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ALL THINGS LICENSING

Article by Mike Smith, Joint Deputy Licensing Manager at Guildford and Waverley Borough Councils Shared Regulatory Services and Advisory Council Representative of the IoL South East Region.

Please note that this article represents my own views and is not presented as the views of the IoL nor Guildford or Waverley Borough Councils.

The licensing landscape continues to shift

The pace of change within the taxi and private hire sector continues to accelerate. Recent months have seen significant developments spanning technology, safeguarding, immigration compliance and emerging transport models. For both the trade and licensing authorities, these changes present opportunities as well as challenges.

This month I look at four key developments that are likely to influence licensing policy, operational practice and the future direction of the industry over the coming years.

Autonomous vehicles begin UK rollout

A major milestone was reached on 2 September when London became the first city in the United Kingdom to launch a commercial autonomous private hire vehicle service. Operated through a partnership between Uber and British technology company Wayve, the scheme currently consists of just 15 licensed vehicles operating within the capital.

Although each vehicle still carries a licensed safety driver capable of taking control if required, the cars are designed to navigate London's complex road network using advanced artificial intelligence technology. The vehicles are fully electric Ford Mustang Mach-E models and passengers are matched with them through the existing Uber app at no additional cost.

More than 100,000 Londoners registered interest in the service ahead of its launch, demonstrating significant public interest in autonomous transport. Competition is also building, with technology companies including Waymo and Baidu actively exploring future opportunities within the UK market.

While fully driverless commercial operations remain subject to future Government approval, the direction of travel is becoming increasingly clear. Autonomous technology is moving from concept to reality.

For current members of the trade, autonomous vehicles may understandably generate concerns regarding future employment and the long-term role of licensed drivers. However, widespread adoption remains some distance away and significant regulatory, technical and public confidence barriers still need to be overcome.

In the short-to-medium term, drivers are likely to continue playing an important role, particularly in customer service, passenger assistance, safeguarding and managing incidents that technology alone cannot address.

Operators should begin considering how autonomous vehicles may integrate with existing business models. Those who engage positively with technological developments may be better positioned to adapt as the market evolves.

For licensing authorities, questions will inevitably arise around accountability, insurance, enforcement, safeguarding responsibilities and determining who is responsible if (or when) things go wrong.

The rollout represents the beginning of what is likely to be a substantial regulatory challenge over the coming decade.

Southport inquiry prompts licensing review

The Government has accepted recommendations arising from the first phase of the Southport Inquiry following the tragic attack on 29 July 2024.

Among the issues considered by the inquiry were the actions of the taxi driver who transported Axel Rudakubana to the Hart Space dance studio shortly before the attack occurred. Evidence heard by the inquiry showed that after dropping off the passenger, the driver witnessed distressing scenes and believed gunshots may have been fired. However, he left the area, accepted another fare and did not contact police until approximately 50 minutes later.

Following a review, Sefton Council subsequently revoked the driver's licence, concluding that he no longer met the standards required under its licensing policy.

The Government has now accepted recommendations intended to strengthen safeguarding and emergency response expectations across the taxi and PH sector.

ALL THINGS LICENSING



These include enhanced guidance and training for licensed drivers, improved awareness of safe-guarding responsibilities and clearer expectations regarding contact with emergency services when an immediate risk to life exists.

This development reinforces the increasingly important role licensed drivers play as part of the wider safeguarding network. Many drivers already act as the eyes and ears of their communities, reporting concerns relating to vulnerable individuals, exploitation, criminal activity and public safety.

The inquiry serves as a reminder that the public and regulators increasingly expect licensed drivers to act appropriately when confronted with emergencies.

Drivers should ensure they fully engage with safeguarding training and understand their responsibilities should they witness serious incidents or immediate threats to public safety.

Licensing authorities may need to review existing driver training programmes, safeguarding policies and fit and proper person assessments to ensure expectations are clear and consistent.

There may also be increasing scrutiny of the way in which authorities respond when drivers fail to discharge safeguarding responsibilities. Decision-makers are likely to place greater emphasis on conduct involving public protection when considering applications, suspensions and revocations.

The recommendations may also provide further momentum behind calls for greater national consistency in licence standards.

DfT statistics show continuing shift towards private hire

The latest DfT statistics provide an interesting snapshot of the sector as at 1 April 2026.

The figures reveal that:

- Licensed taxi numbers continue to decline, falling by 7% since 2024 to approximately 52,300 vehicles.
- In contrast, the number of licensed private hire vehicles increased by 13% to around 290,000.
- Licensed driver numbers also increased by 9% to 417,300.
- Private hire operator licences rose by 17% to approximately 19,000.
- Accessibility remains an area of focus, with around 34,500 wheelchair-accessible vehicles now licensed throughout England.
- Encouragingly, safeguarding standards also remain high, with almost universal adoption of child exploitation awareness training, enhanced DBS checking and growing use of the National Register of Refusals, Revocations and Suspensions (NR3S).

The figures continue to demonstrate the strong growth of the private hire market and the changing nature of passenger transport.

Operators should take confidence from rising driver and vehicle numbers but should also recognise the increasingly competitive environment. Accessibility, safeguarding and professional standards are becoming key factors in maintaining public confidence.

The continuing decline in hackney carriage numbers may also prompt wider discussion regarding the future sustainability of traditional taxi services in some areas.

For licensing authorities, the data reinforces the need for robust enforcement and intelligence sharing, particularly given ongoing concerns regarding out-of-area working.

The growing use of NR3S and strengthened safeguarding measures demonstrate the increasing professionalisation of licensing functions. Authorities should continue using available intelligence tools and ensure local policies align with developing national best practice.

The data also highlights the importance of maintaining accessible transport provision and considering how licensing policies can support disabled passengers.

ALL THINGS LICENSING

New right to work duties for private hire operators

One of the most significant regulatory changes facing the sector arrives on 1 October 2026. From that date, private hire operators will be required to undertake their own right to work checks before engaging drivers.

Until now, many operators have largely relied upon checks undertaken by licensing authorities during the licensing process.

The Government has concluded that clearer accountability is required, particularly in relation to platform-based operating models. Under the new arrangements, responsibility for preventing illegal working will be shared between operators and licensing authorities.

Operators who fail to comply may face enforcement action and potentially significant civil penalties. This change will require operators to review recruitment and onboarding processes urgently. Operators should ensure staff are appropriately trained, acceptable documentation is understood and compliant record-keeping systems are established. For larger operators and digital platforms, implementation may be relatively straightforward, but smaller operators may face additional administrative burdens.

Drivers should also expect increased scrutiny during the onboarding process and may be asked to provide documentation directly to operators, even where the licensing authority has already carried out similar checks.

Authorities will need to communicate clearly with operators regarding their respective responsibilities and ensure there is no misunderstanding about the separate nature of operator and licensing authority checks.

The change may reduce any perception that right to work compliance rests solely with licensing authorities. However, authorities are still likely to face questions and complaints where issues arise, with operators who do not conduct their responsibilities properly likely to fall foul of the fit and proper test.

Conclusion

A common theme links all of these developments: the taxi and private hire sector is becoming increasingly complex, increasingly regulated and increasingly interconnected with wider public policy objectives.



From autonomous vehicles and safeguarding expectations to immigration compliance, the role of licensing is evolving far beyond its traditional foundations. Both the trade and licensing authorities must remain adaptable, informed and willing to respond to change.

For drivers and operators, professionalism, compliance and continual learning have never been more important. For licensing authorities, maintaining consistent standards whilst embracing innovation will remain a delicate balancing act.

There is no better opportunity to remain abreast of these developments than by engaging with the sector's leading professional bodies and events. The Institute of Licensing's Taxi and Private Hire Conference in October will once again bring together licensing practitioners, legal experts, industry representatives and policy makers to discuss the challenges and opportunities facing the trade.

With topics ranging from safeguarding and enforcement through to technological innovation and legislative reform, the conference promises valuable insight for anyone involved in the sector. I would strongly encourage both licensing officers and members of the trade to attend if possible.

As always, I would also encourage everyone involved in licensing to engage with the excellent work of the Institute of Licensing. The training, guidance and professional networks provided by the Institute remain invaluable resources as we navigate what promises to be another fascinating period of change for our profession.

For further information on the Institute's work and upcoming events, including the Taxi and Private Hire Conference....

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ROBOTAXIS...ROBOTAXIS

UBER AND WAYVE LAUNCH LONDON'S FIRST SELF-DRIVING TAXI SERVICE

Londoners can now hail self-driving taxis for the first time after AVs developed by British tech firm Wayve were integrated into the Uber app on 3 September.

Users across the city can be matched with a driverless Ford Mustang Mach-E, though the chances are currently slim with only 15 vehicles licensed out of the capital's 100,000 Ubers.

TfL awarded a PH licence to the vehicles last month, but current regulations require a TfL-certified safety driver to sit in the front seat during this initial phase.

Passengers can unlock the doors and start the trip through the app before using a touchscreen to monitor progress, while the human supervisor remains ready to take over the controls.

Regulatory approval for fully driverless operations without a safety driver requires a separate



process via the DVSA and is considered unlikely this year.

Unlike competitors that rely on pre-programmed instructions or extensive sensor suites, Wayve's 'AV 2.0' system uses AI to make decisions and apply learnings to unexpected situations.

Alex Kendall, the chief executive and co-founder of Wayve, stated that he was proud to introduce the technology to "our home city and one of the most complex driving environments in the world."

Kendall noted that robotaxi services without a safety driver would eventually arrive, adding: "I don't want to put a timeline on it, but we're pushing as fast as we can."

Transport secretary Heidi Alexander hailed the launch as "a major milestone for the future of transport in London."

Sarfraz Maredia, the head of addressed concerns over livelihoods, emphasising that Uber envisions a hybrid network rather than a total replacement of staff, aiming for human drivers and AVs to work side by side.

David McMullen, of the GMB union, warned: "With hundreds of thousands of people employed to drive every day, we need to be really careful with the rollout of driverless cars unless we are prepared to see unprecedented levels of social and economic disruption."

THINKTANK WANTS ROBOTAXI LEVY TO REPLACE VANISHING FUEL DUTY BEFORE FLEET GROWS

The Centre for British Progress argues that autonomous vehicles should be taxed now, while there are too few owners to mount a political pushback. Its report recommends a per-mile AV levy projected at roughly 88p a mile as the replacement for a fuel duty that electrification is quietly killing. This which would raise £47bn yearly by 2050.

Wayve, the British firm at the front of the industry, calls it a penalty on the country's own innovators while Wayve's VP, Global Affairs &

Assurance, Sarah Gates, puts the global sector prize at £700bn. London robotaxis launched last month with Waymo and Baidu following Uber and Wayve, giving policymakers a narrow window before early owners form a lobbying block.

For the private hire and taxi trade, the stakes are severe. England licenses 417,000 private hire and taxi drivers - 121,000 in London alone - with the report predicting mass obsolescence.

GMB union London drivers branch

head Simon Rush warned that a levy alone is not enough, stating that questions to operators, TfL and ministers regarding re-deployment and reskilling plans have "gone unanswered to date". Congestion risks compound the pressure, with departmental forecasts projecting a 24% rise in road mileage under high automation by 2050, alongside data showing nearly half of Waymo's California fleet mileage is driven empty. Meanwhile, the Treasury faces a £27bn annual hole in fuel duty.

ROBOTAXIS...ROBOTAXIS

TESLA CYBERCAB SHAKES UP THE ROBOTAXI RACE AS REGULATORS SCRUTINISE DRIVERLESS FLEETS

Tesla has officially deployed its purpose-built Cybercab to transport passengers in Austin, Texas, intensifying the global race for driverless taxis just as federal regulators begin examining how the steering-wheel-free vehicle was certified. The minimalist, two-seat vehicle lacks a steering wheel, accelerator, or brake pedal, representing a major shift in how hire vehicles are designed and operated.

The launch places Tesla into direct competition with established autonomous leaders such as Alphabet-owned Waymo, which already operates commercial driverless ride-hailing services across numerous American cities with over 200 million miles of real-world experience.

Meanwhile, Amazon-owned Zoox



is tackling the market with a symmetrical, passenger-focused cabin built entirely around the absence of a driver, currently operating in Las Vegas and preparing for broader expansion. Traditional ride-share giants are also adapting, with Uber and Lyft partnering with firms such as Avride, Motional, and May Mobility to integrate autonomous vehicles into their existing apps through a mix of fully driverless and

supervised fleets.

The timing of Tesla's rollout has drawn sharp focus from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, which opened an audit query on September 4 into how the company self-certified a vehicle lacking traditional manual controls.

Because American automotive regulations have historically assumed a human driver is present, the inquiry highlights the legal and safety complexities facing purpose-built robotaxis.

As companies race to refine vehicle reliability, customer support, and emergency features, the long-term future of the taxi and private hire industry hangs in the balance as it transitions toward a hybrid system where human drivers and automated fleets share the road.

LUCID AND BOLT PARTNER TO DEPLOY 25,000 AUTONOMOUS ROBOTAXIS IN EUROPE

American EV maker Lucid and European mobility platform Bolt have agreed a partnership aimed at deploying at least 25,000 fully autonomous Level 4 Lucid vehicles across Europe.

Bolt plans to own and operate the fleet, which uses Nvidia's Hyperion compute and sensing architecture, as part of a wider goal to reach 100,000 autonomous vehicles on its platform by 2035.

Co-designed from the product-development stage, the vehicles will use Lucid's upcoming cheaper mid-size EV platform, though no money has changed hands, no



firm orders are placed yet, and a deployment timeline remains unconfirmed.

Bolt CEO Markus Villig said: "Autonomous driving in Europe requires data, software, vehicles, and operations to work as one system built for European roads and regulation," leveraging Bolt's

decade of experience across 850-plus cities.

Lucid CEO Silvio Napoli noted that "Bolt's reach and operating expertise make it an ideal partner to scale autonomous mobility across Europe."

The deal follows corporate restructuring at Lucid - including workforce cuts and delays to its mid-size platform launch to the second half of 2027 - and sits alongside broader market moves, such as Uber and Wayve launching a human-monitored pilot in London and Lucid's separate US robotaxi project with Uber and Nuro.

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PUNITIVE DRIFT IN SCOTLAND

RE-EVALUATING CIVIC SUSPENSIONS AND THE ULTRA VIRES RISK

By Eddie Grice
Scottish Civic Licensing Paralegal and
Chairman of the Scottish Private Hire Association
www.spha.scot

Anyone who spends enough time standing before licensing committees, navigating the granular nuances of the **Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982** on behalf of the trade, eventually notices a dissonance. There is a widening gap between the theoretical framework of the Act and its practical application in the committee room.

We all accept the foundational premise of civic licensing. It is an administrative, forward-looking regime designed to protect the public. The statutory fit and proper test is fundamentally concerned with whether a person should hold or continue to hold a licence, rather than providing a general power to punish them for past conduct.

Yet, observing the mechanics of committee decisions across various local authorities, there is an often unchallenged drift toward quasi-judicial punishment.

This raises a slightly uncomfortable but necessary legal question for our industry:

Are Scottish licensing authorities routinely acting *ultra vires* (beyond their legal power/authority) by policing statutory offences under the guise of local licence conditions?

The punitive v preventative paradox

To understand the boundaries of a licensing authority's power, we have to look at the anatomy of a suspension. When a suspension is handed down in the heat of the moment following a complaint, the justification given by the committee is often heavily anchored in retrospective bad behaviour.

Too often, there is no clear corrective roadmap. The committee does not explain what the suspension is intended to achieve, what remedial action is required or why that action requires the driver to remain off the road.

Without a corrective intent or a remedial pathway, a suspension fundamentally ceases to be a preventative measure. It becomes a block of time served off the road. It operates, in every practical sense, as a punitive sanction.

The Scottish alcohol licensing regime has already grappled with this problem, and the core administrative principles have in my opinion obvious relevance to civic licensing. In **Lidl UK GmbH v Glasgow City Licensing Board [2013]**, the Court of Session was unequivocal in finding that a licensing board's role is not to punish past misdeeds. A suspension must have a genuine regulatory purpose. It cannot lawfully be imposed simply to punish past misconduct where there is no continuing problem which suspension can address.

Sheriff Paul Pender reinforced this logic in **Nelson v Renfrewshire Licensing Board [2013]**. In that case, a suspension applied after the licence holder had already dismissed the offending staff was overturned. The board had erred in law because there was no continuing risk that a period of suspension could cure. The administrative necessity had evaporated, leaving only a punitive shell.

Applying this doctrine to civic committees exposes a stark fragility in how they regulate drivers. If a private hire driver with an unblemished history faces a single, isolated complaint, what exactly is a suspension attempting to correct?

If there is no established pattern of behaviour, no evidence suggesting a likelihood of repetition and no ongoing risk to mitigate, a suspension imposed without an identifiable continuing risk or remedial purpose risks becoming a semantic veil for punitive action, rather than a genuine exercise of the fit and proper test.

The ultra vires risk of duplicated offences

This punitive mindset is not merely a cultural habit of elected councillors; it can also be facilitated by the way local authorities draft their licence conditions. Take, for instance, a common condition found in local licensing regimes: *"The driver of a private hire car shall not ply for hire."*

PUNITIVE DRIFT IN SCOTLAND



On a superficial level, this looks like standard regulatory housekeeping. However, that raises a more fundamental question about the legal foundation of the condition. Conduct involving the unlawful operation of taxis or the picking up of passengers by private hire cars is already addressed through offences in **section 21 of the 1982 Act**, yet local authorities may also impose conditions regulating that same conduct.

By drafting a local licence condition that directly mirrors a statutory offence created by primary legislation, authorities risk creating a parallel enforcement route which can blur the boundary between regulatory action and criminal punishment.

When a single complaint of plying for hire is brought to committee, there is a risk that councillors are placed in the same retrospective posture criticised in Lidl and Nelson. Instead of being asked to address an ongoing licensing risk, they may effectively be asked to determine what happened in the past and impose a consequence for it.

None of this means that criminal conduct is irrelevant to licensing. A licensing committee is plainly entitled to consider conduct which may also constitute an offence when assessing whether a person remains fit and proper. The question is what the committee is doing with that information. Is it using the conduct to assess an ongoing licensing risk, or is it using the licensing process to punish the conduct itself?

The important question, therefore, is not simply whether a licence condition overlaps with a statutory offence. It is how that condition is then used. A licensing condition cannot transform a licensing committee into a criminal court, and the existence of a regulatory condition does not remove the need for a committee to identify a genuine licensing purpose for any action it takes.

The procedural bleed and the subversion of justice

When we allow local licence conditions to duplicate criminal offences, we invite a dangerous procedural bleed that fundamentally alters the landscape of enforcement. This creates three immediate structural hazards.

- A misallocation of investigative powers where we end up with council enforcement officers being tasked with investigating criminality. This risks blurring the respective roles of licensing enforcement and criminal enforcement.
- The evidential position is also fundamentally different. A criminal prosecution requires the Crown to establish guilt to the criminal standard. A licensing committee deciding whether a licence should be suspended is operating within an administrative framework and does not determine criminal guilt. The danger arises when the committee effectively treats the licensing process as a substitute for prosecution, reaching a conclusion about alleged criminal conduct and imposing a livelihood-threatening consequence without first asking what regulatory risk remains.
- Lastly, in extreme cases, the different evidential framework can allow serious consequences to follow from allegations which have never been tested through the criminal justice process.

Restoring the boundaries

When a committee suspends a licence without attaching a corrective, forward-looking pathway, the result is punishment. When licensing authorities draft conditions that replicate statutory offences, they create an additional enforcement route which can facilitate that punitive drift if it is used without a genuine regulatory purpose. That also risks encouraging committees to act as though they were makeshift criminal courts. It is therefore important that we critically assess these overlapping enforcement routes.

Civic licensing needs to return exclusively to its administrative, preventative roots. Not simply as an exercise of regulatory hygiene, but to preserve the proper boundary between civic regulation and criminal justice, ensuring that the trade is regulated through the statutory licensing framework rather than through administrative punishment which properly belongs to the criminal justice system.

TRIPLE LOCK RULE

THE RULE IS CLEAR, BUT IS IT BEING FOLLOWED?

Cross-border working remains one of the most contentious issues in the taxi and private hire trade. A private hire vehicle can carry out a pre-booked journey outside their licensing area. But crossing a council boundary does not mean the licensing rules disappear. The key is how the journey was booked and who fulfilled it.

The distinction matters. In November 2022, Gill Furniss Labour MP for Brightside and Hillsborough, asked the Secretary of State what steps were being taken to address cross-border working by private hire vehicles.

Responding on behalf of the DfT, Richard Holden stated:

“Taxis and private hire vehicles (PHVs) are permitted to undertake pre-booked work outside of the area in which they are licensed. PHVs are subject to a triple licensing lock; the operator fulfilling the request, the driver and vehicle must all be licensed by the same local authority.”

That is the rule at the heart of this debate. But that distinction is easily lost when attention falls on an out-of-area number plate. The plate tells where the vehicle is licensed – it does not tell which operator fulfilled the booking.

There is an important qualification: the **Deregulation Act 2015** allows a licensed private hire operator to subcontract a booking to another licensed operator but the operator fulfilling it must use a driver and vehicle licensed by the same authority. So the operator that first accepted a passenger's request may differ from the one that ultimately provided the car.

That makes the booking trail especially important: authorities need to establish which operator accepted the request, whether it was passed on, and which operator ultimately fulfilled it. Seeing a vehicle licensed elsewhere is grounds to ask questions, but it is not, on its own, proof that the triple lock has been broken.

For further clarity, the triple lock rule was challenged in the case of *Skyline versus Milton Keynes*, where the ruling judge clearly stated that the **Deregulation Act** did not remove the triple lock rule - it is still very much an active part of legislation.

Holden's answer also acknowledged that the Government recognised that out-of-area working can make life difficult for licensing authorities, while pointing to its value where local drivers are unavailable. Those competing pressures are real. Passengers need reliable vehicles, and operators need enough drivers to meet demand.

Yet the claim that cross-border working simply fills a gap in local supply deserves closer examination. If substantial numbers of drivers licensed in one area spend most of their working time waiting for bookings elsewhere, their absence may contribute to shortages back in the area that licensed them. It is too simple to assume that every out-of-area vehicle represents extra capacity.

Equally, that possibility cannot be established by looking at a vehicle's plate alone; it requires evidence about where and how the vehicle works and which operator despatched them.

For local licensing teams, the difficulty is practical. An officer may encounter a vehicle operating daily in their district while the driver, vehicle and operator licences are held elsewhere. Checking the legal position can mean tracing booking records and seeking information from another authority. The public, meanwhile, may reasonably expect the council area in which a vehicle is working to be able to act when concerns arise.

This is why the industry needs a more precise discussion. Lawful cross-border journeys, predominant out-of-area working and breaches of the triple lock rule are related issues, but they are not the same issue. Treating every outside vehicle as unlawful weakens the argument for reform. Treating the existence of a legal route as the end of the matter overlooks the strain on local oversight.

The Government has stated the rule clearly. The next question is whether licensing authorities can reliably see how bookings are accepted, passed on and fulfilled - and investigate when the facts do not add up. If the triple lock is to command confidence, it must be more than a line in a ministerial answer. It must be a rule that can be checked in practice, enforced where breached and understood by everyone expected to follow it.

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SEND TRANSPORT

QUESTIONS RAISED OVER BRADFORD COUNCIL'S SEND TAXI CONTRACTS

Bradford Council's Passenger Transport Service is responsible for transporting more than 1,800 SEND and vulnerable children and adults twice each day. However, with the new school year underway, questions are being raised about how the council awards and manages SEND transport contracts. The concerns centre on a taxi operator reportedly allocated around twice as much work as it received last year despite concerns about its previous performance. Other operators who wish to remain anonymous, claim the company had previously been suspended from bidding for work on several occasions because of service concerns, including safeguarding issues, driver changes and poor punctuality. They claim the company was subsequently given a "red" performance rating - understood to be the lowest category.

Despite these reported concerns the company is said to have secured substantial more work this year after submitting bids significantly lower than those of competing operators.

Journeys handed back:

However, **PHTM** now understands that around 20 journeys may already have been handed back with less than 24 hours' notice. The reason reportedly given was that the agreed rates were no longer sustainable, although bids for the journeys had been submitted only weeks earlier.

What is particularly concerning is that other operators say they warned the council before the contracts were awarded that some

journeys could not be operated viably at the proposed prices. They also questioned whether drivers would be willing to undertake the work at the rates offered.

There are further claims the company did not have enough drivers to cover all the work it bid for and allegations that additional drivers have been recruited through cash referral incentives and that some jobs were being offered at short notice without the price always being disclosed in advance. There are now calls for Bradford Council to explain how it assesses price when awarding SEND transport contracts and whether it considers the long-term sustainability of a bid alongside its immediate cost. Reassurance is also needed that previous performance, operational capacity, continuity and service quality are properly weighed.

There are now important questions for Bradford Council:

- Were operators' warnings recorded and properly considered before the contracts were awarded by senior SEND management, and those responsible for awarding and monitoring the contracts
- What does a "red" performance rating mean, and can an operator with that rating bid for additional work?
- Why were journeys reportedly handed back at such short notice, and what arrangements were made for the passengers affected?
- How much, if anything, did the council pay to cover those

journeys, and were replacement services provided at higher rates?

- What action has the council taken in response to the reported safeguarding and service concerns?
- What safeguards will prevent a similar situation arising again?

The wider issue:

The case raises a broader question for the SEND transport sector across the country. If an operator wins work with a low bid and later returns journeys because the rates are unsustainable, providers that priced the work realistically may be placed at a disadvantage.

Price is important consideration when public money is spent, but a low bid offers poor value if the provider cannot deliver the service and journeys must be reassigned potentially at a greater cost and with disruption for passengers

Meanwhile the immediate concern is for the children and adults who rely on these services and the families who depend on them. A missed or disrupted journey can mean a lost day of education or care, while parents and carers are left to manage the consequences with little notice.

It is vital that the needs of vulnerable passengers are put first when contracts are awarded. Families deserve confidence that Send transport is safe, reliable and consistent - If a bid cannot deliver those standards at the agreed price, was that bid ever the best value?

Bradford Council has been invited to respond, and we hope to publish this in the November issue.

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FRIDAY IS PAYDAY

THE DAY OF THE WEEK NOBODY IN THIS TRADE TALKS ABOUT

Article by Lee Kerr
CEO and co-founder of LynkPay
www.lynpay.co.uk



Ask any operator what the worst day of the week is and most will say Friday. Not because of the school run traffic or the weekend rush, but because Friday is payday. Someone in the office sits down with a spreadsheet, a bank login and a list of drivers, and starts pressing buttons. Twelve hours later, if nothing has gone wrong, everybody has been paid. If something has gone wrong, the phone starts ringing on Saturday morning.

That job is what LynkPay was built to remove. I've been in and around this industry long enough to know that a payments company will not win anyone over with a glossy app. Operators care about two things: does the money land, and can I prove it did. So that's where we started.

How it works under the bonnet

LynkPay is a regulated payment initiation service provider. In plain English, we move money on open banking and Faster Payments rails, straight between bank accounts. We hold no card data and we hold no client funds. There's no pot of driver money sitting in our account waiting to be released. When a payout is triggered, it goes from the operator's bank to the driver's bank, and it settles in seconds rather than days.

The operator side of that is a single screen. Every driver, every balance, every payment status, and one button. Payouts can be scheduled instantly, daily or weekly, and each one moves through processing, settled and reconciled in real time. Nobody has to ring a driver to ask whether it arrived. The ledger already knows.

On the passenger side, drivers can take fares by bank transfer, by QR code, or by contactless card, Apple Pay and Google Pay, with no extra hardware in the car. Prepaid SMS booking takes the deposit up front and takes the no-show with it. This year we added a Visa card for drivers, issued through the app at no cost to the fleet, with no credit checks and no paperwork for the office.

Today there are around 25,000 drivers on LynkPay across the UK, and the platform has moved more than

£300 million. Plenty of people have tried to build payments for this trade. As things stand, we remain the only viable option built for it, and that is a position we intend to keep earning.

Then we started listening to drivers

Somewhere in the second year of doing this, it became obvious that we had built something for operators and drivers were simply the recipients. They got paid faster, which they liked, but we hadn't really thought about the rest of their week: fuel; insurance; groceries; school shoes. A driver's income is decent, but the outgoings are relentless, and every penny of it is spent in the same places as everyone else, at full price.

So we built LynkPay Rewards, and it goes live in October.

Driver Discounts opens first. It's a catalogue of more than three million products, with offers negotiated directly with household brands rather than lifted off a voucher site. Travel, dining, groceries, days out, technology and home. Depending on the merchant, a driver buys a digital card below face value, uses a member code at checkout, or clicks a tracked link and the price simply drops. Every saving is logged against their account, so they can see what it has actually been worth to them.

There's no new account and no second password. Drivers open Rewards inside the LynkPay app, or sign in through the link on lynpay.co.uk from any browser, using the same login they already use to get paid. It's included in the wallet fee, so there is nothing extra for the driver to pay and nothing for the operator to build. What a driver browses or buys is their business, not their operator's.

Private hire insurance comparison and a LynkPay fuel card, prepaid or on 30 days' credit, follow next.

For operators, the pitch is simple. Rewards is a recruitment and retention offer that the firm down the road can't match, switched on across the whole fleet in an afternoon, with take-up reporting in the client portal.

Faster pay wins drivers. We've known that for a while. Helping them keep more of it is the part we should have got to sooner.



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LICENSING LESSONS

GROUP 2: MEDICAL FITNESS AND TAXI LICENSING

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



The medical standard that has become synonymous with taxi licensing

For most taxi and private hire drivers, the position appears straightforward: to obtain or retain a licence, the applicant must satisfy the DVLA Group 2 medical standard applied to lorry and bus drivers.

That is certainly the expectation across much of England. The Department for Transport recommends Group 2 because licensed drivers spend longer on the road than ordinary motorists, carry members of the public and may need to assist disabled or vulnerable passengers. But an important legal distinction can become lost in practice.

Outside London, Group 2 is not itself the statutory test under which a local authority grants or refuses a taxi or private hire driver's licence. It is a medical benchmark which authorities are strongly encouraged to adopt, and which most incorporate into their policies.

That distinction matters where an applicant remains entitled to drive an ordinary car but falls just outside one of the more stringent Group 2 criteria.

What the legislation actually requires

For private hire drivers, section 51 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 requires the authority to be satisfied that the applicant is a fit and proper person. Section 59 contains the corresponding qualification for hackney carriage drivers. Section 57 permits the authority to require medical information from an applicant, including evidence relating to physical fitness.

The Act does not say that failure to satisfy every element of Group 2 automatically prohibits the grant of a licence. The DfT guidance similarly makes clear that the licensing authority must assess the medical information and decide if the licence should be issued.

The doctor provides evidence; the authority remains the decision maker.

Group 2 is a benchmark, but policy is not legislation

None of this diminishes the importance of Group 2. An authority which has adopted it is entitled to place substantial weight upon it as the national benchmark recommended for professional passenger carrying.

But a policy guiding statutory discretion should not ordinarily be treated as though Parliament had enacted an absolute prohibition. The authority must still consider the individual case and whether there is a proper evidential basis for departure.

It does not create a general medical “exception”; it means only that the statutory decision remains evaluative.

A driver with monocular vision

Consider an applicant who lost the sight in one eye following an isolated injury many years earlier. Group 2 is stringent in relation to monocular vision, whereas ordinary Group 1 driving may remain possible where the applicable acuity and visual field requirements are met and successful adaptation has occurred.

An applicant might therefore have years of safe driving, excellent corrected vision in the functioning eye and full adaptation, yet still fall outside Group 2.

If asked to depart from policy, the authority would need cogent evidence. A generic GP letter saying that the applicant is “fit to drive” is unlikely to suffice. Detailed ophthalmological evidence addressing acuity, visual field, stability, adaptation and progressive risk would be expected. A practical driving assessment may also assist.

The greater the departure from Group 2, the stronger the evidence required.

A single episode of loss of consciousness

Transient loss of consciousness is more difficult because it raises the risk of sudden incapacity. Suppose an applicant suffered a single episode of syncope during an identifiable medical procedure, has never experienced one while driving and has subsequently undergone specialist investigation.

If the applicant remains within a Group 2 exclusion period, departure from policy would be difficult. A consultant would need to identify the diagnosis and

LICENSING LESSONS

cause, address recurrence risk, explain whether the trigger is reliably avoidable and give a clear opinion on the risk of sudden incapacity while driving.

Evidence that somebody simply feels well is of little assistance. **The issue is the probability of recurrence.**

Mental health conditions and medication

Mental health illustrates why diagnosis alone should not determine an application. Some anxiety and depressive conditions can be compatible with professional driving, while more severe illness may require a period of stability and specialist evidence. Medication is likewise not automatically disqualifying; the relevant question is whether the condition or treatment impairs safe driving.

An applicant recovering from a significant depressive episode may therefore require detailed psychiatric evidence addressing diagnosis, treatment, relapse history, stability, insight, medication and current functional risk. **A bare statement that the applicant is “doing better” is unlikely to carry much weight.**

Some Group 2 failures will remain very difficult to overcome

Discretion should not be confused with dilution of the medical standard.

Conditions involving a meaningful risk of sudden disabling events, such as recurrent unexplained blackouts, uncontrolled hypoglycaemia or active seizure risk, present an obvious public safety concern. An authority is entitled to ask why it should accept a risk for fare paying passengers which the national medical framework would not accept for a bus or lorry driver.

In such cases, the fact that Group 2 operates through policy rather than an express statutory prohibition may make little practical difference.

Individual assessment exists to permit lawful judgement, not to take chances with public safety.

What evidential threshold is required?

There is no separate statutory standard of proof for a medical departure. The wider suitability decision is made on the balance of probabilities, and the authority must be positively satisfied that the applicant is fit and proper. The DfT's statutory standards make clear that where the decision maker is left genuinely 50/50, the applicant should not be licensed.

The applicant must do more than cast doubt on the council's position. The evidence must provide a positive basis for concluding that licensing does not compromise public safety.

The strongest evidence will usually come from the relevant specialist and engage directly with the particular Group 2 criterion. Occupational health evidence, a practical driving assessment and a demonstrably safe driving history may add weight, but **none substitutes for proper medical evidence where risk remains unresolved.**

A shorter licence may sometimes assist

Section 53 of the 1976 Act permits a driver's licence to be granted for less than the ordinary three-year period where the authority considers that appropriate in the circumstances. That can assist where the driver is presently considered safe but continuing medical review is justified.

It should not, however, become a disguised probationary licence or a means of licensing someone whose present medical fitness remains unresolved. The DfT likewise cautions against the use of probationary driver licences. **A shorter licence manages review; it does not cure risk.**

Medical fitness requires a decision, not merely a tick box

Group 2 is a sensible starting point and, in most cases, will also be the finishing point. But difficult cases require more than a mechanical comparison with a medical form.

The statutory scheme leaves the licensing authority with responsibility for deciding whether the individual can safely and properly be licensed. For an applicant who falls outside Group 2, the real question is whether there is sufficiently persuasive, condition-specific evidence to justify departure while allowing the authority to remain positively satisfied that public safety is protected. That is a demanding threshold. Properly so.

I advise taxi and private hire drivers where medical issues have resulted in delayed, refused, suspended or contested licence applications, including cases requiring specialist evidence and representations before licensing committees or on appeal. If a medical condition is affecting your licence or application, please do not hesitate to contact me to discuss the evidence and the options available.

AWARDING ACHIEVEMENT

ROMAN TAXIS NEWPORT BECOMES THE FIRST FIRM IN WALES TO ACHIEVE ISO QUALITY CERTIFICATION

Roman Taxis has broken new ground by becoming the first PH firm in Wales to earn the prestigious ISO 9001:2015 certification.

Run by Ryan Milton, Marilyn Clayton and Dale Clayton, the firm achieved the internationally recognised standard after having its management processes independently assessed. The global framework focuses on maintaining high accountability, delivering consistent service, meeting customer expectations and driving



continuous improvement.

Ryan Milton, general manager at Roman Taxis Ltd, said: "Achieving ISO 9001:2015 certification is a hugely proud moment for everyone

at Roman Taxis. We wanted to put in place a recognised framework that would challenge us to continually improve and ensure that quality remains at the heart of our operation.

"Becoming the first firm in Wales to achieve this certification is a significant achievement. Our focus now is on building on these standards and continuing to deliver a service our customers and corporate partners can have complete confidence in."

HARRISONS TAXIS, MARKET HARBOROUGH WINS REGIONAL AWARD

Private hire and taxi firm, Harrison's Taxis, has triumphed at a regional awards ceremony.

Operating across West Northants and the surrounding area, Harrison's Taxis was named Taxi Business of the Year for the East Midlands following a public vote in the My Local Awards programme.



Founded in April 2024 with a modest team of just two drivers, the company has experienced rapid expansion. The business now operates three offices, serving customers in Market Harborough, Wellingborough & Northampton.

General manager Adam Smith shared his pride in the achievement, stating: "We were absolutely over the moon. To win Taxi Business of the Year 2026 just over two years after starting with only two drivers was a very proud and emotional moment for the whole team, particularly knowing how many challenges we had overcome along the way."

He added: "More than anything, it felt like recognition for every member of staff, every driver and every customer who believed in Harrison's and helped us get to where we are today."

The firm credits its community-focused ethos for a lot of its success.

DONCASTER PRIVATE HIRE BOSS WINS 'SON OF PAKISTAN' AWARD

Jaan G Saqlain, MD of Doncaster PH firm Absolute Cabs, has received the prestigious "Farzand e Pakistan" (Son of Pakistan) award at a London ceremony.



Saqlain dedicated the honour to Julie Kay, who recently passed away at 57 following a battle with motor neurone disease (MND).

Recalling their work together, Saqlain said: "Julie and I worked very hard opening the Absolute Cabs office in Doncaster in 2013. This award is for her. Absolute Cabs has grown from five cars at its 2013 launch to a fleet of over 200 vehicles under Saqlain's leadership. The international award celebrates high-achieving Pakistanis living overseas and their contributions abroad.



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GOVERNMENT REAFFIRMS PLANS FOR TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE BILL

The Government has reaffirmed its intention to introduce a draft Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle (PHV) Bill, with improved accessibility for disabled passengers identified as a key objective.

In a written Parliamentary answer published on 7 September 2026, Transport Minister, Simon Lightwood, confirmed the DfT is continuing to consider how taxi and PHV regulation should be reformed, and that a draft Bill would be brought forward for pre-legislative scrutiny.

The Minister highlighted the importance of taxis and PHVs to disabled people, especially in rural or coastal areas where alternative public transport may be limited.

The proposed legislation is expected to include measures for delivering more accessible services for disabled passengers, strengthening existing protections and removing barriers to travel.

The announcement provides further confirmation of the Government's plans to reform the taxi and PHV regulatory framework,

although the detailed provisions of the Bill have yet to be published.

Accessibility is likely to be a significant element of the reforms. Existing legal protections already require taxi and PHV drivers to provide certain forms of assistance to disabled passengers and prohibit additional charges for that assistance.

However, concerns remain about the availability of accessible vehicles and the consistency of accessibility standards across the sector.

WARNING TO ALL PH OPERATORS! NEW RIGHT TO WORK ENFORCEMENT DUTIES FROM 1 OCT 2026

New right to work requirements for private hire drivers came into force on 1 October 2026, placing a statutory duty on operators to verify a driver's immigration status before allowing them to work.

The change, confirmed in a recent parliamentary written question and highlighted in sector briefings, represents a significant shift in the regulatory landscape for taxi and private hire licensing.

The Home Office said the expanded Right to Work Scheme will apply to "organisations engaging people to provide work or services under their company name", explicitly including private hire operators. Ministers noted that relying solely on council licensing checks has not provided sufficiently clear accountability when illegal working is identified, particularly in cases involving platform-based or intermediary

business models. Enforcement teams have repeatedly found responsibility for preventing illegal working was unclear once drivers began working through operators. Licensing authorities will continue to carry out right-to-work checks as part of the badge-issuing process, but operators will now be required to complete their own verification before engaging a driver.

The new duty is intended to create a shared compliance framework, ensuring both licensing authorities and operators hold responsibility if illegal working is later detected. The Home Office confirmed it will monitor the impact of the change and publish further assessments as the scheme is implemented.

Sector sources, have warned that operators who fail to meet the new duty could face severe civil penalties of up to £60,000 per illegal worker for repeat breaches

(£45,000 for a first breach).

The requirement applies to all PH operators, including large national platforms, which the Home Office identified as presenting particular challenges under the previous system. The change forms part of wider employment reforms being introduced throughout 2026.

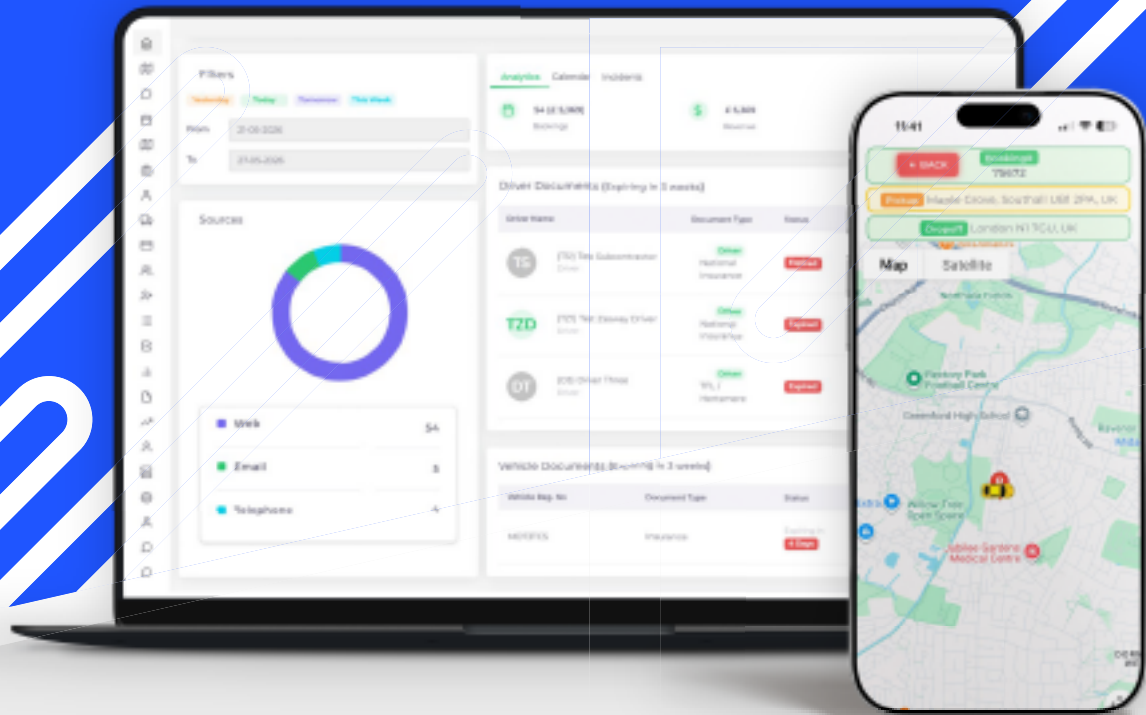
Government guidance for employers emphasises the need to update internal processes ahead of statutory changes, including right to work compliance.

For PH operators, this includes

- revising onboarding procedures
- ensuring staff understand acceptable documentation and
- keeping clear records demonstrating compliance

Licensing authorities are expected to issue updated guidance to operators in the coming weeks to support consistent implementation across local areas.

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- 📍 Driver Tracking
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- 🗨️ Two-Way Driver Chat

CHOOSING THE RIGHT CAR

GUIDE FOR CABBIES WHO WANT WORK, REPEAT CUSTOMERS & LESS ARGUMENTS WITH SUITCASES

Article by Rev'd Paul Newbery
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The car is not just a car - it is your business plan on wheels

In taxi and private hire work, the vehicle you choose quietly decides what jobs you attract, how much stress you carry, and whether your working day feels like a business or a punishment with cup holders. A good choice brings the right passengers; a bad one leaves you trying to fit four holiday cases into a boot apparently designed for a sandwich.

The best vehicle is the one that matches the work you want. Airport transfers need luggage space and motorway comfort. Executive clients expect presentation. Local work rewards reliability and low costs. Green work needs compliance and charging common sense. Decide the work first, then buy the appropriate tool.

Start with the job you want

Before studying finance offers or dashboards that look like spacecraft, ask one blunt question: from what sort of work do I want this car to earn? The car should serve your passengers and your business, not just impress you on the forecourt.

Think in jobs, not just models. Airport work, local runs, executive travel, accessible transport and green fleets all have different priorities. One car can cover several, but no car is perfect for everything - regardless of what sales brochures and optimistic mates may suggest.

Airport work: luggage is the boss

Airport customers may say "just two passengers", but the cases tell the truth. Airport work rewards boot space, rear comfort, fuel economy and reliability. A saloon or hybrid hatchback can suit solo travellers; an estate is often the sweet spot for families, golfers and

anyone whose "hand luggage" needs its own postcode.

For larger groups, MPVs and people carriers are obvious contenders, but check luggage space with every seat in use. Seven seats are wonderful until the seventh seat removes the boot. Airport work also favours washable interiors, charging points and suspension that makes a 4 a.m. run feel professional rather than punitive.

Shopping, local jobs & everyday private hire

Everyday local work is where reliability, economy and easy access matter most. A sensible saloon, hatchback or compact estate can be ideal: affordable to run, easy to park, easy to clean and comfortable enough for frequent short trips.

Wide-opening doors, a low boot lip and washable mats can mean more than badge prestige. If your day is mostly supermarket, surgery, school and station, choose a car that starts every morning, sips fuel and does not object when someone brings chips into the back seat.

Executive work: the theatre of calm

Executive work is about trust, discretion, punctuality and presentation - not just leather seats and a badge. The car should be quiet, clean and comfortable, giving passengers the feeling that someone has thought about their journey before they opened the door.

An executive saloon or premium estate can suit account work, hospitality and airport meet-and-greet. But clients notice details: a scuffed alloy, loose receipt or air freshener powerful enough to stun a rhino can undo the effect of the badge.

Green work: low emissions, lower fuel shock

Hybrid and electric vehicles matter more than ever, especially where licensing rules, clean air zones or customers favour lower emissions. Cleaner vehicles are becoming less of a marketing extra and more of a business safeguard.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT CAR

A full EV can be brilliant for predictable local work if charging fits your day. A hybrid can be a useful bridge for mixed urban and airport jobs. The “greenest” business decision is the one that keeps you legal, profitable and actually moving.

Accessible and inclusive transport

Accessible work can be rewarding and valuable, but it needs the right kit and approach. Wheelchair access, ramps, restraints, low steps, grab handles and clear communication all affect passenger confidence.

If this is your market, speak to your council, insurer and experienced operators before buying. Consider ramp angle, headroom, loading space and real streets - not just a brochure photo taken in perfect weather. In Britain, the rain is not optional.

The finance question: can the car earn its keep?

A vehicle that looks profitable on Instagram may not be profitable on a spreadsheet. Count finance, insurance, licensing, servicing, tyres, cleaning, fuel or charging, depreciation and downtime. If the extra income does not cover the extra cost, you have bought a very polite way to lose money.

Do not forget utilisation. A big MPV is excellent when full, less excellent on one-person supermarket runs. Match the vehicle to jobs you can actually win, not the jobs you imagine after watching one motivational video at midnight.

The driver test: would you sit in the back?

Before committing, sit in the rear seat for ten minutes. Check legroom, headroom, noise, door openings and ride comfort. If the car annoys you on the drive, it may not charm passengers after an hour on the motorway.

Conclusion: buy for the diary, not the driveway

The right taxi or PHV fits your passengers, your patch, your licensing rules and your ambitions. Airports need luggage and comfort. Local work needs reliability and low costs. Executive jobs need presentation. Green work needs emissions sense. Accessible journeys need dignity, safety and usability.

Choose well and your car becomes a quiet partner in the business. Choose badly and it becomes a daily reminder that boot space is not a theory. The right vehicle helps you build the work you actually want - and keeps the suitcases, passengers and driver all on speaking terms.

QUICK COMPARISON: MATCHING VEHICLE TO WORK

Work type	Best vehicle traits	Watch out for
Airport transfers	Estate, roomy saloon or MPV; boot space, comfort and economy	Passengers who call three suitcases “a few bags”
Everyday local work	Reliable saloon, hatchback or compact estate; low costs & easy access	Short trips, heavy wear and muddy Saturday nights
Executive work	Premium saloon or estate; quiet, clean and comfortable	Small details that spoil the professional image
Green work	Hybrid or EV; low emissions, good efficiency and charging plan	Range, downtime and local licensing rules
Accessible work	Wheelchair access, ramps, restraints, headroom and clear communication	Real-world loading, training and insurance

GREATER MANCHESTER LAUNCHES £2M FUND TO HELP PRIVATE HIRE DRIVERS UPGRADE VEHICLES

A new £2m fund has officially opened for Greater Manchester private hire drivers to upgrade their vehicles, transport bosses confirmed on Tuesday 15 September 2026.

The scheme provides practical financial support to help local drivers transition to cleaner cars, while leaders simultaneously press the Government for legislative change on out-of-area licensing.

Open for applications from 15 September, the Private Hire Vehicle Support Fund offers grants of up to £2,500 to private hire drivers licensed by one of the region's ten local councils. The scheme helps drivers with older vehicles upgrade to Euro 4 or higher for petrol cars, Euro 6 for diesel cars, or zero-emission capable vehicles.

Transport data shows that taxis and private hire vehicles make an estimated 120,000 journeys in Greater Manchester every day, adding up to roughly 44 million trips annually.

Alongside the funding rollout, city region leaders continue to call on the Government to change the law regarding out-of-area licensing. It is estimated that more than 50 per cent of private hire vehicles working in Greater Manchester are licensed elsewhere, giving local authorities limited oversight, fewer enforcement powers, and no direct control over those drivers.

Civic and transport leaders want a "licence where you operate" model, and the Government has confirmed it will bring forward a Draft Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Bill for pre-legislative scrutiny.



Mayor of Greater Manchester Bev Craig said: "Private hire drivers play a vital role helping to keep Greater Manchester moving every day, whether that's getting people to work, healthcare appointments, school, or helping them get home safely at the end of the day.

"We've listened to the trade and we're launching this fund to offer private hire drivers practical financial support to help them move to cleaner, more modern vehicles, which is good for them, passengers and good for our environment.

"I'll continue the work with the Government to secure stronger legislation that better supports our locally licensed drivers. They should not be undercut by drivers licensed elsewhere, where we can't guarantee a safe, high-quality service."

Unions have widely welcomed the initiative. Kevin Flanagan, GMB Manchester Central Branch Secretary, stated: "The GMB welcomes the new support fund launched for private hire drivers across Greater Manchester.

"We are pleased to have worked with TfGM and welcome the commitment shown by the

Greater Manchester Mayor's office in responding to the issues raised and making this support available to drivers.

"Drivers have faced significant challenges and costs in upgrading their vehicles in recent years, these grants will provide welcome assistance to those still making the transition to newer vehicles.

"We want Greater Manchester to be a national model for the trade and will continue to support policies and practices that improve standards, enhance passenger confidence and support the livelihoods of private hire drivers across the region."

Andy Wells, Regional Officer for Unite the Union, added that the move would "only lead to an improvement in services for the customer".

The new initiative complements Greater Manchester's existing Hackney Support Fund, which launched in December 2025 to help licensed black cab drivers upgrade to cleaner vehicles, with funding already committed to more than 400 locally licensed black cab drivers.

John Potts, a Stockport-licensed hackney cab driver who recently switched to an electric vehicle, noted: "The biggest challenge for many drivers is the upfront cost of changing vehicles. Financial support like this made such a big difference to me and the whole process was really straightforward."

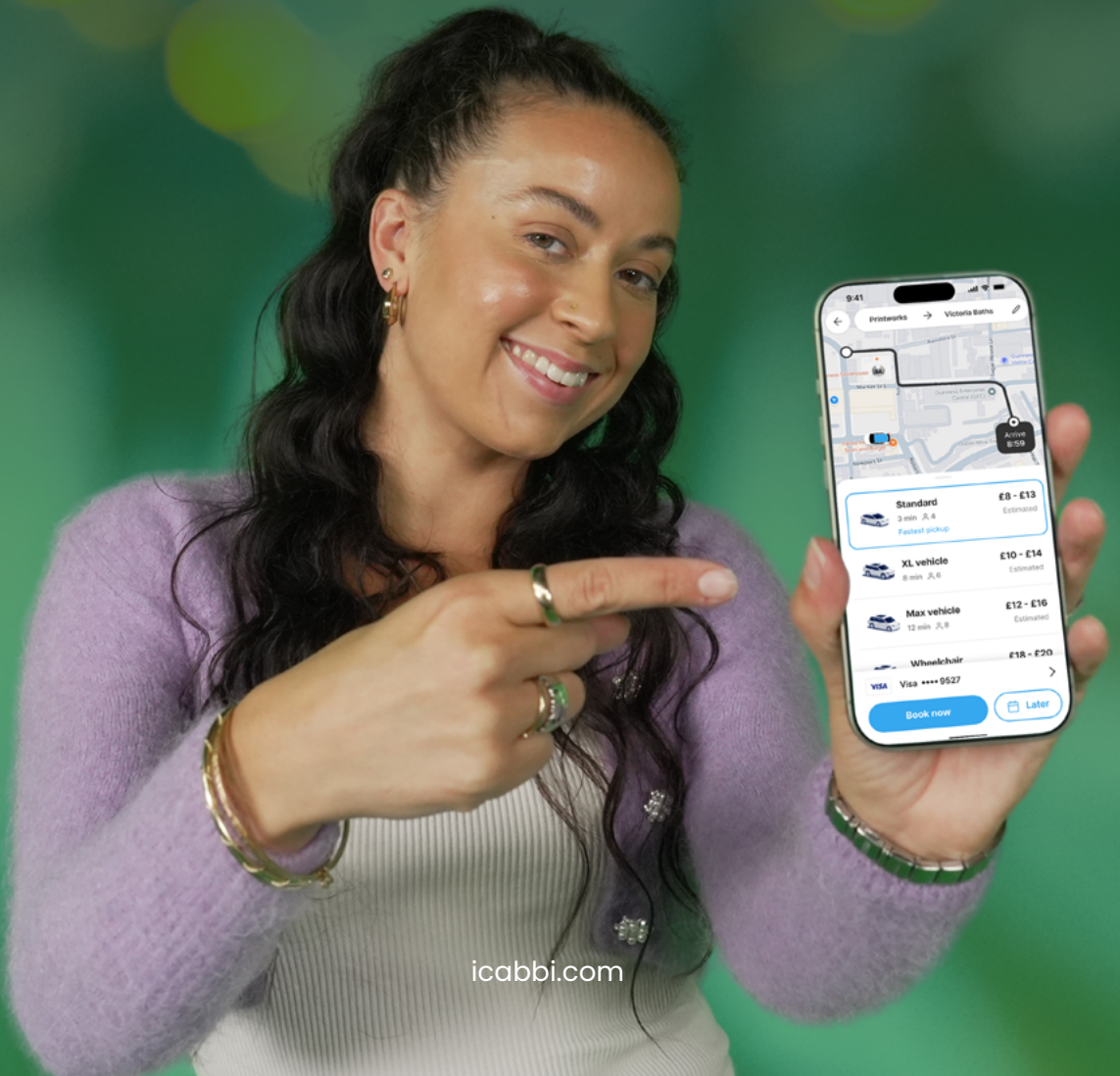
Locally licensed private hire drivers can apply online at:

greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/phv-support-fund



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SWALE COUNCIL PERFORMS U-TURN TO ALLOW TAXIS TO DISPLAY POPPIES AFTER FIERCE BACKLASH

On 1 September, Swale Council unanimously reversed a controversial ruling that banned taxi drivers from displaying poppies and "Lest We Forget" stickers on their vehicles, following a wave of public anger and threats directed at local officials.

The council held an urgent meeting to implement a temporary licensing change after iCars boss Neil McLennan was ordered to strip remembrance emblems from his fleet of taxis. The initial enforcement sparked a major online backlash, leaving councillors and licensing staff facing heavy abuse. Licensing committee chairman Cllr Simon Clark revealed the toll the fallout had taken on officials. "I've been quite traumatised with the amount of the keyboard warriors posting abuse towards our licensing



officers and towards myself as Chair of the Licensing Committee," he said, adding that he had switched his phone to escape the vitriol.

The dispute began when a single complaint prompted a council officer to tell Mr McLennan - whose company operates in Sittingbourne and Sheppey - that the Ford Mondeo taxi display breached strict rules against unauthorised vehicle advertising. Although the

council originally intended to review the policy in October, safety concerns over staff welfare forced the expedited meeting.

Councillors backed a temporary amendment ensuring approved remembrance symbols, including Royal British Legion poppies, will no longer be classified as third-party commercial advertising. The temporary exemption requires displays to be non-commercial, well-maintained, and positioned so they do not obscure mandatory signage or driver visibility.

The temporary policy amendment was passed unanimously, allowing taxi operators to display remembrance stickers while the wider licensing guidelines undergo a full review in October ahead of a final decision by the Policy and Resources Committee.

PRIVATE HIRE DRIVER'S CAR SET ON FIRE RIGHT OUTSIDE HIS SOUTHAMPTON HOME



A PH driver was left "shocked and frustrated" after his vehicle was set on fire outside his Stanton Road home in Southampton while his family slept. Sukhy Sidhu, 59, was alerted just after 10.15pm by his son when a Ring doorbell alarm went off, capturing footage of a person standing next to the vehicle as

flames ignited.

Sidhu rushed out with a bucket of water which "was doing nothing" before fire crews from Redbridge and Totton extinguished the blaze using a hose reel jet.

Having previously installed CCTV after a front window was smashed weeks prior, Sidhu worries about safety and security, noting: "I am still shaking, I don't know what we will do going forward, do we stay awake at night, what is next? We are afraid."

Sukhy added: "I've worked hard all my life, I work two jobs now. We're a Christian family, the first thing I



did was text my pastor."

Though shaken and uncertain why they were targeted - "we've got no enemies, no one to point the finger at," he said. Luckily Sidhu can continue working after his firm loaned him a replacement vehicle. Hampshire Police is treating the incident as suspected arson.



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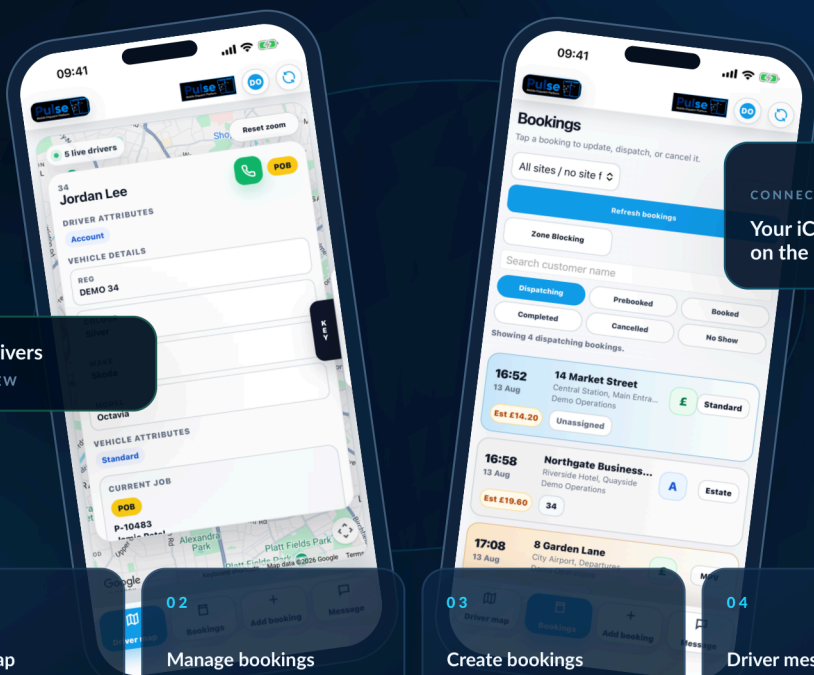


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JUST DESERTS

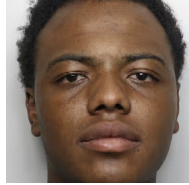
LEEDS CAREER CRIMINAL JAILED AFTER ROBBING TAXI DRIVER HOURS AFTER PRISON RELEASE

A Leeds career criminal who had just been released from prison went out drinking to celebrate, got “f***** out his head” on alcohol and drugs, and robbed a taxi driver during an early morning fare.

Tremaine Jackson, 21, was picked up by the cab at 3.31am on June 5, 2026, after having been freed from custody just the day before.

During the journey to Jackson’s home, Jackson began hitting himself in the head and com-

plaining he’d lost his house keys. The driver gave £12.70 in change, then Jackson started banging on the central console, accusing the driver of stealing his bank card. Leeds Crown Court heard that Jackson pushed the driver to the side, slapped him in the face, and stole cash while shouting that the



driver had stolen from him. The terrified driver managed to escape the vehicle and called the police, while Jackson stuffed cash into his pockets.

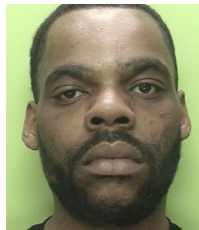
Officers found Jackson stumbling, slurring his words, and carrying cannabis plus the stolen money. Recorder Chapman sentenced Jackson to two years behind bars, noting he must serve up to half that term in custody before release on licence.

KNIFE CARRYING NOTTINGHAM DRUG DEALER JAILED FOR OVER SIX YEARS AFTER INCIDENT IN PHV

A drug dealer who was caught carrying a knife twice in less than a week has been sentenced to more than six years in prison.

Tekla Adofo, 36, first came to the attention of the police on January 28 after a PH driver realised his passenger was carrying a blade

during a fare. While travelling towards Gedling, the driver became aware that Adofo had a knife, which



prompted the two of them to get out of the vehicle before the driver managed to take a photograph of Adofo as he fled the scene.

Six days later, police were called to a separate road rage incident after a police community support officer spotted Adofo brandishing a knife and threatening a motorist. Officers quickly detained Adofo as he attempted to run away, recovering the weapon alongside heroin, crack cocaine, and cannabis hidden in his pockets.

Although Adofo denied possessing a knife during the Carlton private hire incident, he was found guilty following a trial.

He also admitted to a further count of possessing a knife in public and four separate drug offences involving the supply of Class A and Class B substances.

Appearing at Nottingham Crown Court on 11 September, Adofo was sentenced to six years and one month behind bars.

ROBBER WHO ATTACKED CABBIE IN SOUTH SHIELDS JAILED FOR 4 YEARS

A violent passenger who subjected a cabbie to a brutal assault before has been locked up. Newcastle Crown Court heard that Jonathan Mitchell, 25, targeted the cabbie after changing destinations multiple times in South Shields, prompting the driver to radio his control room for police assistance. When the taxi reached a dead end, Mitchell turned on the driver, kicked him ten times, forcing him out of the cab. Mitchell then drove

off in it before officers tracked him down and arrested him.

The court heard that Mitchell had also taken part in a masked burglary a month earlier, adding to a criminal record that already featured 24 previous offences.

Mitchell, of Wallsend, pleaded guilty to burglary, robbery, driving while disqualified/without insurance. Recorder Richard Stubbs sentenced him to four years jail and a driving ban of 55 months.

JUST DESERTS

PASSENGER WITH CLAW HAMMER WHO LEAPT AROUND CARDIFF CAB TERRIFYING DRIVER JAILED

A Cardiff cabbie was left terrified after a passenger entered his cab carrying a 30cm claw hammer during an early morning shift. Cardiff Crown Court heard that Cameron Bennett, 22, boarded the vehicle in the Ely area of the city on February 15, holding the weapon. During the journey, the driver kept his focus on calming the erratic passenger down. The court was told Bennett climbed unbelted from the front passenger seat into the rear while the car was still moving, jumping from side to side.

The driver later recalled feeling an "increased feeling of panic" and feared he would be threatened or assaulted with the weapon, though no direct threats were made. The driver dropped Bennett off near a busy area at 5.10am, saying he had another booking. As Bennett attempted to enter

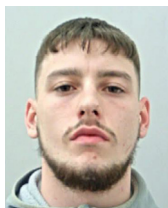


another cab, the driver gestured to his colleague not to pick him up. The cabbie flagged down passing police officers, gave them a description of a third taxi Bennett managed to board, and handed over a mobile phone left behind. Bennett appeared at Cardiff Crown Court for sentencing having pleaded guilty to possession of a bladed article in a public place. The Recorder said: "You didn't make any threats but the perception caused the driver real distress." He jailed Bennett for 314 days.

ACCRINGTON MAN JAILED FOR 42 MONTHS AFTER ATTACKING CABBIE WITH BEER BOTTLE

A man has been jailed for three and a half years after attacking a cabbie with a beer bottle. Lucas Simpson, 21, ordered the cab to take him and his girlfriend from Blackburn to Darwen in July 2024. Once there, Simpson got out without paying the £40 fare, leading the driver to follow him on foot. Simpson was carrying a crate of beer and swung a bottle that missed and smashed on the ground, before hitting the driver in the face with a second bottle. The cabbie suffered a cut above his eyebrow that left a permanent scar, lost £40 and developed anxiety around young passengers. Simpson was later identified via CCTV and arrested in December 2024. During a trial at Preston Crown Court, Simpson admitted making off with-out paying and hitting the driver, but falsely said the cabbie had made advances

toward his girlfriend. The jury dismissed the story and found him guilty of wounding with intent.



Sentencing Simpson, Judge Robert Altham slammed the fabricated defence, saying: "That was a wicked lie, told by you about an innocent man, just to get yourself out of trouble and without any regard for him at all."

DUNFERMLINE BEGGAR TAGGED AFTER RACIST TIRADE AT CABBIE

A drunk beggar who targeted a taxi rank and subjected an Asian cabbie to racist abuse while exposing himself has been sentenced at Dunfermline Sheriff Court. Robert Hooper, 51, was handed a six-month restriction of liberty order after being found guilty of intentional exposure and racially aggravated abuse. The incident, which unfolded at 7pm on July 14 at Queen Anne St. after Hooper had been drinking

following a day of begging, was corroborated by a fellow taxi driver who confirmed he heard Hooper hurling abuse and shouting remarks such as "Suck on this". Hooper claimed he was trying to get a ride home but admitted to showing his middle finger and the racist insult as he was annoyed the driver refused to take him. He denied exposing himself and insisted he was not a racist. The Sheriff rejected his version of events.

UNJUST DESERTS

THUG JAILED FOR FOUR YEARS AFTER **SUNDERLAND** CABBIE LOSES EYE FOLLOWING VICIOUS ASSAULT

A Sunderland cabbie suffered life-changing injuries and had to have his eyeball removed following a vicious street assault by an stranger high on drugs and alcohol, who targeted him as he tried to move his cab.

Jordan Hammond, 34, was jailed for four years at Newcastle Crown Court after admitting to causing grievous bodily harm with a one-year extended licence period.

The terrifying ordeal began in May 2021 when the cabbie and his partner entered their taxi to relocate it away from their home after being warned that Hammond was trying car door handles in the area. Hammond, who was riding a bicycle nearby, intercepted the vehicle, blocked its path, and hurled threats before launching into a violent physical assault.

Recorder Mark Giuliani detailed the attack in court, stating that Hammond pulled the driver to the ground and repeatedly struck him in the head and face while shouting: "I'm going to f**** kill you, do you know who I am? I'm Jord Hammond, you are f***** dead."

During the brutal beating, the victim suffered a suspected fracture to his eye socket and his eyeball ruptured. There was a "spilling out" of the contents, with heavy bleeding. Medical professionals were unable to save the eye, requiring him to have it surgically removed and replaced



with a bespoke prosthetic after wearing plastic support around the eye socket for three months. The devastating physical trauma left him battling post-traumatic stress disorder and unable to return to his profession.

Reflecting on the psychological and emotional toll, the victim shared a poignant statement expressing how the incident ruined his life, noting: "This has had a huge impact. My eye was removed as a result of the attack. This has changed me as a person, in a bad way."

While accepting that Hammond did not consciously intend to cause that specific extreme level of harm, the judge noted the offender posed a high risk to the public and that the vicious assault could have been avoided entirely.

NORTH EAST TEENAGER SPARED PRISON AFTER PUNCHING PH DRIVER AND STEALING TAKINGS

A teenager from County Durham who assaulted a PH driver and stole his earnings during a night-time robbery has avoided jail.

The attack took place after the driver accepted a fare through an app on June 10, arriving at a Middlesbrough address at 12.41am. Teesside Crown Court heard that as the driver was adding details into the app, 18-year-old Brandon Moloney opened the door and punched his cheek, "causing an immediate stinging sensation".

Moloney then grabbed the driver's takings and fled on foot, leaving the victim in shock and

unable to finish his shift.

In a victim impact statement, the driver described stated: "I was in fear for my safety and alarmed." Appearing in court, Moloney, from Bishop Auckland, pleaded guilty to robbery, adding to a criminal record that included seven previous convictions for 22 offences, including a community order at the time of the latest offence.

His defence barrister explained that the teenager had suffered a "traumatic upbringing", spent time in care, and struggled with other personal difficulties.

Judge Anthony Dunne sentenced

Moloney to 22 months in custody, suspended for two years, a rehabilitation activities requirement and £100 compensation to the victim.

Judge Dunne stated: "I'm sure you know, people who rob taxi drivers nearly always go to prison and that could have easily happened to you. The judge acknowledged Moloney's difficult childhood and noted that he had been engaging well with appointments under an existing community order.

Concluding the hearing, the judge gave the teen a final warning: "It's up to you now. This is a chance, please do not waste it."

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HOW GOOD IS YOUR INSURANCE?

Article by Rob Finlayson
City Cars Glasgow
rob@citycarsglasgow.co.uk



The old saying is you get what you pay for, and there's no market that quite echoes that like insurance. For a small taxi or private hire fleet, insurance is one of your biggest bills of the year. When your renewal arrives, the premium naturally receives most of the attention. A significant saving can make a real difference to your figures, particularly when operators are already dealing with rising vehicle, maintenance, licensing, energy and staffing costs, and for those owner-operators, skyrocketing fuel prices.

However, the cheapest premium is not always the cheapest insurance. A policy may provide the required minimum legal cover and still be completely unsuitable for the day-to-day needs of the operator and the business. If adding a driver to your policy takes nearly a week whilst your broker ums and ahs with your underwriter for approval, changing a vehicle becomes an ordeal that eats up your time, or critical documents cannot be produced accurately or correctly, that apparent saving can disappear very quickly. Sometimes, you do get exactly what you pay for.

A small fleet cannot absorb unnecessary delays

Larger organisations may have multiple spare vehicles, dedicated compliance teams and enough recruitment activity to absorb occasional delays. Smaller fleets and owner-operators don't have that luxury. Every vehicle needs to be out earning its keep. Every suitable driver who crosses the threshold matters. Managers are usually covering several responsibilities at once, and time spent chasing an insurer is time taken away from being hands-on and actually running the business.

If a vehicle is sitting idle while paperwork is being processed, it's a dead asset. The operator is losing money. If a prospective driver is waiting for an insurance referral, the operator risks losing that driver to a competitor who spent that little bit more to go with an insurance company that is more proactive. This is why service times matter just as much as the bottom-line premium. When did you last assess your insurance quotation based on turnaround KPIs or average response times?

For a modern private hire or taxi operation, we simply cannot afford to accept poor service standards. Experience shows us that poor service isn't just a once-in-a-blue-moon affair. It's something that is endemic in the insurance industry. When delays or errors hit, it's the operators who end up bearing the cost, and that isn't listed on the breakdown of your premium.

Set out your stall

The most frustrating failures are those that could have been avoided. Before an operator enters an insurance arrangement, both operator and broker really should establish how the business actually works and what it needs from its policy and the service supporting it.

How many vehicles does the business operate? What are the plans for the coming year in terms of fleet scale and size, and how often are you likely to be changing vehicles? Are drivers employed, self-employed or a mixture of both? What unique challenges and peculiarities does the operator face with its licensing authorities?

This leans particularly into what documentation the operator requires. A certificate that is technically valid may still be rejected by a licensing authority because of local variations and edge-case issues relating to that particular working area's licensing conditions.

These conversations should all be had before a premium is even discussed. Too many operators and brokers are guilty of focusing on the bottom number rather than the correct product for the operation.

Operators must be honest and specific about their requirements. In this case, they are the subject-matter experts on their own licensing area. A broker may cover the entirety of the UK market, but only an operator knows the day-to-day peculiarities of its own licensing authority.

The exchange of knowledge needs to work both ways, though. The operator understands its local licensing system and its quirks, while the broker should bring a broad knowledge of the insurance market to the table, including the appetite of its panel of underwriters and the practical limits of each product it offers.

The correct policy is usually found somewhere in the middle, where these two knowledge bases meet. Problems begin when either side makes assumptions and doesn't ask questions.

HOW GOOD IS YOUR INSURANCE?

It's easy for an operator to assume that all taxi and private hire policies work in roughly the same way. It is equally easy for a broker or underwriter to assume that requirements which work perfectly well in one licensing area will be rejected out of hand in a neighbouring one.

Assumption is the catalyst for the vast majority of problems in our sector. It's something we should avoid wherever possible.

What are you actually buying?

The insurance product is more than the certificate and the promise to pay an eligible claim. It also includes everything that surrounds the policy: how quickly telephone calls are answered, how accurately documents are produced, whether emails receive a meaningful response from someone who actually understands the product and, more importantly, how easily the policy and product can adapt when the operation changes.

Some insurers and brokers have systems which allow routine changes to be handled quickly and efficiently. Others require almost every single small request to be passed through several people over the course of multiple days before a decision can be made.

The difference may not be obvious when you're comparing quotations, but that £200 a year you're saving today may cost you multiples of that when you're off the road or have a vehicle sitting in your yard that you can't get out because you can't change it onto your policy instantly and it takes days instead of minutes. A fleet that rarely changes may never notice, but an operator that is regularly adding drivers, replacing vehicles or dealing with different licensing authorities certainly will.

This does not mean that the most expensive policy will automatically provide the best service. A higher premium is not proof of competence, just as a lower premium is not proof of poor service. The point is that service has a value of its own, and operators should consider that added value when comparing products.

We do this with almost every other supplier. We consider how quickly the garage can repair a vehicle, how reliable a communications provider is or how responsive a DMS partner can be when something goes wrong. Insurance seems to be one of those products that escapes the same examination, as the

premium is always what seems to dominate the conversation.

When everything is running normally, most insurance policies look exactly the same. The vehicles are covered, the certificates are filed away either on your dispatch system or in a filing cabinet, and the monthly or annual premium leaves your account. They all seem to be able to do that correctly, it seems.

The real litmus test appears when something changes. You get that call at two in the morning and a vehicle is written off and needs to be replaced. You have a new driver in the office wanting to start. Your licensing officer asks a question about your documentation and requires an amendment when you renew a plate, or you expand into a new operating area and your requirements change. This is when the quality of your product becomes visible.

For a small operator, the ability to speak to a real human being who understands the business can be worth considerably more than a modest saving on the initial premium. So can having a broker who knows your fleet structure and does not require the entire history and modus operandi to be explained on every phone call.

There is also value in being told no. Not every driver, vehicle or unusual request will be acceptable to an underwriter. Operators understand that. A clear answer given promptly allows the business to look at other options and make other plans. Silence, vague updates and uncertain timescales are often more debilitating to a business than an outright refusal given in good time, purely because an operator cannot make a decision whilst there's no resolution on the table.

Claims are only part of the test

The traditional measure of an insurer is how it performs when a claim is made, and rightly so. A low premium means very little if a legitimate claim becomes an exhausting battle. However, claims handling is only part of the overall relationship.

For private hire and taxi operators, what you really want is someone who will fight your corner when things go sideways. That is worth more than anything.

Smaller administrative interactions generally happen more frequently than major claims. Driver referrals, vehicle substitutions, changes of operating address, letters of indemnity and confirmations form the backbone of the overall experience of the policy.

HOW GOOD IS YOUR INSURANCE?

An insurance company could handle one major claim effectively but still create constant disruption and cost to a business through slow administration. Another might have excellent day-to-day service but let you down when that claim hits. A genuinely good broker or insurer needs to be able to do both.

The cost isn't always the cost

The difficult part is that service failures are difficult to price in advance. A quotation clearly shows the premium, excess and level of cover. It does not show the likely number of hours that will be spent chasing documents.

It does not show the number of days it will take to get that shiny new car you're adding to the fleet into service, or how many prospective drivers you will lose throughout the year while waiting on approvals or referrals.

These costs sit elsewhere in the business, and we never consider insurance as the root cause. They will appear in your KPIs as lower vehicle utilisation rates, lost recruitment opportunities, additional management time and frustration. Because these issues are often overlooked, they aren't always raised at renewal time.

This is perhaps why an insurance arrangement can appear inexpensive on paper whilst having an incalculable cost in reality.

Value is different for every operator

There is no single insurance product that will be the right product for every company in the UK. An owner-driver with one vehicle may value a straightforward policy, clear claims support and the ability to speak to an empathetic human being at the other end of the phone.

A fleet operator working across multiple licensing areas may need a broker who understands that one certificate format will not necessarily fly with every local authority it works with and may need variations or amendments to suit.

A specialist chauffeur or contract operator may require specific indemnities or additional levels of cover.

The cheapest suitable policy may still be the correct choice. The important caveat here is suitable.

Price will always matter, and no sensible operator should pay more without a reason, but value is more important than price any day of the week.

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3

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S

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ONLINE REVIEWS...ONLINE REVIEWS

MORE REVIEWS. MORE BOOKINGS. WHY YOUR ONLINE REPUTATION MATTERS

Article by Taxisolutions
taxisolutions.co.uk



When passengers search for a taxi, there are often several local firms competing for their attention. One of the first things they are likely to notice is the number of reviews each business has and its overall Google rating. If two taxi firms appear side by side, but one has significantly more positive reviews, which one is the passenger more likely to trust?

This is why building a strong online reputation has become increasingly important for taxi and private hire operators. Positive reviews provide reassurance to new passengers before they have even made their first booking. ReviewMaster helps operators build their online reputation. Over time, this can create a stronger and more consistent flow of recent reviews, helping businesses demonstrate the quality of service they already provide.

More positive reviews can also support local visibility. When passengers search for terms such as “taxi near me”, having a strong Google Business Profile can help a taxi firm stand out against other operators in the area. It is not simply about achieving a high star rating either. Passengers want to see recent feedback from real people showing that a business is reliable, professional and trusted locally.

For operators, passenger feedback can also provide useful insight into their service. It highlights what the business is doing well while helping identify areas where improvements could be made.

A stronger review profile can also help build confidence at the point when a passenger is deciding who to book with. Someone who has never used your company before may not know much about your fleet, drivers or service standards. Reviews help bridge that gap by giving them reassurance from other passengers who have already travelled with you.

That can be particularly valuable in competitive local markets where several taxi firms appear in the same search results. Even small differences in rating, review volume and how recently feedback has been posted can influence how a business is perceived.

Reviews also continue working long after they are posted. Unlike a short-term advert or promotion, a strong collection of positive feedback helps create an ongoing digital reputation for the business. As more reviews are added, potential passengers can see that people are regularly using the service and having a positive experience.

For taxi operators looking to grow, this can support more than just bookings. A professional online presence can also strengthen credibility with local businesses, account customers and potential partners who may search for the company before making contact.

ReviewMaster works with leading taxi dispatch systems including CAB9, iCabbi, Autocab, Cordic and Cab Treasure, making it suitable for operators across the taxi and private hire industry.

With passengers checking reviews before deciding who to book, building a strong online reputation could make the difference between being overlooked and winning the next booking.

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LEVC CONFIRMS NEXT GENERATION LONDON BLACK CAB TO LAUNCH IN 2027

Last month LEVC confirmed that the next generation black cab will launch into the UK market in the second half of 2027, fully engineered from the ground up to meet the Metropolitan Conditions of Fitness, set out by TfL. This new model will take over from the iconic TX range-extended electric taxi which launched in 2018.

LEVC has sold over 12,000 TX taxis worldwide to date and thanks to its eCity powertrain, TX has prevented over 450 million kg CO₂ from entering the atmosphere and reduced NOx emissions of the London taxi fleet by 60%.

Environmental sustainability and air quality continues to be a key consideration in the development of LEVC's next-generation taxi.

With development of its new model well underway, LEVC has revealed a series of early design sketches, showing a clear evolution of the instantly recognisable silhouette while advancing the vehicle's design, technology and usability for the next era of urban mobility.

As manufacturer of the world's only purpose-built, fully accessible electric taxi and custodian of one of Britain's most recognisable automotive icons, LEVC is developing its latest model with the needs of drivers, passengers, fleet operators and cities firmly at its core.

Since 2013, Geely Group has invested over £1 billion in the ongoing development of LEVC and remains firmly committed to the future of the UK taxi industry.

This next generation product will build on the synergies and partnerships forged over the past decade, combining LEVC's



industry expertise and Geely's innovative global capability.

While full technical details and specifications remain under wraps, the next-generation taxi will leverage LEVC's expertise in purpose-built taxi design, accessibility and durability, to deliver a vehicle that represents an advanced, purpose-built urban mobility solution.

Tony Chi, Chief Executive Officer at LEVC, said: "For more than a century, LEVC has been at the heart of urban mobility, and the black cab remains one of the most trusted and recognisable transport solutions in the world.

"Our next-generation taxi will honour everything drivers and passengers value about the current TX, while taking a significant step forward in design, innovation and sustainability. We know how important the future of the black cab is to our partners and we want to reassure them that LEVC is fully committed to the future of this sector."

Brett Boydell, Global Design Director at LEVC, said: "Designing the next generation of iconic black cab is both an incredible responsibility and a unique opportunity. These first sketches capture the essence of what's to

come - familiar, purposeful and unmistakably LEVC - but with a fresh, modern character that reflects the future of mobility. LEVC will continue working closely with drivers, partners and industry stakeholders to ensure the next-generation purpose-built taxi continues to meet the unique requirements of professional urban transport."

As part of the planned transition, final assembly of the TX model concluded in September, which enables the brand and LEVC's Ansty production facility to fully prepare for the introduction of its new purpose-built taxi.

LEVC remains fully committed to its customers, drivers and industry partners. Our established after-market and aftersales operations will continue to provide comprehensive and ongoing service, parts and technical support for the current TX.

With new vehicle production commencing in 2027, today's reveal signals the beginning of a new era for LEVC and the continued evolution of the iconic black cab."

Danny O'Gorman, General Manager at Freenow by Lyft UKI, said: "This LEVC announcement is great news for the taxi trade and marks an exciting next step for London's transport network. We are pleased that LEVC is continuing to set the benchmark for purpose-built taxis with the range-extended TX6, which will deliver a much greener, higher-spec vehicle that lowers running costs for drivers."

BUSINESS NEWS

SPHA SECURES UPDATE TO BOOKING OFFICE RULES IN GLASGOW

The Scottish Private Hire Association has achieved a significant victory for small-scale and independent operators in Glasgow.

Following negotiations with Glasgow Licensing, the authority has confirmed they will accept applications for Booking Office Licences when operating from a domestic property.

This is a change from previous practice where booking office licence applications were only accepted for commercial office spaces.

The SPHA's formal proposal highlighted that the regulatory framework focused too narrowly when defining physical premises and failed to account for modern

practices. It was argued that because many modern booking offices can function entirely online, the authority's assumption of a bricks-and-mortar office placed an unfair burden on the trade.

The SPHA also pointed out that the current "Sui Generis" classification for taxi businesses found in planning legislation didn't match the definition or practices of a modern booking office and that the same planning legislation already provided a lawful pathway to allow domestic based booking offices to exist.

The detailed proposal was reviewed by both the licensing and planning departments of Glasgow Council and all parties agreed with the SPHA's proposal and

suggested pathway.

The council confirmed that applications for domestic based booking offices will now be accepted alongside a Certificate of Lawfulness from the planning department to satisfy planning and use class requirements.

The SPHA claim this removes an unnecessary barrier to market entry and modernises how the trade is regulated.

They say it is a development that will encourage regulatory compliance alongside organic business growth and that it also helps promote the self employed nature of the trade by allowing growing independent operators to operate safely, legally and affordably from home.

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UBER UPDATE

UBER GRANTED CONTROVERSIAL FIFE LICENCE AS 100s OF OBJECTIONS THROWN OUT ON TECHNICALITY

Uber has successfully secured a 24/7 PH operator's licence for a booking office at Rosyth Business Park after Fife Council's Regulation & Licensing Committee approved the bid on 22 September.

The decision went through unopposed following a dramatic procedural intervention that dismissed all 431 public and industry objections. The controversy unfolded when Kevin Clancy, a solicitor acting for Uber, pointed out that none of the published objections met the strict legal requirements because they lacked a hand or electronic signature.

Council solicitor Kimberley Langley confirmed this legal shortcoming, leading committee convener Councillor Tom Adams to rule the representations invalid.

Consequently, 25 local taxi operators who had been invited to speak - including representatives from St Andrews Taxis and Magnum Taxis - were silenced before they could voice their concerns regarding public safety, driver verification, and safeguarding requirements.

Local trade figures expressed fury over the handling of the process. Linda Holt of St Andrews Taxis

branded the outcome "rank incompetence," stating: "Hundreds of objections to the application were accepted by Fife Council as legitimate. They invited 25 of us to speak but before we got the chance, Uber's solicitor said the objections were not valid because they were not signed."

Sam Green of Magnum Taxis added that objectors were initially told emails would suffice, noting: "They shouldn't have said that if they didn't know. They should have checked."

Councillor Carol Lindsay also raised serious concerns regarding administrative transparency and whether councillors were given enough factual information and time to handle such a massive volume of submissions.

Committee convener Tom Adams defended the ruling, explaining that legal advice left them no choice but to dismiss the unsigned objections, stating: "That meant I had to move we couldn't take the objections and there was no point in us hearing any further."

Lindsay Thomson, Fife Council's head of legal and democratic services, acknowledged that the licensing team would reflect on whether procedural changes are needed for the future.

Meanwhile, an Uber spokesperson welcomed the decision. The company emphasised the service will meet strong local demand, offer a safe and affordable option for residents, and provide new earning opportunities with worker rights, holiday entitlement, a pension scheme, and GMB Union representation for local drivers.

UBER DRIVERS ORGANISE AGAINST ALGORITHMIC PAY MODELS

Uber drivers across Europe and the UK are pushing back against shifting pay structures and algorithmic pay management. A collective legal action in Amsterdam accuses Uber of exploiting driver data to shift financial risk onto workers while increasing platform commissions.

Since 2020, Uber has moved away from fixed rates based on time and distance toward variable payments determined in real time. The parameters for these calculations remain undisclosed, leaving drivers unable to understand how their earnings are determined or how they compare to passenger fares, which studies suggest can result in the platform taking more than 50% on individual journeys.

The legal claim aims to reform Uber and secure compensation for c. 241,000 drivers across the UK,

and Europe. While Uber maintains that its system optimises supply and demand to maximise earning opportunities, drivers report unpredictable incomes, longer unpaid waiting times, and rising workplace inequality.

Many now work 12 days, 5 days a week, to earn what previously required much shorter hours. Although the UK Supreme Court ruled in 2021 that drivers are legally workers entitled to minimum wage and holiday pay, unions continue to challenge the company over pay and algorithmic control.

Resistance has moved offline into protests and industrial action, although organisation remains difficult because drivers work in isolation, and the platform's dynamic pricing model can incentivise strike-breaking by raising fares when supply drops.



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VEHICLE CHECKS ARE VITAL

WOULD YOU PASS AN INSPECTION TOMORROW?

Article by CheckedSafe
info@checkedsafe.com
www.checkedsafe.com



For most taxi and private hire operators, compliance is something that sits in the background of everyday operations. Vehicles need to be maintained, drivers need to be checked and records need to be kept.

But there is an important question worth asking: *If an inspection happened tomorrow, could you quickly prove that everything was being done properly?*

It is one thing to have a compliance process in place. It is another to have clear, accessible evidence that the process is actually being followed.

Daily vehicle checks are a good example. A driver may carry out a walkaround before starting their shift, spot a problem and report it. But what happens if that check is recorded on a piece of paper that gets misplaced, or in a spreadsheet that is difficult to trace back to a particular vehicle and date?

The check may have happened, but proving it happened becomes much harder.

That is where digital compliance can make a real difference.

Using CheckedSafe, operators can set up bespoke daily vehicle checklists around the requirements of their own fleet. Drivers can complete their checks through the app, report defects as they find them and create a clear digital record of what was checked, when it was checked and what was reported.

This is not simply about creating another layer of administration. Done properly, daily checks are an opportunity to spot minor issues before they develop into major problems.

A worn tyre, faulty light or damaged mirror might initially seem like a relatively small issue. Left unnoticed or unresolved, however, that same defect could contribute to a vehicle being taken off the road, creating disruption for the operator, the driver and potentially their customers.

The earlier a problem is identified, the more opportunity there is to deal with it.

That is why the process after a defect is just as important as the initial check. Operators need visibility of what has been reported, whether action has been taken and whether the vehicle is safe to continue operating.

A digital system can help bring those stages together, rather than leaving information scattered across paper forms, emails and spreadsheets.

There is also the question of evidence.

If a licensing authority, enforcement officer or other relevant party asks an operator to demonstrate how vehicles are being checked, having a clear audit trail can make a significant difference.

Instead of relying on memory or searching through folders of paperwork, operators can access records showing completed checks and reported defects.

Of course, no system can replace good judgement. Drivers still need to take their responsibilities seriously, operators still need to act on defects and vehicles still need appropriate maintenance and inspections.

Technology simply makes it easier to manage that process consistently.

For an industry where vehicles are working every day, compliance cannot afford to be something that is only considered when an inspection is approaching. It needs to be part of the daily routine.

So, would you pass an inspection tomorrow?

If the answer is yes, could you prove it?

Carrying out daily checks through CheckedSafe gives operators a straightforward way to record vehicle checks, identify defects and maintain an accessible history of their fleet's compliance.

Because when it comes to compliance, it is not enough to say that the checks were done. You need to be able to evidence them.



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ROUND THE COUNCILS

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE:

MAJOR TAXI POLICY CHANGES

Buckinghamshire Council has introduced an updated taxi licensing policy aimed at making local travel safer, more accessible and better for the environment.

The comprehensive updates, which took effect on September 1, 2026, streamline the application process for drivers while modernising vehicle standards and passenger requirements across the county.

Under the new framework, applying for or renewing a taxi licence has been simplified, though applicants must now meet clear eligibility criteria.

Drivers require at least 12 months of driving experience on a full British licence, must be aged 21 or over with limited exceptions, and need a medical check from their GP or an approved provider, with a full medical history only required for the initial check.

HC drivers must also provide proof of working within Buckinghamshire, and anyone who has lived abroad for 12 months or more in a single country over the past decade must supply a certificate of good conduct.

Vehicle rules have also been updated to offer more flexibility alongside greener standards. Most standard vehicles can now be licensed for 12 years instead of 10, while WAVs and LEVs gain an extended lifespan of 15 years, with even longer licences available for vehicles meeting enhanced accessibility requirements.

To improve air quality, all newly licensed vehicles must meet Euro 6 emissions standards from their first licence, and by 2035, all new vehicle applications must be ultra-low or zero emission. Existing vehicles can continue operating until they reach their maximum age limit. More information is available via the Buckinghamshire Council HC vehicle licence holder page here: <https://shorturl.at/vFRib>

Passenger experience and safety form a major part of the policy changes, introducing mandatory contact-less payments and a zero-tolerance declaration on abuse.

Operator staff dealing directly with customers must now complete safeguarding and disability awareness training, while rules have been relaxed to remove the requirement for operators to maintain a local landline number and to give executive drivers more flexibility to handle occasional non-executive work.

Further updates include a revised approach to managing driver DVLA points and greater latitude for vehicle advertising.

A complete copy of the updated guidelines can be accessed directly here: <https://shorturl.at/yi9Di>

NORTH NORTHANTS:

WIDE KNOWLEDGE TESTS CONCERNS

Licensed taxi drivers in Corby have met with senior council officials to warn that a new, harmonised knowledge test is proving too difficult for veteran drivers and reducing the number of cabs available to the public. The meeting took place at the Corby Cube on the evening of 2 September between members of the North Northamptonshire Hackney Carriage Trade Alliance, local councillors, and regulatory services lead Councillor Kirk Harrison.

The talks focused on the council's updated licensing policy introduced last year, which replaced four legacy district policies and now requires drivers to demonstrate knowledge of routes across the entire North Northamptonshire unitary area, covering Corby, Kettering, Wellingborough and Rushden, instead of just their home town. Trade representative Neil Rielly said, "We want licensing that protects passengers while also being fair, practical and sustainable for drivers. The meeting was constructive, but the important test will be whether the concerns raised now lead to clear answers and meaningful action." Taxi owner Ian Robb added, "Because it is so difficult to pass a street test that covers all of North Northants, there are less drivers and less taxis on the road which is affecting the public."

The discussion also covered vehicle requirements, such as mandatory black hackney carriage bodywork, fee structures, policy inconsistencies, and a licensing panel safeguard for drivers who fail the test three times. Particular attention was given to an ongoing case involving an experienced driver left unable to work while his licence renewal remains unresolved. Cllr Harrison agreed to review the three-failure safeguard and the vehicle colour requirement, with an urgent reply on the sidelined driver requested within 10 working days, and responses on remaining matters expected within 20 working days. No policy changes or individual case outcomes have yet been confirmed. Addressing the trade representatives alongside Clls Mark Pengelly and Willie Colquhoun, Cllr Harrison noted that the issues would feed into a wider review of the harmonised policy. He stated, "My priority is to ensure we have a licensing policy that is fair and consistent across North Northamptonshire and works for both the trade and the travelling public, while maintaining the high standards of public safety that residents rightly expect."

ROUND THE COUNCILS

PETERBOROUGH: PROPOSED POLICY OVERHAUL

Taxi and PH drivers in Peterborough could soon be forced to replace older vehicles as the city council considers sweeping changes to its licensing policy. Under the proposed Taxi and Private Hire Policy for 2026-2031, officials want to scrap acquired rights or grandfather rights - for vehicles licensed before July 2022 to modernise the city's ageing fleet.

The potential shake-up also includes mandatory financial checks for all new and renewal operator applications to prevent money laundering and ensure companies can safely manage vulnerable passenger transport contracts.

Other adjustments on the table involve setting a maximum licensing age of 18 years for zero-emission vehicles, introducing a broad hybrid category covering mild hybrid, full hybrid and plug-in hybrid vehicles, and potentially moving from the current certificate of compliance testing to an MOT-only model while expanding testing centre options for drivers.

While the council argues the updates will enhance safety and align with national standards following the Baroness Casey review, local trade representatives are pushing back against several key measures.

The Peterborough PH Association welcomed moves toward greener hybrid options and increased testing capacity, but strongly opposed reducing vehicle age limits, scrapping grandfather rights, and introducing unverified financial checks. It confirmed it will organise meetings to formulate a formal objection, stating: "We will challenge unjustified restrictions and unnecessary costs being placed upon the trade."

Licensing committee members are set to review the proposals and decide whether to launch a one-month public consultation.

HARTLEPOOL: YELLOW TAXIS POLICY REMAINS

Hartlepool BC licensing chiefs have voted to keep the town's hackney carriages fully yellow following a public consultation earlier this summer. The review was triggered after Blueline Group raised concerns that the requirement to respray vehicles yellow creates "prohibitive" costs for newer vehicles.

Blueline, which operates across the North East, asked the council to allow partial markings in approved

designs or colours, particularly to help them transition to fully electric vehicles. Blueline boss, David Wilson, stated that full colour compliance costs would "affect that investment," warning that a full respray could reach up to £2,000. However, council research suggested the cost would be closer to £350, and councillors questioned the company's figures.

Cllr Matthew Dodds argued that the price of a respray is minimal compared to the overall expense of introducing a new electric fleet, stating: "It feels very much like something they don't want to do."

At a meeting on 23 September, the Licensing Committee rejected the requested changes after a survey showed 418 out of 491 respondents supported keeping the town's cabs yellow. Blueline had previously argued the survey "failed" because it did not ask specifically about partial livery or EVs. Despite this criticism, councillors defended the current rules and stressed that public protection remains their primary goal.

WILTSHIRE: PHV BOOM AFTER UBER ARRIVAL

Wiltshire is experiencing a surge in PHVs following the introduction of Uber to the county at the start of 2026. The shift comes after driver numbers dropped by a fifth between 2020 and 2025, compounded by a net loss of 79 drivers in 2025 as many workers switched permanently to supermarket deliveries.

A report presented at Wiltshire Council's Licensing Committee on September 14, revealed local drivers are increasingly converting their traditional HC licences into PH ones. According to the licensing team, this trend is primarily driven by Uber's dynamic pricing model, as HCs are legally bound to fixed metered fares while PH operations offer greater pricing flexibility. The licensing team also noted a noticeable rise in PHO applications as well, aligning Wiltshire with other authorities where PHVs far outnumber HCs.

The committee reviewed progress on creating a unified taxi licensing policy spanning Wiltshire, Dorset, BCP and Somerset. It also addressed vehicle safety standards and a stricter oversight of vehicle maintenance via the rollout of a new online booking system for vehicle inspections..

The council has updated driver requirements by reducing the interval for mandatory safeguarding training from every five years down to every three highlighted completed safeguarding training for around 400 drivers.

ROUND THE COUNCILS

TEWKESBURY:

PENALTY POINT SCHEME IN EFFECT

A new penalty points scheme for all taxi/PH drivers and operators licensed by Tewkesbury BC came into effect on 28 September, following approval at the council's Executive Committee on 2 September.

Under the scheme, penalty points can be issued for minor infringements of licence conditions. The points issued will depend on the seriousness of the breach and will remain on a driver's record for three years. Drivers who reach 12 points within a three-year period will have their licence reviewed by the council's Licensing sub-committee, to decide whether any further action is necessary. This could include suspension, licence revocation, or no further action, depending on the circumstances.

The penalty points scheme was developed following consultation with licensed drivers, operators, and members of the public.

CUMBERLAND:

DRIVERS CRITICISE COUNCIL POLICY

Taxi and PH drivers gathered in Carlisle on 14 September, to blast Cumberland Council over falling standards, rising costs, and a lack of consultation. Organised by the Carlisle 2022 Taxi and Private Hire Association, Chris Bray, association secretary said drivers feel "railroaded" by new licensing conditions without proper consultation.

He pointed out that while fare tariffs are proposed to rise in Allerdale and Copeland to match Carlisle, city drivers will see no increase, leaving them struggling. "We've had no increase in fares," Bray said, noting that maintenance has jumped 70% in 3 years alongside higher rental, diesel, and tyre prices: "Drivers are just beside themselves. Most of them are working for less than minimum wage."

Trade representatives also flagged a shortage of accessible transport, with Bray stating: "There's no disability WAVs coming on. And disabled people are entitled to a taxi as well as everybody else."

He also criticised the council for a lack of communication, noting that for two years the standard response has been a lack of staff, leaving both drivers and the public without answers.

Cumberland Council defended its record, saying it regularly engages with the trade and keeps policies

focused on public safety and proportionality.

A council spokesperson said: "Any policy changes are considered carefully, taking into account legislative requirements, best practice and trade feedback.

The council acknowledged economic pressures and encouraged ongoing dialogue with the trade through proper channels.

Meanwhile, members of the council's executive committee met on September 16 and agreed to launch a consultation over the proposal that taxi fares be harmonised across the Cumberland Council area to a two-mile tariff of £7 to bring operators in both Allerdale and Copeland in line with those based in Carlisle.

HAVANT:

LICENSING POLICY CONSULTATION

Havant BC is inviting residents, businesses and the taxi/PH trade to share their views on proposed updates to the HC and PH Licensing Policy. The proposed changes seek to align the policy with updated national guidance and best practice, as well as improve consistency with neighbouring authorities (including Portsmouth, Fareham and Gosport councils).

The proposals include the following:

- Introduction of regular mandatory safeguarding and disability awareness training for taxi drivers.
- Introduction of drug screening for taxi drivers
- Increased minimum period to 2 years for licence holders to have held a driving licence.
- Reduction to qualifying period for Certificate of Good Character
- Amendments to vehicle specifications
- Alignment with Institute of Licensing's guidance on criminal convictions
- Other clarifications and minor amendments.

The changes are aimed at ensuring taxi users feel safe while those in the taxi trade are equipped to operate in a protected manner. These proposed updates were considered and agreed in their draft form by the Licensing Committee on 15 June 2026 and views are now sought before making a final decision on whether to adopt the revised policy.

The online survey can be completed here:

<https://shorturl.at/1NLwc>

The proposed updated policy can be viewed here:

<https://shorturl.at/i7o7X>

The consultation is open until midnight on Monday 19 October 2026.

ROUND THE COUNCILS

HIGHLAND:

NO CONFIDENCE VOTE PASSED

Highland Council has voted 56 to 6 in favour of a vote of no confidence against five councillors who previously voted to let jailed rapist David Brown keep his taxi operator licence.

The controversy began when six male members of the licensing committee voted on 23 June against revoking the taxi licence held in Brown's name. Council convener Bill Lobban stated that these members showed a "catastrophic failure of judgement" and sent a message that women's safety was of secondary consideration. Council leader Raymond Bremner added that it was difficult to understand how the committee members could have failed the community in such a way.

Defending the initial decision, some councillors argued they wanted to support Brown's wife, who needed the taxi operator licence to continue working herself after her husband was imprisoned. Councillor Chris Birt defended his actions during the heated September 17 debate by saying, "Even if we are deemed to be wrong, we did please a few people." Councillor Duncan Macpherson claimed he was placed in an "impossible position" because he could not disclose confidential details discussed during the private, quasi-judicial licensing meeting.

Opposing members argued that public safety must always come first. Councillor Emma Knox maintained that the core issue was simply "whether a man convicted of a rape committed in a taxi remained a fit and proper person to hold a taxi operator's licence." Councillor Lyndsey Johnston warned that the controversy had "very, very seriously damaged that confidence and brought this council into disrepute." Following public exposure by the press and subsequent fallout, one member, Willie Mackay, resigned entirely from the council, while four others stepped down from the licensing committee. However, Councillors Birt and MacPherson have refused to resign from their elected council positions, and John Grafton indicated that quitting remains an option under consideration.

In response to the mass resignations, Highland Council has appointed a completely new line-up of members to its licensing committee and licensing board to help restore public trust, with incoming members required to undergo training and sit an exam.

HARLOW:

SUPPORT PACKAGE FOR CABBIES

Harlow Council has announced a comprehensive support package designed to protect and assist the town's licensed HC drivers through the disruption caused by major town centre regeneration works.

The initiative recognises the vital service provided by local cabbies and aims to position the taxi trade at the centre of a revitalised Harlow featuring new restaurants, bars, nightlife, and entertainment from morning until night.

The assistance package includes direct financial support through grants alongside a temporary period of free licensing for drivers.

In addition to monetary relief, the council is investing heavily in new taxi infrastructure by building improved ranks across the town, including a dedicated main black cab rank positioned at the new bus station.

Announcing the measures, Cllr Dan Swords, Leader of Harlow Council, said: "Our black cab drivers provide an incredibly important service to Harlow. As we rebuild the town centre, we know construction creates disruption. That is why we're backing our drivers now with financial support, while building the new ranks and infrastructure they need to thrive in the future.

"We're creating a busier, more vibrant Harlow – and that means huge opportunities for our taxi trade.

"A thriving town needs a thriving taxi trade. We're backing ours and putting black cabs at the heart of the new Harlow as we Build Harlow's Future."

SOUTHEND:

OVERHAUL OF TAXI STANDARDS

Southend City Council's cabinet met on 7 September, to review a sweeping package of reforms that will reshape transport and public services across the city. Among the central proposals is a new taxi licensing policy that would set one framework for driver conduct, vehicle standards, safeguarding and operator responsibilities.

It would introduce penalty points for licence holders alongside mandatory requirements for disability-awareness training, enhanced criminal record checks, and verified English-language skills.

Councillors will be asked to approve the policy and recommend it to the full council for final adoption.

THE £500 CUSTOMER

WHY ONE AIRPORT TRANSFER COULD BE WORTH MORE THAN YOU THINK

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



When a customer books a £50 airport transfer, how much is that customer actually worth to your taxi business? £50? I would argue that you should be thinking much bigger.

One of the most important things I talk about in marketing is customer lifetime value. Instead of looking at the value of one booking, look at what that customer could spend with your business over the next few years.

Take an airport customer as an example. They book your taxi to take them to the airport. If you provide a great service, there's a very good chance they'll book you for the return journey too. That one customer has already potentially doubled in value.

Then six months later they book another holiday. Next year they go away twice. Perhaps they also start using you for nights out, railway station journeys, business trips or family events.

Suddenly, that original airport booking could have developed into £500 or more of business. And it doesn't end there.

If they've had a great experience, they might recommend you to friends, relatives and work colleagues. One happy airport customer could therefore generate several additional customers. This is why retaining customers should be every bit as important as attracting new ones.

The first step is providing a brilliant experience.

Make booking easy. Confirm the journey. Turn up on time. Make sure the vehicle is clean. Help with luggage. Be friendly and professional. If you're collecting them from the airport, monitor the flight and make the collection as stress-free as possible.

These things sound obvious, but they're all part of your marketing.

Marketing isn't just Facebook posts and advertising. It's every interaction somebody has with your brand.

The next step is making sure they remember you.

After the journey, why not send a simple message thanking them for travelling with you? Encourage them to download your app. Ask them to leave a Google review. With the appropriate marketing permissions, keep in touch with occasional offers, competitions or useful local information.

Most importantly, give them a reason to book again.

If someone travelled to the airport with you this summer, there's a reasonable chance they'll travel again. Your objective should be to make sure that when they start planning their next holiday, your taxi company is the first one they think of.

There's another important opportunity here too: the return journey. When someone books an outbound airport transfer, don't automatically assume they've organised their transport home. Ask the question:

"Would you like us to book your return airport collection at the same time?"

One simple question could double the value of that booking immediately.

Taxi companies spend significant amounts of money trying to attract new customers through Google, social media, leaflets, sponsorship and advertising. That's important, but don't forget about the customers you've already won.

A customer who already knows you, trusts you and has experienced good service is much easier to convert than somebody who has never used your company before.

So next time a £50 airport booking appears on your system, don't just see £50. See the beginning of a customer relationship that could ultimately be worth £500, £1,000 or potentially even more.

Win the booking. Deliver a great experience. Then work hard to keep the customer.

That's where the real value is.



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DRUGS IN CABS

PRIVATE HIRE DRIVER CONVICTED AFTER POLICE FIND £50K OF CANNABIS IN BOOT NEAR **CARLISLE**

Leicester private hire driver Muhammad Malik, 46, has been found guilty of possessing five kilos of cannabis with intent to supply after police stopped his Toyota on the M6 near Carlisle on December 11 of last year.

District Judge Philip Holden rejected Malik's defence of innocent possession, calling it "wholly implausible" and noting he was "likely a courier being used by an organised crime group."

Malik claimed a bin bag containing the £50,000 worth of drugs was left behind by an unidentified customer and that he set off on an 11-hour, 600-mile round trip to



Scotland - intending to visit Glasgow's central mosque, a Toyota showroom, and potential takeaway sites - without checking inside.

Prosecutor George Shelley

dismissed the account as "nonsense" and "ridiculous," while defence lawyer Mohammed Hussain argued that "drug dealers make mistakes and they forget things."

When questioned about his nervous demeanor during the traffic stop, Malik blamed fear of getting licence points as a working taxi driver, insisting: "I am simply a taxi driver who was doing my work."

Having spent 12 days in custody following his arrest, Malik received a 12-month community order with 120 hours of unpaid work, £650 in costs, and a £114 victim surcharge.

LIVERPOOL COUNCIL TO TIGHTEN DRUG RULES AFTER 12 DRIVERS LOSE LICENCES

Liverpool City Council is moving to tighten drug-testing processes for taxi and private hire drivers after cocaine and cannabis use identified by city officials resulted in 12 immediate licence revocations without any right of appeal.

For the past seven years, the local authority has implemented a drug-testing policy across its 4,800 registered drivers following approval in 2019. Data shows that only 13% of drivers - 630 individuals - have actually been tested during this period.

Those screenings revealed that a "small minority" of licensed motorists use illegal substances on a "recreational basis or as habitual users", prompting council concerns over public safety standards.

An upcoming report going before

the general licensing committee emphasises that the council views such substance use as "completely incompatible with being fit and proper persons to be entrusted with the safe carriage of the general public as well as the dangers presented to other road users".

Recent operational data shows that since 2023, 21 new applicants with drug-related DBS records underwent testing, while 17 existing drivers faced random checks following public complaints regarding suspected drug use over the past 18 months.

Under proposed rule changes, applicants with live or decade-old drug convictions may face discretionary testing and must provide a negative urine sample.

Renewal applicants with drug convictions or cautions from the past three years face mandatory testing requirements.

Non-negative initial screening samples must be sent to a UKAS-accredited analytical laboratory for confirmation of exact substances and quantities. Licences can be revoked with immediate effect during this window. Drivers passing a random check receive a three-month exemption from further random testing.

Alongside random checks, an intelligence-led approach requiring credible suspicion from officers is under consideration. Revoked drivers may apply for licence reinstatement upon completing a test, provided they are deemed fit and proper to drive again.



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digitally, allowing drivers to get connected quickly. This can also be useful for fleet operators who want to provide drivers with data connectivity without managing large numbers of physical SIM cards.

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Professional driving increasingly goes beyond local journeys. Chauffeurs, executive transport operators and minibuss companies may regularly carry passengers to airports, across borders or into other countries. **Driver Connect eSIM** can also provide international mobile data across more than 180 supported destinations. This means drivers travelling abroad can select an appropriate international data package and remain connected to the services they depend on while away from the UK. For chauffeurs and executive drivers, this can help maintain access to navigation, passenger communication, and live booking information throughout international journeys. Drivers using compatible dual-SIM smartphones may also be able to keep their normal phone number active while using the **Driver Connect eSIM** for mobile data.

Supporting the modern professional driver

The role of the professional driver has changed significantly. A modern taxi or private hire driver may depend on a dispatch system while simultaneously running navigation, messaging and payment applications. Multi-app drivers need to move between different platforms throughout the day, while chauffeur and minibuss operators need reliable communication with passengers and booking teams.

All of these services rely on connectivity.

Driver Connect eSIM provides a straightforward mobile data solution designed around these working requirements. With 30-day bundles, no credit check required, digital eSIM activation, UK and international options and support for the applications professional drivers use every day, it offers a flexible way to stay connected.

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SHAME SHAME

BEXLEYHEATH CABBIE JAILED FOR SIX YEARS AFTER FATAL CRASH CAUSED BY EXTREME FATIGUE

A taxi driver who spent 53 hours behind the wheel across three days has been jailed for six years after falling asleep and killing a man who had stopped for a break in a layby. Kolawole Erunkulu, 45, from Bexleyheath, pleaded guilty to causing death by dangerous driving after his Audi swerved into a layby on the A23 in Merstham and struck 59-year-old Philip Dray on August 17, 2025.

Detectives examining data from Erunkulu's employers and interior vehicle footage discovered he had been working for roughly 12 hours straight with only minor breaks immediately prior to the crash. In the preceding three days, his longest rest period was 7 hours. Inside-camera footage captured the cabbie falling into a "micro-sleep" - a brief second-long episode



where the brain stops processing information - causing his car to veer across white lines and hit Mr Dray as he returned to his Volkswagen. Mr Dray, described by his grieving partner as "a sweet, gentle, and caring man" and his sister as a conscientious driver who spent his life keeping others safe, died at the scene. Erunkulu continued driving for another 10 seconds before parking in the next layby. Passing sentence at Guildford Crown Court, the judge remarked:

"The footage shows the defendant was extremely tired and, in my view, has continued to drive when he must have known that. He was driving commercially. Even though he didn't have a passenger, he could have done and has driven in that state. All of this could have been stopped had he have slept." Acting Det Insp Rob Baldwin emphasised the severe risks uncovered by the investigation, stating: "This case sadly highlights the very real dangers of driving while fatigued. Mr Erunkulu had worked long hours with insufficient rest over the preceding days, accumulating a sleep debt." Erunkulu received an eight-year driving disqualification to run concurrently with his prison sentence and must pass an extended retest to ever drive again.

DISGRACED NEWCASTLE PH DRIVER SPARED JAIL AFTER ONLINE GROOMING WITH SCHOOLBOY

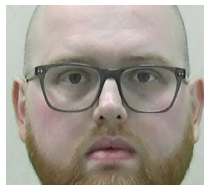
A private hire driver from Newcastle who attempted to trade a taxi ride for sexual favours with an undercover officer posing as a schoolboy has avoided an immediate prison sentence. David Richardson, 31, communicated via Snapchat in May with a profile he was told belonged to a 14-year-old schoolboy, during which he sent indecent images of himself and discussed picking the teenager up from school. Prosecuting counsel John Crawford told the court: "They spoke about the officer paying for a taxi ride with the defendant in

exchange for sexual favours."

Richardson was identified partly

because parts of his room and trainers appeared in the images he transmitted. Appearing in court, Richardson pleaded guilty to attempted sexual communication with a child and attempting to cause a child to look at a sexual image.

Recorder Jonathan Sandiford KC noted that probation reports concluded Richardson possesses a



"sexually deviant interest in children".

Mitigating on his behalf, Richard Herrmann stated that his client was suffering from depression at the time of the offences. He added that Richardson has lost his job as a taxi driver, plans to work in e-commerce, and intends to have no future contact with children.

Richardson was handed a 12-month prison sentence suspended for two years. Additionally, he has been ordered to sign the sex offenders register and comply with a sexual harm prevention order for a duration of ten years.

SHAME SHAME

POLICE INVESTIGATE **BLACKPOOL** PH DRIVER FOLLOWING VIRAL TIKTOK SEX INCIDENT

Police have launched an official investigation after a Blackpool private hire driver was allegedly caught engaging in a sex act, seemingly with another person, inside his vehicle on the top floor of a town centre multi-storey car park. The marked C Cabs vehicle was filmed during the daytime by a social media personality who approached the car, with the resulting footage quickly spreading across TikTok and racking up more than 538,000 views within three



days of being uploaded.

The video, which appeared to be filmed at the Talbot Road Sainsbury's car park, was brought to light after a concerned member of the public forwarded

it to reporters.

While long-established firm C Cabs declined to comment publicly due to ongoing police involvement, email correspondence seen by reporters indicates that the driver has already been dismissed and reported to both Lancashire police and local licensing authorities.

Confirming that action is being taken, a spokesperson for Lancashire Police stated: "This has been reported to us and our enquiries are ongoing."

NELSON CABBIE BANNED AND FINED AFTER DRIVING FOUR TIMES OVER COCAINE LIMIT

A cabbie from Nelson has been disqualified from driving for 12 months after testing positive for a cocaine derivative at more than four times the legal limit.

Sana Majeed, 28, initially entered a not guilty plea at Blackburn Magistrates' Court before changing his plea to guilty for driving while over the limit for benzoylecgonine. The court heard that police stopped Majeed due to a marker on his vehicle, after which he failed a roadside drug test.

Subsequent testing revealed a level of 206 mcg of benzoylecgonine per litre of blood, significantly exceeding the legal driving limit of 50mcg. Majeed claimed he had consumed cocaine the previous evening during a night out.

District Judge Alexandra Preston condemned the driver's delayed admission, noting that his initial denial forced the Crown to

commission an expensive expert report. The judge also emphasised that as a professional driver, Majeed should have been fully aware of the consequences of his actions.

In addition to the 12-month driving

ban, Majeed was ordered to pay a £120 fine, a £48 victim surcharge, and prosecution costs of £1,085.

The prosecution noted that the defendant had no previous convictions prior to this incident.

GLASGOW PH DRIVER SUSPENDED FOR RECORDING PASSENGERS ACCUSATION

A Glasgow PH driver has been handed a 6-week licence suspension after terrified passengers abandoned their evening plans over claims he recorded them.

Abdiqadir Mohamed Nur faced Glasgow City Council's licensing committee following a complaint to the local authority's taxi and private hire enforcement unit.

The committee heard that Nur "kept looking" at passengers and "looked angry", creating an atmosphere that left them feeling

deeply "uncomfortable".

Passengers spotted him touching his mobile phone and alleged he was actively "recording them".

The ordeal left the travellers "terrified", prompting some to change their destination and skip their planned venues.

Nur denied recording anyone inside his vehicle.

Despite his denial, councillors ruled to uphold the complaint and imposed a six-week suspension on his private hire car driver licence.

UNLICENSED PRIVATE HIRE DRIVER WHO DROVE SEND CHILDREN TO LLANELLI SCHOOL FINED £2,700

An unlicensed PH driver caught transporting SEND children to a special school has been ordered to pay more than £2,700 by the courts. Derrick Lewis was convicted in his absence at Llanelli Magistrates' Court on 4 September after failing to attend the hearing.

He was caught on 9 February driving a licensed PHV on a school run in Llanelli without holding the

mandatory dual hackney carriage and private hire driver's licence.

Carmarthenshire Council revealed that the illegal operation was uncovered during joint compliance checks by the council's licensing and school transport teams at the school, where Mr Lewis was found driving a licensed car without the legal authorisation. Magistrates issued a £660 fine

alongside £1,778.50 in prosecution costs and a £264 victim surcharge, giving him 28 days to pay the total sum of £2,702.50.

Cllr Aled Vaughan Owen, cabinet member for enforcement, stressed that pupil safety remains critical, adding: "We will continue to work with our partners to ensure school transport services remain safe, reliable and compliant."

SOUTHAMPTON PRIVATE HIRE DRIVER LOSES LICENCE AFTER MULTIPLE COMPLAINTS

A Southampton PH driver who accumulated seven public complaints, a ban from the local port, and an undisclosed speeding offence has had his licence revoked with immediate effect.

Councillors made the decision during a hearing behind closed

doors on September 16, concluding the driver was no longer a fit and proper person to hold the driver's licence. The driver did not attend the meeting.

The council's licensing department had received a series of grievances, highlighted by a June incident

where a member of the public alleged the PHV nearly caused a crash after travelling in the opposite direction and turning right into a lay-by. They stated that their sleeping wife was thrown forward and left "shocked and traumatised", and accused the driver of having "absolutely no remorse and offering no apology".

A further complaint in July alleged the driver was "driving like an idiot, nearly hit oncoming traffic, swerving all over the road" and was "close to hitting pedestrians".

Although the driver denied the allegations, he failed to provide requested dashcam footage as proof. The sub-committee also noted he'd received a three-month ban from Southampton's docks by Associated British Ports in 2025 and breached licence conditions by not disclosing a speeding offence.

The driver surrendered his vehicle licence and attempted to surrender his driver's licence which the sub-committee disregarded in making its decision.

KEIGHLEY PH DRIVER COMPLETED OVER 200 JOBS WITHOUT LICENCE

PH driver Khalid Bashir completed 205 jobs without a valid driver's licence or insurance over a one-month period, Bradford Magistrates' Court has heard.

Bashir, from Keighley, worked for Aireside PH between October 8 and November 8, 2025, taking over £1,300 while uninsured.

His PH driver licence expired on October 7, 2025, and renewal stalled after the council found an undisclosed 2023 mobile phone driving offence.

Appearing at court, Bashir pleaded guilty to driving a PHV without a

licence and proper insurance, but claimed special reasons due to his poor English. Bashir confirmed Aireside PH kept supplying a vehicle and never told him he lacked the right to work.

Magistrates accepted it was an honest misunderstanding rather than deliberate lawbreaking and handed Bashir an absolute discharge, though he has since lost his licence.

In May, Aireside boss Imran Khan was fined £220, an £88 surcharge and £600 costs for employing an unlicensed driver.

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FIT AND PROPER

PRESTON PH DRIVER'S LICENCE REVOKED AFTER DISABLED CHILDREN DRIVEN IN UNINSURED VEHICLE

A Preston-licensed PH driver has had his licence revoked after he was caught using an unlicensed and uninsured vehicle to transport seven disabled children to school. Warren Jeremy Harris was operating a Renault Master that carried the youngsters alongside a passenger assistant when it was intercepted during a joint operation by South Ribble Council and

Lancashire County Council. Mr Harris told authorities that the vehicle was only being used as a temporary replacement while his usual transport was unavailable. Investigators discovered, however, that the Renault had no private hire licence at the time of the journey, which automatically invalidated its insurance policy. Appearing at Preston Magistrates'

Court, Mr Harris pleaded guilty to driving and operating an unlicensed vehicle, and driving without insurance. He received six penalty points on his driving licence and was ordered to pay fines and costs totalling £350. Preston City Council confirmed that Mr Harris has now been stripped of his licence following the prosecution.

PH DRIVER WITH MYSTERY PASSENGER HAS LICENCE REVOKED AFTER TERRIFYING PAISLEY MOTHER

A Paisley mother has successfully campaigned to have a PH driver's licence revoked after he turned up to collect her and her 26-year-old daughter with an unannounced male passenger in the front seat. Laura Hegart, 50, and her daughter had ordered a Renfrewshire Cab outside a bar at around 9pm on January 27 when they noticed two

men inside the vehicle. Mrs Hegart immediately challenged the driver and the unknown passenger, who claimed he was acting as a "trainer". Refusing to back down, she stood her ground until her daughter managed to photograph the licence plate, while the two men began shouting and attempted to close the door.

Speaking about the terrifying ordeal, Mrs Hegart said: "I approached the car and opened the rear door and explained that there is never two males in any Renfrewshire cab. I was then told by the passenger 'I am a trainer' to which I said absolutely not. "I then informed them I would be calling the office."

She added that the encounter left lasting psychological impacts on her daughter, noting: "It was traumatising. She thought we were going to get attacked. There needs to be more checks on the people being issued these licences. My daughter hasn't got a taxi since the incident unless me or her father is with her." Following the initial complaint, Renfrewshire Cabs confirmed the newly registered driver was signed off immediately, stating that passenger safety is their absolute priority.

Mrs Hegart has welcomed the decision by Renfrewshire Council to strip the driver of his licence following an eight-month process.

STOKE-ON-TRENT PRIVATE HIRE DRIVER FINED £500 FOR LITTERING

A Stoke-on-Trent private hire driver has been hit with a £500 fine after Stoke-on-Trent City Council caught them throwing litter from their vehicle.

The council subsequently published a photograph of the offending cab to highlight the penalty and warn other motorists against the practice.

Addressing the incident, a council spokesman stated: "If you throw litter from a vehicle, you can



receive a fixed-penalty notice. "Keep it in the car. Bin it when you stop. This cabbie now has a £500 fixed-penalty notice for littering from the vehicle. Be a binner - not a tosser."

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Devolution

Last month my rant was about where we are with devolution with the UK taxi/PH trade in limbo, especially where the government has said it wants to reduce the 270 current licensing authorities down to 70 based on the proposed devolved areas.

As I consistently state, this is the government's pathetic resolution to predominant out-of-area working, mistakenly referred to as cross-border hiring, by taking down the borders to make areas bigger. I published an email sent to the Leader of Brighton & Hove council, Cllr Bella Sankey and Cllr Trevor Muten (Transport), highlighting the ongoing pressure the local trade in the city is under with the invasion of hundreds of out-of-town drivers compounded by the uncertainty of looming devolution - albeit that I consider since Brighton & Hove is already a unitary authority, the trade here will be a lot better off than others around the country.

I do have to praise Trevor in that he always provides a quick response, even if my concerns are not always fully covered. I did state last month that his response would be shared with the trade and also published here. However, instead I have uploaded his response here at: bhcta.co.uk/devolution together with my original email for context, for anyone who is interested in reading it. I also had the opportunity to discuss this with Trevor on a one-to-one basis at the Trade Forum meeting the following week.

However.... dramatic pause.... since then, despite confirming devolution details for specific areas, the government has halted it. So, that throws everything that could affect the UK taxi/PH trade in the total chaos of more uncertainty! In one way I say good! I have always stated that I am totally against devolution with what I refer to as the all-powerful 'God Mayors' in place, and just because something is bigger doesn't necessarily mean it's better. In fact, the results of Brighton & Hove City Council's own consultation showed overwhelmingly that the residents of the city were totally against devolution. So, the waiting game continues and in the meantime the UK taxi/PH trade carries on in limbo along with the uncertainty of what other possible major changes are to come.

Brighton & Hove fare review

Just to be clear, having been heavily involved in fare reviews for a number of years, I specifically removed myself from the process as I wanted others to step-up and step-forward. The last review in 2023/24 went reasonably well. This year's fare review started in April 2026 by other parties and I purposely distanced myself from this.

The set standard procedure has always been that the trade itself would get together and propose a fare review with the assistance of a senior licensing officer. This would then be officially agreed at a trade forum meeting, and that took place at a meeting in May 2026. It would then be taken to a meeting with the licensing chair and someone from the council finance department.

This would then be formalised and presented to the Licensing Committee, which holds meetings four times a year, with the next one due in June. This would be passed (it's never been rejected) and would then be published for objections for fourteen days as per Section 65 of the 76 LGMPA. All very straight forward.

However, it wasn't taken to the licensing meeting in June, and it seemed to have stalled with no explanation provided. In fact one trade rep directly blamed me for the delay... bless him. I then found out that the reason for the delay was due to Brighton & Hove City council changing to a Cabinet system. It seems that now we have a new head of licensing it has been deemed necessary for hackney carriage fare reviews to go through the full council instead.

Mmmm... I will be looking into that. So, at the August trade forum meeting I had fares put on the agenda and asked for a full explanation about the change of the process. This was clarified by the new head of licensing and we were told that the fare review will be on the agenda for the Cabinet meeting on September 17.

I made it very clear that I was not at all happy about the delay (I would hate having to deal with people like me) stating this was normally a straightforward process, dealt with by a small licensing committee which now has to go under the scrutiny of a larger one. In fact it turned out that our fare review would be item number 51 on the agenda which speaks for itself. In fact I was so annoyed about the delay I stated that I felt like walking out. I'm sure there were some at the meeting



Brighton & Hove Cab Trade View

who would have liked me to have done that. Keep in mind that I have not been involved in the fare review, however, the two reps who were involved were absent from the meeting, so I considered that questions needed to be put by someone.

Anyway, the agenda for the Cabinet meeting on September 17 was published and contained nearly 500 pages. The fare review itself covered 18 pages which was quite astonishing, but I suppose council employees have to justify their jobs. I watched it live on the council's webcast... well it saved having to get up early after a late night... and it was passed. However, whereas before Licensing would then get it published it seems it now has to go through yet another stage!

A councillor posted on his Facebook page a brief summary of that meeting which included a statement on the fare review: *"We moved forward a review of taxi fares. Any change will still go through equality and statutory consultation, balancing affordability for passengers with the rising costs facing drivers."*

I have no idea why an 'equality consultation' is 'statutory' for hackney carriage fares? As far as I'm concerned, under Section 65 of the 76 LGMPA, all that needs to be done is for the proposed fares to be published for objections, with the fares already having been passed by the Cabinet meeting, which allows anyone from any representational group to offer comments/objections. So, off goes another email to Trevor effectively asking what is going on, and more importantly, a time scale for the implementation of the new fares. As always, Trevor quickly responded and stated that he will get back to me as soon as he gets information on this, although I have not yet received anything at the time of writing this.

Portsmouth penalty points

Portsmouth private hire drivers continue to use our ranks, and I continue to send off reports to Portsmouth Licensing. I'm pleased to state that the latest two drivers who have done this have received 4 points each as per the penalty points system in place in Portsmouth. Well done Portsmouth Licensing. One has also received points for purposely removing the rear licence plate. I need to make it clear that I have better things to do with my increasingly shortening time on this earth. I really would much rather have a situation where, whilst we have to put up with hundreds of OOTs working here, out-of-sight and out-

of-mind of respective licensing enforcement, those that predominantly work here kept to the rules and didn't exploit the current state of affairs... effectively stop taking the whastit.

I'm pleased to say that the Uber rep here, Luke Juan, is now very helpful and is happy to be copied in to all reports to any licensing authority where their private hire drivers are using taxi ranks or are working here without plates or door livery.

Now, a penalty points system for licensed drivers can be controversial and fiercely resisted. Brighton & Hove licensing tried to bring such a system in here about two years ago, but the trade voted against it. I never made it a secret that I personally supported it, but when I carried out a member poll it was voted against, so of course I had to present that view and voted against it. Why do I support it? Well, its simple, I have nothing to fear. However, I'm very pleased that Portsmouth and Lewes (next door to us) have a penalty points system because:

1. Nobody wants drivers to lose their licences if they mistakenly err and it also gives drivers a chance to redeem themselves.
2. It gives a licensing authority a tool to assess the character of a driver if offending continues which can also be used in court should a driver lose their licence because the LA can show that a driver has been given chances. Let's be realistic, do we really want rotten apples in our trade?

Brighton naked bike ride

We had the annual naked bike ride here and firstly I have to state: 'Why?' And that is a serious 'Why?' From the local media photos that I've seen, you would have thought it was mid-winter, so in one respect it could be a case of: 'Nothing to see here'. The funny thing is that we have a council supported third-party bike hire-service and there were plenty of these in the parade. So, the first thing I thought of was: 'Did anyone bring any wet-wipes?' These bikes are almost the same aqua colour as the hackney boot and bonnets here.

So, it has crossed my mind to put it to the council that the local taxi trade should have a naked taxi ride day, where drivers and customers could join in the fun of the 'Anything goes!' policy of the city. I will put that on the next Trade Forum meeting agenda....

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

With mobile phone use on the rise again, and with more and more drivers admitting to checking messages or notifications while behind the wheel, it is becoming increasingly clear that distraction is one of the biggest risks on the road. Recent RAC research shows that handheld mobile phone use while driving has climbed back up to 15%, the highest level since 2018, and this is reflected in the number of enquiries we receive from drivers who have been accused of using their phones.

Modern vehicles may have increasingly advanced driver assist technology, but the law has not changed: holding and using a mobile phone whilst driving remains a strict liability offence. Below are examples of questions we have been asked which examine exactly these points.

Case 1

Question: I've just received a letter from the police saying I've been caught using my mobile phone while driving. Apparently a cyclist filmed me and sent it in. The letter says I'm getting six points and a £200 fine. I'm really annoyed because I didn't give anyone permission to film me in my own car. Isn't that a breach of my human rights? Can they even use that video? Does it matter that I wasn't actually moving at the time?

Advice: Unfortunately, no, it is not a breach of your human rights to be filmed whilst you are in your car. Members of the public are allowed to film incidents on the road, and the police are entitled to rely on that footage if it shows an offence being committed.

You have two options at this stage. The first is to accept the fixed penalty of six points and a £200 fine, and that will be the end of the matter. The second option is to reject the fixed penalty and take the case to court. If you do that and are found guilty, you would still receive six points, but the fines and costs could be significantly higher because they are based on weekly income and can easily reach into the thousands. So it is important to get proper advice before deciding which route to take.

If you send me the video, I will have a look at it and advise you properly. In order to find you guilty there must be evidence of you driving whilst using and holding a mobile phone. That's what I'll be looking for.

Outcome: In this particular case, the driver sent us the footage which clearly showed him holding and using his phone whilst driving. In order to commit the offence, the police must prove both elements: that the driver was holding the phone and that he was using it for any reason at all. Here, both elements were present.

The fact that he was stationary in traffic did not take him outside the definition of "driving". The law calls that "continuing driving", which means they look at

why the vehicle had stopped. If the stop is part of the ordinary progress of the journey, for example waiting at a red light or sitting in a queue of traffic, the driver is still treated as 'driving'. It may be different where the stop is unconnected with the act of driving, such as where the driver has pulled over, applied the handbrake, parked safely and is not about to move off. On these facts, he had merely stopped because of traffic, so he was still legally driving when he used the phone.

We therefore advised him to accept the fixed penalty as taking it to court would almost certainly have resulted in the same points but much higher financial penalties.

Case 2

Question: I've been accused of using my phone while driving. I absolutely deny it. I've already pleaded not guilty and I've got a trial coming up. The officer says he saw me holding and using it, but I know for a fact I was not. What should I do?

Advice: The first thing I need to advise you is that if you are found guilty after trial, the fines and costs will be much higher than the fixed penalty would have been. The points will remain at six, but the financial penalties can easily reach a couple of thousand pounds once the fine, surcharge and prosecution costs are added together. If, however, you are found not guilty, you will receive no points, no fines, and you may even be able to recover some of your legal fees.

The next step is to obtain all of the evidence. That includes the officer's witness statement and, crucially, any body worn footage from the stop. They must prove that you were (a) driving (b) whilst using (c) a handheld phone/mobile device. They have to prove every element. We need to scrutinise exactly what the officer says he saw and whether it is consistent.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS



But we need to get moving quickly. The laws of evidence and the procedure of criminal proceedings is strict. For example if they have sent you their witness statements, you only have seven days to reject them. If you haven't rejected them, they will be agreed at the trial, meaning you cannot challenge them. Likewise if you want to rely on any evidence you have to provide that to the prosecution before the trial, otherwise they will accuse you of ambushing them and the court may refuse to allow you to rely on it.

Outcome: Before trial we got a copy of the witness statements of the police officers, a copy of the footage from the stop and all various forms. We rejected the relevant parts, agreed other parts, served what we needed to serve. We call this 'legal housekeeping'. We then scrutinised everything we had received to get a better understanding of the case.

Once we obtained the body worn footage, it became clear that the officer's account at the roadside differed significantly from what he later wrote in his witness statement. At the roadside he stated that he had only seen the driver holding the phone but not using it, whereas in his statement he claimed he had seen him holding and using it. We put that inconsistency to the officer in court, and he couldn't explain it. That inconsistency was enough for the court to conclude that they could not be sure he had been using the phone, which is a vital element of the offence. He was found not guilty.

Case 3

Question: I've had a letter from the police with a photograph from one of these new AI cameras. It shows me holding my phone and my thumb is touching the screen. I wasn't actually using it, but I don't know what to do. Is that enough to convict me?

Advice: The law is clear that in order to find you guilty, the police must prove that you were both holding a phone and using it. In this case, holding the phone is obvious. The question is whether you were using it. The court must be convinced that you were using the phone for any reason at all, including illuminating the screen.

If your thumb is touching the screen, that would probably be enough evidence for the court to conclude that you were using it, but it is not guaranteed. It will depend on whether you can persuade the court that there was a legitimate reason for holding the phone and that touching the screen did not amount to using it. If the court does not believe that explanation, you would be found guilty.

Taking it to court is therefore a gamble. If you lose, the points remain at six, but the fines and costs will be significantly higher than the fixed penalty. If you win, you receive no points and no fines. You need to consider the risks carefully before deciding.

Outcome: In this case, the driver decided to accept the fixed penalty. The photograph was clear, and although he maintained that he was not using the phone, the position of his thumb on the screen would have made it very difficult to persuade a court otherwise. Accepting the fixed penalty avoided the risk of much higher financial penalties.

Had the photograph simply showed him holding it but not touching the screen, that probably wouldn't have been enough to convict him for driving whilst using a phone, because there would have been no evidence of 'using'. Although in this circumstance the police could, and often do, charge with the lesser offence of 'driving whilst not in proper control', which carries three points and £100 fine.

The same is often said for the opposite – in cases where the photograph shows the phone in a cradle and the driver touching the screen, but not holding the device. Here, again there would not be enough evidence to convict somebody of driving whilst using a 'handheld' mobile phone, so instead the police often argue that somebody cannot be in full control of the vehicle if their focus is not on the road but instead is on the phone, so charge with the lesser offence.

If you need any advice on motoring matters, then please email us at:

advice@pattersonlaw.co.uk or call 01626 359800 for free legal advice.

PattersonLaw
THE DRIVER DEFENCE SERVICE

THE NATIONAL
HACKNEY
FARES TABLE

OCTOBER 2026

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

UPDATED DAILY
www.phtm.co.uk

NATIONAL AVERAGE
2 MILE
HACKNEY FARE
TARIFF ONE
£7.49

POSITION	TARIFF ONE 2 MILE FARE	
	COUNCIL	
17	CARRICK	£9.20
18	LEWES	£9.20
19	ST ALBANS	£9.15
20	GUERNSEY	£9.10
21	SOUTHEND ON SEA	£9.10
22	WORTHING	£9.10
23	HERTSMERE	£9.08
24	MAIDSTONE	£9.00
25	MID SUSSEX	£9.00
26	ORKNEY	£9.00
27	READING	£9.00
28	TONBRIDGE & MALLING	£9.00
29	DACORUM	£8.98
30	BRENTWOOD	£8.90
31	CHELTENHAM	£8.90
32	EAST LOTHIAN	£8.90
33	MIDLOTHIAN	£8.90
34	REIGATE & BANSTEAD	£8.90
35	SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE	£8.90
36	UTTLESFORD	£8.90
37	VALE OF WHITE HORSE	£8.90
38	TORRIDGE	£8.79
39	BRIGHTON & HOVE	£8.70
40	EAST DEVON	£8.70
41	RESTORMEL	£8.70
42	SEVENOAKS	£8.70
43	SWINDON	£8.70
44	WATFORD	£8.70
45	WOKING	£8.70
46	SHETLAND ISLES	£8.64
47	CAMBRIDGE CITY	£8.60
48	COVENTRY	£8.60
49	TEST VALLEY	£8.60
50	TUNBRIDGE WELLS	£8.60
51	WEST BERKSHIRE	£8.60
52	BCP	£8.52
53	PENWITH	£8.52
54	CLACKMANNAN	£8.50
55	EAST AYRSHIRE	£8.50
56	SLOUGH	£8.50
57	WYRE	£8.50
58	COLCHESTER	£8.40
59	EAST SUFFOLK (NORTH)	£8.40
60	EASTLEIGH	£8.40
61	LEEDS	£8.40
62	MEDWAY	£8.40
63	SOUTHAMPTON	£8.40
64	SOMERSET	£8.36
65	DARTFORD	£8.30
66	HUNTINGDONSHIRE	£8.30
67	LINCOLN	£8.30
68	ROCHFORD	£8.30
69	RUNNIMEDE	£8.30
70	SWALE	£8.30
71	THANET	£8.30
72	TORBAY	£8.30
73	WILTSHIRE	£8.25
74	BASINGSTOKE & DEANE	£8.20
75	BRISTOL	£8.20
76	BROXBOURNE	£8.20
77	EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE	£8.20
78	EAST HERTS	£8.20
79	GRAVESHAM	£8.20
80	HART	£8.20
81	MANCHESTER	£8.20

POSITION	TARIFF ONE 2 MILE FARE	
	COUNCIL	
82	NORTH HERTS	£8.20
83	RUSHMOOR	£8.20
84	WOKINGHAM	£8.20
85	FOREST OF DEAN	£8.13
86	HASTINGS	£8.10
87	IPSWICH	£8.10
88	NORTH DEVON	£8.10
89	OXFORD CITY	£8.10
90	PLYMOUTH	£8.10
91	DUNDEE CITY	£8.08
92	MOLE VALLEY	£8.08
93	BRECKLAND	£8.00
94	BUCKINGHAMSHIRE	£8.00
95	CHICHESTER	£8.00
96	DOVER	£8.00
97	EAST LINDSEY	£8.00
98	EAST RENFREWSHIRE	£8.00
99	HARLOW	£8.00
100	HORSHAM	£8.00
101	NORTH YORKSHIRE	£8.00
102	NOTTINGHAM	£8.00
103	RIBBLE VALLEY	£8.00
104	RUSHCLIFFE	£8.00
105	SHROPSHIRE	£8.00
106	SOUTH AYRSHIRE	£8.00
107	SOUTH GLOUCESTER	£8.00
108	TANDRIDGE	£8.00
109	YORK	£8.00
110	FIFE	£7.98
111	DENBIGHSHIRE	£7.90
112	HINCKLEY & BOSWORTH	£7.90
113	ROTHER	£7.90
114	STEVENAGE	£7.85
115	ADUR	£7.80
116	BRACKNELL FOREST	£7.80
117	DORSET	£7.80
118	GLOUCESTER	£7.80
119	ISLE OF MAN	£7.80
120	LEICESTER	£7.80
121	NORTH SOMERSET	£7.80
122	SOUTH HAMS	£7.80
123	STOCKPORT	£7.80
124	SURREY HEATH	£7.80
125	SWANSEA	£7.80
126	WAVERLEY	£7.80
127	MELTON	£7.75
128	CHELMSFORD	£7.70
129	HIGH PEAK	£7.70
130	NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE	£7.70
131	WEALDON	£7.70
132	WINDSOR & MAIDENHEAD	£7.70
133	STRATFORD ON AVON	£7.68
134	NORTH TYNESIDE	£7.65
135	RENFREWSHIRE	£7.65
136	WARWICK	£7.65
137	ASHFORD	£7.60
138	BASILDON	£7.60
139	BIRMINGHAM	£7.60
140	CONWY	£7.60
141	DUMBARTON & VALE OF LEVEN	£7.60
142	GREAT YARMOUTH	£7.60
143	KERRIER	£7.60
144	KINGS LYNN & WEST NORFOLK	£7.60
145	MONMOUTHSHIRE	£7.60
146	SCOTTISH BORDERS	£7.60

POSITION	TARIFF ONE 2 MILE FARE	
	COUNCIL	
1	LONDON (HEATHROW)	£15.00
2	EPSOM & EWELL	£13.40
3	TfL	£13.40
4	LUTON AIRPORT	£12.60
5	GUILDFORD	£10.00
6	JERSEY	£9.65
7	CARADON	£9.60
8	EASTBOURNE	£9.60
9	NORTH CORNWALL	£9.60
10	ARUN	£ 9.50
11	SPELTHORNE	£9.50
12	ELMBRIDGE	£9.50
13	EXETER	£9.50
14	STROUD	£9.40
15	EDINBURGH	£9.30
16	GLASGOW	£9.30

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

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

POSITION	TARIFF ONE 2 MILE FARE	
	COUNCIL	
277	ROSSENDALE	£6.50
278	TORFAEN	£6.50
279	DONCASTER	£6.48
280	HYNDBURN	£6.42
281	BLAENAU GWENT	£6.40
282	CREWE & NANTWICH	£6.40
283	DERBYSHIRE DALES	£6.40
284	NORTHUMBERLAND	£6.40
285	WEST LINDSEY	£6.40
286	EAST RIDING	£6.35
287	ANGLESEY	£6.30
288	BARNSELY	£6.30
289	DARLINGTON	£6.30
290	GATESHEAD	£6.30
291	SOUTH HOLLAND	£6.30
292	REDDITCH	£6.25
293	CHORLEY	£6.20
294	COPELAND	£6.20
295	FALKIRK	£6.20
296	FENLAND	£6.20
297	NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE	£6.20
298	S. LANARKSHIRE (HAMILTON)	£6.20
299	WYCHAVON	£6.20
300	WYRE FOREST	£6.14
301	BRADFORD	£6.10
302	NEATH PORT TALBOT	£6.10
303	S. LANARKSHIRE (CLYDESDALE)	£6.10
304	NORTHERN IRELAND	£6.06
305	ALLERDALE	£6.00
306	BOLTON	£6.00
307	GWYNEDD	£6.00
308	KIRKLEES	£6.00
309	NORTH WEST LEICESTER	£6.00
310	PETERBOROUGH	£6.00
311	POWYS	£6.00
312	PRESTON	£6.00
313	RHONDDA CYNON TAFF	£6.00
314	TELFORD & WREKIN	£6.00
315	THURROCK	£6.00
316	HARTLEPOOL	£5.90
317	NORTH LANARKSHIRE	£5.90
318	STOKE-ON-TRENT	£5.90
319	VALE ROYAL	£5.90
320	AMBER VALLEY	£5.80
321	FLINTSHIRE	£5.80
322	LICHFIELD	£5.80
323	MERTHYR TYDFIL	£5.80
324	NORTH EAST DERBYSHIRE	£5.75
325	ROCHDALE	£5.70
326	STOCKTON ON TEES	£5.70
327	ASHFIELD	£5.60
328	MIDDLESBROUGH	£5.60
329	WREXHAM	£5.60
330	PENDLE	£5.50
331	REDCAR & CLEVELAND	£5.50
332	SOUTH KESTEVEN	£5.30
333	STAFFS MOORLANDS	£5.20
334	WEST LANCASHIRE	£5.20
335	CHERWELL	£5.08
336	BURNLEY	£5.00
337	BOLSOVER	£4.60
338	MALDON	N.S.F.
339	RUTLAND	N.S.F.
340	SOUTH DERBYSHIRE	N.S.F.
341	WEST DEVON	N.S.F.

WORLDWIDE TAXI FOCUS

from Australia



TAXI CO FINED \$12,000 AFTER DRIVER REFUSES WOMAN IN WHEELCHAIR

A Victoria taxi company and one of its drivers have been ordered to pay \$12,000 (£6,400) and implement mandatory training after refusing a woman because of her wheelchair. The incident occurred on August 20, 2021, when a woman known as “Ms. T” booked a taxi for an appointment. Accompanied by healthcare worker Ning Li, Ms. T had pre-arranged the ride and ensured she was ready outside. When driver Ehsan Khan arrived, the pair stated that Khan claimed the wheelchair would not fit in his vehicle. Ms. T explained that it folds down to the size of a suitcase and that she always takes regular taxis.



Li, who had professional experience fitting similar wheelchairs into car trunks, folded the wheelchair to demonstrate that it would fit. According to the women, Khan pulled the wheelchair away, closed the boot, told them to call a disability van, and drove away. When Ms. T subsequently called Victoria Taxi, she stated that the dispatcher told her “drivers don’t want to deal with wheelchairs.” Victoria Taxi later claimed in a written submission that the dispatcher no longer worked for them and that no call record existed.

British Columbia Human Rights Tribunal member Amber Prince noted that the Taxi Bill of Rights guarantees passengers the right to travel with a portable mobility aid. Prince wrote in the decision, “On the undisputed evidence before me, I find that Ms. T’s wheelchair is a portable mobility aid, because it is designed to collapse for easy transport,” adding that, “the BC Government expects that taxi drivers will handle and store portable mobility aids in their regular taxis, much like luggage.”

Prince ordered Khan and Victoria Taxi to pay Ms. T \$12,000 as compensation for injury to her dignity, feelings, and self-respect. Additionally, Victoria Taxi must implement mandatory training for all staff and managers regarding human rights obligations to wheelchair users, and provide written confirmation to Ms. T that she may use regular taxis and that drivers are required to assist her and her wheelchair.

SYDNEY TAXI DRIVER BANNED AND FINED \$25,000 FOR OVERCHARGING

A Sydney taxi driver has been convicted and fined a total of \$25,000 (£13,300) for repeatedly charging passengers far above the maximum amounts allowed under New South Wales fare regulations.

Sebastian Tony Wahli was fined \$5,000 for each of his five offences. Receipts presented during the court case proved that customers were significantly overcharged by hundreds of dollars for trips between June 2024 and July 2025. In one extreme case, a passenger was charged \$610 for a journey that should have only cost approximately \$39.56, while another was charged \$350 even though the meter displayed just \$49.41.

Transport Commissioner Kate Timbs emphasised that passengers have a fundamental right to expect lawful and transparent taxi fares. Ms Timbs said: “Deliberate overcharging undermines trust in the entire industry and will not be tolerated.”

Mr Wahli was banned from driving taxis/hire vehicles.

from South Africa



DRIVER NABBED FOR CRAMMING 30 PASSENGERS INTO 15-SEATER MINIBUS

A KwaZulu-Natal minibus taxi driver was arrested last month after being caught transporting 30 passengers in a vehicle licensed for only 15 people. The overloaded taxi was intercepted by officers along the N2 major national highway, as authorities ramped up road safety operations. In addition to the massive overcrowding violation, the driver was allegedly found without his driver’s licence and valid professional driving permit. KwaZulu-Natal Transport MEC, Siboniso Duma, strongly condemned the driver’s actions, confirming that the operator will face multiple charges. Emphasising the severe safety hazards, Duma explained that excess weight drastically compromises a vehicle’s ability to steer and brake properly. Furthermore, the extreme load places dangerous pressure on tyres, causing them to heat up rapidly and burst, which dramatically increases the risk of a fatal crash.

Authorities have urged commuters to take responsibility for their safety by speaking out against unauthorised seating arrangements, such as the use of buckets and makeshift seats inside public transport.

from Spain



BRIT ARRESTED AFTER SEVILLE CABBIE STABBED 16 TIMES

A British passenger has been arrested in Seville after allegedly stabbing a local cabbie 16 times in a brutal knife assault, sparking fresh safety demands from the city's taxi trade. The horror attack unfolded at around 2am at an industrial estate. The British suspect initially asked to go to a shopping centre before changing the destination to the industrial area. Suspicious of his passenger's intentions, the cabbie refused to go any further. The suspect reacted with a knife frenzy, lasting several minutes, inflicting wounds to the driver's hands, arms, neck and shoulder so violent that the knife handle snapped off inside the cab.

The wounded cabbie managed to drive to a local police station. An officer gave first aid before paramedics arrived and rushed the driver to hospital. His life is not understood to be in danger. Police tracked down the suspect after he attempted to ditch the weapon, recovering the blade and the snapped handle left inside the vehicle. The suspect put up "strong resistance" during his arrest and is expected to face an attempted murder charge.

The violence has united local taxi drivers in anger over night-time security. The Sevillian Taxi Union slammed the shortage of police protection, warning the City Council that current staffing levels put working cabbies at serious risk, "more evident at night".

MALAGA POLICE IMPOUND 19 UNLICENSED HIRE CARS

Local police in Malaga region impounded 19 PHVs and filed 21 official reports following more than 1,300 inspections conducted between June and August. The operation, known as 'Transporte Legitimo', targeted illegal operators around the seafront, the old town and the airport. Officers uncovered multiple breaches, including nine vehicles that had begun journeys outside of their permitted operating areas. These violations carry an instant, on-the-spot fine of €1,001 alongside the immediate towing and immobilisation of the vehicle. A further twelve cars were caught operating without a valid VTC licence, an offence that can incur a €4,001 fine and time in the

municipal pound. Investigators are also probing one individual over suspected document forgery.

Authorities highlighted a growing loophole where operators purchase second-hand vehicles that previously held Andalucian taxi permits and still bear old markings, pairing them with cheaper transferred licences from other regions. Similar summer crackdowns have hit other Spanish coastal areas, including the Costa Brava, where local forces logged 94 offences and confiscated six cars in August.

The enforcement highlights a deep divide in how different hire sectors are regulated in Spain. Securing a town-hall-issued taxi licence is notoriously difficult and tightly controlled, often requiring buyers to purchase permits from retiring drivers for tens of thousands of euros. Candidates must also pass exams on local streets and tariffs, hold a category B driving licence with sufficient seniority, provide a clean record free of sexual offences, and register as self-employed. Street hails and official ranks remain the exclusive domain of these traditional cab drivers.

By contrast, VTC authorisations - used by app-based drivers such as Uber, Cabify, and Bolt - are managed at state and regional levels, with pre-booking remaining a strict legal requirement.

from Zimbabwe



27 DEAD AFTER MINIBUS COLLIDES WITH TRUCK IN ZIMBABWE

A horrific head-on collision between a minibus taxi and a haulage truck has left 27 people dead in Zimbabwe.

The tragedy occurred on the night of, August 28, on a major highway south of Harare. A police spokesperson explained the truck overtaking another vehicle when it smashed into the minibus taxi, transporting Christians to a conference. The impact caused the taxi to burst into flames, reducing the vehicle to a burnt-out shell. The disaster highlights the severe dangers facing commuters in the country. Road accidents involving crowded buses and minibus taxis are frequent in Zimbabwe due to dangerous driving and poor road infrastructure.



PHTM

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SOMETHING IS BREWING IN WISCONSIN.... WIGAN SET FOR GRAND FINAL GLORY

You will no doubt appreciate that Bernie the Book monitors all sports, not just in Europe, and when I have news of the Men's intermediate Kayak championship from Soweto, I will let you know!! But until then, let's delve into Major League Baseball now that the World Series is under way. You know, the one contested by one country even though they let the Toronto Blue Jays take part, much like the Super Bowl is often referred to as the World Championship.

Don't yer just luv Americana..and that's pre-Donald, but I can't say too much as I will be banned from attending the press conferences at the White House, along with CNN.

But back to betting...

The World Series has now reached the play-offs and **MILWAUKEE BREWERS** cannot be ignored as they are the most in form team among the 12 left standing. As No. 1 seeds in the powerful National League, they will enjoy significant benefits over their rivals (a bye and HFA) and will likely meet the ante-post favourites and current champions, the LA Dodgers, in the Conference final, and at a massive 7/1 simply can't be ignored.



Now that the American Football season is under way, although only 3 rounds in of 17, you can already discount some teams from post season action, more in a Thanksgiving half-term school report, but fans of the Chargers, the Jets and Tampa Bay should not be too optimistic, but as I said, more when we eat the turkey.

SUPER LEAGUE GRAND FINAL

It's also the time of year when rugby league comes to a conclusion at the Grand Final at Old Trafford and **WIGAN WARRIORS** are expected to win



back the sport's ultimate crown. At 4/7, this might seem more skimpy than a Twiggy minidress, but that's the price, so fill your boots before that one goes, (price at time of writing, prior to the semis).

EFL CUP

And so to nearer home. The EFL/Carabao/League Cup has reached the last 16 stage and with three rounds still to go before Wembley, the elite teams are re-evaluating their priorities. Whilst Arsenal don't need to worry about progressing to the quarters (away at Fleetwood), only one of Liverpool and Chelsea can progress and equally the same is true about Man City and Brighton.



I have no doubt City will continue with wholesale changes from their first choice squad, but at a massive 20/1, even 25/1 in a place, **BRIGHTON** will not, and a tentative and sporting wager is justified plus Tony Bloom has that winning touch. They certainly are the form horse in the Cup.



PRIX DE LARC DE TRIOMPHE

My last column eschewed the merits of Maltese Cross, and I hope my fans have backed the horse at a tempting 8/1. Since then, we have had the three established Arc trials: the Vermeille, Foy and Niel, and I was immensely impressed with **DARYZ** for The Aga (daughter). Unless he is handed a bad draw, outside on the wing, I genuinely feel Daryz is the one to beat and a saver, or indeed a chunk for new money at 2/1 is a must.



Until next time

Good punting

Bernie the Book



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