs to look like to qualify for the title and encourage a reaction!

Will a 20% increase in fares be good for the industry?

This summer's crop of consultations did not address the elephant in the room.....VAT. Rumours abound of the chancellor seizing the opportunity to add 20% to all taxi and PH fares as a useful fillip generating a reputed £2.5bn a year. Comments from operators such as *'well as long as everyone has to charge it, I suppose it's okay'* make my blood run cold.

We have been in a downturn in this industry for the longest period that I can remember. Shortly after the furore in late 2021/early 2022 concerning driver shortages and overwhelming demand, we have been in a slow-down offset to some extent by an inflationary environment where we have been able to gently increase fares so that most companies' accounts look unaffected.

Well that cosy window dressing approach to a quite serious problem is going to be severely stressed if fares go up 20%, none of which is going into anyone's accounts, it's just going straight to HMRC, and watch what happens to volumes. This won't be a pretty picture if the worse case scenario materialises. What will the industry do about it? Well in its time-honoured tradition the industry leaves it to a few underfunded and overstretched representative organisations and one or two larger operators to apply what pressure they can. The simplistic estimate of £2.5bn income to the Treasury is mythical the impact of a 20% hike on this industry will be anything but.

INDUSTRY EXPERT REFLECTIONS

Is it time for this depressing cycle to be broken?

No matter how much people like to imagine that they are king of their own castle and anything that happens outside of the four walls of their office can't be influenced, changed or simply doesn't matter, the truth is it does matter, and it matters a lot. For businesses to thrive i.e. be profitable, to grow, prosper and provide either a decent exit value or something worth passing onto the kids, the industry needs to be in good shape. Turning the other cheek every time there's talk of regulatory or legislative change, or in the case of VAT fiscal restructuring, mitigates against the basic tenets of business management. Whilst not everyone will have the know-how, the time or the appetite to lobby, they can join one of the representative organisations so that they can collectively work on your behalf. Whether you belong to anything or not at the very least everyone should complete a consultation.

In case anyone hasn't noticed, the regulatory bar is continually rising, the number of people using taxi and PH services is reducing, and if we're not very careful, we may well find businesses being squeezed out of the industry or simply out of business. I don't say these things to alarm anyone; I don't naturally fit into '*the end is nigh*' type of thinking, but just take a look at what is actually happening and decide if you agree or not. A 2-3% reduction each year quickly becomes a big number, through compounding, adjusting fares and driver charges to shield you from the impact has a finite life cycle, especially given the price competition experienced in many areas of the market. If you have less work, you have less drivers, if you have less drivers your service levels drop, if you charge more or your service is less reliable, you will have less customers, and if VAT is thrown into the mix, it won't be long before you have no business -sorry but that's real life. If you feel that it will probably be okay, I wish you luck. If however you share my concerns and feel that leaving your future, your family's future and the future of your business to probability then either join up or get busy.

Representative bodies need to actually be representative

If the industry is going to be attracted to joining a representative organisation, representative they need to be. Representative organisations need to critically



consider how representative they really are. What are the processes for gathering member feedback, developing policy, consulting on proposals to government and local government before campaigns start? Do organisations have the skills to look forward, horizon scan and provide thought leadership as to what the industry could and should look like in the years ahead?

Poorly resourced organisations that are just reactive to whatever the latest crazy idea is won't cut it. To be worthy of being considered truly representative a lot more effort needs to go into the full process of representation. Old war stories, vested interests, whinge fests and slapstick routines at annual trade shows do not equal representation.

The plates are moving

Next year will be interesting to say the least, the consultations will be long closed, the evidence gathered and the proposals for legislation, regulation etc. will be in chain. We will all be charging 20% more or not. AVs will be involved in live trials. What we don't know is whether this industry will be heartily involved in fashioning our future or bleating from the sidelines about how unfair it all is. The AV naysayers with their '*it will never happen*' mantra will be silenced once the pilots start. Will the industry be developing proposals to policymakers or holding bucket collections with the forlorn hope of stopping things happening or reversing the decisions which have been through proper and legitimate process? Will cross-border be replaced by unworkable systems that damage hitherto viable businesses? Think it could not happen, then look at the system pre- Deregulation Act.

The plates are moving, change will happen with or without us.

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NINE COUNCILS CAN NOW DIRECTLY SUSPEND WOLVERHAMPTON-LICENSED PHVs

On 1 October 2025 City of Wolverhampton Council entered into an agreement with the following licensing authorities:

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- Ashfield District Council
- Broxtowe Borough Council
- Mansfield District Council
- Newark and Sherwood District Council
- Nottingham City Council
- Rushcliffe Borough Council
- Liverpool City Council

It authorises their Enforcement Teams, pursuant to Section 101 (1) (b) of the Local Government Act

1972, to undertake functions under Sections 68 and 73 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, as amended.

This means that their enforcement teams are authorised to inspect and test private hire vehicles licensed by City of Wolverhampton Council working within their respective areas.

Should the vehicle fail the test/inspection, their enforcement teams are authorised to suspend the vehicle licence.

The suspension notice will be given in writing, requiring the proprietor to address the issue and

present the vehicle for further testing/inspection.

It is important to note that it is an offence if you:

- obstruct the officer
- fail to comply with any requirement properly made acting under this authorisation
- without reasonable cause, fail to give the officer any other assistance or information which he may reasonably require
- make a statement which you know to be false to the officer

An authorisation letter has been issued to the respective enforcement teams.

ROTHERHAM OFFICIALS FLAG SIGNIFICANT THREAT FROM OUT-OF-TOWN TAXI DRIVERS

Council officials in Rotherham have presented evidence to a parliamentary select committee expressing serious concerns that out-of-town taxi/PH drivers are undermining local safety standards. The officials voiced fears that drivers licensed in other areas can operate in Rotherham, about whom local authorities have “no information.”

Rotherham had previously strengthened its regulations - including requiring in-vehicle video cameras - following the child sexual exploitation scandal, and officials argue their high standards are now being undercut.

Rotherham Council told MPs: “It is considered essential that urgent action is taken to address the issues raised above, as the current situation represents the most



significant threat to the safety of the travelling public in Rotherham.” Their main concerns are:

- Out-of-town working: the ability of vehicles to operate predominantly in a different area from where they are licensed “exposes the public in that area to unacceptable risks to their safety.”
- Outdated laws: current laws have not kept pace with digital services and taxi apps, which

have “brought an increase in the level of cross-border working and out of town vehicles operating in a particular area.”

Rotherham MP, Sarah Champion, supported the council's position, stating that: “Historic failures in local licensing were recognised as a significant contributing factor” in the town's child sexual exploitation, and while Rotherham introduced “some of the most stringent licensing regimes in the country,” these are being undermined by drivers obtaining licences from areas with lower standards.

She added: “This fundamentally undermines the efforts of Rotherham to ensure our children are protected and is unfair on the local drivers who work hard to lead by example.”

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- Send the first call to the passenger's nominated "favourite driver", then send it to the driver who has least recently taken a call if the first-choice driver isn't available.
- Send the calls to all available drivers at the same time. The driver with the fastest fingers takes the call.

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for your group. It shows your branding as well as the TaxiCall logo. We send you a QR code which you give out to each new passenger who rides with you. Passengers can then download your app to make bookings.

Passengers use the app to book their journeys with you, either for instant hail or for their preferred date and time. The system can be configured to assign the job to a driver automatically, based on your preferred rules, or you can manually assign the job.

if you don't have any drivers who are free to cover the job, the TaxiCall system can look for another driver (or group) in the network who is close to you and offer the job to them. The passenger gets their ride, and you still retain them as your customer.

Passengers can also use the TaxiCall app to book rides whenever they travel outside their home area. The system will always try and find a local driver in the network who can serve them.

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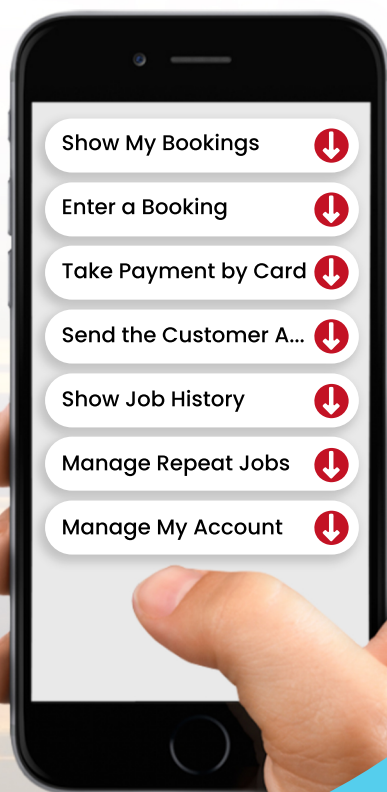
- You get a source of bookings at low cost. We don't charge commission.
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- You build your own brand.

TaxiCall is a fresh, fairer, and friendlier alternative. It's a booking app, and it's a nationwide community of independent drivers. Members just pay a low subscription (less than £10 a week) to join, and you earn every penny of the fare from each job you do. You are in complete control, you set your fares, and there is no commission. We don't do surge pricing, we don't monitor what you do, and we don't penalise you for refusing jobs.

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DECLINE OF AN ICON

Article by Derek Myers (MCIPR)
derekmmyers@gmail.com



While politicians talk about limitations on private hire numbers and tweaks to the Knowledge, the real crisis in London's taxi trade is being ignored. It's not about new drivers, it's about keeping the ones we continue to lose and, most importantly, ensuring there's a need for London taxis well into the future.

TfL's latest figures (w/e 19 October) show that London has lost another 68 licensed taxi drivers. The week before, it was 47. That's 115 drivers gone in just two weeks - with no new licences issued.

It's fascinating that only now, as numbers reach historic lows, the interest in 'London's dying taxi trade' seems to have caught the attention of some politicians; when the problem began well before covid and then went into overdrive under mayor Khan's leadership of TfL.

What exactly is the Icon? They often seem to focus on losing an icon although I'm not sure what the icon actually is. Is it the vehicle? There are currently five different shaped taxi models, many of which look like moving billboards - are these the icons? There are also the drivers who may have spent years studying the Knowledge - are they the icons?

Whatever the icon is, it's already disappearing fast. Driver numbers have fallen by around 9,000 in a decade while vehicle numbers, which normally track around 2,000 lower, have fallen by c7,500. And, until the last Euro 5 taxi is forced off of London's streets, this decline will show no sign of slowing.

The focus on PH limitation and The Knowledge: In order to save the taxi trade, we're hearing of an increased call to limit PH numbers. When he was mayor, Boris Johnson actually spoke about bringing this in, but when he was, apparently, given a no-no by the government of the day, his efforts ended there.

Sensible limitation always seemed to be in the best interests of professional stakeholders within both the taxi and PH sector; but with driver numbers currently exceeding 105,000 and vehicle numbers of 95,000 plus (without the effects of cross-border licensing) coming up with a plan that might have any positive impact on what's happening to the icon will be pretty long term.

There really is something about stable doors and bolting horses.

The other thing that seems is being highlighted is The

Knowledge; in the belief, or I believe misbelief, that changing the current system might achieve the blood transfusion that this dying patient, apparently, needs. But surely with 115 drivers leaving the trade in two weeks the real problem lies at the other end of the telescope, where there is very little focus; retention.

Retention, not recruitment: the taxi system always worked with a combination of full and part-time/semi-retired drivers, and the vast majority of those who have contributed to these reduced numbers (c9,000 in 10 years) were those older/part time/semi-retired drivers. Many of whom would have liked, and indeed planned, to continue working as the years passed.

The mayor's effort to substantially improve air quality in London by reducing the licensing life cycle of Euro 5 taxis from 15 to 12 years continues to remove a huge number of the most affordable, and often freehold, taxis from London's streets. Along with this has come a substantial increase in insurance costs, with many older drivers now finding it difficult to get insurance at all, aligned to the stress of working within a 20mph zone where 6 points on your driving licence could lead to a temporary ban from working at all.

In addition, there are the high costs of the only new taxi that meets current regulations. All in all this has made part-time working less and less viable and, in many cases, as the taxi (icon) reaches its 12th birthday, it's the driver (icon) who enters into unplanned retirement. While the vehicle, ironically, probably goes on to serve as a licensed taxi in major cities up and down the land.

And with a three-year driver licensing cycle plus annual medicals for most, even the official figures probably overstate how many drivers are actually still working.

What needs to change: London's taxi system has always depended on a mix of full-time, part-time, and semi-retired drivers who, as part of London's transport infrastructure, provided reliability and 24-hour coverage. What's needed now is a commercial strategy that retains drivers and, most importantly, sustains and eventually grows the need for licensed taxis in London within our current - and future environments.

Between late 2025 and September 2027, approximately 2,500 Euro 5 taxis will reach their 12-year limit and will no longer be eligible for licensing in London. Until this time, without a speedy and effective plan, taxi driver numbers will continue their fast decline, suppliers will continue to disappear, and the taxi system once envied by regulators and taxi services around the world will continue to slip quietly into London's history.

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SHAME SHAME

EDINBURGH TAXI DRIVER FINED AFTER RUNNING RED LIGHT AND HITTING CHILD

Edinburgh cabbie, Duncan Beattie, 77, has pleaded guilty to driving without “due care and attention” after striking a four-year-old child at a pedestrian crossing.

The incident occurred around 3:15pm on April 15 in South Gyle. The child was crossing the road after pressing the button when Beattie drove through a red light. The child’s head “struck the taxi before falling backward and being caught by his parents.” The child sustained a lump on his forehead

and minor bruising.

Appearing at Edinburgh Sheriff Court, Beattie told the court he did not see the red light.

He claimed the crossing’s traffic lights previously showed an amber signal as the pedestrian light turned green, a flaw that has since been corrected.

When Sheriff Cook asked him



directly if he ran a red light, Beattie admitted: “Yes.”

The sheriff described the incident as a result of “inattention” and considered Beattie’s clean driving record. Beattie received a £400 fine (reduced from £600 for his early plea) and was given five penalty points on his licence (reduced from an initial seven).

Beattie reportedly remains a working taxi driver and intends to continue for at least another six months.

SHOCKED MUM FLED FROM BARROW CABBIE WEARING BOXERS AND DRUNK AT WHEEL

Pensioner and taxi driver Geoffrey Thomas Albery was fined and disqualified from driving after being found behind the wheel while over the legal alcohol limit and wearing “only his boxer shorts,” a court heard.

The incident occurred on the evening of August 23 in an Aldi Car

Park in Barrow. A member of the public noticed Albery was “parked funny” with a flat tyre. Despite being warned not to, a woman and her children got in for a fare.

Prosecutor Lee Dacre stated that when the woman saw the 69-year-old “sat behind the driver’s seat wearing only his boxer shorts, she

quickly got out and ran away from the scene with her children.”

A witness, who questioned Albery, felt the need to remove his keys to prevent him from driving off.

Albery was arrested after a roadside breathalyser test showed 94 mcg in 100 ml of breath (the legal limit is 35), which later dropped to 86 mcg in police custody.

Solicitor Karem Templeton said he had been watching football and drinking at home before falling asleep. “When he woke up, he was disorientated. He thought it was the following morning when it was 7:20pm that evening.”

Ms Templeton also noted: “He was working as a taxi driver. He has since lost his job and given up his licence to the council.”

Magistrates fined Albery £211 and imposed a driving disqualification of 22 months. He was also ordered to pay an £84 victim surcharge and £85 in court costs.

TORBAY CABBIE LOSES LICENCE AFTER ASSAULTING POLICE OFFICER

A Torbay taxi driver has had her licence revoked after being found guilty of assaulting an emergency worker following a day of drinking. Torbay Council’s licensing committee heard the driver had failed to notify of her arrest and charges within the required 48 hours.

The driver had previous convictions, including while under the influence of alcohol which the

committee was concerned “demonstrated a pattern of behaviour that extended beyond isolated incidents and reflected a lack of personal responsibility and poor judgement.”

The council report concluded: “Members considered that the respondent’s convictions and conduct fell far below the standard expected of a licensed driver.”

SHAME SHAME

UNLICENSED MIDDLESBROUGH TAXI DRIVER JAILED FOR DECADES OVER SEXUAL OFFENCES

Unlicensed cabbie, Edwin Youll, 63, from Normanby, has been sentenced to 32 years in jail at Teesside Crown Court on 13 October, for a string of violent sexual offences. Youll was found guilty in July of 26 charges of sexual assault and rape following a trial. The offences, which date back to the 1990s, involved him targeting vulnerable

women and children.

According to Cleveland Police, he used his job to seek out women and became violent "if they did not do as he commanded," on occasion using knives in his offending.



DS Stuart Hodgson said: "Firstly I would like to thank the brave victims who came forward and gave harrowing accounts of the horrendous sexual abuse carried out by Edwin Youll."

He added: "Whilst the experiences will stay with them forever, I'm pleased this chapter has come to a close and justice has been served."

NEWCASTLE CABBIE JAILED FOR NINE YEARS AFTER THROWING HOT OIL AT POLICEMAN

Mohammed Sarfaraz, a 45-year-old taxi driver, has been sentenced to nine years in prison for throwing boiling oil at two police officers, hitting one in the face and chest. The cabbie had previously called police to complain about not being allowed to see his children after the breakdown of his marriage and had been arrested after he refused to leave the area by his former home in Newcastle, during which he kicked at officers. On 17 January, five officers went to a house in Kenton looking for Sarfaraz. His wife told them that he was at his parents' home in Gosforth, and as they left, they saw her making a phone call which Judge Robert Adams said was her "no doubt warning" Sarfaraz that the police were coming. The court heard that after learning police were on their way, Sarfaraz "deliberately heated a pan of oil" in his parents' kitchen to create a "highly dangerous weapon." At the Gosforth home, Sarfaraz's parents and sister were "obstructive" and "clearly not telling the

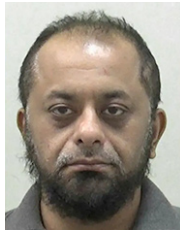
truth" when they claimed he was not there.

After police "lawfully" entered the house, a female officer found Sarfaraz in the kitchen holding a pan of boiling oil. As she shouted at him to put it down, two male officers entered, and Sarfaraz swung the pan, striking one officer while the other "narrowly avoided being hit."

Sarfaraz then fled into a garage, where a battering ram was used to enter, and Tasers were fired before he was arrested.

During his police interview, Sarfaraz claimed he had heated the oil to cook an egg, but Judge Adams said the officers' body-worn camera footage showed that to be "clearly untrue."

Sarfaraz was unanimously found guilty by jurors of causing GBH with intent, attempted wounding, and affray following a trial at Newcastle Crown Court.



The injured police officer was left with "permanent scarring on his face and chest," and there were initial fears he might have been blinded.

In a statement read to the court, the officer said he was off work for a month and had to visit a burns unit every 2 or 3 days. He added that his children were "shocked" and "upset" to see his injuries.

Judge Adams noted that Sarfaraz still maintained his innocence, having written a 30-page letter to the court in which he blamed police for "terrorising" him and accused social workers of discriminating against him because he was a Muslim man. "I don't accept that," Judge Adams said.

The court heard Sarfaraz had been the suspect in 22 domestic violence reports and 44 child concern notifications.

The judge also revealed that Sarfaraz had tried to "blackmail" him by saying he would kill himself if given a long prison sentence.

"I'm not prepared to be threatened in that way," Judge Adams said.

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SKODA



AUTOCAB AND zTRIP ANNOUNCE PARTNERSHIP TO POWER 3,600 VEHICLES ACROSS 20 US STATES

Taxi dispatch provider Autocab and zTrip, the largest taxi fleet operator in the US, have forged a partnership that will see thousands of journeys a day powered by industry-changing technology.

zTrip, which operates in 40 cities across 20 states, says the move will see Autocab's technology installed in 3,600 vehicles.

The first vehicles operating Autocab's technology are now live in Las Vegas, a location zTrip expanded into in 2025 with more than 500 cars.

The implementation will then continue with key cities before moving onto the operator's entire network.

zTrip said the Las Vegas implementation has been the smoothest rollout the business has ever completed, and significant



improvements in dispatch efficiency are anticipated.

Safa Alkateb, chief executive of Autocab, said: "zTrip searched all over the world for their next partner and selected Autocab because we're the leading supplier for this highly scalable technology.

"Autocab, which has customers in 33 countries, is already the trusted supplier to some of the world's largest taxi companies, and this landmark partnership with zTrip further demonstrates the strength and scalability of our technology.

By powering fleets across the US and North America at this scale, we're helping drivers boost their earnings and operators improve efficiency, setting a new standard for the industry."

Bill George, founder of WHC Worldwide, parent company of zTrip, said: "After an extensive review of the world's leading taxi dispatch technology providers, we selected Autocab because its technology clearly stands out as the best.

"Autocab's software is a true game-changer for our fleets. It will drive higher revenue by enabling drivers to operate more efficiently and maximise their earning potential. "We're working hand in hand with the Autocab team to ensure a smooth, phased rollout of the platform and we're very pleased with the progress so far."

RAINBOW CITY TAXIS ACQUIRES COMCAB ABERDEEN CREATING 500-VEHICLE FLEET

Rainbow City Taxis has successfully acquired its competitor, ComCab Aberdeen, with the deal being finalised on October 8.

This purchase significantly boosts the combined fleet size to more than 500 vehicles.

The full integration of the two companies is anticipated to be complete by "around Monday, October 19."

Rainbow City Taxis' boss, Russell McLeod, stated that the acquisition "underlines our commitment to Aberdeen and the valued customers we serve and enables

us to continue to represent 'Altogether A Better Service'."

He also highlighted the firm's history, having "always been proud of our heritage, servicing the citizens and visitors of Aberdeen for over 42 years."

ComCab Aberdeen, which was the city's longest-established taxi firm after being launched in 1953, operates an "industry-leading passenger app" and started a taxi training school in 2022.

This major buyout follows a "major shake-up" to the governance of the city's taxi industry less than

two months prior. Aberdeen City Council Taxi and Private Hire Car Consultation Group, which advises the local authority, was reformed to include representatives from a number of taxi companies, Uber, and Aberdeen International Airport.

Previously, the group had only a single representative for all licensed taxi booking offices, who was Russell McLeod.

With this new acquisition, Mr. McLeod now heads two out of the seven firms on the newly reformed board.

LEVC'S PRE TAX LOSSES WIDEN DESPITE UNDERLYING COST CONTROLS

LEVC, owned by Chinese automotive giant Geely has reported a widening of its pre-tax losses.

According to new accounts filed with Companies House, the company's pre-tax loss ballooned to £179.4m, significantly up from the £75.5m loss reported in 2023.

This was accompanied by a slash in turnover, which dropped from £129.1m to £88.1m in 2024.

Despite the difficult financial year, the company pointed to sales achievements and cost controls. The board stated: "LEVC achieved its sales targets in the UK and overseas despite a sluggish market, declining driver numbers

in London, and high interest rates." Key sales figures included:

- A total of 1,272 sales in 2024, which was "in line with market demand forecasts that anticipated a decline in demand of 35%."
- Sales outside of London and in the rest of the world were up by 12 per cent compared to 2023," boosted by a delivery of 153 TX vehicles to Baku, Azerbaijan.

On the operational side, the company noted it had "successfully aligned" manufacturing to market forecasts and controlled costs, "delivering a 4.5 per cent reduction against budget and more than 24 per cent decrease on

the prior year" in manufacturing costs.

Looking ahead, LEVC added that "Forecasts at the end of 2024 indicated a continued decline in the taxi segment, driven by market uncertainty, the potential withdrawal of the Plug-in Taxi Grant and ongoing high financing and insurance costs."

As a result, the company reduced its headcount from 461 to 395 during the financial year and started a redundancy round in December 2024 due to a planned reduction in output for early this year. In July, it was also reported the company planned to cut 180 jobs in Coventry.

GETT TEAMS UP WITH EDINBURGH'S OLDEST TAXI FIRM CITY CABS

City Cabs, the driver-owned cooperative that celebrated its centenary year this year, is Edinburgh's most trusted taxi service. Gett, which has operated in Edinburgh since 2015, will now have an additional 700 black taxi drivers from City Cabs platform on its app, extending its network to more than 7,000 drivers.

The new partnership signals an exciting chapter of growth and a more collaborative future for both companies. It is a model both companies hope to replicate across the country, championing the traditional hackney carriage industry, improving reliability and expanding coverage for users nationwide.

Commenting on the partnership, Matteo De Renzi, Gett's CEO said:

"We're thrilled to be collaborating with such an established, heritage brand as City Cabs, knowing that our Gett customers who rely on us in London will continue to receive a high-quality taxi service when in Edinburgh."

Lewis Rae, Managing Director at City Cabs added: "Gett users will benefit from our first-class service, with average pick-up times of under four minutes in the city. The partnership strengthens our service coverage for passengers and increases access for City Cabs users across Edinburgh and London."

The platform integration has been made possible via dispatch management software; so existing Gett and City Cabs customers will continue to have a seamless

booking experience in either app. City Cabs taxis are now live on the Gett app, with Gett's network in London joining the City Cabs' app later this month.

Drivers already using Gett in Edinburgh were offered the chance to work with City Cabs and continue completing Gett bookings.

Matteo De Renzi at Gett adds: "This reciprocal set-up opens the door for Gett in other major UK cities, where we are actively seeking to partner with driver networks who uphold our exceptional operating standards."

This week, Gett also launched WhatsApp as a support channel for drivers to further improve query response times. With Gett, drivers have access to a dedicated 24/7 support team, based in the UK.

CALL FOR PHV LICENCE CAP AND REGULATORY REFORM UNITES TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE DRIVERS

The London Assembly Transport Committee is pushing for “radical action on private hire licensing” and a cap on private hire vehicle numbers to address a “steep decline” in licensed taxis.

The worrying situation is largely attributed to the surge of app-based operators such as Uber, Bolt, and Free Now.

The Committee, chaired by Elly Baker, noted that the “advent of app-based operators” has “irreversibly changed the landscape” for cab drivers in London and led to a staggering 106,000 PH drivers licensed by TfL, causing “extreme competition for fares.”

In letters sent last month to both the Transport Secretary and the TfL Commissioner, Ms Baker repeated the Committee’s calls for a cap on PH licences, stating that they “cannot see the reasoning behind continuing to resist this call, which has wide support across taxi and private hire drivers”.

She warned that: “There are too many private hire vehicles doing too few trips, adding to congestion and pushing down driver pay.

“As drivers work longer hours to make up their pay, this leads to driver fatigue and raises questions around road safety.

“London is often seen as world-leading when it comes to transport systems. Yet, if we continue to lack the regulatory powers other cities have, we risk attracting bad actors who can exploit drivers and jeopardise the safety of Londoners.” She also criticised the slow government response to drivers licensed outside of London working predominantly in the

capital which has exacerbated the density of drivers. Ms Baker said ministers have not addressed this issue “urgently” enough, instead kicking the can further down the road.

The decline in traditional black cabs is stark, falling from 22,810 in 2014 to 14,800 in 2024, partly due to the barrier to entry proving too expensive with the cost of compliant vehicles at least £70,000.

To combat this, the Committee recommended an extension of the £7,500 plug-in taxi grant for drivers buying eligible, low-emission vehicles and exempt taxis from VAT by the end of this year.

Ms Baker urged TfL to set a specific target to increase black cab numbers, suggesting their Taxi and PH Action Plan, launched in March, does not go far enough in addressing the crisis, saying: “It’s time TfL gets serious about protecting this industry.”

The ADCU welcomed the Transport Committee’s calls, particularly those for legislative powers to establish a PHV cap, mandated data sharing by PH operators as a condition of licensing, including data on fares and algorithmic pricing and greater financial support for drivers.

Cristina-Georgiana Ioanitescu, President of ADCU, shared Baker’s disappointment in TfL’s lack of engagement with the Committee before publishing its Action Plan. She stated: “We echo Baker’s calls for greater data transparency, vehicle caps, and ending the use of dangerous technologies such as Uber’s Trip Radar. These are key protections our members urgently

need in order to operate safely, and to make a reasonable living.”

Ms Baker, in turn, thanked the ADCU, saying: “I’m grateful for their active participation in our evidence gathering, enabling us to understand the real-world impact of the lack of regulation on the large app-based operators.

“I’d urge the Government and TfL to listen to those who live and breathe these trades, so we can genuinely move to a taxi and private hire sector that works for drivers and passengers alike.”

In contrast, Trevor Merralls, General Secretary of the United Cabbies Group, expressed disappointment in the Committee’s proposals, arguing: “There’s nothing in it for taxi drivers, it’s all about PH. They’ve said nothing about giving us road access to pick up disabled passengers or how technology has blurred the lines and allowed PH to operate as a ghost taxi fleet.

“Prior to this, there was 50,000 PH drivers in London - there are now more than double that. This has been at the taxis’ expense.

“All our rights have been eroded. Our fares are set by TfL - PH drivers can buy cheaper vehicles and charge whatever they want.

“The law hasn’t kept pace with the technology - that’s obvious.”

Helen Chapman, TfL’s Director of Licensing, responded by welcoming the recommendations and confirming they would respond to the Committee, stating: “We remain fully committed to working with everyone to ensure that London has safe, accessible, and green taxi and private hire services, recognised across the world.”



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AIRPORT AILMENTS

GATWICK AIRPORT DRIVERS PROTEST OVER UBER'S LOCAL LICENSING LOOPHOLES

PHV drivers at Gatwick Airport, organised by Unite the Union, staged a protest on 9 October, claiming that Uber is “destroying local livelihoods” by circumventing local licensing rules in Crawley. The drivers claim that London-registered Uber cars are operating in Crawley and poaching passengers from Gatwick Airport without being subject to the town's stricter licensing restrictions. Unite general secretary, Sharon Graham, accused Gatwick Airport of “partnering with a race-to-the-bottom firm like Uber, which is destroying local livelihoods and damaging Crawley's economy. Ms Graham urged the government



to “close the loopholes in legislation,” stating: “Uber's side-stepping of local licensing laws is hurting workers and putting passengers at risk.”

Responses to the protest:

- Crawley BC previously dismissed a similar complaint in March, concluding after legal advice that there was “no wrongdoing” and drivers' claims “lacked any

legal substance.”

- A Gatwick spokesperson stated they “recognise the importance of fair competition” saying their official taxi partner, Airport Cars, operates from dedicated bays outside the terminals, while Uber and other PHVs use designated pick-up zones.
- An Uber spokesperson said the company “abides by the same regulations as all other PH operators,” adding this was “supported by an independent review by Crawley Borough Council.”

The protest marked the start of a new campaign which Unite said aimed to fix the disadvantage it said its members were at.

TAXI DRIVERS CRITICISE NCP OVER PARKING CHARGE ISSUES AT GATWICK AIRPORT

Brighton cabbies are “slamming” NCP for what they claim are wrongfully issued PCNs at Gatwick Airport. They allege that fines result from NCP's “own system” and “terrible” camera recognition. Mohammed Ahmed, chairman for the United Taxi Driver's Association, stated the issue “discourages” drivers from taking trips to the airport: “We have a WhatsApp group of hundreds of drivers and every day without fail there's a message saying they have been issued a PCN for entering and leaving Gatwick Airport.”

“We don't have this issue at Heathrow, Luton or Stansted – so why can't the NCP and the airport get it right?”

Drivers subscribe to the NCP

AutoPay app, which is meant to automatically take payment when a vehicle's registration is picked up by a camera upon entry and exit. Mr. Ahmed called the number of times payment wasn't taken as “astronomical” and questioned the system's value: “What's the point of us subscribing to the app if we're getting fined for doing nothing wrong? These aren't miniscule charges either, they could be worth the cost of a whole trip from Brighton to Gatwick.”

Andrew Peters of the Brighton and Hove Cab Trade Association also called the system “not fit for purpose” and said the PCNs “lack common sense.”

He advises that NCP “should stop sending out PCNs where they have

failed to apply the parking fee to anyone subscribed to the AutoPay system.”

London Gatwick responded by saying it would be “working to upgrade” the camera systems and confirmed they are “working with our parking provider, NCP, to ensure vehicles are correctly recognised upon entry and exit from the airport.”

A spokesman added: “Any incorrectly issued PCNs will be cancelled directly through NCP.” However, NCP said it “does not recognise any wider issues” with its camera systems and stated it was “confident” in its payment systems, despite being given examples of multiple parking charges related to vehicle recognition.

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Season 2: studio guests and specials

Following the momentum of Series 1, Taxi Talk Season 2 kicks off on **12 November 2025**, featuring a dynamic line-up of industry figures and special guests. The season will include insightful conversations with names such as **Tom Pugh, Rachel Dale, Lee Ward, Mike Amman** and **Peter Bresland**, along with themed episodes like the **Christmas Special**, a **Hope Cancer Research** feature, and the much-anticipated **Pakistan Special**.

The introduction of regular **studio recordings** has elevated the production value, allowing for more engaging face-to-face conversations, professional sound quality, and visual highlights for YouTube and social media audiences. Viewers can expect more energy, more humour, and a deeper look into the real stories that keep the industry moving.



Season 3: ask the expert with David Lawrie

Launching in **March 2026**, Season 3 will feature a dedicated run titled **"Taxi Talk: Ask the Expert with David Lawrie."** This 20-episode series brings David Lawrie - one of the industry's most respected minds - into the studio for in-depth discussions and practical advice sessions that tackle the challenges and opportunities facing operators today. Each episode will focus on key topics such as fleet efficiency, technology and data, EV adoption, driver retention, customer service and industry regulation, with David offering clear, actionable insights drawn from decades of experience.

Why Taxi Talk matters



Taxi Talk isn't just another podcast - it's a community hub. Hosted by David Hunter, Jodie Wright, Chris Thalha, and Ashley Butcher, the show gives a genuine voice to an industry often overlooked in mainstream media. It celebrates the people behind the wheel and explores how innovation, technology, and collaboration are reshaping the private hire landscape.

With its mix of humour, expertise, and honest debate, Taxi Talk continues to highlight what makes this industry special - its people, its passion and its constant drive to adapt and improve.



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VAT REFORM MUST NOT LEAVE TRADITIONAL OPERATORS STRANDED

Article by Nia Cooper
Chief Legal Officer
veezu.
www.veezu.co.uk



In July, the Supreme Court delivered a unanimous and unequivocal verdict for operators across the country. The ruling confirmed that operators outside London remain free to choose their business model, whether agency, principal, or intermediary. It stopped Uber from reshaping the sector to suit its own interests and imposing a monopoly on passengers and driver-partners alike.

Despite this landmark ruling, the cloud of VAT on PHV fares still hangs heavy over the sector. With the Autumn Budget fast approaching, reports suggest the Treasury is once again looking to private hire as it searches for ways to fill a £50 billion fiscal gap. The government held off its response to the VAT consultation on PHV fares until after the Supreme Court's decision. While this created 12 months of uncertainty for the sector, we understood the logic. But now that the five justices have spoken clearly and unanimously, politics should not get in the way.

We are grateful to see the sector rally behind this issue, with 59 local, regional and national PHV operators coming together in a joint letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer urging the government to provide clarity. That unity shows just how deeply this issue cuts across our industry. Providing reassurance on VAT now would remove a needless headache for both ministers and operators alike and allow the government to focus on the far bigger issues it needs to address in next month's Budget.

That unity across the sector is all the more important because uncertainty hasn't stopped

others from exploiting the grey areas. What concerns us most is that, while all options remain on the table, some ride-hailers continue to apply VAT treatments that both the government and HMRC disagree with. The use of the Tour Operators Margin Scheme (TOMS) by large multinationals undermines the competitiveness of the market and could see the collapse of hundreds of small to medium-sized British-founded and based companies. If the so-called "Taxi Tax" would have been a blunt hit, TOMS is a slow squeeze - less visible, but every bit as damaging.

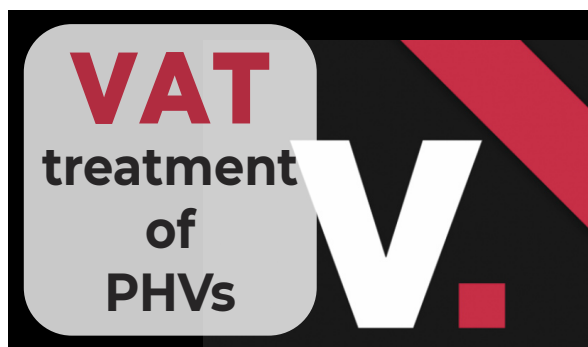
TOMS and the risk of distortion

Whether TOMS is applicable for use on PHV fares is currently subject to a legal process. In March this year, the Upper Tribunal's decision in *HMRC v Bolt Services UK Ltd* upheld Bolt's right to use TOMS.

The government's consultation on the VAT treatment of PHV fares proposed a specific margin scheme for the sector as a potential solution to the current VAT challenges. Veezu had supported this approach, provided that it is developed in a way that preserves the legal clarity on business models established by the Supreme Court's unanimous ruling in *Uber v Sefton*, is applied uniformly across the sector, and allows all operators sufficient time to implement the necessary administrative changes.

The immediate risk is that the government imposes 20% VAT on PHV fares while the application of TOMS remains unresolved and subject to a lengthy legal process. Under such circumstances, multinational platforms using TOMS would continue to pay VAT only on a reduced margin, whereas British-founded and based operators would face significantly higher costs due to the 20% increase in fares. This would risk entrenching the dominance of global tech giants at the expense of British businesses and further distort competition across the sector.

VEEZU: VAT TREATMENT OF PHVs



The 20% VAT threat

A blanket VAT rate of at least 20% on all PHV fares would be just as problematic. Treasury estimates have suggested such a measure could raise approximately £750 million annually; however, the accuracy of that figure is highly questionable. Additionally the revenue would come straight from passengers' pockets, as well as jeopardise the earnings of thousands of licensed drivers and their families.

The impact would be felt most acutely in places where PHVs are a necessity, not a luxury. The government's new Transport Connectivity Metric - developed by the Department for Transport (DfT) - measures how easily people can reach essential destinations such as jobs, schools, hospitals and shops within an hour. It provides a national picture of access to essential services, assigning each area a connectivity score from 0 to 100. The data reveals stark regional inequalities. London scores 84 out of 100, while Wales scores just 53, meaning the capital is almost 60% better connected. The South West (56), East of England (58), and West Midlands (64) perform only marginally better, leaving London approximately 40% more connected than the rest of the country.

The DfT's analysis also notes that driving is the "great equaliser", since it is the only mode that offers comparable access in rural areas. Yet for many households, access to a car is limited. In places where a single vehicle must cover the needs of an entire family, or where no car is available at all, PHVs often provide the only practical way to get to

work, school, hospital appointments, or home safely when public transport has stopped for the night.

Within Veezu, our data shows that more than 50% of rides support essential journeys such as healthcare, transport, and educational needs, while only 12% are for leisure. Should the government impose 20% VAT on PHV fares, then passengers who depend on regular and frequent PHV services, due to little or no public transport provision, will be subject to a huge jump in fares. For those on tight budgets, particularly individuals who rely on PHVs for basic mobility, even this increase can be the difference between staying connected and becoming effectively stranded.

Higher costs would not only affect passengers; tens of thousands of licensed drivers could also be forced out of the industry as demand for services declines. For operators of all sizes - from family-run firms to large national players - it would likely mean curtailed investments in cleaner, more efficient vehicles, stifling technological innovation, and ultimately dampening consumer confidence until the legal and taxation landscape becomes clearer. Taken together, these pressures risk eroding the key role that PHVs play in delivering affordable, round-the-clock transport to communities across the UK, leaving passengers to pay the price - both literally and figuratively.

The continued search for stability, simplicity and certainty

Whether the Budget brings clarity or prolonged uncertainty, we cannot afford to overlook the social and economic importance of PHVs. Any VAT reform that ignores that reality risks pricing out the very communities that depend on them most, while also stifling the industry's ability to innovate and grow.

Any reform must work equitably for rural communities, towns and cities alike, for homegrown businesses and big tech platforms, ensuring fair competition whilst keeping fares affordable for passengers who depend on these services every day.

JUST DESERTS

SEVEN YEARS' JAIL FOR MAN WHO ROBBED HULL CABBIE AND DEMANDED HE GET INTO BOOT

A Hull taxi driver's life was "shattered" after a menacing passenger threatened him with a kitchen knife, demanded cash, and then ordered him into the boot of his own car during a terrifying early-morning ordeal.

Dale Allison, 43, of Hull, was jailed for seven years and two months after admitting to robbery and causing criminal damage. He pleaded guilty on the day his trial was due to start.

The terrifying incident began when Allison booked a taxi in the early hours of March 25. Prosecutor Nick Murphy told Hull Crown Court that after arriving at the Boothferry estate, Allison refused to pay the £8.20 fare, instead pulling out a knife and pointing it towards the driver's chest, telling him: "Just give me everything you have."

After taking the driver's cash, Allison forced the man to drive to a nearby Asda car park, where he detained him for about 40 minutes.

Mr Murphy said: "The defendant ordered the victim to get out of his car to get into the boot."

The shocked driver "bravely refused" the order and managed to flee the scene before flagging down a second taxi driver for help. Allison followed the victim and stabbed the rear tyre of the second taxi driver's car before disappearing. The victim's impact statement revealed the "devastating" effect of the crime. "I couldn't sleep for a couple of days after the incident due to constantly reliving what had happened," the driver said, adding he felt "utterly powerless". He testified that the robbery had "shattered my confidence and my ability to do my job" and forced him to consider leaving the profession he loved.

In mitigation, Rachel Scott conceded that it was "terrible



offending" but argued the robbery was not planned, given Allison had booked the taxi in his own name. However, Judge John Thackray KC condemned the vicious attack on a vulnerable worker.

"All offences of robbery are serious but this is a particularly serious example," the Judge told Allison. "Taxi drivers play an extremely valuable role in society... They inevitably work alone and are therefore, to a degree, vulnerable." The Judge highlighted the prolonged threat, noting: "He must have been terrified. Brandishing a weapon as you were, he was undoubtedly terrified of what was going to happen to him and he bravely refused to get into the boot and managed to escape."

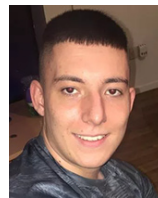
Allison was later arrested and initially denied the offences, claiming the two drivers were involved in a conspiracy to rob him. He had 19 previous convictions, including for assault and theft.

VIOLENT CO DOWN OFFENDER JAILED FOR ATTACK ON TAXI DRIVER

Jamie Love, 25, of Killyleagh was handed a three-year sentence at Belfast Crown Court on October 6, for assaulting a taxi driver. The sentence was split equally between custody and supervised licence.

The court heard that on February 12, 2023, police were called to a scene where they observed the wounded taxi driver "covered in blood" following the assault by Love. Sentencing him, Judge Gordon

Kerr KC stated the taxi driver was "providing a public service" and was "entitled to the court's protection." Love subsequently pleaded guilty to a charge of assault occasioning ABH. Judge Kerr noted Love's criminal record, which includes several prior violent offences, adding: "It's perfectly clear that this man has a



tendency to be a violent offender." In addition to the assault, Love was given a two-year conditional discharge for a separate charge of child cruelty that occurred on July 20, 2021.

Regarding the child cruelty charge, Judge Kerr noted that "the child is now safe and the defendant has no access to the child." He imposed the same conditional discharge on Love as he had previously given to the co-accused.

The Exchange

We are delighted to announce the launch of The Exchange. With the potential to encompass some 60,000 taxis in the UK and IE this network will be hands down the largest united pool of taxis available to passengers today. And it is all done through the local fleet. This means that a local taxi firm, who uses iCabbi taxi dispatch technology, can now offer their passengers access to local, national and soon, a global network. Critically, this collaborative approach to retaining, and winning bookings for the taxi and private hire sector serves to push ridehail back from taking over passenger transport in cities and towns across the UK, something that is becoming an ever growing problem as more and more councils issue licenses.



→ 60,000

Taxis in the UK and IE network



JUST DESERTS

KNIFEPOINT ROBBER SENTENCED TO 76 MONTHS IN JAIL FOR ASSAULTING CABBIE IN WORCESTER

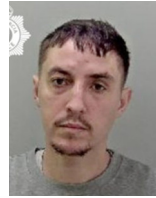
Paul Sheward, 38, has been sentenced to six years and four months in prison at Worcester Crown Court for a knife-point robbery and assault on a taxi driver. Sheward, of no fixed abode, previously pleaded guilty to robbery and two counts of possession of a bladed article in a public place.

The attack, which involved an accomplice, occurred around 7pm on September 13, 2024, on Foxwell Street in Worcester. The assailants wrongly believed the driver “had drugs in his car.”

Sheward threatened the driver with a knife, stealing “around £100 cash and a mobile phone.”

Police were able to identify Sheward after finding “discarded shopping” at the scene. CCTV footage from the Tesco on London Road showed “a man matching the attacker’s description purchasing the shopping,” which led to his positive identification.

Sheward was arrested on



September 16, 2024, where he was “again found to have a knife on him,” resulting in the second bladed article charge.

He received six years and four months for the robbery, with concurrent sentences of eight and ten months for the two counts of possession of a bladed article.

DC Cameron Chamberlain commented: “Sheward’s cowardly robbery on the taxi driver has rightly seen him given more than six years in prison and is another knife carrying criminal off our streets.”

KNIFE WIELDING THUG JAILED AFTER THREATENING TO KILL MIDDLESBROUGH TAXI DRIVER AND FAMILY

A Middlesbrough taxi driver was subjected to a terrifying ordeal when a passenger, Wakahs Nawaz, punched him, produced a four-inch knife, and threatened to kill him and his family.

The incident occurred on May 3 this year after the driver picked up Nawaz from the Longlands Hotel. Initially speaking in a “conversational tone,” Nawaz, who was intoxicated on drink or drugs, became violent after failing to get money from a cash machine.

According to prosecutor Rachel Butt, Nawaz “became aggressive and accused [the victim] of sleeping with his mother” before making “a threat to stab and kill not only him but his children and his mother.”

Nawaz then punched the cabbie, leaving him “dazed, confused and scared,” and produced a knife,

threatening to stab the victim and saying “he would be buried today,” Ms Butt told the court.

The driver managed to escape the vehicle after Nawaz was distracted, but not before Nawaz threatened to “rape his daughter,” Ms Butt said.

Nawaz then drove off in the taxi, which contained the driver’s phone and car key.

Another taxi driver stopped and helped the victim contact police. The mobile phone was tracked and Nawaz was arrested.

The victim said in a statement that he has been living in fear for himself and his family since the attack: “He made threats towards me and my family,” and “I honestly



believe if I had not got out of the taxi when I did, he would have stabbed me.”

Teesside Crown Court heard Nawaz had 23 previous convictions from 43 offences which include battery, causing actual bodily harm and inflicting grievous bodily harm.

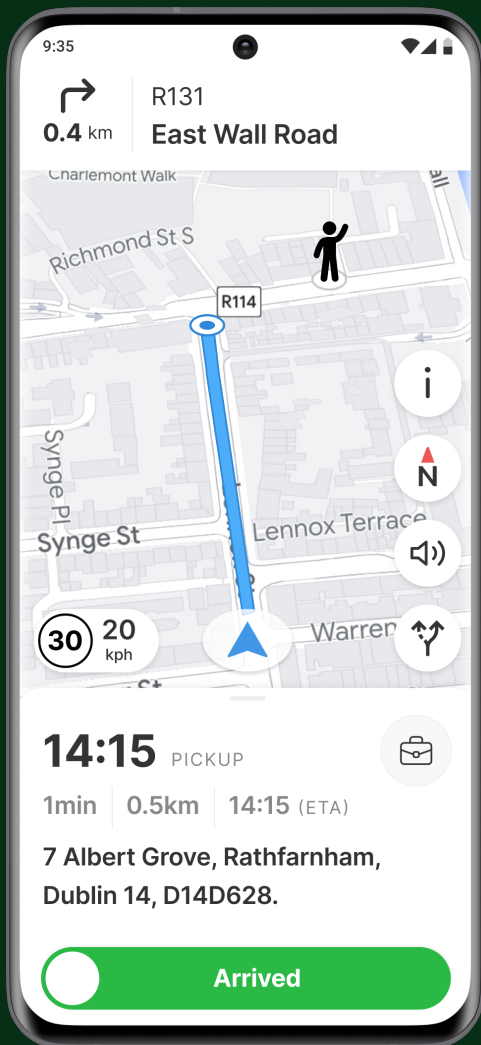
He pleaded guilty to making threats to kill, assault by beating, possession of a blade in public, stealing a motor vehicle, and theft from a person at Teesside Crown Court.

Judge Joanne Kidd told Nawaz she considers him “a real and serious risk” of similar offending, especially until he abides by a drug-free lifestyle.

He was handed an extended sentence of six years, consisting of four years in custody and two years on extended licence.

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ROBOTAXIS

DRIVERLESS TAXIS FROM WAYMO WILL BE ON LONDON'S ROADS NEXT YEAR

Waymo, the US autonomous vehicle company, announced plans on Wednesday, October 15, to launch its driverless taxi services in London next year, making the UK capital the first European city to host the "robotaxi" service. The move pits the new service against London's iconic black cabs.

Waymo's vehicles, currently on their way to London, will begin driving on the capital's streets in the coming weeks with "trained human specialists" (safety drivers) behind the wheel.

The company, a Google spin-off, plans to scale operations and work with Transport for London and the Department for Transport to secure permits for fully autonomous rides in 2026.

The launch is supported by Transport Secretary Heidi Alexander, who said: "I'm delighted that Waymo intends to bring their services to London next year, under our proposed piloting scheme." She added: "Boosting the AV sector will increase accessible transport options alongside bringing jobs, investment and opportunities to the UK."

However, the plans met opposition from the Licensed Taxi Drivers' Association. General secretary Steve McNamara dismissed the technology, stating: "It's a fairground ride... It's a tourist attraction in San Francisco. Quite frequently one of them will lock up in the middle of a junction because it gets confused and the police have to come and park, wait for the Waymo man to get his laptop out and get it going again." He added: "The press releases are a



bit misleading, firstly they are not 'taxis'. Taxis are funny looking black vehicles with a big illuminated sign on the front that says 'Taxi'.

"Secondly they are not driverless, they will have a safety 'driver' in the car at all times.

"But even accepting the misnaming and hype, when they are eventually deem themselves safe to go autonomous in London, who will be the minister to actually sign off on them?

"I suspect there won't be a queue and come the day of the first fatality or serious accident that minister could become the Michael Fish of government, remembered only for his disastrous prediction!

"London is not San Francisco or like any grid city seen in the States, dealing with the idiot drivers, mad cyclists, drunks etc will prove challenging, frustrated drivers will quickly catch on that the lidar dome on the roof is an invitation to pull out of a side street or change lanes with little or no notice, as the ultra cautious car will always slam the brakes on to give way.

"How long before the kids who hack Lime bikes figure a way to hack the cars, or worse still 'Waymo roof surfing' becomes a thing for Tik Tok.

"I don't think London Cabbies

need worry just yet!"

He said ride-hailing apps such as Uber and Lyft might welcome the technology because it would reduce the cost of hiring drivers.

Meanwhile, the Waymo press release stated: "Over the coming months, we'll lay the

groundwork for our service in collaboration with our fleet operations partner Moove, and continue to engage with local and national leaders to secure the necessary permissions for our commercial ride-hailing service in London.

Waymo co-chief executive Takeda Mawakana championed the technology for "making roads safer and transportation more accessible," adding: "We've demonstrated how to responsibly scale fully autonomous ride-hailing, and we can't wait to expand the benefits of our technology to the UK."

The company cited data showing that "cars driven by humans were involved in incidents that injured pedestrians 12 times more often than its autonomous vehicles."

Waymo maintains that it can help achieve London's transport priorities, including ambitious targets for reducing the number of people killed or seriously injured on the city's roads.

A fuller rollout is expected after the Automated Vehicles Act takes full effect in late 2027. Waymo's competitors, Uber and UK tech company Wayve, also "have also announced their own plans to trial their driverless taxis in the capital next year."

NEW YORK CITY EXTENDS WAYMO DRIVERLESS CAR TRIAL IN MANHATTAN

The trial programme for driverless vehicles in New York City has been extended through to the end of the year.

Waymo, the company running the programme and also operating in several other U.S. cities, received the extension from the

Department of Transportation to continue its pilot in Manhattan.

The DoT granted access on the condition that an operator remains in the driver's seat during the tests. The programme, which ran over the summer, has generated significant opposition

from local taxi and livery drivers who view it as a threat to their employment.

Uber and Lyft drivers, scared for their jobs, have collected more than 7,700 signatures on a petition calling to ban self-driving cars across New York state.

WAYMO UK DRIVERLESS TAXIS ROLLOUT HIGHLIGHTS LEGAL GAPS

The UK is poised to be the first European country to introduce Waymo's driverless taxi service, starting with a supervised fleet and moving to fully autonomous operations by 2026. However, legal experts warn that the UK's current legal framework is "fundamentally incompatible" with the technology. Waymo plans to "start with a small fleet and gradually expand, working closely with the DfT and TfL to ensure safety and regulatory compliance at every stage," says Ethan Teicher of Waymo.

Lawyers have raised significant concerns about liability, telling City AM that the existing system is unprepared for driverless cars.

Ernest Aduwa, partner at Stokoe Partnership Solicitors, stated: "Our current system of motoring offences is built upon a fundamental, and until now, unshakeable principle, the principle of human agency. Every driving offence requires a culpable human mind behind the wheel."

He added that the arrival of truly driverless cars "shatters this principle and forces us to confront a legal vacuum," asking: "If a

driverless car exceeds the speed limit, crashes into another vehicle/property, or causes injury, who carries the blame? Is it Waymo? The car manufacturer? Or the software engineer who wrote the code?"

The concern is amplified by Waymo's US collision record, which includes 398 collisions as of June 2025.

Legal professionals are calling for scrutiny of the new **Automated Vehicles Act 2024**, which became law in May 2024.

Darius Latham-Koenig, Associate at Grosvenor Law, noted that the "legal questions of liability are yet to be adequately resolved, particularly in an accident scenario," and that the Act's implementation "should be heavily scrutinised to ensure legal clarification."

William Smith, partner at Addleshaw Goddard, agreed that "The legislative framework is in place, but there is still a lot of detail to be fleshed out, particularly around liability, enforcement and data governance."

The new law introduces a category of "**authorised self-driving entities**," which will be held to high

safety standards.

Andrew Sanderson, partner at Kingsley Napley, explained: "These entities, not human drivers, will be held to safety standards equal to or better than those of a competent driver. This shift means liability in the event of an accident could rest with software developers, manufacturers, fleet operators, or even infrastructure providers, not just the person behind the wheel."

He added that the law updates the previous Act (2018) by addressing complex issues such as cybersecurity and data sharing, and that it represents a "wake-up call" for insurers and transport companies. Sanderson concluded: "The traditional fault-based model is being replaced by a system-centric approach. New insurance products are emerging to separate human error from system failure, and regulators are demanding clarity on cybersecurity, data sharing, and operational protocols."

The true impact of the new law remains untested, and legal professionals are warned to be ready for a landscape "where liability is shared, complex, and constantly evolving."

FIT AND PROPER

TRAFFORD PRIVATE HIRE DRIVER GUILTY OF PLYING FOR HIRE AND OVERCHARGING

A private hire driver has had his licence revoked after he illegally picked up a fare outside Old Trafford and charged £35 for a four-mile journey.

Rehan Mirza, 42 from Crumpsall, was waiting in his Mercedes at the hackney rank on Sir Matt Busby Way after a Manchester United Premier League match on November 10 last year.

He picked up a United fan, and his seven-year-old son, and took them to Piccadilly train station. Mirza insisted the journey cost £35.

The suspicious fan paid up but later complained to Trafford Council.

Their licensing enforcement team carried out an investigation, and found Mirza had been had been illegally plying for fares at the rank and hence driving without insurance.

His private hire licence was revoked, in his absence, at a meeting of Trafford Council's licensing sub-committee.

He was also recently prosecuted and pleaded guilty at Manchester Magistrates Court to charges of illegally plying for hire, permitting any other vehicle other than a hackney carriage to wait in a stand, and driving without insurance.

He was fined £250, ordered to pay

a surcharge of £100 and costs of £300.

A spokesperson for Trafford council said in a statement issued after the hearing: "Once again our Licensing Enforcement Team has demonstrated a continued dedication to hold drivers, who put the public at risk, accountable for their actions. "Only Trafford licensed hackney vehicles can pick customers up without a pre-booked fare outside Old Trafford.

"Our enforcement team continues to proactively patrol Old Trafford on match days and respond to complaints to ensure decisive action is taken where necessary."

PRIVATE HIRE DRIVER FINED AND GIVEN POINTS FOR ILLEGAL PICK UP IN MILTON KEYNES

A Milton Keynes private hire driver has been hit with a hefty fine and penalty points after he was found guilty of illegally picking up passengers during a council operation.

Loay Khojali received a £1,111 fine and six DVLA penalty points after

he was caught in a test purchase sting run by Milton Keynes City Council.

Khojali approached council staff on the High Street in Stony Stratford and offered a ride without a legal pre-booking, driving them to the Xscape

building for £15.

At Milton Keynes Magistrates Court, Khojali pleaded guilty to touting, illegally plying for hire, and driving without insurance.

Buckinghamshire Council is now reviewing his private hire licence following the conviction.

Mick Legg, Cabinet member for regulatory affairs at Milton Keynes City Council, issued a firm statement on the matter: "This case sends a clear message that we take public safety very seriously."

He stressed the legal requirements for private hire operators, adding: "Private hire drivers must follow the law and only accept pre-booked journeys. We'll continue to work hard to protect residents and visitors in our city."

FINE & POINTS FOR BRADFORD PH DRIVER GUILTY OF PLYING IN LEEDS

A Bradford PH driver has pleaded guilty to illegally plying for hire in Leeds. Leeds taxi and PH licensing enforcement officers investigated and prosecuted Bradford licensed private hire driver, Aqib Hussain, for plying for hire and having no insurance on the 12 April 2025, in

Leeds City Centre.

On the 30 September 2025 at Kirklees Magistrates Court, Mr Hussain pleaded guilty to the offences and received a fine of £466 plus court costs of £420, and his driving licence was endorsed with 8 penalty points.



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READING PRIVATE HIRE DRIVER'S LICENCE REVOCATION FOR ILLEGAL PLYING UPHELD

A court has dismissed the appeal of a private hire driver from Reading, Shabuddin Parvas, over the revocation of his licence for illegally plying for hire.

Parvas had appealed a decision by Reading Borough Council to revoke his licence after he was caught operating illegally during a multi-agency covert operation at the Henley Royal Regatta on July 5,

2024.

During the operation, Parvas was found to have offered to transport six passengers from Henley to Reading for £60 without a prior booking.

Appearing before Reading Magistrates' Court on Tuesday, October 14, the court upheld the council's decision and ordered Parvas to pay £700 toward the

council's court costs.

Councillor John Ennis, lead councillor for climate strategy and transport, commented on the outcome: "The result sends a strong message that illegal activity won't be ignored."

He affirmed the council's commitment to safety, noting they "will continue to ensure visitors to the event are kept safe."

NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL GRANTS MAN TAXI DRIVER'S LICENCE DESPITE SPEEDING CONVICTION

North Ayrshire Licensing Committee has granted a taxi driver's licence to Scott Craig for one year, despite an objection from Police Scotland regarding a speeding conviction from September 15 at Glasgow City Justice of the Peace Court. The court found that on February 19, Mr. Craig drove an HGV at 76mph in a 50mph zone on

the M74. He was fined £155, and had his licence endorsed.

Mr. Craig admitted his speed "crept up" as he was "running a bit late" while working, but conceded "there was no excuse for that."

Councillor John Bell remarked that 76mph in a 50mph zone was "quite excessive."

Despite the police objection, the

committee unanimously agreed to grant the licence.

Chair Eleanor Collier warned Mr Craig stating: "If there were any further endorsements, we would need to know as it could result in further action, so do not speed and drive safely because we are putting our trust in you with the people of North Ayrshire."

GLASGOW LICENSING COMMITTEE GRANTS TAXI LICENCE TO DRINK DRIVER

Glasgow's licensing committee has approved a taxi driver's licence for Mason Mullen, despite objections from Police Scotland regarding a 2018 drink-driving incident.

Police Scotland objected to the application, with an officer telling councillors that the applicant had driven without "due care and attention or without reasonable consideration" for others.

The officer detailed how Mr. Mullen's vehicle had "collided with a road sign on the footpath, causing his vehicle to spin onto the carriageway."

The officer added that Mr. Mullen failed a roadside breath test, which initially showed he had 89mcg in 100ml breath - around four times the legal limit (22mcg). A later test at the police station found him to have 43mcg of alcohol in 100ml of

breath.

Mr. Mullen was handed a one-year driving ban and a £350 fine in 2018. Before the committee, Mr. Mullen described his actions as "stupid," but noted he has not been in trouble since and submitted character references.

Ultimately, the committee decided to grant him the licence but issued him with a warning over his conduct.



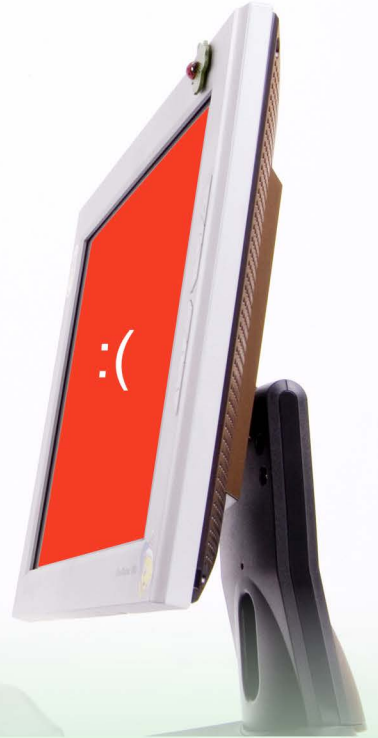
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BOLTON COUNCIL REFUSES PHV DRIVER'S LICENCE RENEWAL OVER ALLEGED SEXUAL ASSAULT

A PHV driver in Bolton had his licence renewal application rejected by Bolton Council's licensing committee after considering an allegation of sexual assault against a female passenger.

The committee deliberated on the application and took into account a complaint from September 27, 2022. The details of the allegation, as set out in a report to the panel, stated that the passenger woke up to a horrifying situation: "The

passenger passed out in the vehicle, upon coming around, the driver was on top of her, grabbing and licking her breasts.

"When the passenger managed to get out of the vehicle, she noticed her belt was undone as well as the button and zip on her trousers."

The applicant denied the allegations, but the committee "found the allegations to be credible and were concerned for those who travel alone in his vehicle."

In coming to their unanimous decision to reject the application, the panel also considered:

- Twelve previous complaints recorded by his PH operator.
- Alleged disregard of warnings given in 2021 and 2022.
- Previous breaches of his licence conditions before its expiry.

The hearing proceeded in the applicant's absence after he made a second request for adjournment and failed to attend.

STOCKTON COUNCIL REFUSES TAXI LICENCE OVER CRASH AND DRIVING OFFENCES

A Stockton taxi driver has been denied the renewal of his licence after a council committee heard conflicting accounts of a crash in Norton, where another motorist claimed the driver was "looking at his phone" moments before the collision.

The incident on Crooks Barn Lane, Norton, at 4:30 pm on March 3, was reviewed by Stockton Council's licensing committee as the unnamed driver applied to renew his hackney carriage and private hire licence.

The other motorist involved claimed the taxi driver was "not paying attention to the road as he was looking at his mobile telephone". He told the committee he was trapped in his vehicle after the collision and that the driver initially apologised and "accepted the collision was his fault," only to deny it later.

The complainant added the driver was "clearly looking downwards as

he turned the corner," seemingly distracted by a mobile device or "pressing something, possibly a map."

The taxi driver disputed the other motorist's account, claiming the other car caused the crash by entering his lane at speed around a corner. While denying he was distracted, the driver did "admit looking at a device to see where he needed to go." His representative, David Wilson, described the crash as potentially a "quirk of timing and fate" and maintained the driver was "not distracted in any way."

However, the committee also heard the driver's licence showed 10 DVLA penalty points. He accepted he had committed two speeding offences in seven months and expected to accumulate seven or more points once those matters concluded, though he denied and was appealing a 2024 offence of failing to give driver information. In reaching a unanimous decision

to refuse the licence, the committee noted the driver's conduct and attitude. Minutes from the meeting state the driver "appeared to dispute matters repeatedly" and "did not appear to offer any mitigation in relation to the speeding offences that he accepted guilt for," instead suggesting such errors were a "fait accompli" for anyone driving for a number of years."

The committee expressed serious reservations, concluding that members "were not persuaded that [the driver] was a fit and proper person, as they found that they had too many doubts in relation to the matters of concern before them."

The committee added that they were "not satisfied that they would allow people for whom they care to enter a vehicle with [the driver] due to their doubts surrounding his history of driving-related incidents and offences."

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HOW TO STAY SANE AND SMILING: YOUR SURVIVAL GUIDE (WITH A DASH OF HUMOUR)

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



Introduction

Running a private hire or taxi company is not for the faint-hearted. If you've ever been woken at 3am by a panicked driver ("The sat-nav's taken me to Narnia!"), juggled customer complaints like a circus performer, or tried to explain to a staff member that "lost and found" doesn't mean "keep it if it's shiny," then congratulations: you're an everyday hero. But even heroes need a break. This guide will help you keep your mental health in check - and maybe even your sense of humour - while you steer your business through rush hours, regulatory changes, and the occasional existential crisis.

1. Recognising stress (and laughing in its face)

Let's be honest, stress is as much a part of running a taxi business as the humble air freshener. The important thing is to spot when you're getting overwhelmed. Common warning signs include: snapping at your phone before it even rings, treating the office kettle as your confidant, or considering "closed for lunch" as an escape plan.

Pro tip: Keep a "stress diary" - not just for venting, but to spot patterns (like the fact that Kevin always forgets his shift on Mondays).

- **Driver drama:** Rescheduling drivers is like herding caffeinated cats. Make it a team activity: whoever solves the weekly rota puzzle fastest wins a chocolate bar (or, more realistically, eternal gratitude).
- **Staff Shenanigans:** If office debates over whose turn it is to buy biscuits get heated, remember: laughter is the best de-escalator. Unless you run out of biscuits. Then, run.
- **Customer Curiosities:** Yes, some people do believe taxis can teleport. Smile, and add "quantum physicist" to your secret CV.

2. Boundaries and the elusive work-life balance

If you feel like your workday never ends, you're not alone. But you can set boundaries, even if your phone disagrees.

- **Office Hours:** Set a "no calls after 7pm" rule. If anyone complains, blame it on your dog's unionised walk schedule.
- **Delegation:** Hand off tasks! If you're too busy to breathe, it's time to trust someone else with the spreadsheet. (Bonus: they may even fix the formulas you've been ignoring.)
- **Breaks:** Schedule real breaks. Step outside. Take a deep breath. Wave at a passing taxi and resist the urge to check if it's one of yours.
- **Family and friends:** Let them know you exist! It's rumoured some people outside the taxi world have fascinating conversations that don't involve fuel prices.

3. Communication: the art of not losing your mind

Clear communication is like oil for your engine - it prevents breakdowns and costly repairs (of relationships).

- **Team huddles:** Short, regular catch-ups let everyone share updates, problems, and, if needed, therapy over last night's football score.
- **Open door policy:** Let drivers and staff know you're always available for a chat - except during "emergency biscuit consumption."
- **Humour in conflicts:** When disputes arise, make a joke if the moment's right. ("Let's settle this the old-fashioned way: rock, paper, scissors!")
- **Celebrate wins:** Recognise good work. "Driver of the Month" can come with a trophy, or at least an official crown made of receipts.

4. Supporting your team (and yourself!)

A happy company runs better - and so does your brain.

- **Mental health resources:** Keep helpline numbers on hand and normalise talking about stress. You could even invite a guest speaker - just not the one who tried to sell you motivational tambourines.

AND TAXI COMPANY OWNERS



- **Buddy system:** Pair up staff or drivers for peer support. It's like a buddy cop movie, only with less chasing and more tea.
- **Recognition:** Never underestimate the power of a handwritten "thank you" note. Or, for the modern touch, a meme in the staff WhatsApp group.

5. Customers: the good, the bad, and the hilarious

Not every ride goes smoothly. Some customers are delightful, some... well, they provide stories for future dinner parties.

- **Training:** Teach drivers and staff the basics of de-escalation: "Let me see what I can do," works wonders. So does, "I'm sorry your dog also wanted a seatbelt."
- **Clear policies:** Display clear rules in the office and vehicles. If customers ask why no karaoke is allowed, tell them you're saving voices for the finals.
- **Don't take it personally:** Most grumpy passengers are just having a bad day - sometimes because their driver took them to the wrong Narnia.

6. Self-care: because even managers need TLC

Remember, you can't pour from an empty petrol tank (or coffee cup).

- **Move your body:** Dancing around your office totally counts as exercise.
- **Eat and sleep:** Replacing meals with crisps and coffee is not a long-term strategy. And despite myths, staring at spreadsheets does not replace a good night's sleep.

- **Connect:** Find a peer group - other transport company owners, or just someone who understands the heartbreak of a flat tyre.
- **Laugh:** Collect funny stories. Share them at meetings. Laughter can be the best defuser after a stressful day.

7. Professional help: not just for TV detectives

If things get too overwhelming, there's absolutely no shame in seeking help from a GP or therapist. In fact, the bravest thing you can do is admit when you need a hand - preferably one not holding a taxi radio.

- **Confidential support:** Many transport trade associations offer helplines and resources tailored to your industry. Don't wait until you're Googling "how to open a stress ball."

8. Building resilience (or how to bounce back like a well-tuned suspension)

- **Learn from challenges:** Next time something goes wrong, write down the lesson. If the lesson is "never let Gary near the office keys," that's valid.
- **Celebrate everything:** Did you get through Monday without a single lost booking? That's cause for (responsible) celebration!
- **Mindfulness:** Try meditation, even if it's just three deep breaths in the car park. Remind yourself that you're doing your best.

Conclusion

Running a private hire or taxi company will always have its ups and downs - much like a ride over cobblestones. But with boundaries, good humour, strong relationships, and the occasional cup of tea, you can keep your mind healthy and your business thriving. And remember: when in doubt, take a deep breath, share a laugh, and maybe hide in the break room for five minutes (just not when the phones are ringing).

Happy driving - and don't forget to check the back seat for leftover sandwiches.

IT'S GOOD TO TALK

If you're feeling depressed, anxious or can't sleep speak to your GP, they are there to help, or contact

www.mind.org.uk www.anxietyuk.org.uk

DRUGS IN CABS

NEWPORT CABBIE ORDERED TO REPAY £128,000 AFTER BEING CAUGHT WITH COCAINE IN HIS CAB

Mohammed Yamin, 55, a cabbie from Newport, has been ordered to pay back £128,409 after being caught transporting 2kg of “high-purity cocaine” in his cab. He was stopped and searched by police in May 2023, near Pontllanfraith.

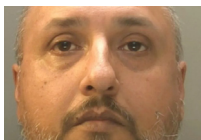
Detective Constable Hackney of Gwent Police confirmed that Yamin “played a significant role in the distribution of wholesale amounts of cocaine.”

He added: “Officers found 2kg of high-purity cocaine that was being

taken to the Blackwood area.” Further searches found “£17,000 in cash.” Yamin

was found guilty of possession with intent to supply Class A drugs and was sentenced to six years and six months imprisonment.

At a Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA) hearing on October 9, Cardiff Crown Court heard that Yamin had benefited to the tune of £128,409



from his criminal activity.

Judge Daniel Williams ordered him to pay this full amount within three months. If he fails to pay the sum, Yamin will serve an additional 15 months’ imprisonment in default.

DC Hackney welcomed the outcome, saying he hopes the sentence “acts not only as a warning to others tempted to engage in such criminality but reassures the community that we are committed to targeting those involved in drug supply.”

CABBIE ARRESTED ON DRUGS CHARGES AFTER POLICE PURSUIT IN ST HELENS

A 29-year-old man was arrested on October 12, following a police pursuit of a taxi in St Helens.

The incident began around 11pm when officers attempted to stop a Kia Niro taxi that drove through a road closure. The taxi failed to stop, leading to a pursuit that ended when the car stopped on Carole Close in Sutton Leach. The driver fled the vehicle but was “detained nearby,” police said.

Following a search, a package of “suspected Class A drugs” was found in a nearby garden, and “bags of cannabis” along with a “large quantity of cash” were found. Further cash was seized after a search of a property. The man was arrested on suspicion of:

- Possession with intent to supply Class A and B drugs
- Dangerous driving
- Drug driving

● Failing to stop

● Possession of criminal property

The man is currently in custody, and inquiries are ongoing.

Matrix Roads Policing Inspector Emma Haffenden praised the officers’ actions saying: “Thanks to the observations and quick thinking of our officers they were able to pursue and detain the driver and seize a large quantity of suspected Class A and B drugs.”

She issued a strong warning to criminals: “My message to those involved in drugs supply and serious organised crime is clear – Merseyside Police will never rest, we are relentless in our pursuit of those involved.”

She also appealed to the public: “Information from the public is vital if we are to breakdown the organised crime groups who bring misery to our streets and I would appeal to anyone who has information to come forward.”

CABBIE ACCUSED OF TRANSPORTING COCAINE WORTH £160K ON M6

A taxi driver, Nehat Cetin, 46, has been accused of transporting cocaine with an estimated street value of £160,000 along the M6 motorway in Cumbria.

Cetin, of Kegworth, Leicestershire, appeared at Carlisle’s Rickergate court and “entered a not guilty

plea” to the charge of possessing the class A drug with intent to supply. The alleged offence took place on October 20.

Magistrates sent the case to Carlisle Crown Court for a hearing on November 25, and Cetin “was remanded in custody.”

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Article by ReviewMaster
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VEEZU: MY AFRICA ADVENTURE

Article by Paul Dolan
Commercial Director
Veezu - www.veezu.co.uk

veezu.

From 25th October to 2nd November, I will be travelling to Kenya to take part in a volunteering programme organised by Port Vale FC and African Adventures. Alongside a team of volunteers from across different industries, I will spend a week at St Trizah School in Nakuru, Kenya taking part in teaching, sports coaching and important building work around the school. This is an entirely new experience for me and something that will definitely test my skills – particularly my DIY abilities, which my wife has not hesitated to remind me.

As I get closer to the day of departure the reality, and uncertainty, of what I am about to do has started to set in. The mix of excitement and anxiety is growing, but so is the sense of purpose. In our day-to-day lives it is easy to focus narrowly and lose perspective on things. We often forget the privileges we enjoy just by virtue of where we are born and live. Problems such as lack of Wi-Fi on the train, access to a decent coffee and a delayed Amazon package can dominate our thinking, when ultimately these are mild inconveniences compared to the hardship that millions of people encounter daily.

African Adventures Foundation has a mission to provide more children with education and better opportunities in life. The foundation partners with 34 schools across Ghana, Kenya and Zanzibar to provide education, health and food security, as well as social support to young people who have no or limited access to the types of services that we take for granted.

I am really proud and humbled to be contributing a small, but hopefully impactful, effort towards their mission.

This type of programme requires ongoing financial and volunteer support. I am very grateful to Veezu, iCabbi, Taxi Butler, Dotted and Airpay for their financial and moral support for my volunteering.



Arnie Singh, Chief Commercial Officer at Veezu said:

"Everyone at Veezu is really proud of Paul's trip to Kenya to volunteer for African Adventures. He is doing something that will provide opportunities for others and challenge his own capabilities. We are excited to hear about his experience and hopefully learn something ourselves. Please support Paul in any way you can by sponsoring his volunteering efforts."

All aspects of the trip are self-funded, so in addition to my corporate support, I have set up a GoFundMe page which you can access here:

<https://shorturl.at/FKUuO>

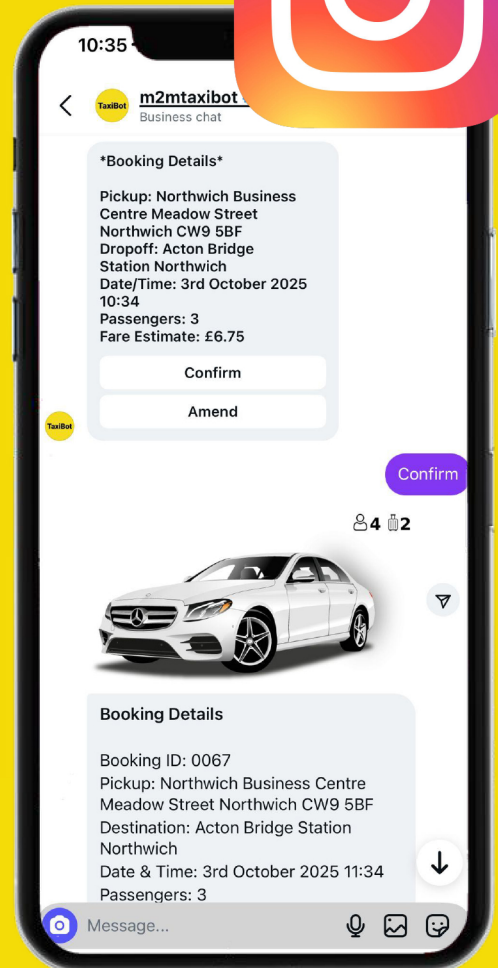
Whatever you can give will be gratefully appreciated and will make a genuine difference to the lives of children who have not had the start in life that we all enjoy.

Anything worth doing in life takes you out of your comfort zone and that is definitely the case for me when it comes to this trip. I know it will be a huge learning experience for me and I hope I come back with some different perspectives and life lessons that can be shared.

Thanks in advance for your support and generosity.

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ROUND THE COUNCILS

CORNWALL:

SCRAPPING TAXI ZONES WARNING

Falmouth taxi drivers are raising the alarm over potential “serious consequences” for passengers and local livelihoods if Cornwall Council proceeds with a plan to scrap the county's current six taxi licensing zones and create a single operating area.

Cornwall taxis are currently licensed across six separate zones - Penwith, Kerrier, Carrick, Restormel, North Cornwall, and Caradon - a system based on the former district councils and maintained since the unitary authority was established in 2009.

Drivers are only permitted to pick up passengers in their licensed area, and fare tariffs vary between zones. Cornwall Council has opened a consultation on the proposal, arguing that creating a single licensing zone would align with Government guidance, simplify the system for passengers, improve overall taxi availability, and lead to a fairer framework. The council has stressed that existing taxi ranks would remain unchanged.

However, local drivers fear the deregulation would allow taxis from anywhere in Cornwall to operate in towns such as Falmouth, leading to an “influx of unfamiliar drivers” who lack local expertise and rely heavily on satellite navigation.

David Kendall, a Falmouth taxi driver with 43 years of experience, warned that the change could undermine quality and safety standards.

“The influx of drivers from other districts, relying solely on satellite navigation systems, has led to significant issues,” Kendall said. “These drivers often lack essential local knowledge, resulting in overcharging and substandard service for passengers.”

He added that “Deregulation undermines the licensing department's mission to safeguard the public by ensuring drivers meet rigorous standards of professionalism and local expertise.”

The drivers' concerns have been heightened by the recent licensing of Uber in Cornwall, which many fear, combined with deregulation, could threaten the viability of traditional taxi services and diminish the quality of transport options for residents.

The Falmouth Taxi Association is now urging residents to support their local drivers by participating in the council's consultation before any final decision is made.

Cornwall Council's consultation can be found at <https://letstalk.cornwall.gov.uk/taxi-zones>

DUNDEE:

UNIFORM RULES CHALLENGED

A group of Dundee taxi drivers has strongly pushed back against the city's mandatory uniform policy, claiming the existing rules pose a risk to their health and are “unsafe.”

The backlash follows a reminder issued by Dundee City Council in August, which warned drivers could lose their licences for failing to comply with the dress code. The reminder came amid concerns about some drivers wearing “football attire,” shorts, and tracksuits while on duty.

Current rules mandate a dress shirt, blouse, or polo shirt, with dress-type trousers or a skirt, and dress shoes, boots, or dress sandals.

The council's stance had previously been welcomed by some in the industry, with one cabbie telling The Courier: “I've seen drivers in baseball caps and tracksuit bottoms. I'm pleased efforts are being made to address the issue.”

However, in a recent letter to the newspaper, an anonymous group of drivers - signing off as “a collection of local cabbies” - argued the policy is severely outdated and called for the council to bring its policy “into the 21st century.”

“Dundee taxi drivers deserve better than a dress code that belongs in another era,” the letter stated.

“Forcing us into leather shoes, formal trousers and shirts might look tidy on paper, but in reality, it is unsafe, unhealthy and out of step with modern working standards.”

The group specifically cited overheating and dehydration during summer months, as well as the impracticality of the attire when helping customers with heavy shopping.

They even suggested the smarter clothes inhibit them from doing light exercises between jobs, affecting their ability to stay active.

The cabbies propose modern work wear as a sensible alternative, arguing: “It is entirely possible to look smart, presentable and respectful in modern work wear, smart trainers, loose trousers, or tailored shorts in summer.”

The group concluded that their objection is not about fashion, but “a matter of safety, dignity and basic health.”

A Dundee City Council spokesman responded simply by stating: “Taxi drivers can raise issues directly with the city council if they have any concerns.”

ROUND THE COUNCILS

HARTLEPOOL:

YELLOW TAXI COLOUR CONSULTATION

Hartlepool's trademark yellow taxis may be headed for a colour change, as the borough council's licensing committee has agreed to launch a public consultation on the issue.

The review comes after concerns were raised by Blueline Group managing director, Ian Shank, about the financial burden of the current policy which dictates that hackneys "must be professionally painted or wrapped to a non-standard production shade of yellow." Mr Shank wrote to the council arguing the expense of using a "non-standard colour" which negatively impacts "the dwindling hackney trade." The letter highlighted that wrapping or spraying vehicles to the current standard "now costs more than £2,000 – 'on top of the vehicle price' – suggesting a "more practical and cost-effective choice" would benefit both the trade and the public. He proposed that partially wrapped or liveried designs retaining the distinctive colour "could be achieved at a much lower cost."

Despite the potential savings, some councillors voiced strong reservations at the licensing committee meeting on October 24 including the fact that yellow taxis are instantly recognisable as being local and that a new colour scheme would be a "massive change to a lot of people."

Council reports noted that the HC and PH working group has already been consulted, with three responses objecting to the move.

The public consultation on hackney carriage colour requirements is expected to begin in January 2026. This follows a 2019 consultation where councillors voted to keep the vehicles yellow, aligning with the majority of responses at the time.

OLDHAM:

TAXI TESTING RULES CHANGED

Oldham Council has announced a significant change to its licensed vehicle testing process to alleviate pressure on its testing capacity and "cut waiting times." Effective last month, taxi and PH drivers will be allowed to have their mid-year vehicle tests conducted at any DVSA-approved test centre, instead of being restricted solely to the council's facility.

This decision follows consultation with local drivers and is expected to "free up around 2,000 test slots,"

which will reduce delays for new applications, renewals, and re-tests, as the number of registered drivers has recently soared.

Cllr Elaine Taylor, Cabinet Member for Licensing, stated: "These changes will make a real difference by freeing up testing capacity, cutting waiting times and ensuring vehicles remain safe and roadworthy."

The council will continue to carry out all initial vehicle tests at its own facility to maintain a focus on safety and high licensing standards.

BOLTON:

AGE CAP FOR HACKNEYS LIFTED

Members of Bolton Council's Licensing Committee have backed proposals to remove the age cap and instead require all licensed HCs and PHVs to meet emissions standards by 31 August 2030.

This change brings Bolton into line with the Greater Manchester Clean Air Plan and DfT guidance, which warns councils against setting arbitrary age limits.

Officials said older but well-maintained vehicles can often be cleaner than newer petrol or diesel cars, and that twice-yearly MoTs and compliance tests will ensure safety standards remain high.

Since 2004, HCs in Bolton could not be licensed if they were more than 10 years old at first grant, or more than 15 years at renewal. Councillors were told keeping that rule risked drivers missing out on government funding and left many struggling to meet the previous compliance deadline of December 2025.

Figures show 54 HCs and 319 PHVs in Bolton are not currently compliant with Euro 6 diesel or Euro 4 petrol standards. The new 2030 deadline reflects delays in government funding and negotiations between GM councils and ministers, with leaders across the region keen to avoid "licence shopping" between boroughs. The government has set aside £8m in Clean Taxi Fund grants for HVs across Greater Manchester, with support offered on a tiered basis.

However, no funding has yet been confirmed for PH drivers which has left many in the industry frustrated. Labour councillor Donaghy warned that HCs, while declining in number, still play a crucial role while licensing manager, Patricia Clyne, told the committee hackney numbers have "dropped to nearly half" of pre-Covid levels. She said the high cost of purpose-built vehicles, combined with the growth of booking apps, had hit the trade hard, but added that removing the age policy could encourage new drivers to join.

ROUND THE COUNCILS

WESTMORLAND: NEW LICENSING STANDARDS

A new Taxi Licencing Policy proposed by Westmorland and Furness Council aims to ensure consistently high standards of taxi services across the area so that passengers can expect safe, professional and reliable journeys wherever they travel. The six-week community conversation marks the beginning of an important journey to bring together services following Local Government Reorganisation in 2023 which joined four councils under a single authority.

As varying policies and practices were adopted from former county and district councils, taxi drivers and operators currently work to different rules and regulations in Eden, Furness or South Lakeland.

Westmorland and Furness Council's new policy aims to ensure that all hackney carriage and private hire drivers follow national best practices, improving vehicle standards, reducing harmful emissions, protecting the environment and ensuring passenger safety.

The community conversation invites drivers to share their views on how the proposed changes may affect their work and what they feel would be a reasonable timeframe for introducing the new standards. It will also help the council understand taxi users' experiences and what is most important to them.

- The proposed changes would remove the existing operating zones for hackney carriage vehicles which currently restrict drivers to applying for a licence within only one of the former council areas.
- This would allow all hackney carriage drivers and vehicles licensed by the council to operate for hire anywhere in Westmorland and Furness.
- Licence types would also be revitalised, making it easier for drivers to operate both hackney carriage and private hire vehicles under a single dual licence and for one fee. This positive change would reduce costs for drivers and give them greater flexibility to work across the taxi and private hire trade in the area.
- Unlike the current approach in Eden and South Lakeland where vehicle age restrictions apply, under the new policy there is no age limit. Instead, it focuses on environmental performance and safety, reflecting the council's commitment to ecological awareness and sustainability.
- From April 2026, any new vehicle not previously licensed with the council would need to meet Euro 6 emissions, a European standard that ensures vehicles produce much lower levels of harmful

exhaust gases, such as nitrogen oxides and particulates. To support drivers with vehicles currently licensed by the authority, a grace period of up to three years will be allowed before they must upgrade to meet the new standards.

- Vehicle and driver safety continues to be at the heart of the policy. Proposed changes to vehicle testing and safety requirements would mean that taxis over eight years old must undergo up to three MOT tests per year to ensure high standards of roadworthiness are maintained.
- The requirement of drivers to hold an Enhanced DBS safeguarding checks will continue, alongside medical assessments every three years or annually for drivers aged 65 and over.

Councillor John Murray, Cabinet Member for Transport and Regulatory Services, said: "This new, unified policy is an important step in bringing together the different systems we inherited through Local Government Reorganisation, ensuring that drivers and passengers across Eden, Furness, and South Lakeland all benefit from the same high standards."

The policy would also launch a single restricted private hire driver licence at a lower fee designed specifically for drivers who wish to carry out school transport and social care contract work on behalf of the council. This new licence aims to help increase the number of drivers available for these vital community services, supporting residents who rely on safe and reliable transport.

Taxi drivers and operators, businesses, residents and visitors can share their views by completing an online survey available on the council's website or from next week, a paper copy available at Barrow Town Hall, Kendal Town Hall or Penrith's Voreda House.

Cllr Murray added: "We want to hear from drivers, operators and passengers about what matters most to them. This is your chance to share your feedback and help shape how these changes are introduced, creating a policy that supports our taxi trade, protects passengers, and contributes to a greener, safer future for our communities."

The feedback shared will be presented to Cabinet in January 2026. If the new Taxi Licensing Policy is approved it will come into effect from April 2026.

To read the draft Taxi Licensing Policy and summary detailing what would change in each area or to take part visit:

<https://www.westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk/taxi-policy>
The survey closes on 23 November 2025.

ROUND THE COUNCILS

WOLVERHAMPTON: CHANGES/INSPECTION PROCEDURES

City of Wolverhampton Council has announced major, immediate rule changes for all private hire and taxi drivers. These updates cover vehicle plates and tyre standards. Crucially, the council has also established a new cross-council agreement that lets other local authorities inspect Wolverhampton-licensed vehicles operating outside the city.

Plate restrictions:

- All 3D and 4D plates are strictly prohibited
- Vehicles stopped by compliance officers displaying 3D/4D
- If you no longer possess the original plates, you must purchase replacements from a DVSA-approved plate producer

No tyres over 10 years:

- All tyres on licensed vehicles (including the spare) must not be more than ten years old

How to check tyre age: Understanding the DOT Code

- Each tyre has a DOT code stamped on its sidewall
- The age of the tyre is indicated by the last four digits of this code:
- The first two digits represent the week of manufacture
- The last two digits represent the year of manufacture

Example:

- If the DOT code ends in 2319, the tyre was manufactured in week 23 of 2019
- Tyres that have had the DOT code removed, altered or obscured will be considered defective
- Please inspect all tyres on your vehicle and ensure none are older than ten years
- Tyres exceeding this age limit must be replaced immediately to remain compliant

Loxdale office protocols:

- Only the individual with a booked appointment may attend
- Entry will be refused to anyone accompanied by passengers
- will also be refused entry

Important - On 1 October 2025 City of Wolverhampton Council has entered into an agreement with the following licensing authorities:

- Telford and Wrekin Co-operative Council
- Ashfield District Council
- Broxtowe Borough Council
- Mansfield District Council
- Newark and Sherwood District Council

- Nottingham City Council
- Rushcliffe Borough Council
- Liverpool City Council

It authorises their Enforcement Teams, pursuant to **Section 101 (1) (b) of Local Government Act 1972**, to undertake functions under **Sections 68 and 73 of the LGMPA 1976**, as amended.

See **Cross-Border Crisis** on page 10 for further details.

JERSEY:

UBER STYLE RATINGS FOR CABBIES

Jersey taxi drivers have voiced support for new Uber-style passenger ratings, arguing the system will help single out unsatisfactory drivers instead of unfairly damaging the industry's reputation.

This support comes after a new report commissioned by Driver and Vehicle Standards found overwhelmingly negative feedback on the island's taxi service, with 78% of respondents offering negative feedback.

The research, which used 30 mystery taxi users, suggested that Jersey taxi drivers were "frequently late, too expensive and could be rude."

Speaking for the Jersey Taxi Drivers Association (JTDA), Paul Tostevin acknowledged the findings but emphasised that the report's overall portrayal requires "balance and context."

He stated: "The Jersey Taxi Drivers Association has always supported continuous improvement and constructive feedback, but some of the report's generalisations do not accurately reflect the standards achieved by many drivers and operators."

Mr. Tostevin claimed that the JTDA's internal data and previous assessments "directly contradict the suggestion that taxi drivers are frequently late, too expensive, or rude."

He added: "While we cannot speak for every operator, our own data and the DVS's independent assessments show a consistent pattern of professionalism, reliability, and courtesy among our drivers."

The JTDA member welcomed the plan to add QR codes to taxis for online passenger ratings, stating: "Regarding the planned QR code rating system, we have no objection and in fact welcome any fair, transparent means of gathering passenger feedback." He concluded that the new approach "will fairly identify any driver who persistently falls short of expected standards, rather than unfairly tarnishing the entire profession."

WOMAN ASSISTS POLICE AFTER ALLEGED ASSAULT OF **BOURNEMOUTH** CABBIE

Following an appeal for information and the release of an image, a woman has come forward to assist police investigating the alleged racial abuse and assault of a taxi driver in Bournemouth. The

incident occurred at 11pm on August 24, in the Exeter Road area. Two women travelling in the taxi allegedly became racially abusive towards the driver.

Furthermore, it is alleged the

women assaulted the driver while he was driving, reportedly "grabbing, scratching and hitting him" and also damaging the taxi. No arrests have been made at this stage as enquiries continue.

TWO ARRESTED FOLLOWING ROBBERY AND THREAT AGAINST **ABERDEEN** TAXI DRIVER

Two people have been arrested following a robbery in Aberdeen that targeted a veteran cabbie in the early hours of October 6.

The 59-year-old driver, who has 13 years of experience, was carrying three people when the incident occurred. During the robbery, he

was threatened, chased out of his car, and had his work mobile phone stolen, which was later recovered. The "terrifying" experience has left the driver "shaken up" and considering quitting.

He said: "Having people in the back of the car, I'm going to have

this incident in the back of my mind all of the time."

Police Scotland confirmed the arrests of a 32-year-old man and a 28-year-old woman with enquiries ongoing." The driver is taking time off work and is uncertain if he will return to taxi driving.

YOBS WREAK HAVOC AT **CHATHAM** BUS STATION BLOCKING BUSES, TAXIS & INJURING TWO DRIVERS

Taxi drivers say yobs on bikes have been targeting their moving vehicles, jumping on their bonnets and preventing them from moving off safely at the Waterfront Bus Station in Chatham.

It's understood that one taxi driver

was injured and taken to hospital. Others are now considering boycotting the town centre, amid fears for their safety and damage to their vehicles following a spate of recent, similar incidents.

Nigel Jackson, chairman of Medway

Licensed Taxi Drivers Association, has described the spate of thuggery as "very disturbing".

Speaking on behalf of the hundreds of drivers he represents, he said: "I have been made aware of four incidents, and the police have been informed. Let's hope that they will be reviewing CCTV and these feral young kids will be brought to account."

Mr Jackson added: "It's very unfair. Our drivers already get abuse, especially racial abuse as well as physical abuse. They are just doing their job. They have a duty of care to our customers to get them safely from A to B. If their vehicle is damaged, they are out of action, and this is their livelihood."

HUDDERSFIELD CABBIE SUFFERS 'SIGNIFICANT FACIAL INJURIES'

Six people - five women aged 20, 21, 25, 27, and 30, and a 17-year-old boy - have been arrested following the robbery of a taxi driver in Huddersfield.

West Yorkshire Police were called at 4.10am on October 18, to Market Street, Milnsbridge, after the injury

to the cabbie was reported. He was taken to the hospital for treatment for what police described as "significant facial injuries."

The suspects were arrested on suspicion of robbery, interviewed and subsequently released on conditional bail.

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HULL PRIVATE HIRE DRIVER REPORTS PASSENGERS TERRIFIED AFTER ATTACK BY E BIKE GROUP

An Uber driver in Hull claims his vehicle was chased and damaged by a “group of teenagers on electric bikes” around 10.45pm on Saturday night, 18 October, in Anlaby, leaving his elderly passengers severely shaken. The driver said the “hooligans” ultimately smashed the rear window of his car while he was driving two passengers, whom he described as being “in their sixties.”

The driver’s main concern was the anxiety caused to his passengers. He described actively evading the group while calling the police. The driver claims that aggressive youths on bikes are a frequent issue for those who drive at night, especially as they “use the cover of darkness”: He noted they are difficult to see, stating: “These hooligans are going around on the bikes in full

camouflage gear... They are in black head-to-toe, with balaclavas on.” He expressed concern for the future: “We are coming into winter now, and their cover of darkness is going to get even longer.” He stressed that this is a widespread concern: “Every taxi driver I speak to, they all have got issues. It is a major safety concern. It is the nuisance they cause and the criminal damage.”

KNIFE WIELDING ROBBERY HIGHLIGHTS TIDE OF VIOLENCE AGAINST FIFE AND TAYSIDE CABBIES

A Fife taxi driver, Kay Rooney, has spoken out about the lasting trauma following a knifepoint robbery by an attacker who was on bail for a similar offence.

On May 9, Kay Rooney was held up by passenger Claire Duncan, a crack addict who had appeared in court for a near-identical attack just five weeks earlier.

Duncan, a backseat passenger, “lunged across so quickly” and held a “massive breadknife” against Kay’s neck, demanding

cash and declaring: “Give me your money, don’t be a bitch.”

Kay, who sustained a cut hand and friction burns while struggling, said she instantly thought “it was game over, I thought she was going to kill me,” and tearfully recounted that when she pleaded: “You don’t want to do this, I’ve got kids,” but Duncan “didn’t care.”

Duncan robbed her of her takings, and ID, and was later caught attempting to rob a third cabbie.

Kay Rooney questioned why

Duncan was at liberty to attack her, stating: “They made the wrong call, they let her out. I could have died... The punishment doesn’t fit the crime.”

Duncan, who wept during her court appearance, was sentenced to 40 months in prison, reduced from the maximum five years due to an early guilty plea.

The incident with Kay Rooney is part of a wider “tide of violence” against cab drivers in Fife and Tayside, which includes:

- death threats and assaults
- serious robberies and attacks
- fatal violence: the murder of driver Mark Ward

Drivers in Dundee have reached the point of “demanding self-defence lessons” due to the fear. Kay is now driving only “safe” contracts and known passengers, but suffers from “terrible nightmares” and PTSD. throat.”

Fife Council stated they are aware of the incidents and “take driver safety extremely seriously”.

CABBIE ALLEGEDLY THREATENED WITH GLASS BOTTLE IN CLYDEBANK

A 49-year-old woman has been arrested and charged following an alleged incident where a taxi driver was ‘threatened with a glass bottle’ in Clydebank.

The alleged altercation took place on Clarence Street and police were called to the scene.

A Police Scotland spokesperson

confirmed: “On Tuesday 21st October at 7pm at Clarence Street in Clydebank, a 49-year-old female was arrested and charged for making threats towards a taxi driver with a glass bottle.”

A report on the incident has now been submitted to the procurator fiscal.

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TRANSPORT COMMITTEE INQUIRY

MPs EXAMINE TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE REGULATION AND WORKING CONDITIONS

The House of Commons Transport Committee began its inquiry into the licensing and regulation of the taxi and PHV sector with an evidence session on Wednesday, October 15. The inquiry will question licensing authority officials and industry stakeholders over three sessions.

The core focus of the inquiry is the inconsistency in the current system, which sees regulations “vary between different licensing authorities across England.” Concerns have been raised that this inconsistency allows local drivers to circumvent stricter local standards by “applying for a licence in another area which may have less strict standards” i.e. “cross-border working.”

MPs will question whether the current licensing framework provides local authorities with the necessary tools for effective regulation. Other areas of focus will include enforcement and the “growing role of digital ride-hailing platforms.”

The first session addressed the working conditions of drivers, examining their “security and employment rights.”

Witnesses at the inquiry included:

From 09:15:

- **NPHTA** Director, David Lawrie
- Eamon O'Hearn (GMB)
- Paul Jones (Unite)
- Andy Mahoney MBE (LPHCA)

From 10:30:

- Helen Chapman (TfL)
- David Pattison (City of Wolverhampton Council)
- Lee Petrak (Blackpool Council)

The agenda for the Transport Committee's first panel session explored the experience of drivers focusing on:

- working conditions
- wellbeing
- safeguarding
- impact of the current licensing framework on the workforce



Dave Lawrie
& Sham Raja
NPHTA

Members heard evidence on:

1. **Fitness of the legislative framework:**

- whether the 1847 and 1976 Acts, which still underpin taxi and PH regulation, remain fit for purpose in today's app-based industry

2. **Workforce conditions:**

- long hours, insecure income and pressure from platform-based models
- The Committee may refer to the 2024 National Taxi and PH Driver Survey, which found widespread concern about mental health across the sector.

3. **Employment protections:**

- how far the 2021 Supreme Court ruling on Uber has improved driver rights and what gaps remain

4. **Safeguarding & driver safety:**

- preventing abuse, ensuring consistent reporting and support mechanisms, and the respective roles of operators, licensing authorities, and the police

5. **CCTV and complaints:**

- whether in-vehicle CCTV should be mandatory nationally, and how well complaints systems function when drivers operate across multiple areas

6. **Ride-hailing and fairness:**

- how the regulatory framework accommodates both traditional and app-based operators, including issues around e-hailing and competitive balance

7. **Licensing variation and cross border working:**

- the effect of differing local standards on drivers' livelihoods and public confidence, and potential reforms such as national minimum standards or geo-fencing

8. **Future reform:**

- views on the continued suitability of the “triple-lock” rule (vehicle, driver, and operator licensed by the same authority) and what a modernised framework might look like if designed from scratch today

October 15 was the first session held by the Transport Committee. There are two further sessions scheduled, with its report expected early next year.

Click to watch full committee meeting:

<https://www.parliamentlive.tv/Event/Index/40f4c5a4-4d91-412e-9b6c-4eaa2792d8a2>

TRANSPORT COMMITTEE INQUIRY

NPHTA: FURTHER EVIDENCE AND RESPONSES TO VERBAL EVIDENCE

1. Allegation that drivers are sleeping in cars and drug use

When Paul James from Unite made this statement during the oral evidence committee meeting, both myself and everyone present in the public gallery were shocked by such an unexpected and serious allegation. The remark was so concerning that Andy Mahoney immediately intervened, clearly stating that he had never encountered any such issues.

Since then, we have received numerous messages both from our members and from those who viewed the proceedings, expressing outrage at such a defamatory and unfounded statement directed against an entire industry.

Whilst we acknowledge that, as in any profession, there may be a small minority of individuals who engage in inappropriate or illegal behaviour, it is wholly inaccurate and unfair to suggest that our industry as a whole is associated with habitual drug use or that drivers routinely sleep in their vehicles. There is absolutely no evidence to support such damaging and irresponsible allegations.

Suggestion / summary:

Remove these allegations from the record as being false, misleading, and dangerous.

2. Repetitive training courses for drivers

We do not believe that there is any meaningful benefit or advantage to drivers - or to the travelling public - from requiring drivers to repeatedly undertake the same training courses. Where such repetitive testing is in place, it serves only as a waste of time, effort, and money for drivers, while providing nothing more than a revenue stream for the course providers.

Furthermore, we see no justification for requiring private hire drivers to complete wheelchair accessibility training unless they specifically intend to drive fully wheelchair-accessible vehicles. For those applicants, the training should focus on how to assist passengers with limited mobility - for example, helping them safely transfer from a wheelchair to a vehicle seat, and folding and securing the wheelchair appropriately in the

luggage area. This approach aligns with the Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Disabled Persons) Bill introduced by Peter Gibson MP:

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2912>

We fully support the requirement for first-time applicants to complete such courses, as they provide valuable foundational knowledge and promote high standards among new entrants to the industry. However, once a driver has successfully completed and passed a course, repeating the exact same material every three years - with little or no change to course content - is counterproductive and unnecessary.

We would instead support refresher training only where there is clear evidence of a lack of understanding or competence. For example:

- Where a driver demonstrates poor driving habits
- Where safeguarding concerns arise, requiring the driver to repeat the safeguarding module could form part of targeted enforcement action. Many local authorities already adopt such a risk-based and proportionate approach, which we believe is fair and effective.

Finally, we believe that the same training courses should also be mandatory for all licensing officers, committee members, and police officers involved in licensing enforcement. This would allow them to gain the same practical insights and understanding as drivers, rather than receiving training limited solely to the legislative aspects of the role.

Suggestion / summary:

When considering national standards, entry level courses should be entry level only. Reassessment should only be required when supported by evidence.

3. Full WAV policies

Having not only owned and driven a wheelchair accessible vehicle (WAV), but also enjoyed many years working within the nursing home sector, I have a deep personal and professional understanding of the needs of both disabled and elderly communities, as well as practical experience in the safe transportation of wheelchair users.

TRANSPORT COMMITTEE INQUIRY

While there is a clear and justified need for a higher proportion of WAVs in areas with elevated levels of tourism - such as London and Blackpool - the same level of supply is not necessary or viable in other regions.

To illustrate this point, consider nursing homes and hospitals: although these facilities may accommodate over a hundred residents, many of whom are wheelchair users, they typically maintain only a limited number of wheelchairs on-site. The same principle should apply to the taxi sector - a required percentage of WAVs is entirely reasonable, but a 100% WAV policy is not a sustainable business model. This is primarily due to the high purchase cost of these vehicles compared with the low frequency of their use for their specific purpose.

It is also important to distinguish between wheelchair users and those who are wheelchair-bound, as the two categories represent different levels of mobility and need. This distinction has been discussed in detail in articles published in the national trade publication *Private Hire and Taxi Monthly* (PHTM).

Suggestion / summary:

Rural and low-demand areas should not be required to operate a 100% WAV fleet. Instead, a mixed fleet model should be adopted, provided that a minimum number or percentage of WAVs is maintained to ensure accessibility needs are met.

4. "No excuse for abuse campaign"

I was visibly shocked when Paul claimed that Unite the Union had recently launched the No Excuse for Abuse campaign. In fact, the campaign was launched by PHTM Newspaper back in 2018, in response to the increasing number of attacks on our drivers. Evidence of this can be found here: PHTM January 2019 Issue, page 64:

<https://shorturl.at/5ATos>

Councils from across the country, who have to approve the distinctive double sided window stickers before they can be displayed, have been fully supportive of this campaign and regularly purchase the stickers which are now produced both in English and English/Welsh to distribute to their licensed vehicle owners.



5. Reflection on the Casey Report and the role of taxi/private hire Services

During our recent session, reference was made to the Casey Report, though time did not allow for a full discussion. Having reviewed the report in detail, I noted that of the twelve recommendations made, only one related specifically to the taxi and private hire sector, focusing primarily on cross-border working and its perceived link to child exploitation activity.

It is important to recognise that this is not a new issue. The original Casey Report of 2012, which focused on the Rotherham area, identified that taxi and private hire vehicles had been used by perpetrators to transport victims. This finding led Rotherham Council to introduce mandatory in-vehicle CCTV in 2014 to enhance safeguarding and evidential integrity. However, this measure was not replicated in other places, such as Newcastle, Telford, or Rochdale, despite similar cases emerging in those areas.

It should also be emphasised that of those drivers accused of direct involvement in grooming activity, very few were ever convicted, but they were all locally licensed. The evidence therefore does not support the view that cross-border licensing was a contributing factor. Rather, the issue has consistently been one of systemic safeguarding failures, intelligence sharing, and multi-agency communication.

The taxi and private hire trade has, unfortunately, been used as a means of transport by offenders - no differently to buses, trains, or other public transport. The vehicles themselves were not the cause; the lack of early identification and safeguarding coordination was.

I have been actively involved in safeguarding initiatives through LANPAC (Lancashire Partnership Against Crime), where child exploitation awareness has been a consistent focus. The taxi and private hire sector play a critical role in these efforts, working closely with the police and local authorities to identify risks, report concerns, and protect vulnerable passengers.

Having personally experienced the care system, passing through multiple children's homes and foster care placements from an incredibly early age, this issue is one I hold close to me heart. I therefore remain committed to ensuring that our sector continues to be part of the safeguarding solution, not mischaracterised as part of the problem.

TRANSPORT COMMITTEE INQUIRY

Suggestion / summary:

- The use of taxi and private hire services in child grooming has been recognised in Rotherham, but broader implementation of safeguards has been limited.
- The issue is not primarily one of cross-border working or licensing limitations, but of ensuring appropriate safeguards across all local areas.
- Active engagement, advocacy, and awareness are crucial to improving safety measures and preventing abuse in all transport sectors.

6. Capping of PHV numbers

We do not believe that introducing a cap on the number of private hire vehicles would be beneficial to the travelling public. On the contrary, evidence suggests that such restrictions would have a detrimental effect not only on passengers but also on the private hire industry as a whole.

In practice, a cap on private hire vehicle numbers would primarily benefit large private hire companies, which would acquire available vehicle licences (“plates”) and then rent them to drivers. This would create capitalisation and monopoly, forcing independent drivers to rent rather than own their vehicles. Such concentration of ownership reduces competition, raises costs, and limits flexibility within the industry.

As David Pattison of Wolverhampton Council has rightly observed, there is a real risk that a company based in another area - for example, Manchester - could acquire the majority of a local authority's available plates. This could leave residents within that authority, such as those in Wolverhampton, without sufficient local service provision, simply due to an imposed cap on vehicle numbers.

Current legal position:

Under existing legislation in England and Wales, local authorities do not have the power to cap the number of private hire vehicles.

- Section 37 of the Town Police Clauses Act 1847, read in conjunction with section 16 of the Transport Act 1985, allows councils to limit the number of hackney carriage (taxi) licences only if they are satisfied that there is no significant unmet demand for such services.

- These provisions do not extend to private hire vehicles.
- Furthermore, neither the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 nor the Local Transport Act 1998 provides authority to restrict PHV numbers.

Accordingly, any attempt to introduce such a cap would require primary legislative change.

Comparative example - Glasgow:

In Glasgow, a cap on PHV numbers exists under Scottish legislation, the impact of this measure has been mixed and remains controversial. Independent drivers in Glasgow are unable to license a new vehicle or replace one that has been damaged or written off because no new vehicle licences are available. This forces drivers to rent vehicles from plate holders, artificially inflating vehicle rental values and restricting independent enterprise.

It is also important to note that under the Scottish licensing framework, a private hire driver may accept their own bookings until they operate three or more vehicles. At that point, they are required to obtain a Booking Office Licence - the Scottish equivalent of a private hire operator licence under the system in England and Wales.

The Scottish experience illustrates the economic and operational drawbacks of capping private hire vehicle numbers.

Suggestion / summary:

Introducing a numerical cap on private hire vehicles would be harmful to both the industry and the travelling public. It would:

- Create monopolies dominated by large operators.
- Restrict market access for independent drivers.
- Increase vehicle rental costs; and
- Reduce availability and service quality for local residents.

Current law does not permit such restrictions, and where caps do exist - such as in Glasgow - they have led to negative consequences. For these reasons, we strongly oppose any proposal to cap private hire vehicle numbers and urge policymakers to maintain an open, competitive, and fair licensing environment that prioritises public benefit.

7. Introduction of residential address being considered part of “fit and proper” test

An interesting question, we believe there is clear scope to establish a defined boundary beyond which licence applications could reasonably be rejected. While there are legitimate cases where drivers may reside outside the licensing authority area, many continue to live near their licensed district and genuinely work within it.

For example, in Rossendale, many licensed drivers reside in nearby areas such as Nelson or Keighley, yet their work and licensing activities are fully centred within Rossendale itself. Likewise, some applicants may live just beyond an authority's boundary, where their local environment - in terms of nighttime economy or access to schools - differs significantly from the licensed area, but where their proximity and intended work justify inclusion within that authority's remit.

If residency were to form part of the “*fit and proper*” test, such a requirement could be structured to allow for a reasonable radius or to permit applicants to demonstrate a genuine intention to work within the licensed district. Examples exist of drivers living at greater distances - for instance, on the Isle of Wight - who nevertheless travel to and work consistently within the Transport for London (TfL) licensing area. This illustrates the importance of aligning policy with intended use, as outlined in our written and oral submissions.

We believe that a combined approach incorporating:

- Intended use policies (which would effectively end out-of-area licensing within a year)
- Geo-fencing technology (to restrict booking ranges and reinforce Section 75(1)(a) enforcement), and
- Consideration of residential addresses within licensing criteria

would collectively bring an end to the widespread issue of out-of-area operation within twelve months.

A practical example of such an intended use policy can be seen in Rossendale Borough Council's policy:

<https://www.rossendale.gov.uk/downloads/file/13839/intended-use-policy>

While several local authorities have adopted similar approaches, these currently apply only to hackney carriage licences.

Finally on cross-border working, it is important to clarify a point I made within my verbal evidence, where I suggested that cross-border hiring started in Berwick, this comment was not 100% accurate, the issue started long before 2007 and was only brought to light as a result of the Berwick case which can be found here:

<https://www.casemine.com/judgement/uk/5a8ff7c760d03e7f57eb201e>

Suggestion / summary:

We support the establishment of a residential boundary as part of the “*fit and proper*” licensing criteria, provided there is flexibility to account for drivers who genuinely live outside the area but primarily work within it.

Mechanisms such as intended use policies, geo-fencing, and verifiable commuting intentions can ensure compliance while addressing the issue of out-of-area licensing effectively. Historical and practical examples demonstrate that a balanced approach can reduce cross-border hiring abuses without penalising legitimate drivers.

8. Single national licence

We do not consider this a sensible or logical proposal, as it would entirely remove local authority involvement in licensing. Implementing it would require a complete repeal of the **Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976**, which is explicitly designed for “*Local Government*” activities.

If such an approach were adopted, licensing would need to be centralised under a body such as the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency, with enforcement conducted by police forces using their powers. This would place a significantly greater burden on an already stretched police service.

The only apparent benefit of this model would be to simplify operations for large operators, allowing them to hold a single operator licence and use any driver or vehicle anywhere in the country. We believe this poses serious risks and should be avoided.

Given the current discussions around devolution, the number of licensing authorities is likely to be reduced anyway. We consider this a suitable compromise, particularly when combined with a national standard, the confusion and complexities of licensing variations will be reduced.

9. National standards

We fully support the principle of introducing national standards, as expressed in both our written and oral submissions. However, there are significant complications within that notion which must be carefully considered when seeking the right balance between differing regulatory models.

For example, in London, Transport for London (TfL) operates under the **Local Transport Act 1998**, where private hire vehicles are only considered to be licensed while on duty. This allows such vehicles to be driven by anyone for personal use when not operating. In this system, there are no visible licence plates attached to PHVs, which may work effectively in the capital given the much higher levels of enforcement activity.

In contrast, under the **Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976**, which governs the rest of the UK, a PHV is always considered a licensed vehicle, regardless of its use. The visible licence plates therefore form a vital part of the public safety and enforcement regime.

Adopting the TfL approach nationally could undermine public safety expectations and enforcement mechanisms outside London, while adopting the wider UK model would likely meet resistance from those licensed by TfL.

Additionally, inconsistency between local authorities could lead to further complications, as illustrated by Milton Keynes' recent decision that all new hackney carriages must be fully wheelchair-accessible and must be fully electric or hydrogen - going further to stipulate **"must have no exhaust."** Such a rule, while environmentally motivated, has the unintended consequence of rendering the current fleet non-compliant, and removing the ability to license any new vehicles, since no such vehicle presently exists.

This formed the basis of my suggestion that, while the new national standard should be absolute, provision must be made for regional variations. However, any such variations should only be introduced following substantial input and active engagement with the industry, in accordance with the **Regulators' Code (2014)**, they must also be fully detailed and justified, without such safeguards, we risk repeating the same issues already identified in many of the other written submissions.

10. DBS standards

There are two longstanding issues within the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) system that continue to disadvantage licensed taxi and private hire drivers, and which have been the subject of ongoing campaigning across the industry. Despite widespread support - including from many local authorities and the Institute of Licensing - progress has been minimal.

We call for:

1. A single, unified DBS check covering both taxi/private hire and regulated school transport work.
2. Modernisation of the DBS Update Service to allow Direct Debit renewals, preventing unnecessary lapses and reapplications.

Issue 1: Duplication of DBS Certificates

Current DBS rules require drivers who undertake school transport contracts (more than three times per month) to hold a separate enhanced DBS certificate for **"regulated activity"**, even if they already hold an enhanced DBS for their taxi or private hire licence.

This results in:

- Duplication of checks for the same individual performing identical duties.
- Administrative and financial burden on drivers and licensing authorities.
- Inefficiency and inconsistency in the safeguarding framework.

Practical example

A driver may transport the same child, from the same address, to the same school, in the same licensed vehicle - but the DBS requirements differ solely based on whether the booking was made by the school (regulated) or by the parent (non-regulated). This is an artificial distinction with no safeguarding benefit.

Proposed solution

Amend DBS guidance to allow one enhanced certificate to cover both:

- Taxi/Private Hire (other workforce)
- Regulated activity (children and vulnerable adults)

This would maintain safeguarding integrity while removing unnecessary duplication.

TRANSPORT COMMITTEE INQUIRY

Issue 2: DBS Update Service renewal mechanism

The DBS Update Service is fundamentally flawed in its renewal process. Currently, renewal is only possible via debit card payment, not direct debit.

Problems

- Debit cards expire or are replaced every 2-3 years, automatically causing renewal failures.
- When a payment fails, the driver's update subscription lapses, requiring a full new DBS application - often leaving drivers unable to work during processing.
- DBS has claimed that direct debit payments are "more likely to fail", but industry experience and financial data show the opposite to be true.

Proposed solution

- Introduce Direct Debit renewals for the DBS Update Service.
- Implement automated email AND SMS reminders before renewal deadlines.

These simple administrative reforms would preserve continuity, reduce bureaucracy, and support workforce stability.

Suggestion / summary:

The industry is not calling for reduced safeguarding - only for a fair, consistent and efficient system.

We urge the Home Office, the Disclosure and Barring Service, and the Department for Transport to:

1. Implement a single DBS framework for all licensed taxi/private hire work.
2. Enable Direct Debit renewals for the DBS Update Service.

Both actions would significantly reduce administrative burden, improve safeguarding continuity, and better support the drivers who provide essential transport services to schools, vulnerable people, and the wider public.

11. Devolution

We believe that the spirit of devolution is sound. The principle of reducing variations in licensing conditions, creating larger and more consistent working areas, and implementing clearer and more practical licensing policies are promising and necessary steps forward.

For example, we have observed significant inconsistencies in how window tint restrictions are applied across different licensing areas. In one area, tint is regulated by a specific percentage of light transmission, while neighbouring authorities allow vehicles with "manufacturer's standard glass".

Where such percentage-based restrictions exist, they often rely on the use of light transmission meters to measure compliance. However, these devices have repeatedly been found to be inaccurate, uncalibrated, or incorrectly operated. This has resulted in unreliable readings that are frequently challenged. In some cases, the same person using the same device on the same vehicle has produced different results - highlighting the futility of applying such precise percentage conditions in practice.

We have even seen cases where vehicles failed compliance tests for being just 1.5% below the allowed tolerance - a difference imperceptible to the human eye and with no measurable impact on safety or visibility. In such instances, vehicle owners were forced to replace all windows at a cost of approximately £1,000, whilst undermining the vehicle's original Type 1 approval status, despite reasonable alternative proposals being rejected.

The only suggested justification for such restrictive conditions is that enforcement officers should be able to see into vehicles as they pass. However, given that most enforcement takes place during daylight hours, and that vehicles typically pass at speeds of around 30 mph, this argument lacks logical or practical merit.

This issue has already been the subject of several judicial reviews involving local authorities, many of which subsequently removed such conditions without any impact on public safety. The matter has also been discussed in detail in Private Hire and Taxi Monthly (PHTM), notably in the July 2021 (Issue 346, p.6) and August 2021 (Issue 347, p.6) editions, where we fully explain the reasoning behind vehicle manufacturers' adoption of tinted glass as standard.

Reduced services for the travelling public

However, we do have significant concerns regarding the broader proposals for devolution and the full amalgamation of existing local authorities. Experience from areas such as Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) and the new North Yorkshire Council has shown that such large-scale mergers can lead to inconsistent service provision and a lack of meaningful

TRANSPORT COMMITTEE INQUIRY

engagement with local stakeholders. Issues such as fare structures, fee setting, and local service conditions have too often been “*stitched together*” without adequate consideration of the real-world impact on drivers or the travelling public.

When large, combined authorities are created, the “*controlled districts*” in which hackney carriages may operate can expand dramatically. This creates a serious risk that high-demand urban areas become saturated with drivers seeking higher fares, while rural or low-demand areas are left with minimal service provision.

To illustrate: under current arrangements, Greater Manchester comprises ten separate local authorities, each with its own controlled district. If these were merged into a single entity, the area of operation would expand from around fifty square miles to more than five hundred square miles. This would encompass major transport hubs (airports, train stations), the

nighttime economy, and high-demand shopping districts - all drawing drivers away from less profitable, but socially essential, local services.

The likely consequence would be reduced access to transport for elderly or infirm residents, patients attending medical appointments, and even families relying on school run services. Naturally, drivers will gravitate toward areas offering the greatest earning potential, leaving smaller communities underserved.

Suggestion / summary:

While devolution and local authority amalgamation may deliver administrative efficiencies in theory, we strongly recommend that existing licensing zones remain in place. Each zone should continue to manage its own fare structures and service conditions to ensure fair access and sustainable service levels across both urban and rural areas.

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ALL THINGS LICENSING

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

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

November is conference season for the Institute of Licensing with the Taxi Conference having just taken place online at the end of October and the signature National Training Event scheduled to take place in November in Stratford upon Avon.

The Taxi Conference, a full day of discussion with some leading voices associated with the licensed trade, took place hot off the first live evidence session of the Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Inquiry on the 15 October.

The theme emanating from the Taxi Conference just passed was very much a need for consistency in the sector by way of national standards, which was almost an echo of many of the live submissions to the Parliamentary Inquiry.

Certainly one of the speakers at the Taxi Conference from the Suzy Lamplugh Trust, a charity campaigning for safety, advised that the Government certainly has an interest in ensuring robust safety standards in the sector as part of its commitment to reduce violence against women and girls.

Leading on from that there have also been indications that the Government is looking to limit private hire activity following concerns in some areas around out of area working, including Greater Manchester Mayor Andy Burnham going on record with a proposal to amend the current Local Government Devolution Bill to this effect. Additionally, the Department for Transport has also confirmed that there will be a consultation on moving the taxi and private hire licensing function to strategic authorities 'shortly'.

Moving on from the Taxi Conference, there are a number of taxi related sessions at the upcoming IoL National Conference, including a session that I am delivering on practical vehicle inspections. At the time of writing there are still some limited places available, with details available on the IoL website at www.instituteoflicensing.org.

Otherwise, the Transport Select Committee inquiry into the licensing of taxis and private hire vehicles is continuing to publish the written evidence it has received and having had a brief look through some of the newer submissions, the common theme of the need to have national, common standards very much remains.

The published written submissions are available on the Committee Inquiry pages at: <https://committees.parliament.uk/work/9260/licensing-of-taxis-and-private-hire-vehicles/>

I've had a few phone calls from Guildford licence holders asking whether the council has made a submission, which it has, and I am looking forward to seeing this and others in the coming weeks.

Finally, although not strictly taxi but licensing related, there is also immense change on the horizon for other areas of local government licensing. Following the Taxi and Private Hire Call for Evidence, October saw not one, but two further Government calls for evidence on licensing matters.

Pubs could stay open longer under licensing reforms



ALL THINGS LICENSING



hospitality really struggling in the financial climate at the moment, with numbers of pubs and nightclubs in towns and cities closing. This is also relevant to the taxi and private hire trade as less customers on a night out will also impact the fares available.

PHTM readers may have seen on BBC News that pubs could stay open longer under licensing reforms: <https://shorturl.at/JHaDV>

The government is looking at making changes to the licensing act following an industry led taskforce review which reported back in the summer: **Licensing taskforce report: government response:** <https://shorturl.at/GapAK>

Earlier in October, the government announced a call for evidence: <https://shorturl.at/Lmeld> which proposes a number of changes, most notably:

- a potential national policy framework (similar to planning) for licensing
- higher evidential thresholds for reviews and representations
- the introduction of a fifth licensing objective of promoting economic growth
- protection of premises from noise complaints via the agent of change principle
- an amnesty on outdated conditions, making it easier to obtain a pavement licence
- removal of the requirement to advertise in newspapers
- increases to temporary event notices which align with the taskforce recommendations.

Dealing with the licensed trade as I do, I know that there are some members of the taxi and private hire trade who also have other businesses in the alcohol and entertainment sector and consequently this consultation will be relevant to them.

Additionally, it is clear that there are some areas of

This call for evidence has a very short window of opportunity, closing at midday on 6 November.

The second call for evidence relates to the **Tobacco and Vapes Bill:** and pertinently the creation of a new licensing system for products. Unlike the **Licensing Act** call, this is very much creating a new regime from scratch. The government has indicated a two-tier approach separating a personal licence for individuals from a premises licence for retail locations, aimed at ensuring that only responsible retailers and staff can sell relevant products.

Licensing authorities would administer applications, renewals, suspensions and revocations and could attach conditions to licences. Penalties for unlicensed selling or breaches of licence conditions could include fixed penalties and higher fines through the courts. The licensing model is intended to deter rogue traders, support legitimate businesses that comply with rules, and provide a clearer enforcement route for local authorities.

The call for evidence is at: <https://shorturl.at/gFnoI> and is open until the end of the day on 3 December.

With the taxi and private hire trade and local licensing functions poised for change this is a critical time to ensure that everyone involved in the trade is informed so I would very much extend the invitation to attend the IoL National Conference to all **PHTM** readers.

For full details please visit:
www.instituteoflicensing.org

JOIN YOUR LOCAL ASSOCIATION

ALONE, YOU'RE VULNERABLE BUT TOGETHER, YOU'RE PROTECTED

Article by Shaz Malik
Chorley Taxi Association
NPHTA Board Member



When you're given a taxi badge it feels simple; get in, drive, earn. But the truth is far from simple. That badge comes with conditions, and those conditions change. Regulations are constantly shifting, and many drivers don't even realise until it's too late.

Imagine this: you've been driving for years, confident you're doing everything right, but the rules have changed around you. You suddenly find yourself facing a licensing committee, being asked why you failed to comply. What evidence do you have that you understood your duties? What proof can you show that you kept up with the changes?

For most drivers, the answer is none.

This is why representation isn't a luxury, it's survival. Driving a taxi is not just about the road, it's about rules, regulations and protecting your licence.

I've sat in sub-committee meetings where even the boldest, most outspoken drivers fell silent under pressure. Their confidence collapsed in front of decision-makers who hold their livelihood in their hands.

But when you're a member of an association, you are not standing there alone. You have experience, guidance, and strength behind you.

In 2023, Shaz Malik was approached to help support the taxi trade in Chorley, Lancashire. From there, the Chorley Taxi Association was built, a structure with board members and team managers, dedicated to representing drivers and strengthening our trade.



At the start, many doubted us. Some said: *"What's the point? Nothing will change."* But what we've achieved in just over two years has not previously been achieved in more than 25 years.

We've represented drivers, influenced trade decisions and secured a voice at council meetings where the future of our industry is decided.

And make no mistake change is coming. Councils, government and regulators are moving the trade in new directions, from compliance checks to environmental policies and technology standards.

If we don't organise, we risk having decisions made for us instead of with us. We need to be in a position where drivers have a voice, where we can influence the future of our livelihoods instead of being left behind.

If you don't yet have a local association, then you can still join the **NPHTA**. And if you do have a local association, I strongly recommend joining the **NPHTA** alongside it.



Why? Because it keeps the trade united, gives clear direction, and ensures every association benefits from national backing. The **NPHTA** won't run your association, but it will guide, support, and strengthen it. And every association will need that at some point.

Representation matters, at the local level and at the national level. Without it, your chance of success is limited. With it, you have protection, knowledge, and the power of unity. Don't wait until you're standing in front of a committee, wishing you had support. By then, it's too late.

Join your local association.

Support the **NPHTA** - nphta.co.uk

Change is coming make sure you have a voice in shaping it.

CALLING ALL COUNCILS

CALLING ALL OPERATORS



**NO EXCUSE
FOR
ABUSE**

OFFENDERS WILL BE
REPORTED TO THE POLICE

**DIM
ESGUS
DROS
GAM-DRIN**



**NO
EXCUSE
FOR
ABUSE**

BYDD TROSEDDWYR YN CAEL EU REPORTIO I'R HEDDLU
OFFENDERS WILL BE REPORTED TO THE POLICE

ENGLISH OR WELSH VERSIONS AVAILABLE

WITH INCREASED DRIVER ATTACKS

IT'S TIME TO TAKE ACTION NOW!!

PRICE LIST

10	stickers	£15	+ vat
50	stickers	£55	+ vat
100	stickers	£99	+ vat
200	stickers	£185	+ vat
400	stickers	£350	+ vat
500	stickers	£425	+ vat
750	stickers	£550	+ vat
1000	stickers	£675	+ vat

**Prices include delivery*

- *Window sticker*
- *Double-sided*
- *Reusable*
- *Easy peel*
- *No residue*

**MANY COUNCILS HAVE
ALREADY ORDERED
TO PROTECT THEIR DRIVERS**

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info@phtm.co.uk ● 0161 688 7777



Brighton & Hove Cab Trade View

Andy Peters

Brighton & Hove Cab Trade Association

info@bhcta.co.uk www.bhcta.co.uk

BHCTA
Brighton & Hove Cab Trade Association

AND SO IT BEGINS...

Good to see David Lawrie from the **NPHTA** kicking off the first of the Transport Select Committee Evidence Sessions on the *Call for Evidence – Taxis and Private Hire* and pointing out that the **LGMPA 1976** was indeed still fit for purpose, when the question about its suitability due to being 'old legislation' was put by the panel. David also made it clear that that **Section 76 (1) (a)** of the **76 Act** had been put in place by "...someone who had incredible foresight when including it..."

See: bhcta.co.uk/section-75.

I'm also, very pleased that David was able to put across the importance of having an **Intended Use Policy** to be applied to all licences in the same way that it can currently be applied to hackney carriages as per the ***Best Practice Guidance**, along with also stating the additional importance of **Geo Fencing**. I was especially pleased that David really emphasised, and fully clarified that the issue of '**cross-border hiring**' was in reality '**predominant out of area working**' (POAW). This is something that I've been banging on about for several years that should be separated from cross-border hiring.

It would be impossible to go through all what was said by the reps there, but I do feel that I need to state: "Oh dear, never mind" on the input by Andy Mahoney of 24/7, who has a multimillion pound school contract business and wants to abolish the '**Triple Lock**' which for all intents and purposes is a recorded legal paper trail, as he made a point of stating he has to deal with the forty plus different licensing authorities where his company has gone into areas with part-time drivers doing the school runs. Of course, there is nothing wrong in him making the point that existing legislation doesn't suit his own business model, but I also found it extraordinary that he was against CCTV which is there for the protection of passengers. Under his business model, these are children as he specialises in school transportation. Maybe the real reason is down to cost v profit?

I will also dwell on some of points made by David Pattison of Wolverhampton Licensing, the main suppliers of drivers to Uber, who, as we all know predominantly work outside of Wolverhampton.

A panel member asked Mr Pattison: "*What steps have you taken to discourage so many applications in Wolverhampton?*"

I watched the crocodile tears that Mr Pattison let flow trying to defend their position of "*hands being tied...*" adding under the law they cannot refuse PH driver licence applications, saying: "*we never asked for this*" and had asked external lawyers: "*What can we do to dissuade this, to put barriers in place...*". However, one panel member astutely asked about the lack of a **Wolverhampton Knowledge Test** requirement for PH licensing. Other panel members mentioned this, probably because they're very aware of the effect of the number of Wolves drivers working in their own respective areas, and/or that drivers are not getting licensed locally but in Wolverhampton instead.

Mr Pattison's defence of the (massive) issuing of Wolverhampton licences without the extra requirement of a **Knowledge Test** was claimed to be based on the **DfT Best Practice Guidance** that states that such a test is not good practice for PH drivers.

Well, Mr Pattison, guidance is just a guidance. In fact, the DfT specifically states that it is not statutory guidance. So, it is not set in stone or in legislation. It also specifically states: "*Individual licensing authorities are still responsible for deciding their own policies and making decisions on individual licensing matters applying the relevant law and any other relevant considerations. This guidance is primarily intended to assist licensing authorities, but it is only guidance and does not intend to give a definitive statement of the law; any decision is made by an authority remain a matter for that authority.*"

The guidance also states the merits of CCTV for driver and public safety, yet Wolverhampton does not have compulsory CCTV, probably because it would have to be the data controller of 50k+ vehicles. Yet Mr Pattison stressed their desire to protect the public and claims they are '**strong on standards**'. I find that hypocritical.

In Brighton & Hove, a Dual Licence is issued by default to be able to drive both a PHV and a hackney carriage meaning the requirements are exactly the same for both. This includes an extensive Knowledge Test that ensures professionalism without being a satnav jockey.

So, the simple solution Mr Pattison is to change to a dual licensing system if you're really genuinely concerned about having '**tyed hands**'. There you go, you can have that for free and maybe ask for the money spent on external lawyers to be paid back.



Brighton & Hove Cab Trade View

Ironically, the Best Practice Guidance that Mr Pattison has quoted is used for setting standards also has this:

"6.12 Intended use policies in respect of taxi drivers

"We are aware that a number of licensing authorities have introduced a taxi 'intended use' policy when considering licence applications aimed at reducing the number of taxis working predominantly to carry prebooked fares in other areas rather than plying for hire in their licensed area.

Licensing authorities should require an applicant for a taxi driver licence to declare that they intend to work predominately within the licensing authority's area."

I know Wolverhampton does not have an **Intended Use Policy** for its hackneys, so Mr Pattison has clearly picked and chosen what guidance to follow to suit.

When questioned if he would support a **'Triple Lock'** mechanism where the driver, vehicle and operator had to be registered locally, Mr Pattison looked a bit flustered replying: ***"As to what the answer is to the current situation...I'm not sure it is necessarily reinforcing.... I think something needs to change fundamentally..."*** Very certainly he did not say: ***"Yes"***, probably because the Wolverhampton Licensing department would collapse, in my opinion. Yet the Best Practice Guidance also states when referring to taxi licensing: ***"The residential address provided by the application should be considered in assessing the likelihood of this declaration being adhered to when assessing an application for a taxi driver licence."***

So, I put it to you Mr Pattison that Wolverhampton Licensing is relying on the **Guidance** for its own means as it can very easily include a **Knowledge Test** and **CCTV** as a condition of licensing. I also question the need to have engaged external lawyers if you really wanted to ***"..dissuade.."*** outsider applicants as there is no black and white statutory requirement to adhere to what the DfT suggests.

When questioned further on the ***"Incredible amount of money that was coming in"*** (to Wolverhampton), Mr Pattison stated: ***"And that is the challenge..."*** and that ***"..fees have gone up this year..."***. He emphasised the importance of ***"...public safety and enforcement throughout the country..."*** which is where such money is being spent and that they are ***"...looking at other ways that they can spend money on public safety and that they are looking at the same technology as UK Border Force..."*** Ironically though he clearly does not support compulsory CCTV.

Another panel member also made quite a point about fees when addressing Mr Pattison, and whilst making it clear to the room that a profit is not allowed to be made on fees, also clarified that in 2023 Wolverhampton Council had a 'reserve' account of £2 million, asking if that went towards the authority's overall balance sheet, suggesting that there could be ***"...some advantage derived from that..."***. Mr Pattison denied that was the case and was keen to state that this figure has come down significantly since then. He made it clear that they have to demonstrate that fees are used for licensing matters, otherwise the fees have to be reduced, and that they are subject to transparency and scrutiny. Mr Pattison made it clear that they can have a certain amount of money in 'reserve' but it never goes into the council's general funds, dismissing rumours that they were using to money to ***"...balance the books..."***

A further question asked for clarification on when the council's annual statement of accounts was published, as to whether the sum net balance would include the 'reserve'. Mr Pattison replied by stating it would be an 'earmarked reserve'. Is that what is known as creative accounting?

There then followed a discussion on the lack of WAV provision for Wolverhampton PHVs. So, I thoroughly enjoyed the comment from another panel member stating that: ***"...I do find it incredible that you talk about providing accessible vehicles being a barrier to the trade, I'm sure that there will be people in Wolverhampton who would not be happy with that phraseology..."*** There was again emphasis that there could have been the option of a **Knowledge Test** and a higher standard of age limits (as other authorities do thus countering the ***'our hands are tied'*** excuse) not just instead settling on the minimum standard suggested by the DfT.

All in all, I was very pleased about the questioning the panel members gave to Mr Pattison and it is very clear to me that where we are today with Wolverhampton PHVs working the whole of the country is the result of Wolverhampton Licensing taking advantage over selective sections picked from the DfT Best Practice Guidance.

I could write plenty more on the grilling given by panel members to Mr Pattison but the best thing to do is to listen to it yourself from the time frame of 10:47:30 at: www.tiny.cc/transport-committee-pl

I look forward to the next session....

*Best Practice Guidance: www.bhcta.co.uk/dftbpg

THE NATIONAL
HACKNEY
FARES TABLE

NOVEMBER 2025

RISE IN 2025	
RISE IN 2024	
RISE IN 2023	
RISE IN 2022	
RISE IN 2021	RISE IN 2017
RISE IN 2020	RISE IN 2015
RISE IN 2019	RISE IN 2013
NO SET FARE	

UPDATED DAILY
www.phtm.co.uk

NATIONAL AVERAGE
2 MILE
HACKNEY FARE
TARIFF ONE
£7.36

POSITION	TARIFF ONE 2 MILE FARE	
	COUNCIL	
17	EDINBURGH	£9.00
18	MID SUSSEX	£9.00
19	ORKNEY	£9.00
20	READING	£9.00
21	TONBRIDGE & MALLING	£9.00
22	BRENTWOOD	£8.90
23	MIDLOTHIAN	£8.90
24	REIGATE & BANSTEAD	£8.90
25	SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE	£8.90
26	STROUD	£8.90
27	UTTLESFORD	£8.90
28	VALE OF WHITE HORSE	£8.90
29	BRIGHTON & HOVE	£8.70
30	RESTORMEL	£8.70
31	SEVENOAKS	£8.70
32	SWINDON	£8.70
33	WOKING	£8.70
34	EAST DEVON	£8.69
35	CAMBRIDGE CITY	£8.60
36	TEST VALLEY	£8.60
37	TUNBRIDGE WELLS	£8.60
38	WEST BERKSHIRE	£8.60
39	BCP	£8.52
40	PENWITH	£8.52
41	ARUN	£ 8.50
42	CLACKMANNAN	£8.50
43	SLOUGH	£8.50
44	COLCHESTER	£8.40
45	EAST LOTHIAN	£8.40
46	EAST SUFFOLK (NORTH)	£8.40
47	EASTLEIGH	£8.40
48	LEEDS	£8.40
49	SOUTHAMPTON	£8.40
50	WATFORD	£8.40
51	DARTFORD	£8.30
52	HUNTINGDONSHIRE	£8.30
53	LINCOLN	£8.30
54	RUNNYMEDE	£8.30
55	SWALE	£8.30
56	TORBAY	£8.30
57	WILTSHIRE	£8.25
58	BASINGSTOKE & DEANE	£8.20
59	BROXBOURNE	£8.20
60	EAST HERTS	£8.20
61	GRAVESHAM	£8.20
62	HART	£8.20
63	MANCHESTER	£8.20
64	NORTH HERTS	£8.20
65	WOKINGHAM	£8.20
66	FOREST OF DEAN	£8.13
67	HASTINGS	£8.10
68	OXFORD CITY	£8.10
69	PLYMOUTH	£8.10
70	MOLE VALLEY	£8.08
71	BRECKLAND	£8.00
72	BUCKINGHAMSHIRE	£8.00
73	CHICHESTER	£8.00
74	COVENTRY	£8.00
75	EAST LINDSEY	£8.00
76	HARLOW	£8.00
77	HORSHAM	£8.00
78	MAIDSTONE	£8.00
79	MEDWAY	£8.00
80	NORTH YORKSHIRE	£8.00
81	NOTTINGHAM	£8.00

POSITION	TARIFF ONE 2 MILE FARE	
	COUNCIL	
82	RIBBLE VALLEY	£8.00
83	RUSHCLIFFE	£8.00
84	SHROPSHIRE	£8.00
85	SOUTH AYRSHIRE	£8.00
86	SOUTH GLOUCESTER	£8.00
87	TANDRIDGE	£8.00
88	TORRIDGE	£8.00
89	YORK	£8.00
90	DENBIGHSHIRE	£7.90
91	HINCKLEY & BOSWORTH	£7.90
92	IPSWICH	£7.90
93	ROTHER	£7.90
94	STEVENAGE	£7.85
95	ADUR	£7.80
96	BRACKNELL FOREST	£7.80
97	DORSET	£7.80
98	EASTBOURNE	£7.80
99	GLOUCESTER	£7.80
100	LEICESTER	£7.80
101	NORTH SOMERSET	£7.80
102	ROCHFORD	£7.80
103	RUSHMOOR	£7.80
104	SOUTHEND ON SEA	£7.80
105	SOUTH HAMS	£7.80
106	STOCKPORT	£7.80
107	SURREY HEATH	£7.80
108	WAVERLEY	£7.80
109	MELTON	£7.75
110	DUNDEE CITY	£7.72
111	CHELMSFORD	£7.70
112	DACORUM	£7.70
113	HIGH PEAK	£7.70
114	WEALDON	£7.70
115	WINDSOR & MAIDENHEAD	£7.70
116	STRATFORD ON AVON	£7.68
117	NORTH TYNESIDE	£7.65
118	RENFREWSHIRE	£7.65
119	WARWICK	£7.65
120	SHETLAND ISLES	£7.62
121	ASHFORD	£7.60
122	BIRMINGHAM	£7.60
123	BRISTOL	£7.60
124	CONWY	£7.60
125	DUMBARTON & VALE OF LEVEN	£7.60
126	EAST AYRSHIRE	£7.60
127	FIFE	£7.60
128	GREAT YARMOUTH	£7.60
129	ISLE OF MAN	£7.60
130	KERRIER	£7.60
131	KINGS LYNN & WEST NORFOLK	£7.60
132	MONMOUTHSHIRE	£7.60
133	SCOTTISH BORDERS	£7.60
134	SOMERSET	£7.60
135	THREE RIVERS	£7.60
136	WEST SUFFOLK	£7.60
137	WEYMOUTH & PORTLAND	£7.60
138	WINCHESTER	£7.60
139	BATH & N. E. SOMERSET	£7.50
140	MILTON KEYNES	£7.55
141	BEDFORD	£7.50
142	ANGUS	£7.50
143	CARDIFF	£7.50
144	CHESTER	£7.50
145	EPHING FOREST	£7.50
146	EXETER	£7.50

POSITION	TARIFF ONE 2 MILE FARE	
	COUNCIL	
1	LONDON (HEATHROW)	£13.60
2	LUTON AIRPORT	£12.60
3	EPSOM & EWELL	£12.00
4	TfL	£12.00
5	GUILDFORD	£10.00
6	JERSEY	£9.65
7	CARADON	£9.60
8	NORTH CORNWALL	£9.60
9	ELMBRIDGE	£9.50
10	GLASGOW	£9.30
11	CARRICK	£9.20
12	ST ALBANS	£9.15
13	GUERNSEY	£9.10
14	WORTHING	£9.10
15	HERTSMERE	£9.08
16	CHELTENHAM	£9.00

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

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

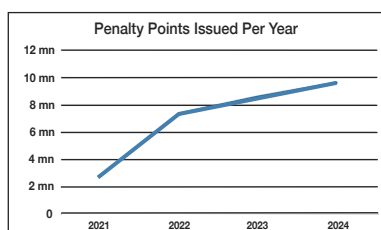
POSITION	TARIFF ONE 2 MILE FARE	
	COUNCIL	
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281	WYRE	£6.38
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283	ANGLESEY	£6.30
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293	FENLAND	£6.20
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303	ALLERDALE	£6.00
304	BOLTON	£6.00
305	GWYNEDD	£6.00
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316	STOKE-ON-TRENT	£5.90
317	VALE ROYAL	£5.90
318	EAST RIDING	£5.85
319	AMBER VALLEY	£5.80
320	FLINTSHIRE	£5.80
321	LICHFIELD	£5.80
322	MERTHYR TYDFIL	£5.80
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325	STOCKTON ON TEES	£5.70
326	ASHFIELD	£5.60
327	MIDDLESBROUGH	£5.60
328	WREXHAM	£5.60
329	PENDLE	£5.50
330	REDCAR & CLEVELAND	£5.50
331	ROCHDALE	£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.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

300% INCREASE IN PENALTY POINTS OVER THE LAST 4 YEARS, FIGURES REVEAL

Freedom of Information data obtained by Co-op Insurance last month revealed there has been a 300% increase in the number of penalty points issued to drivers on UK roads over the last four years.

In 2021, 2.8 million penalty points were issued in total in the UK. In 2024 that number increased to a staggering 9.6 million. And so far in 2025, it looks to be going up again.



**data obtained from Co-op Insurance*

Why the increase?

Quite simply it's mainly down to more speed cameras, stricter enforcement and better technology.

Undoubtedly there have been additional cameras placed all over the UK, but this isn't the only reason for the drastic increase. Historically the police never used to prosecute for speeds within 10% + 2mph (so a speed of 35 in a 30 limit would go unpunished), but this was reduced to 10% + 1mph. Add this to the reduction in various speed limits - a few years ago the limit was reduced from 30 to 20mph in Wales, with drivers in London seeing similar reductions - meaning that more drivers are now within the enforcement threshold.

Technology has improved as well. Older speed cameras were not necessarily as accurate, and occasionally the pictures not as good. These days, with digital cameras and enhanced technology, the cameras are more accurate and the photographs clearer, making vehicle identification far better.

All these factors combined have led to an increase in drivers getting penalty points.

So what if I am caught?

The first thing that the police need to do is identify the driver. They do this by sending a Notice of Intended Prosecution to the registered keeper within 14 days, together with a request asking the keeper to nominate the driver. Nomination is a vital step. A person that fails to nominate the driver is going to be at risk of 6 penalty points for failing to identify.

Once you have identified the driver, one of three things will happen. You will either:

- 1) Be offered a speed awareness course. This is instead of penalty points and so is often the preferred choice of drivers. Courses are only offered at the discretion of the police and only when the speed is within the threshold per the green table below, if one hasn't been completed within the last three years and it's within 100 days or so of the offence being committed.
- 2) Be offered a fixed penalty of three points and a £100 fine. A fixed penalty is given where the driver isn't eligible for a course, and as long as the speed is within the blue threshold per the table below. In order to accept, the driver must fulfil the conditions which are to pay the fine and provide licence details within 28 days, and if doing so would not put them on 12 or more points.
- 3) Go to court. In this regard, a driver may wish to take a case to court of their own volition to challenge a case, or alternatively it may go to court automatically if the driver will have 12 or more penalty points on their licence or if the speed is in the pink column of the table below.

Limit	Device tolerance	Speed awareness course, if appropriate	Fixed penalty when course not appropriate	Summons
If a vehicle is travelling in a:		and between (mph)	and between (mph)	and over (mph)
20	22	24 and 31	24 to 34	35
30	32	35 and 42	35 to 49	50
40	42	46 and 53	46 to 65	66
50	52	57 and 64	57 to 75	76
60	62	68 and 75	68 to 85	86
70	73	79 and 86	79 to 95	96

How many points before I am banned?

If you are within the first two years of passing your test, 6 points will see your licence revoked, meaning you must re-take both parts of your driving test.

Otherwise, you can get up to 11 points without being banned. When you hit 12, you will be at risk of a minimum 6-month disqualification, and the case will proceed to court automatically.

Penalty points are valid for three years from the date of the offence. They will remain on your licence for an extra year, so for four years in total.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

What happens if I commit many offences in quick succession?

This is a question we are asked more and more as time goes on. Ten years ago it was quite rare to speak to somebody who, for example, committed 6 or 7 offences within the same week. These days however we speak with multiple people every day who are in that exact situation.

You can always ask the police to have some discretion and drop two or three of the offences to remove the risk of disqualification. But there is no guarantee they will agree, and if they don't, your only options would be to complete the speed awareness course on one of them, to accept a couple of fixed penalties to leave you up to 11 points, and then take any remaining to court, as they are the ones that are going to put you at risk of disqualification.

One point to note however is that if two of the offences were committed in very quick succession, these could be considered as one offence. If for example you were caught by two cameras just a minute apart on the same road in the same direction, there is a legal argument to be had that this was one offence of speeding simply recorded by two cameras, and therefore there should only be one sentence.

These can however be complex legal arguments, so before taking a case to court and arguing it yourself, we would strongly suggest obtaining legal advice.

How do I take a case to court?

If the speed is too quick for a fixed penalty or if you have 9 points already, the case will automatically proceed to court after you have nominated the driver. There is nothing you can do to stop that from happening.

If you have been offered a fixed penalty/speed awareness course, you will have a choice to reject the offer and take the case to court of your own volition.

There are a number of reasons why you might want to take a case to court – for example if you have a defence to put forward such as a medical emergency or if there were two offences committed in quick succession as mentioned above – but before you do, always seek legal advice.

By taking a case to Court, you could be putting yourself at risk of more penalty points, disqualifications and higher financial penalties.

What if the case proceeds to court?

Firstly, the sentence will be different. Courts have different thresholds from the police and instead will sentence based on the table below:

Speed Limit (mph)	Recorded Speed (mph)	Recorded Speed (mph)	Recorded Speed (mph)
20	21-30	31-40	41 and above
30	31-40	41-50	51 and above
40	41-55	56-65	66 and above
50	51-65	66-75	76 and above
60	61-80	81-90	91 and above
70	71-90	91-100	101 and above
Sentencing Range	Band A Fine	Band B Fine	Band C Fine
Disqualification / Points	3 Points	7 - 28 Days OR 4 - 6 points	7 - 56 Days OR 6 points

N.B. certain speeds, e.g. 41mph in a 30 limit, will see the police offer you a fixed penalty/speed awareness course if you're eligible; Yet at court, you're at risk of 4-6 points, much higher fines and even disqualification.

If the case does go to court, seek legal advice urgently. There are deadlines within which a driver must respond, and failure to do so can result in a sentence in your absence of a fine, points or disqualification.

Every case is dealt with on its own facts, for example:

- Where a speed is too quick for a fixed penalty, there could be a way of dealing with the matter in a behind closed doors sentence hearing called the single justice procedure.
- If the case has gone to court because you have 12 or more points, there's a chance of avoiding disqualification by persuading the magistrates that a ban would cause exceptional hardship. That requires the driver to request a hearing to attend in person.
- If however, you've chosen to take the case to court because you want to challenge it, there will be the opportunity to enter a not guilty plea and have a trial.
- But in certain circumstances, you might want to enter a guilty plea and argue a 'special reason', in cases where, say, you were speeding but only for a medical emergency.

Finally, Magistrates' Court proceedings are complex and even if you decide not to instruct a lawyer to help you, it is always sensible to seek legal advice first.

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



WORLDWIDE TAXI FOCUS

from Morocco



MOROCCO SHUTS DOWN RIDE-HAILING APPS IN WIN FOR TAXI UNIONS

Morocco has formally banned ride-hailing apps such as Bolt and Yango, a move that is a major victory for the country's taxi unions.

The Ministry of Transport and Logistics announced the ban, stating that private drivers on these platforms have “no legal basis” under Moroccan transport law, clarifying that Moroccan law “does not recognise app-based private vehicle transportation.”

The decision follows rising tensions between traditional taxi drivers and ride-hailing services. Taxi unions alleged “unfair competition,” arguing that app-based drivers offered variable fares while avoiding the regulatory burdens faced by licensed taxis. Conversely, app-based drivers argued they were simply meeting demand, citing riders' preference for the convenience and efficiency of digital booking.

The ruling confirms that ride-hailing operations existed in a “legal grey area.” Both the Ministry of Transport and Logistics and the Ministry of the Interior have taken a strong stance. Interior Minister Abdelouafi Laftit stated in parliament that unauthorised passenger transport “violates Morocco's transport and road safety laws.” The Ministry of Transport warned that private car drivers offering paid transport are “breaching the law and risk imprisonment or fines.”

While welcomed by taxi unions, the ban leaves a gap in Morocco's transport system, as commuters increasingly relied on these digital platforms for convenience and efficiency. This development in Morocco is part of a broader trend across Africa, where governments are attempting to regulate new digital transport platforms while protecting established transport sectors. Other African nations, including Senegal, Togo, Cameroon, Algeria, and Tunisia, have taken similar actions to address regulatory and compliance issues with ride-hailing services.



from Australia



TRIPLED FINES FOR DODGY NEW SOUTH WALES TAXI DRIVERS

New South Wales has significantly increased penalties for taxi drivers who commit fare-related offences, tripling the fine for a first offence from \$1,000 to \$3,000.

This move is in response to incidents such as a driver charging an overseas family \$188 for a 13km trip from Sydney Airport to the central business district. That driver was fined \$2,000 for the offence.

The increased penalty is intended to deter drivers who overcharge, refuse to use their metres, or refuse a fare. Quotes from officials highlight the zero-tolerance stance:

Transport Minister John Graham said: “Tripling the penalty for first-time offences should serve as a big flashing light to any taxi driver doing the wrong thing that the NSW Government has zero tolerance for rip-offs and rackets being conducted from the driver's seat of a cab.”

He also added: “The vast majority of cab drivers are honest and upstanding and I want to thank the industry for working with us to protect their reputation by weeding out rogue cabbies.”

The NSW Taxi Council welcomed the change, with CEO Nick Abraham stating: “The NSW Taxi Council commends the NSW government for adopting the tougher penalties, which is a part of the NSW Taxi Council Four Point Plan, focusing on weeding out drivers who are tarnishing the good work delivered by the majority of our cabbies.”

The Point to Point Transport Commissioner, Anthony Wing, noted his team had issued over one thousand \$1,000 fines for fare-related offences in the past two years, reinforcing that: “I take fare-related offences seriously – all passengers travelling in a taxi should feel confident they are getting a fair fare.”

The increased fine follows the recent announcement of a flat \$60 rate trial for trips from Sydney Airport to destinations in the 2000 postcode (the CBD) over a two-year period, designed to prevent inconsistent fares. The changes come as the taxi industry faces stiff competition from ride share services. Airport data shows that in 2018, taxis accounted for 57% of airport pick-ups and drop-offs, but this dropped to just 27% in June 2024.

from Kenya



CABBIE UNKNOWNLY DELIVERS MURDERED WOMAN'S BODY TO POLICE

Police in Murang'a, Kenya have arrested four suspects in connection with the murder of a woman whose body was allegedly wrapped up and delivered to a police station by an unwitting taxi driver.

The shocking discovery was made after a taxi driver, whom police say was tricked into transporting the remains, grew suspicious and took the 'package' to the Kangari police station.

Kigumo police commander, Hassan Bashir, said the driver was flagged down by a man he believed to be a passenger and asked to deliver a heavy package to a specific location in Kangari town, where another person was supposedly waiting.

"The driver was paid for the delivery, so he helped the man put the heavy package into the car," police said. Upon reaching the designated drop-off point, the driver waited but found no one coming to claim the parcel. After a considerable delay, the driver decided to take the package to the police station in case the owner came forward to report it missing.

"When he arrived at the station, police demanded he open the package so they could see its contents," police reported. Officers were shocked to find a dead body wrapped in blankets and placed inside a plastic bag, along with clothes. The woman had reportedly been murdered before her body was concealed.

Bashir said the swift action of the officers led to immediate progress in the case. "The preliminary investigation led to the arrest of the four who are helping to unravel what transpired," he stated.

from South Africa



BLOEMFONTEIN ASSOCS DEMAND SUSPENSION OF UNREGISTERED APPS

Meter taxi operators in Bloemfontein, led by groups including the Rainbow Meter Taxi Association, marched to the Free State Department of Roads and Transport offices on October 8, 2025, demanding the suspension of "illegal e-hailing services."

The protest highlights deep tensions, with local taxi groups claiming that unregistered apps and drivers are circumventing rules, undercutting their income, and "putting passengers at risk."

Their primary concern is passenger safety, as they allege that some e-hailing services use drivers who are not vetted, opening the door to serious crimes. One protester shared: "We have seen too many cases where passengers end up in danger because of these unchecked apps."

The associations' rank manager, Teboho Pitso, also alleged corruption, claiming that some officials, including police, are involved in the illegal operations. Pitso stated: "These people who should be enforcing the law are sometimes the ones breaking it," and called for a probe into the corrupt practices.

The demonstration comes just a month after new national regulations were implemented, requiring all e-hailing drivers to undergo criminal background checks and get proper operating licences, yet enforcement remains a point of contention. The local conflict has previously escalated into violence, including reported attacks on e-hailing drivers by meter taxi groups.

from USA



TAXI CRITICALLY INJURES DRIVER, INJURES 3 OTHERS IN NEW YORK

An out-of-control yellow cab critically injured its driver and hurt three other people after it "hopped a curb in Manhattan and



slammed into a pole just steps from the Chinese consulate" on Thursday, October 9, just before 2.30pm. The taxi "smashed head-on into a large green traffic pole," resulting in the car being "heavily damaged." Investigators currently believe the crash was "accidental." The cabbie was taken to Bellevue Hospital with critical injuries.

The three others injured - his two passengers, a 54-year-old woman and a 61-year-old man, and a 33-year-old man on the pavement - were hospitalised in stable condition.

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- ✓ Direct Company
- ✓ Air Con
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- ✓ Free Warranty

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- ✓ One Owner
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 2.0TDCI 9 Seat LWB Minibus**



- ✓ Direct Company
- ✓ Air Con
- ✓ From 90,000 Miles
- ✓ Free Warranty

No Reserve - Highest Bidder

**2017 Peugeot Boxer 435 L3H2
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AUTUMN HERALDS WINTER SPORTS... AND WINTER WAGERS

THE CLOCKS HAVE GONE BACK! Or is it forward?, I am never sure, but two things are for certain... the nights are getting darker and the racing starts before Noon!

GMT also heralds traditional English Winter sports in freezing cold and wet conditions so I am naturally starting off with The Ashes in Australia!!

THE ASHES

The first of a five match Ashes series kicks off in Perth on the 21st of this month and I fancy England to serve it up to the Aussies in their own backyard. England are readily available at 5/2 to win the Series (note: it can be a draw) but I fancy a small wager on a **3-1 victory** at a juicy 12/1. Why?

Primarily two reasons:

firstly - the fearsome, white hot terrifying Australian bowling attack on bone hard Australian pitches might be substantially blunted by the injury to talismanic captain Pat Cummins for at least the first test (maybe two?) and

secondly - I believe there is a growing maturity and spine to the English batting line-up and, more pertinently, a steely resolve to our greatest batsman Joe Root, who will surely tick off his wish list success in Oz before his retirement.



To that end I think 9/4 for Top English Batsman (the fossil that I am can't refer it as batter!) for **JOE ROOT** is stealing money over the five test series and should be wagered for the maximum.

As to the Aussies, I think **TRAVIS HEAD** at a whopping 4/1 has to be similarly played to the maximum.

NB: the double pays a shade over 16/1

As I alluded to above, the temporary loss of Pat Cummins to injury leaves the Top Aussie Bowler field wide open and I think dependable **NATHAN LYONS**, who will bowl more overs in the Series than anyone else is well worth backing at 9/4

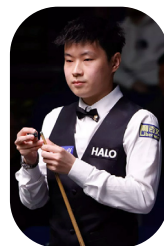
While we are down under, this Tuesday, admittedly at 4am UK time! sees....

HORSE RACING - THE MELBOURNE CUP

....Australia's greatest race, the race that stops a nation, the MELBOURNE CUP from Flemington Park. I must confess, in the global betting arena, Antipodean racing is not high on my list but one early morning last month at a God forsaken hour I was switching channels (as you do!) and saw **VALIANT KING** storm home in a grade 3 trial...strewth as they say in Sydney and immediately backed him at 16/1 for the cup. Now 8/1! Someone must have seen it too, so if you are awake at 4am on Tuesday, you might be on the rank, then tune in and spread the cash.

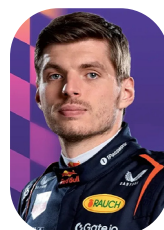
SNOOKER

As promised let's turn our attention to the snooker. The UK Snooker Championship (the first of the holy trinity), culminating in the World Championships, begins in York at the end of the month and to my mind, there are question marks over the old guard. Consequently I think the new kid on the block, and current World Champion, **ZHAO XINTONG** is a sporting selection. History may well tell us that getting 13/2 about him adding to his Sheffield glory was a massive price.



FORMULA 1

And finally, with three rounds to go and two sprints (93 points still available), it's worth backing the irresistible force that is **MAX VERSTAPPEN** (scores 32 points at Scrabble!) to overhaul Lando and Oscar and retain his world driver's crown at odds of around 7/2.



Until next time

Good punting



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