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# VAT AND PRIVATE HIRE

## UBER'S CHALLENGE TO THE LICENSING OF PRIVATE HIRE OPERATORS FINALLY RUNS OUT OF ROAD

Article by Jonathan Main  
VAT Partner, MHA



### What does this mean for private hire operators' VAT bills?

#### Who should read this?

Anyone with an interest in the VAT obligations for private hire operators ('PHOs').

The Supreme Court handed down its judgment in the case of *D.E.L.T.A. Merseyside Limited and another (Respondents) v Uber Britannia Limited (Appellant)* [2025] UKSC 31 on 29 July 2025. This article summarises the implications of the decision from a VAT perspective.

#### The decision

Uber sought the Supreme Court's agreement that PHOs regulated by Part II of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 ('The 1976 Act') are required in all cases to contract as principal for the

journey booked by the passenger. The 1976 Act governs the licensing requirements for PHOs based outside London and Plymouth.

Uber failed to convince the Supreme Court, which agreed with the ruling from the Court of Appeal in July 2024. In short, PHOs licensed under the 1976 Act can continue to choose whether to use an agency or principal contracting model for journeys booked by passengers.

#### The VAT implications

HMRC VAT Notice 700/25, "*How VAT applies to taxis and private hire cars*", provides VAT guidance for the private hire sector. The VAT Notice makes it clear that PHOs can act either as agent or principal in providing private hire journeys to passengers.

- **As principal:** the PHO is required to pay VAT on the full fare paid by the passenger.
- **As agent:** the PHO accounts for VAT on the fees charged to drivers for providing access to passenger bookings, together with any fees for other services, such as vehicle rental.

**For agency work, the driver:** is responsible for paying VAT on the fare paid by the passenger. If drivers earn more than the £90,000 VAT registration threshold in any 12 month period, they should register for VAT.

The Supreme Court decision preserves the status quo under the 1976 Act and PHOs outside London can continue to choose the contracting model that best suits their business.

Unfortunately, this is not the end of the story. PHOs licensed within London are regulated by a later, differently worded but similar scheme, under the Private Vehicles (London) Act 1998 ('The 1998 Act'), which requires all journeys to be contracted as principal with operators liable for VAT on the full fare paid by the passenger.

This discrepancy between the 1976 and 1998 Acts leaves open the very unsatisfactory possibility of VAT





# VAT AND PRIVATE HIRE

rate shopping within the UK, if a PHO licensed outside London can use an agency model to compete against a London licensed operator paying VAT in full.

## So, what happens now?

HM Treasury ('HMT') launched a consultation entitled the "*VAT Treatment of Private Hire Vehicles*" in April 2024. HMT's response to the submissions made during the consultation has been parked pending the final outcome of the litigation just decided at the Supreme Court.

At the same time, Bolt Services UK Ltd ('Bolt') is involved in litigation with HMRC over the correct VAT treatment of income received for its ride hailing services. The latest judgment, in favour of Bolt, was issued by the Upper Tribunal ('UT') in March 2025, *Bolt Services UK Ltd v Revenue and Customs Commissioners* [2025] UKUT 100 (TCC).

Subject to HMRC overturning the decision of the UT, Bolt is required to pay VAT on the profit it earns after paying its drivers, rather than the full fare paid by the passenger, a considerable VAT saving. Bolt is using the Tour Operators Margin Scheme ('TOMS') to achieve this VAT saving.

## HMT and HMRC have several decisions to make:

- HMT is required to respond to the consultation it launched in April 2024.
- As part of that response, HMT should address the possibility of VAT rate shopping within the UK.
- HMRC must decide whether to accept or continue to challenge the Bolt decision in the UT.

One of the options discussed in the HMT consultation is the introduction of a margin scheme, which is similar to TOMS.

Could HMRC decide not to challenge Bolt in the Court of Appeal, allowing HMT to endorse the margin scheme as an option for all PHOs across the UK?

As always, if you have any questions, then please email me at:  
[Jonathan.main@mha.co.uk](mailto:Jonathan.main@mha.co.uk)



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# BRISTOL AIRPORT

## BRISTOL AIRPORT'S NEW PUBLIC TRANSPORT INTERCHANGE NOW OPEN



Bristol Airport's new Public Transport Interchange (PTI) officially opened in July 2025, becoming one of the region's largest transport hubs, and transforming the airport experience for customers travelling to and from Bristol Airport.

There are some important changes that taxi drivers need to be aware of to ensure their journey is smooth for both themselves and passengers.

### New Drop Off & Pick Up car park

Taxi and private hire vehicle drivers should follow signs for the new 'Drop Off & Pick Up' car park located on the top floor of the PTI, which has more than double the number of spaces compared to the old drop & go area. The Drop Off & Pick Up car park is cashless and uses the latest in automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) ticketless technology. Cameras read vehicle registrations on entry, with payment taken at the exit barrier by contactless or Chip & PIN.

As this is an express car park, prices start at £7.00 for up to 10 minutes, and £9.00 for 10 to 20 minutes. The maximum time vehicles can wait here is two hours, and 1 – 2 hours costs £60.00. It's important that cars move swiftly through here in order to keep traffic flowing. For trips requiring more time, please go to the Short Stay car park, located just a short walk away from the terminal, where prices start at £7 for 30 minutes. All prices can be found on the website, simply select the parking tab and scroll to the bottom to find parking prices.

### Important - height restriction

All drivers should be aware that the Drop Off & Pick Up car park has a height restriction of 2.5m and can only be utilised by vehicles with up to 9 seats. Should your vehicle exceed these requirements, please use the new Minibus & Over Height car park, which is located in the old drop-off and pick-up zone, and has level access. Prices start from £7.00 for up to five minutes. It's important to use the appropriate car park.

Frequent drivers to Bristol Airport will be aware of the local villages surrounding the Airport and the importance of respecting these local communities, by not waiting or dropping off / collecting passengers



outside of people's homes, especially during the night, littering and toileting. We ask all drivers to be respectful and mindful of residents.

### Waiting Zone

Bristol Airport has a Waiting Zone that offers free parking for the first hour. Drivers can wait here and make use of toilet facilities and litter bins. And passengers can benefit from the complimentary shuttle bus that runs regularly around the clock, from the car rentals car park next to it, taking all passengers directly to the PTI. The Waiting Zone is just over one mile away, simply follow the signs for car rentals and Waiting Zone.

If you are unfamiliar with the new road layout and car park locations, please visit Bristol Airport's website where there are maps, videos and directions. Please do not stop anywhere outside of car parks, as dropping off and stopping is not permitted.

### Public Transport Interchange

The PTI provides a spacious indoor waiting area with seating and modern toilet facilities. If you are dropping off passengers who require assistance, they will find the call points just inside the PTI opposite the new M&S store.

Further projects are planned as part of the Airport's transformation programme, including construction of a new electric vehicle charging hub.

### Airport taxi concession - new tender

The contract for the Airport's taxi concession is also due to be re-tendered this coming Autumn, so operators are encouraged to register on the Airport's procurement portal should they wish to receive further details:

<https://in-tendhost.co.uk/bristolairport/asp/Registration>



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Running a taxi company in 2025 is not without its challenges. From rising fuel costs and insurance premiums, to recruitment pressures, customer demands, and ever-increasing competition from national and international operators, the traditional local taxi firm is under more strain than ever before.

Many operators find themselves juggling licensing requirements, VAT returns, technology upgrades, and marketing campaigns, all while trying to keep drivers happy and customers loyal.

That is where **TakeMe** comes in.

**TakeMe** is a national brand covering over 34 sites across the UK. We are a team of like-minded taxi owners who have come together to streamline businesses and share the knowledge that only decades of industry experience can provide. Our mission is simple: to help you cut costs, grow driver numbers, and boost passenger revenue, while freeing up your time to focus on what matters most - running a successful business.

### What makes TakeMe different?



When you join our franchise network, you are not simply buying into a logo or a name. You are joining an award-winning team with over a thousand years of combined taxi industry knowledge. Our managers aren't career consultants - they are taxi company owners, just like you.

They know first-hand the day-to-day challenges of running a fleet, because they've lived them.

Over the last five years, **TakeMe** has won more than 21 awards, covering marketing, technology, business growth, and industry leadership. That recognition comes from one thing: delivering real results for our partners.

Here is what's included when you join **TakeMe**:

- Free dispatch system
- iCabbi (T&Cs; apply)
- Free recruitment and driver retention support
- Free accounts service
- Free Emerald Logic driver system (saving money on payments)
- Free technology tools
- Free marketing and data analytics
- Free social media and design support
- Free branding package

In short, we take the heavy lifting out of the operational side, so you can concentrate on revenue streams - driver recruitment, driver retention, and customer growth.

### Proof it works: Success stories from across the UK

#### Roger Bridge – Porthcawl Driven Taxis

Roger doubled his profits in the very first year of becoming a **TakeMe** franchise.

#### Mahanas – Al Embassy, Stoke-on-Trent

Before joining **TakeMe**, Mahanas was working around the clock, even sleeping in his office.

#### Andy Cheeseman – Brighton

Andy increased both his driver base and account work through the **TakeMe** National Accounts Centre.

#### TakeMe Taunton

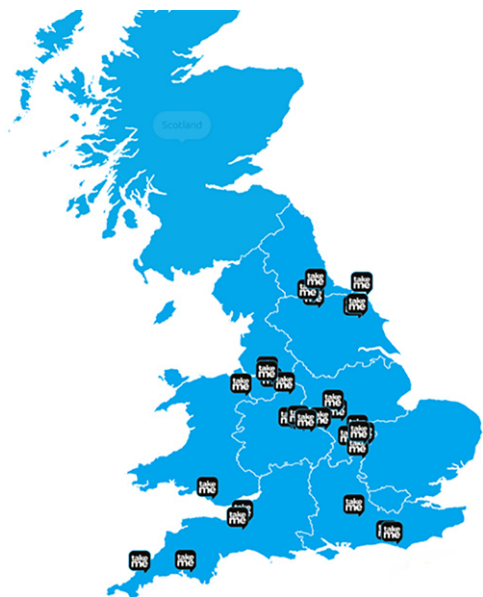
In the last 12 months, **TakeMe** Taunton has grown its business by 60%.

#### TakeMe Plymouth

Plymouth is one of the most competitive taxi markets in the UK.



# TAKE ME HAS THE ANSWERS



## More than just an algorithm

In a world where technology dominates headlines, it can feel like personal service has been forgotten. At TakeMe, we believe in combining the best of both worlds.

Yes, we provide cutting-edge technology - from app-based bookings to driver workflow management.

Yes, we offer a call centre, social media team, and marketing department under one roof.

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## Looking to the future

TakeMe isn't only focused on solving today's problems - we are also preparing our network for the future.

## Exit opportunities and peace of mind

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- Save money on overheads through shared services.
- Gain drivers through national recruitment and retention support.
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- Grow customer revenues with national accounts and data-driven campaigns.
- Be part of an award-winning, friendly, and supportive team.
- Future-proof your business with EV and driverless tech insights.
- Protect your exit value when the time is right. Join the team

At the end of the day, taxi companies succeed or fail based on two things: drivers and customers. TakeMe helps you keep both happy, while taking the stress out of everything else.



So if you want to streamline your business, save on overheads, grow your driver numbers, and boost your customer revenues, now is the time to find out more.

**We're a friendly bunch, and we'd be delighted to talk you through what TakeMe can do for your business.**

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Fuel Consumption figures for the Skoda Scala 1.0 TSI 116 SE 5dr MPG (l/100km): WLTP Combined 52.3. CO<sub>2</sub> emissions: 123 (g/km). "Max range" or "Miles per Gallon" figures shown are usually from the Worldwide Harmonised Light Vehicle Test Procedure (WLTP). These allow comparison between different vehicles as they are based on a standard laboratory test. Real world results will vary depending on factors including (but not limited to) the accessories fitted after registration, weather conditions, driving styles, vehicle load, vehicle and tyre maintenance including tyre type and pressure (and, for battery electric vehicles, temperature, starting charge of the battery and battery condition).

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Fuel Consumption figures for the Ford Tourneo Custom 2.5 PHEV 232ps H1 Titanium 8-Seater Auto (WLTP Combined) 141.2mpg, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions 43g/km. Figures shown are for comparability purposes; only compare fuel consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> figures with other cars tested to the same technical procedures. These figures may not reflect real life driving results, which will depend upon a number of factors including accessories fitted (post-registration), variations in weather, driving styles and vehicle load.

Fuel Consumption figures for the Skoda Octavia 1.5 TSI SE Technology 5dr Petrol Hatchback (WLTP Combined) 50.4mpg, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions 127g/km. Figures shown are for comparability purposes; only compare fuel consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> figures with other cars tested to the same technical procedures. These figures may not reflect real life driving results, which will depend upon a number of factors including accessories fitted (post-registration), variations in weather, driving styles and vehicle load.



SKODA





# FLYING TAXIS

## DUBAI AIMS TO BE THE WORLD'S FIRST FLYING TAXI CITY

Dubai is on track to become the world's first city with a commercial, city-wide electric flying taxi service, with initial flights expected to begin as early as 2026.

This initiative, a collaboration between the Dubai Roads and Transport Authority (RTA), JOBY Aviation, and Skyports Infrastructure, is set to transform urban transport and reduce travel times significantly.

The first four "vertiports" will be located at key city landmarks: Dubai International Airport (DXB),

Dubai Downtown, Dubai Marina, and Palm Jumeirah.

The inaugural commercial flight is slated to take off from the vertiport at DXB, connecting the airport to major hotels and destinations. According to the RTA's Al Awadhi, the goal is to make a 10-minute flight between DXB and Palm Jumeirah a reality, a journey that currently takes around 45 minutes by car.

Booking a ride will be seamless, as JOBY Aviation is a global partner with Uber, allowing for

reservations through the popular ride-hailing app. The cost is expected to be comparable to an "Uber Black" service but will be a fraction of the travel time.

JOBY Aviation is now in the multi-stage application process to become a certified taxi operator in the UAE, ensuring all operational and safety standards are met before the service launches.

The long-term vision is for a fleet of around 100 vehicles and for the service to eventually expand to connect Dubai with Abu Dhabi.

## JOBY'S AIR TAXI COMPLETES FIRST PILOTED FLIGHT BETWEEN TWO PUBLIC AIRPORTS

Joby Aviation has marked a significant step toward commercial readiness by successfully completing the first piloted flight of its electric vertical takeoff and landing (eVTOL) air taxi between two public airports in the U.S.

The flight on Friday, August 15, travelled approximately 11 miles from Marina Municipal Airport (OAR) to Monterey Regional Airport (MRY). The journey took about 12 minutes, which included a five-minute hold pattern to allow a commercial airliner to land. The flight demonstrated the eVTOL's ability to take off vertically, transition to wing-borne flight, and integrate into controlled airspace while adhering to the same air traffic control protocols as a traditional aircraft.

Didier Papadopoulos, President of Aircraft OEM at Joby, called the flight a "major step" toward the



company's goal. He stated, "Successfully flying from Marina to Monterey showcased operations of our aircraft integrated in the broader transportation network and further validated its performance to ensure we're prepared for service on day one."

This milestone also provides crucial data for the aircraft's certification process with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). According to Joby, the company plans to begin flight testing with FAA pilots early

next year and, following certification, intends to launch commercial services in Los Angeles and New York City. The company previously demonstrated its capabilities with an exhibition flight in New York City in 2023, where it claimed the journey from downtown to JFK Airport could take just seven minutes by air taxi, compared to 49 minutes by car.

While Joby's flight is a first for the U.S., British firm Vertical Aerospace recently claimed the world's first flight between two public airports, flying 17 miles in England.

Joby, which has flown more than 40,000 miles across its fleet, has partnerships with Delta Air Lines and Virgin Atlantic. The company is also planning to launch commercial services in Dubai in early 2026, while a rival firm, Archer, plans to launch in Abu Dhabi by the end of this year.

# ROBOTAXIS

## BAIDU ROBOTAXI FALLS INTO CONSTRUCTION PIT IN CHINA RAISING SAFETY CONCERNS

A Baidu autonomous taxi has sparked a wave of safety fears after footage showed the vehicle at the bottom of a large construction pit in the Chinese city of Chongqing. The incident, which has been widely shared online, shows a female passenger safely climbing out of the pit with the help of onlookers. The Baidu cab, with Apollo Go branding, is visible lying sideways in the trench. How the incident occurred remains unknown, with no official statement from Baidu.

According to Chinese media, the site was marked with barriers and signs that the taxi's sensors should have detected. However, the video appears to show an open pit with



no clear barriers, allowing pedestrians and other road users to approach the unprotected edge. The danger of unmarked pits to AVs has been a known issue in the industry. In 2023, U.S. media outlet,

The Intercept, reported on internal chats from General Motors' now-defunct Cruise operation, which revealed that its AVs struggled to detect large holes, including "large construction pits with workers inside."

A report stated this was considered "a major flaw," with Cruise estimating that one of its taxis would likely drive into an unoccupied pit about once a year. Baidu's Apollo Go driverless service operates in 15 cities and has over 1,000 taxis. The company has ambitious global expansion plans, including recent deals with Uber and Lyft to deploy thousands of its robotaxis in Asia, the Middle East, and Europe.

## LYFT PARTNERS WITH BAIDU TO LAUNCH ROBOTAXIS IN EUROPE

US ride-hailing company, Lyft, has announced a strategic partnership with China's Baidu to introduce AVs to several European markets starting in 2026. The companies aim to launch their robotaxi services in Germany and the UK, pending regulatory approval. This move marks a significant step in Lyft's international expansion, following its recent acquisition of FREENOW, a German multi-mobility app. The acquisition, valued at approximately £149m, has given Lyft access to nine new countries in Europe, allowing it to compete more directly with its rival, Uber, which has long had a global presence. Under the agreement, Baidu's RT6

vehicles, equipped with the Apollo Go self-driving system, will be integrated into the Lyft app. The initial deployment will be followed by a scaled expansion to "thousands of vehicles" across Europe in the coming years. This strategy reflects a broader trend among ride-hailing companies, which are increasingly partnering with AV developers rather than creating their own in-house technology.

While Lyft has not pursued partnerships at the same pace as Uber, it has made several key agreements in the past year. In addition to the Baidu deal, Lyft plans to add autonomous shuttles from Austrian manufacturer Benteler Group to its

network in late 2026 and to deploy AVs from May Mobility in Atlanta later this year.

Baidu's partnership with Lyft is non-exclusive, meaning Baidu could potentially work with other ride-hailing companies, including Uber, in the same markets in the future.

Uber itself recently announced a similar deal with Baidu to deploy driverless cars in Asia and the Middle East.

With over 11 million rides completed in China, Baidu is actively seeking to expand its services in other countries, including Switzerland, Singapore, and Malaysia, by partnering with various mobility service providers and fleet operators.

# CROSS-BORDER CRISIS

## SOUTH KESTEVEN DISTRICT COUNCIL CRACKS DOWN ON TAXIS LICENSED OUT OF AREA

A council leader is appealing to the government to tighten operations by licensed drivers licensed outside of South Kesteven.

Locally-licensed drivers have raised fears of unfair competition from vehicles licensed outside the district operating within South Kesteven, restricting the district council's ability to monitor those who do not comply with legislation, or even had a licence refused or revoked by SKDC but can trade in the district due to a loophole in the regulations.

Council leader Ashley Baxter is now lobbying the government about the issue, which allows drivers and vehicles to avoid

SKDC standards.

Licensing staff have been on patrol during evenings, nights, and weekends to assist and advise on safety and regulations, including moving visiting drivers on taxi ranks, ensuring PHVs are not flagged down, and working with other enforcement authorities – including Lincolnshire County Council – to prevent illegal parking. Cabinet member for licensing, Philip Knowles, said: "We are serious about closing this loophole and bringing a more level playing field for SKDC-licensed drivers and vehicles.

SKDC-licensed drivers have concerns about Peterborough,

Rutland, and Wolverhampton-registered vehicles (including Uber) remaining in Stamford for pick-ups.

"Legally, there are no restrictions in place about where journeys start and finish, even for drivers licensed elsewhere, which means they can end up here and wait for their next job," said Cllr Knowles.

"We are taking the opportunity to question these drivers, advise them and take positive action where appropriate.

"Where there are concerns, information is collected during our patrols so that we can report any concerns or issues directly to their licensing authority."

## TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE DRIVER LICENCES PLUMMET IN NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME

The number of taxi drivers licensed in Newcastle-under-Lyme has dropped by 47% in the last five years, a decline that local officials attribute to "licence shopping" by drivers seeking less stringent regulations.

Since the council introduced its current taxi licensing policy in 2019, the number of registered drivers has fallen from 1,020 to 546. The number of PHVs licensed by the council has fallen from 600 to 385, while the number of HCs has gone down from 194 to 127.

According to a report presented to the public protection committee, the decline is a direct result of the borough council's tighter rules compared to other authorities.

Drivers obtaining a licence from

one council but operating in another, is a loophole committee members believe "punishes" authorities with higher standards. Licensing lead Matthew Burton told the committee: "We've decreased nearly 47% in terms of drivers, which really is a significant amount, when other authorities are having such large increases." He explained that while the council stands by its comprehensive standards, applicants are going to other authorities for licences and then returning to operate in Newcastle.

"There are some local authorities that have very high standards and some that have very low standards... and individuals are able to 'licence shop'," Burton said.

"We've been told on multiple occasions that licence holders leave the authority and new applicants won't apply because our standards are too high."

The council is now preparing its response to a government consultation on national licensing, which could introduce uniform standards and put an end to this practice.

Councillor Rupert Adcock added: "We effectively have a system that punishes local authorities that have higher safety standards and rewards those with lower standards, and that's just not right. "In our response to the consultation, we should set out the minimum standards that we want."





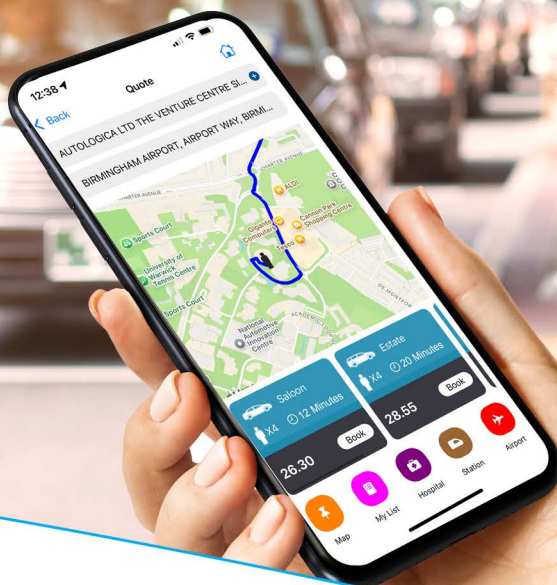
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**AUTOLOGICA**

## GLASGOW PRIVATE HIRE DRIVER ACCUSED OF ASSAULT HAS LICENCE RENEWED FOR THREE YEARS

A Glasgow private hire driver facing trial for assault has been granted a new three-year licence, despite objections from Police Scotland.

The city's licensing committee renewed Iqbal Akhtar's licence after twice postponing a decision to await an update on the criminal proceedings.

Akhtar is accused of "assault to severe injury and failing to stop

and provide his name and address" following an alleged incident in December 2022.

It is claimed he "accelerated at speed in a public car park" while a customer was next to his vehicle, causing "her to be dragged or fall and break her leg."

Chairman of the licensing committee, Councillor Alex Wilson, noted the case was "very much a subjudice case" and that the

committee had to decide if Akhtar was a "fit and proper person in the meantime."

He added that the decision was made on the assumption that individuals are "innocent until proven guilty."

The committee also acknowledged that Police Scotland could lodge a further complaint if Akhtar is found guilty at his trial, which is scheduled for September 15.

## CARLISLE CABBIE'S ILLEGAL ACT OF KINDNESS LANDS HIM IN COURT

A 75-year-old Carlisle private hire driver, Barry Haden, was taken to court and charged with breaching licensing rules after he used his personal car to transport an autistic student to college.

Haden, who did not charge the family for the journeys, explained he did it to avoid letting the student and his family down after his licensed taxi broke down.

The incident came to light after a "tip off" from a competitor. While Haden normally transported the student in his licensed vehicle, an electrical fault in his taxi forced

him to use his own Honda car on five occasions.

At Carlisle's Rickergate court, prosecutor Jonathan Farnworth explained that Haden's decision to use his personal vehicle, which was not appropriately licensed for private hire by Cumberland Council, was a breach of regulations "even though the pensioner did not charge the family."

Farnworth stated that the licensing rules are in place to ensure "legal safeguards and standards are met."

A powerful character reference

was provided by the student's father, who sat beside Haden in court. The father described how Haden had a strong relationship with his son, who has complex learning needs.

The father told magistrates that his son "did not like to be transported by any other driver," and that Haden, "even after a close bereavement, had insisted on taking his son to college."

The father concluded: "That shows the quality of the man you have here," adding that it would be devastating for his son if Haden could not continue to transport him to college.

Haden pleaded guilty to the offence.

Magistrates acknowledged his good character and imposed a three-month conditional discharge, meaning he will not be punished as long as he stays out of trouble during that period.

He was also ordered to pay costs of £74 and a surcharge of £26.

## UBER RATING SAVES BOLTON DRIVER FROM LONGER SUSPENSION

A Bolton private hire driver who failed to declare multiple speeding offences was handed a four-week suspension after his "high Uber ratings" and 18-year driving history were taken into account by the

council's Licensing and Environmental Regulation Committee.

The driver had previously taken a speed awareness course and admitted to three recent speeding incidents from 2023 and 2024.

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# CARD PAYMENT PARTNER

## CHOOSING YOUR CARD PAYMENT PARTNER: TRUST AND SUPPORT MATTERS MORE THAN EVER

Article by CabCard Services  
[www.cabcard.services](http://www.cabcard.services)



In today's taxi industry, payments are more than a back office function. They are the lifeblood of daily operations. Every fare completed, every driver payout, every account reconciled and balanced relies upon payments working seamlessly. As digital payments and transactions become increasingly central to the taxi sector, the choice of a payment partner has never been more important.

For taxi fleet owners and managers, the difference between a supplier and a payment partner is stark. A supplier just provides a basic product, however, your payment partner works alongside you with key services that add to your business success, giving you the tools, support and experience to help you grow your business and succeed in an ever competitive market.

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At CabCard you can be assured of your own dedicated account manager for all fleet customers. This means that a fleet manager has someone available who understands the taxi business, your driver's requirements and your needs and is ready to go the extra mile whenever needed.

### Built for the taxi industry

Most payment providers offer generic solutions, whether to a cafe, shop or restaurant for example. CabCard is different, since our products and services are designed specifically for the taxi industry which also includes system integrations with all of the key data dispatch software providers.

CabCard has also recently streamlined its driver onboarding process, making it easier than ever to sign up new drivers and to have them process card payments quickly. We know that time spent on admin means less time spent on the road.

### Preparing fleets for the future

Digital payments are not just a customer convenience, they are fast becoming an operational necessity with HMRC moving towards digital reporting for drivers. Payment and banking systems will play a key role in a taxi fleet's future compliance and financial management.

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This means drivers not only get paid seamlessly, but they also gain valuable financial insights and benefits that help them run their businesses smarter.

### Why partnership matters

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\*Source: British Retail Consortium (BRC) 2022 Payment Survey

# MAKE SCHOOL RUNS A HIGHLIGHT

## STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE SERVICE AND ENHANCED SAFETY - WITH A SIDE OF LAUGHTER

Article by Rev'd Paul Newbery  
The Elite Family  
[www.elite-liverpool.co.uk](http://www.elite-liverpool.co.uk)



### Introduction

The daily school run isn't just a logistical challenge - it's a comedy in motion. If you've ever tried to locate a missing shoe before sunrise or herded a group of giggling kids into the right car, you know it takes nerves of steel and a sense of humour sharper than a freshly-sharpened HB pencil. In the world of private hire and taxi services, passenger assistants are not only guardians of safety - they're also the unofficial stand-up comedians of the 7:30am circuit.

### Understanding school runs in the private hire and taxi sector

What's a school run? It's that magical (read: chaotic) time when kids, bags and breakfast crumbs assemble on wheels to journey between home and school. While buses handle the masses, PHVs and taxis provide that boutique "VIP" experience - complete with passengers who can sing "Wheels on the Bus" off-key for the entire trip. All under the careful eyes of assistants who can tell a joke faster than you can say "seatbelt check."

### Challenges in current operations

- **Communication gaps:** sometimes, a message from the council travels slower than a snail on a sticky note. (*"Did you get the memo?" "What memo?"*)
- **Safety concerns:** making sure every child is buckled up and not trying to invent new forms of seating - like upside-down - is a full-time sport.
- **Scheduling complexities:** coordinating pick-ups and drop-offs is like solving a Rubik's cube, if the colours changed every five minutes and sometimes someone ate a piece.
- **Resource limitations:** there are days when you wish you had a stretch limo for every request or a magic wand that conjures accessible vehicles on demand.
- **Regulatory compliance:** reading the rulebook is like reading bedtime stories, except nobody falls asleep and you still have homework afterwards.

### The role & value of passenger assistants

Passenger assistants - also known as travel whisperers - guide children and vulnerable passengers with equal doses of care and comic relief. They're experts in defusing playground drama, finding missing socks and answering life's big questions, like: *"Are we there yet?"* and *"Can I eat my snack now?"* (Spoiler: It's always yes for the snack.)

### Key responsibilities

- Supervising boarding and alighting, often while sidestepping banana peels and spontaneous games of 'tag, you're it!'
- Monitoring behaviour and providing emotional support - a smile and a sticker can work wonders, but so can a well-timed knock-knock joke.
- Managing emergencies, from lost mittens to the classic: *"I forgot my homework!"* (again).
- Communicating with parents, guardians, and school staff to relay vital information - like who told the best joke or who invented a new handshake.
- Ensuring safeguarding protocols with the keen eye of a hawk and the warmth of a teddy bear. And yes, sometimes they do both at once.

### Benefits of passenger assistants

- Enhanced safety: with an assistant on board, the only thing flying around is laughter - not lunch boxes.
- Improved communication: assistants act as the "group chat" that never glitches - keeping everyone in the loop (and the kids entertained).
- Personalised care: everyone gets attention, whether they need help with a seatbelt or just want to share a riddle about chickens.
- Behaviour management: when tensions rise, a pun or a goofy face can turn frowns upside down faster than you can say "school run superstar."

### How to make school runs work effectively

Delivering top-notch school run services is all about planning, training and keeping a few extra jokes up your sleeve. Remember: stickers, snacks and stories are the holy trinity of a successful journey.



# NOT A DREADED JOURNEY

## 1. Robust recruitment and vetting

Hire people with patience, kindness, and the ability to laugh at knock-knock jokes - no matter how many times they hear the same one. And yes, vetting is serious, but a sense of humour should be mandatory too.

## 2. Comprehensive training

Training covers all the essentials:

- **Handling emergencies:** like the time someone dropped a grape and it rolled under the seat, causing a minor existential crisis.
- **De-escalation skills:** “*Who can do the quietest ninja impression?*” works wonders for peace and quiet.
- **Communication:** speaking “Kid” fluently, including advanced giggle translation.
- **Disability awareness and inclusion:** because everyone deserves a great trip (and maybe a joke or two).
- **Confidentiality and data protection:** remember, what happens on the school run, stays on the school run (except the jokes, those are for sharing).

## 3. Clear policies and procedures

Document everything - from incidents to the running tally of lost gloves. And make sure the “Joke of the Day” gets a mention in every report.

## 4. Technology integration

Let’s embrace the digital age:

- **GPS tracking:** so you know where the minibus is (even if the kids are convinced you’re actually on a secret detour to the moon).
- **Dedicated apps:** for seamless scheduling, updates and, hopefully, a “*send a joke*” feature in the next update.
- **Automated alerts:** because no one wants to miss a pick-up - or the “*Punchline of the Week*”.

## 5. Vehicle suitability and maintenance

Clean, accessible vehicles are a must - bonus points if you can remove biscuit crumbs faster than a kid can drop them.

## 6. Strong partnership with schools and families

Regular communication is crucial. And if you can swap riddles with the teachers, even better. Laughter really is the best feedback tool.

## 7. Well-defined routes and schedules

Careful route planning means fewer surprises. Unless, of course, you count the time someone tried to navigate using a treasure map.

## How to improve school runs & passenger assistant services

### 1. Empowering passenger assistants

- Encourage sharing of tips - and the best puns. Maybe even hold a “*Passenger Assistant’s Got Talent*” for joke-telling.
- Reward outstanding care with gold stars and maybe a tiny trophy for “*Funniest Carpool Captain*.”
- Offer support and a chance to swap stories - because sometimes all you need is a good laugh after a wild Wednesday morning.

### 2. Investing in ongoing innovation

- Try out new tech - maybe a voice assistant that tells dad jokes on command?
- Test eco-friendly vehicles, so the only thing polluting the air is laughter.
- Create peer support groups - where venting and joke-swapping are both highly encouraged.

### 5. Enhanced safeguarding and inclusion

Review safeguarding regularly, making sure everyone feels safe and included. Remember, the only thing anyone should feel left out of is a bad pun.

### 6. Feedback-driven change

Solicit honest feedback. If the most common comment is: “*This was the most fun I’ve ever had on a school run!*” you know you’re on the right track.

## Conclusion

School runs are serious business - but with the right passenger assistants, they’re also a rolling comedy show. From safe arrivals to side-splitting giggles, these journeys can be the highlight of everyone’s day.

So let’s keep investing in people, technology, and, most importantly, a sense of humour - the secret ingredient for a school run that’s safe, smooth, and just a little bit silly.

If you find yourself at the wrong side of the fun bus – looking to grow with the support and fun that is provided as a member of the Elite Family – then after your school runs are completed send me an email:

[paul@elite-liverpool.co.uk](mailto:paul@elite-liverpool.co.uk)

# DEREG DILEMMA

## EDINBURGH COUNCIL TO SURVEY PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE OVERPROVISION

Last month Edinburgh councillors approved a survey to determine if there is an overabundance of PHVs operating in the city.

The decision follows a petition from a group of taxi drivers who argued that the market is “over-saturated” and causing “unsustainable pressure” on their trade. The drivers had also requested a temporary freeze on new PH licences, which was rejected by the

Regulatory Committee.

The survey tender process will take approximately 12 weeks, with data collection scheduled for the first half of 2026. Taxi drivers claim PH drivers are undercutting their business. City taxi driver Keith Auld told the committee: “We’re under unsustainable pressure. This isn’t competition, but oversaturation.”

The drivers’ petition also raised concerns about dangerously long

working hours among PH drivers due to low incomes.

Currently, there are 2,982 PHVs and 1,090 taxis operating in the city. Mr. Auld claimed that the number of PHVs increases by three every day. Cllr Joanna Mowat expressed caution about market intervention and the danger of “creating protected markets”, but acknowledged that the public safety concerns warranted the survey.

## GLASGOW COUNCIL ORDERS REVIEW OF PLATE CAP DESPITE MASSIVE CONFLICTING PUBLIC OPINION

A public consultation has revealed overwhelming support from Glasgow residents for maintaining the city’s cap on taxi and PH licences. An online survey of 4,440 people found that 92% were in favour of retaining the PH cap, while 90% supported keeping the taxi licence limit.

Despite this public sentiment, a council report highlights a “clear conflict in views” with written responses submitted by business groups such as Glasgow Chamber of Commerce, Glasgow Taxis, Uber and Unite the Union.

The Glasgow Chamber of Commerce argues that the current policies, which limit taxis to 1,420 and PHVs to 3,450, are “misaligned with the city’s ambition for economic recovery and a thriving night time economy.”

This perspective is backed by recent council-commissioned reports indicating a lack of late-night transport is hurting the city’s post-Covid recovery.

To resolve these conflicting opinions, on 27 August councillors recommended a full independent review which will consider competition, pricing, consumer attitudes and behaviour, the impact on the wider city centre economy, comparisons with other UK cities and the effect on operator and driver earnings.

Following this decision the Scottish PHA issued the following statement: “We must express our significant disappointment with the outcome of today’s committee decision. We are concerned this decision undermines the purpose and value of the recent public consultation, which showed overwhelming support for retaining the existing licence caps.

“Over 3,800 members of the public reported no issues with securing a ride. This level of public engagement and consensus is remarkable and, in our view, should have been a clear and decisive factor in the committee’s decision-making.

“We were told this public exercise would inform the council’s path forward on this important issue. The public has spoken, yet their opinion is seemingly being set aside in favour of a second process. It feels like a case of if the council doesn’t get the answer it wants, it will try again until it does.

“The SPHA believes the council’s assertion that a clear conflict of opinions were received is questionable. It appears to prioritise a small handful of written submissions from influential voices over the vast majority of the public. This raises serious questions about the fairness of the process and the true influence of powerful commercial interests.

“Furthermore, we are concerned about the financial implications of commissioning another in-depth review, which will be paid for by licence holders.

“We urge the council to reconsider its approach and listen to the clear will of the people.”

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# CHARITY CORNER

## AYR TAXI DRIVERS TREAT YOUNGSTERS TO DAY OUT AT FIVE SISTERS ZOO



Kind-hearted taxi drivers from Ayr gave up their time last week for the annual Ayr Taxi Day Out, treating families from Whiteleys Retreat to a memorable trip. The families and young carers

were chauffeured in a convoy of taxis to the Five Sisters Zoo near Livingston.

"A great day was had at the zoo, thanks to Ayr Taxi Day Out," a Whiteleys spokesperson said.

"A massive thank you to the local companies and businesses who donated to the cause. Without you, today wouldn't happen!"

Organisers echoed the sentiment, stating: "What a day the kids had, totally great day and brilliant weather and enjoyed by everyone." They extended their gratitude to



everyone who helped, adding: "Without your donations we couldn't have pulled it off," and promised to "make it even better" next year.

## GRIMSBY TAXI DRIVER CYCLES FOR CHARITY AFTER PROSTATE CANCER JOURNEY

A Grimsby taxi driver, Ronnie Gibson, swapped his cab for a bicycle to raise over £2,000 for a hospital charity after successfully being treated for prostate cancer. Gibson, who was diagnosed in May 2024, undertook a 12-day cycling challenge from Belfast to Dublin to raise awareness and funds for the Hull-based WISHH (Working Independently to Support Hull Hospitals) charity.

Battling "atrocious" weather, a puncture, and even an "attacked by midges," Gibson persevered on his journey. His wife, Linda, set up a JustGiving page that has so far raised £2,154.

Linda paid tribute to the "spot-on" care Gibson received at the Queens Centre at Castle Hill Hospital, which is supported by WISHH. Inspired to help other prostate cancer patients, Gibson shared his



own story of diagnosis. He explained that before the pandemic, he began having issues "with my waterworks." He credits a chance encounter with a consultant he was driving in his taxi for prompting him to be insistent with his GP about getting a PSA test.

"He said 'go to your GP; tell him

you want a PSA test,'" Gibson recalled. He was told to also ask for an ultrasound and an MRI scan.

Gibson emphasised the importance of being proactive, noting that he had to demand testing instead of just being monitored. He recalled that other patients he met with similar diagnoses "had all had to demand a PSA test."

He now tells all his taxi passengers, "you don't even need to have symptoms to ask for a PSA test."

The NHS website states that while routine PSA testing isn't offered, men aged 50 or over can request one from their GP, even without symptoms.

The funds raised by Gibson will help WISHH provide additional equipment and support services to patients and their families at Hull Royal Infirmary and Castle Hill Hospitals.



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## THE PLACE TO BE IF YOU'RE A RIDE-HAILING AV

Article by Barak Sas  
www.movingppl.com #MovingPeople



London, Summer of 2026: the city is the world's #1 battleground for autonomous ride-hailing, with multiple global players launching simultaneously. Already committed to the cause are **Uber** and **Wayve**, **Lyft/FREENOW** and **Baidu**, and **Waymo**. Expect others (cough, Bolt) to join. From consumer-apps to technology players - let's look at London - a year from now.

### Why are AV companies focusing on London all of a sudden?

Because the UK government sped up AV adoption. In June, the UK's Transport Minister announced an accelerated framework, aimed at bringing autonomous ride-hailing to London in the spring of 2026, a year ahead of the originally planned deployment.

On July 21st, the UK government published an Open Consultation on "Automated passenger services: permitting scheme" which further opens the door for autonomous ride-hailing operations; we can expect regulation to be completed toward the end of 2025 / beginning of 2026.

### Why is London so important?

Shame on you for even asking such a question, but here goes:

- London is big. The city has 9 million residents and over 20 million tourists entering each year. **Come 2026 It will be the largest autonomous ride-hailing market in the Western world.** It is also ideal for ride-hailing economics, offering a large dense urban environment. Fun fact: it is one of Uber's five highest revenue cities.
- London is complex. Modern streets next to medieval ones. Mixed traffic with buses & cars next to cyclists. People constantly cross the street on a

red light. Plenty of road work in a dense urban environment. Rain, and lots of it. Possible snow and hail come winter. This isn't Phoenix or Austin with wide, easy streets and good weather. If you can make it in London - you can make it anywhere.

There's more reasons, but let's stop here. You get the point.

### So how will the future commercial competitive landscape look like?

Good question. This piece focuses on commercial autonomous ride-hailing. Some AV companies might enter London for limited trials, piloting both technology and commercial / consumer facing operations. But now we're focusing on what will move the needle, i.e. full-scale commercial operations.

And the players are:

1. **Uber** and **Wayve** - most likely to lead the market. The partnership between both companies is a strategic one, going back to August 2024 when Uber participated in Wayve's \$1.05 billion round. Uber is the largest ride-hailing player in London, estimated to command  $\pm 70\%$  of the ride-hailing market. Wayve is London-based, has performed trials in London for years now, and has a local operations team.
2. **Lyft-FREENOW** and **Baidu (Apollo Go)** - a recently announced partnership, Lyft is now partnering with Baidu, a prominent AV player. FREENOW's London market share is circa 10%, divided between PHV (gig) and Black Cabs. Will Lyft use the opportunity to introduce its brand in Europe, side-by-side FREENOW which will continue to work with Black Cabs, or will FREENOW be the front for this operation, risking backlash from Black Cabs? TBD.
3. **Waymo** has recently started advertising a Business Operations Principal role - indicating that the company is gearing up for a London launch. Waymo's options: go solo (e.g. San Francisco), partner with a ride-hailing player (Bolt, Gett) or do both.



# LONDON CALLING AVs



## Which other ride-hailing players are there in London?

This is where it gets even more interesting.

- **Bolt** - the company has an AV programme, but has yet to announce any partnerships. Its market share in London is believed to be roughly 20%, so **Bolt must deploy autonomous ride-hailing in London. The million pound question - with who?**
- **Gett** - a small player in global terms but a sizable one in London, with millions of rides annually. Gett probably isn't able to carry out large scale operations on its own, but it can be 'bolted on' to an existing AV partnership, as a way to increase demand. On the other hand, same as with FREENOW, it has to keep good relations with Black Cabs, which will obviously not like (British understatement) the new autonomous world order.
- **Addison Lee** - a local UK player, recently acquired by **ComfortDelGro**. The global ownership adds to Addison Lee's appeal, but it share Gett challenges.

## Who are other Global AV-tech players likely to deploy in London?

Partnering with an established demand generating player is better than setting up a new consumer brand. There are a few questions here: (1) who will Bolt partner with; (2) Would Addison Lee or Gett try to initiate small local operations as pilots?; and (3) will there be new AV players trying to go in with their own brand?

I don't have all the answers, but let's look at companies which we are likely to see in London, most likely as a result partnering with a local demand generating player:

- **Mobileye** - powering the AV activities of MOIA in Germany and the US and with an existing partnership with Lyft in Dallas, Mobileye has yet to announce.
- **WeRide** - a rising player in the AV scene. WeRide operates commercial services and pilots in major Chinese cities and the UAE (with Uber), and has recently entered Europe with Shuttles in France and Switzerland, albeit both are not commercial ride-hailing. WeRide also has their own rider app and operations.
- **Pony.ai** - similar to WeRide, operates in China and the UAE, and recently launched in Luxembourg, for now on an initial pilot. A bit behind WeRide in terms of European expansion. Pony also has their own rider app and operations.
- **Avride** - the company is running tests in Austin and preparing deployment in Dallas with Uber, expected later this year. London will be a huge leap for the company.
- **May Mobility** has several pilots in the US and are planned to launch in Atlanta with Lyft very soon - but don't expect them to be ready for large-scale London deployment.
- **Oxa** pivoted into logistics; it still runs Ford vans and shuttles in the US, but it is far behind the AV tech-readiness race.
- **Motional** - controlled by Hyundai. The company is active in Pittsburgh, Las Vegas and Singapore. I don't expect Hyundai to go all-in in London.

Let's stop here - with one more company to mention:

- **Tesla** - big question over the tech-readiness of Tesla, which was blocked from operating FSD in the UK, taking criticism from regulators. We're still a year away, which gives Tesla time (but probably not enough time) to prove a safe US operation. Possible, but highly unlikely. If operating in London, Tesla will generate its own demand.

The following months are critical in terms of partnerships, eyes turn to Bolt. I expect to see at least four different autonomous ride-hailing services come summer of 2026 - exciting times.

# TRADE RESPONSES

## NUNEATON OPERATOR'S RESPONSE TO PROPOSED TAXI POLICY CHANGES

**Nuneaton and Bedworth BC has proposed changes to its taxi policy, including a controversial three points penalty for food and drink in your cab.**

Here is operator John Igo's response:

"Thank you for the consultation document. While we broadly support your aim to increase public safety, this cannot be to the detriment of the local licensed trade. We would like to bring to your attention to the following:

### **Disciplinary and Enforcement Measures:**

- We welcome well-directed enforcement activity, but would like to know what percentage of this activity is likely to take place outside traditional working hours. Frequently, problems arise during our busiest times, particularly on weekends at night, when enforcement is less likely.
- Within the penalty points scheme, evidence of smoking or vaping in the vehicle attracts 3 points for the driver (27). The policy does not specify whether it refers only to smoking and vaping by the driver. Although it is not legal to smoke in our vehicles and it is undesirable to allow vaping, it has to be accepted that it can be difficult for a driver to stop a passenger from doing so without risking their safety.
- Likewise evidence of food or drink in the vehicle attracts 3 points (28) but makes no allowance for the drivers entitlement to a break. It is not unreasonable to suggest a driver may want to carry a sandwich box in the boot and a drinks bottle in the locked glovebox, as hydration is vital during the summer months.
- Within the penalty points table (8,9,10, 20, 21 & 48), you are awarding points to proprietors and operators for things that are beyond their control. We, as a company, have a strict written policy that stipulates drivers must maintain the cleanliness of the vehicle at all times and that they must check items like tyres and lights before beginning work. In reality, although we do run random checks on the vehicles, we do not own the majority of them and do not see them on a day-to-day basis. As we support the spirit of this legislation, we would be more than willing to create a message on the driver's PDA so that they could acknowledge they had completed all of these checks before they could begin work.
- You are awarding operators and proprietors 6 points for failure to notify you of any motoring or criminal convictions or DVLA licence points within 3 days (48). Please clarify that you mean their personal information and not that of the driver, since we do not have access to this information.
- We understand the needs of those who use assistance dogs and wish to support them (31). We can exclude drivers that hold exemption certificates, making sure that a vehicle that can take the fare is dispatched at the first attempt, if you would be willing to share the exemption certificates with us.

### **Private Hire Drivers**

- We note sections 2.1 (a, b, c & j). Enforcement of these sections must be across the board and must equally apply to private hire vehicles licenced in other areas that are operating in ours. Not doing so would disadvantage our local drivers and expose the public to unnecessary risk. We would suggest extending Geo Fencing to include Church Street, Newdigate Street and the rear of the Harefield Road rank.
- We would like to remind you that you do not have the power to attach conditions to the licences of taxi drivers. All conditions attached to licences have to pass the "reasonably necessary" test. Furthermore, by way of example, the council needs to provide firm evidence, beyond the mere subjective desires of either elected members or licensing officials, that carrying food and drink in the vehicle for consumption by the driver during the working day is a public safety issue.
- We reserve the right of appeal in the Magistrates' Court against any conditions attached to licences that fail the reasonably necessary test, in accordance with sections 47,48 and 51 LGMPA 1976.
- We want to take this opportunity to ask if you have considered our previous request to change the age limit for WAVs to 5 years. Accessibility for people with disabilities is becoming more difficult as the cost of these vehicles has increased.

Regards

Mr John Igoe

Mi Taxis Nuneaton"

# The Exchange

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



→ 60,000

Taxis in the UK and IE network



# TRADE RESPONSES

## SHPHA RESPONSE TO COMPANY CONDUCTING UNMET DEMAND SURVEY FOR SOUTHAMPTON CC



**Southampton City Council limits the number of hackney carriage licences to 283.**

**To maintain this number, the council employs LVSA to carry out an unmet demand survey on its behalf.**

Here is Ian Hall, chairman of Southampton Hackney and PH Association's, response:

"Good evening Mr MacDonald, LVSA

Thank you for your correspondence, which I have read carefully, along with the responses provided by Perry McMillan and Mark Paget.

In response to your question regarding how the trade has changed in recent years and the challenges we now face, I would like to share the following observations.

- The taxi and private hire trade has undergone significant transformation, primarily driven by the emergence of digital ride-hailing platforms such as Uber. While these platforms have undoubtedly introduced convenience for the public, they have also presented numerous challenges for local operators and regulators.
- In Southampton, we are currently experiencing serious difficulties due to an increase in Uber-licensed private hire vehicles operating within the city. A particularly troubling issue is **\*\*cross-border hiring (CBH)\*\*** - where vehicles licensed by other authorities work almost exclusively in Southampton. This undermines local regulation and creates an uneven playing field for Southampton-based drivers and operators.

- Uber's pricing strategy further compounds these issues. The company reduces fares during the day, which destabilises the market, and imposes significantly higher charges at night through surge pricing. These inconsistent fare structures affect both driver earnings and public trust.
- One of the core problems lies in the outdated legal framework, namely the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, which was introduced well before the advent of mobile phones and internet-based platforms. This legislation is no longer fit for purpose in an era dominated by app-based booking systems, and urgent reform is needed.
- Moreover, enforcement capacity is lacking. Local councils are unable to dedicate sufficient resources to ensure compliance across such complex, digitally operated networks. Without robust enforcement, it becomes difficult to uphold standards and ensure public safety.
- We also face a transparency issue: in Southampton, the names of private hire operators have been removed from vehicle door signage, meaning there is now no clear accountability as to which operator is responsible for a given vehicle. This undermines both public confidence and regulatory oversight.

All of these factors must be taken into account when conducting unmet demand surveys and similar consultations.

It is imperative that the Department for Transport's Transport Committee consider whether new legislation is required to regulate apps and digital platforms more effectively, ensuring fairness, accountability, and safety in the evolving landscape of our trade.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this discussion.

Regards

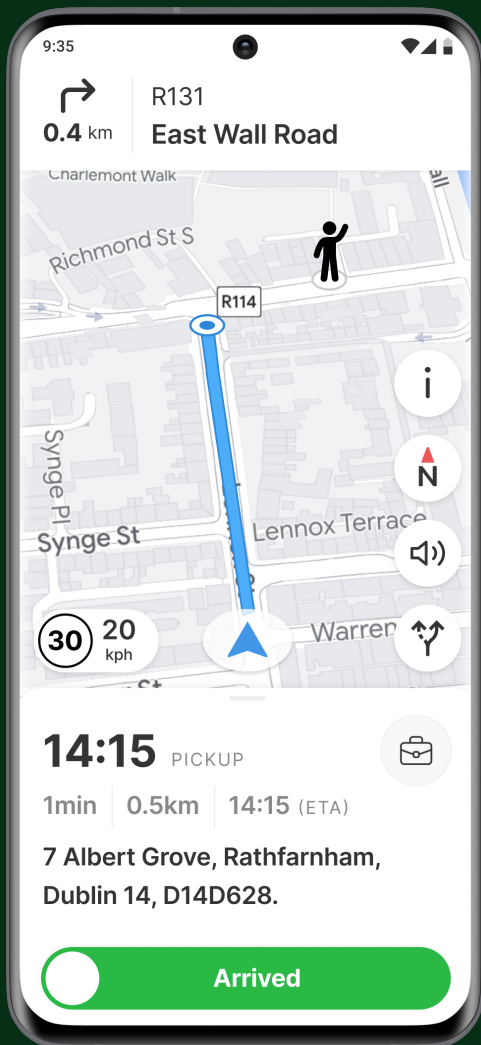
Ian Hall

Chairman

Southampton Hackney and PH Association (SHPHA)"

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# PROTEST PLIGHT

## PETERBOROUGH UBER DRIVERS STAGE 48-HOUR STRIKE OVER PAY AND CONDITIONS

Dozens of Uber drivers in Peterborough held a 48-hour strike from Friday to Sunday morning, 17 August, to protest against what they describe as “low pay and poor working conditions.” The drivers are demanding better pay and improved working conditions from the company.

Mehtab Anwar, 30, a full-time Uber driver and one of the strike organisers, stated that “the recent fare prices are unsustainable, making it difficult for drivers to earn a fair income.”

Another driver, Junaid Ahmed, 26,



called the strike a “necessary step” and said: “It is not sustainable. We can’t work this way and have to do something.”

Drivers feel they are “undervalued” by Uber, according to Arkash Khan. He added that after paying for fuel,

insurance, and maintenance, they are “earning less than the minimum wage” despite driving for 10 hours a day.

Khan said: “The drivers are running on fumes and we want Uber to put the prices up.”

In response, an Uber spokesperson said the company is working with a union to “improve the experience of driving with Uber.”

The spokesperson also stated that all drivers are guaranteed at least the National Living Wage, holiday pay, a pension plan, and other benefits.

## WE ARE UNABLE TO WORK WOLVERHAMPTON DRIVERS MEET TO PROTEST LICENCE DELAYS

Taxi and private hire drivers in Wolverhampton are claiming that delays in renewing their licences are costing them revenue.

Members of the Wolverhampton Taxi and Private Hire Federation met on Tuesday, August 5, to discuss their next steps after claiming the city council is “dragging their feet.”

They say there are delays in the renewal of their licences which have to be renewed every year after the age of 65 due to medical reasons or every three years before then.

According to federation chairman and campaigner Balbir Singh, drivers are facing long waits for licence renewals, with many being told their licences are merely extended, not renewed.

He said: “That doesn’t give the drivers the assurance they need



that they are licensed and insured for the necessary period and some of them are unable to drive legally in the interim period.

“The stated time for a reply seems to be ten days and it is sometimes longer than that, with new staff in particular who have been taken on seeming to not know the process.

“We understand the council deals with a lot of applications from other areas outside the city but we feel their first priority should be to drivers from the area they serve.

“We urge them to come to the table and discuss the issue as at the moment the drivers in the city are feeling they have no confidence in the licensing department to renew their permits speedily and so they are able to get back on the road quickly.”

The drivers are also frustrated with what they describe as a bureaucratic process, with Singh stating: “We have to beg to be able to see anyone at the council,” with drivers asked to correspond by email or telephone.

The council has stated that “renewals are being processed by our officers and that drivers may continue to work while their renewal application is processed, provided it is correct and complete stating: “Renewals will be granted once all documentation and test results are received.”



# PROTEST PLIGHT

## EDINBURGH PH DRIVERS STAGE 'GO SLOW' CONVOY TO HIGHLIGHT ISSUES WITH COUNCIL

Drivers, unified under the group Edinburgh Private Hire Drivers United, assembled at 9am on Thursday 28 August at Lochside Crescent in South Gyle. The convoy of over 200 drivers began its journey at 10am, proceeding at a slow pace toward the council offices on East Market Street.

The protest aimed to draw attention to various concerns being raised by the group:

- **Access to bus lanes and bus gates:** unlike taxis, private hire cars are currently prohibited from using bus lanes and bus gates in Edinburgh. This forces

them to take longer routes, contributing to congestion and increased emissions.

- **Relaxation of the window tint policy:** drivers are currently required to remove factory-fitted tinted windows from their vehicles - a costly and unnecessary expense.

- **Enhanced engagement from the council:** drivers are seeking better levels of engagement and discourse between the council and the trade, especially in shaping future transport and licensing policies in Edinburgh.

We are a vital part of Edinburgh's

transport network, providing hundreds of thousands of journeys every week, from school runs to late-night travel," said a spokesperson for the drivers. "Despite this, we are treated as second-class to the hackney trade and repeatedly ignored on key issues. We want to be treated as part of the solution to Edinburgh's transport challenges, not as part of the problem. We hope this action will get the council to listen to our concerns."

A copy of the driver's key demands was delivered to the council upon the convoy's arrival.

## TfL IN COURT OVER PHV LICENSING FAILURES THAT PUT THOUSANDS OUT OF WORK

TfL is facing a legal claim in the High Court for a judicial review into the licence delays that have kept thousands of PHV drivers out of work for months on end.

The claim, led by members of the IWGB, marks the start of an unprecedented legal challenge which, if successful, could force TfL to overhaul its licensing system, with wide-reaching implications for the more than 108,000 private hire drivers in London.

The application seeks permission for both a judicial review and an injunction for the High Court to order TfL to immediately issue IWGB member, Julius Mugabo, his licence within two days. Mr Mugabo has not been able to work since March, when his licence expired, and despite submitting all the required documentation, TfL is

still yet to issue his renewal.

Mr Mugabo has faced mounting financial pressures and health issues - including missed council tax payments, the threat of eviction due to rent arrears, and dangerously high blood pressure requiring medication.

Julius is one of thousands of drivers impacted by TfL's failure to issue licence renewals, many of whom have reported severe consequences, including car reposessions, homelessness, family breakdown, and mental/physical health impacts.

One driver, Robert Dale, died from a heart attack whilst under extreme stress after TfL failed to renew his licence.

IWGB members, who have already forced TfL to make a series of concessions through weekly protests,

are now leading the legal claim to secure systemic change to ensure drivers are never unable to work whilst applications are processed. IWGB President, Alex Marshall, has submitted a statement arguing that Mr Mugabo's treatment is indicative of wider failures at TfL, and outlining how these issues precede the current crisis, dating back to 2023.

Alex Marshall, IWGB President, says: "This is the starting pistol of an unprecedented legal battle against TfL, which won't end until we have secured accountability, compensation, and meaningful systemic change.

"Instead of despairing as TfL took a bulldozer to their lives, IWGB drivers stood up, organised protests, and put so much pressure on TfL that we achieved significant wins.

## OVER A THIRD OF PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE USERS IN LANCASHIRE FEEL UNSAFE

More than a third of PHV users in Lancashire feel unsafe when using them, according to new research from the University of Central Lancashire.

The research, carried out in collaboration with Chorley Taxi Association, has found more than 200 PHV users who took part in the survey reported feeling unsafe when using PHVs in the county.

The driver asking personal questions was top of the complaint list, with nearly half of the recipients suggesting that reason. That was followed at 35% by the driver speaking a different language

while nearly 31% said listening to the driver's phone conversation to someone via speakerphone made them feel unsafe.

Driving style, being a single passenger and the driver making inappropriate comments during or after the journey were also reasons made by nearly a third of recipients who stated they felt unsafe.

The majority of the respondents to the survey were women aged between 26 and 40.

Professor Joanne Westwood, from the University ran the survey with Dr Helen Richardson Foster.

Professor Westwood said: "The

research findings are very interesting and as far as we know, this is one of the first times that taxi passengers have been asked about their feelings of safety.

"The research has raised many more questions but to have a third of all participants state they felt unsafe is worrying because taxis are a key cog in our transport system and sometimes they are the only transport option for many. "Also, Lancashire is populated with diverse communities with different ethnicities, who speak many languages, so it's unclear why this makes respondents from a range of ethnic groups, feel unsafe."

Uber was not included in this research, which took place over a one-month period last November. Shaz Malik, Chair of the Chorley Taxi Association, collaborated on the research to confirm their anecdotal knowledge.

Mr Malik, the owner of Four Sixes' Taxis in Chorley, commented: "Every journey in a taxi is a moment of trust especially for women, who too often carry an invisible burden of vigilance when moving through public spaces.

"This research reminds us that safety is not just about physical protection, it is about dignity, respect and the ethical duty we owe to one another as human beings.

"For the Chorley Taxi Association, this is a moment to listen, to learn and to lead. We must ensure that no woman ever feels unheard, unsafe, or unwelcome in a space that should offer peace of mind.

"True public service demands moral courage, and that is the path we are committed to walking."

## BANBURY STREET TAPED OFF AFTER TAXI CRASHES INTO HOUSE

A residential street in Banbury, Oxfordshire, was cordoned off by police after a taxi crashed into a house. The incident on Woodgreen Avenue happened between Sunday night/Monday morning, 18 August.

Police tape blocked public access to the street, and a white taxi could be seen at the scene, having collided with a house and facing the road.

Three men and a woman have since been arrested in connection with the incident which saw the parked white Peugeot taxi minivan crashed into by another vehicle, which resulted in it colliding with the house.

Significant damage was caused to the property and the car was removed on Monday afternoon. Nobody was injured in the crash.



A 19-year-old man and a 28-year-old man, both from Banbury, were arrested on Monday morning on suspicion of criminal damage.

A third man, 59, also from Banbury, was arrested on suspicion of criminal damage later that afternoon. Then on Wednesday afternoon a 58-year-old woman from Banbury was arrested on suspicion of assault and criminal damage. All four have been released on conditional police bail.

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## DERBY CABBIES SAY THEY CAN'T PICK UP CUSTOMERS BECAUSE OF SCHOOL SAFE HAVEN ZONES

Derby cabbies say new road closures near schools are making it impossible to pick up and drop off customers, particularly those with disabilities. The drivers are calling for a change to the rules, which they claim are causing major problems for vulnerable residents. Derby City Council has implemented over a dozen "School Safe Haven Zones" (SSHZ) in recent years to improve safety by restricting vehicle access on certain residential streets during school start and end times. The zones were created following "complaints regarding dangerous parking" and are enforced with fines. However, taxi drivers are not included on the list of exemptions,



which currently includes residents, blue badge holders, and emergency vehicles. This means that during the timed closures, which can last up to an hour, customers living within the zones must walk to or from a taxi at the edge of the closed area. Taxi driver Lee Roach highlighted the issue, stating: "There are

disabled people who can't walk up the street. There are people who still need to get taxis in these zones. But we can't get to them." Another driver, Adnan Khan, echoed this concern, asking: "How do you explain to them that 'we can't get to you, can you walk to us'? If they are registered disabled, they can't do that."

A spokesperson for Derby City Council confirmed there is "not a general exemption for taxis" and said the zones' primary goal is to "reduce motor vehicles and create a safer, healthier, and more pleasant environment for children." The council said zone times and distances are "kept as short as possible" to minimise inconvenience.

## HONEST LONDON CABBIE RETURNS £100,000 HERMES HANDBAG TO GRATEFUL OWNER

A London black cab driver named Terry has been praised for his integrity after he returned a Hermès handbag valued at £100,000 to its owner, Hana Al Hai. Hana, a visitor to London, accidentally left the luxury bag in the back of Terry's taxi. Terry found the bag, thought to be a Mini Kelly black alligator with silver hardware, and immediately recognised it as something special. "I could see straight away this wasn't an ordinary handbag," he said. With no contact information inside, Terry went to great lengths to find the owner. He contacted the Dubai Mall Lounge, where Hana was a member, to track her down. The



Dubai Mall then informed Hana that her bag was safe with Terry. Terry successfully returned the handbag to Hana at her hotel in Knightsbridge the following day. Reflecting on his actions, Terry stated: "I drove straight back to the hotel to return it. That's just what we do. This is why London black cabs are the best in the world - we're trusted."

For his honesty, Terry received a £200 tip and an offer for a holiday at a hotel owned by Hana in Dubai. Hana later took to social media to express her gratitude.

"It's rare to meet someone with such integrity and genuine care for others," she wrote, adding: "You turned what could have been a stressful experience into a reminder of the goodness in people."

The LTDA also commented on the incident, using it as an example of the high standards of London's black cab industry. In a statement, the LTDA said: "This driver's actions exemplify why black cabs remain the safest and most reliable form of transport in London."

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# ROUND THE COUNCILS

## ROCHDALE:

### DRIVER UNIFORMS CONSIDERED

Rochdale council is exploring the possibility of introducing a dress code for taxi drivers, an initiative proposed by highways boss Cllr Shah Wazir. The idea, which was discussed during a recent council cabinet meeting, is aimed at improving the town's image by ensuring that cabbies, who are often the first point of contact for visitors, present a smarter appearance.

"When people visiting the borough arrive at the train station for example, usually taxi drivers are their first point of contact. First impressions count," Cllr Wazir stated. He questioned whether it was possible "to have a dress code for taxi drivers so they can be easily recognised?"

A council officer noted that while the idea had been mentioned previously, no official progress had been made, but assured the committee that the team would look into it.

The meeting also saw the approval of a new taxi emissions policy, part of the wider Greater Manchester Clean Air Plan. The new policy mandates that by August 31, 2030, all licensed taxis and private hire vehicles must meet a minimum standard of Euro 6 for diesel cars or Euro 4 for petrol cars.

Currently, 345 out of 1,852 vehicles in Rochdale do not comply with these standards.

Council bosses reported that the taxi trade has welcomed the plan, as it could open up access to £8 million in government funding across Greater Manchester to help drivers upgrade their vehicles.

## GUILDFORD:

### SUCCESSFUL SECRET SHOPPER SURVEY

A "secret shopper" survey commissioned by Guildford BC found that the borough's taxi and PH services are providing a high standard of service to the public.

However, the report also highlighted several areas that need attention. The investigation, conducted by an external contractor, evaluated drivers on professionalism, vehicle condition, and compliance with licensing rules. The key findings were largely positive:

- Professionalism and courtesy: the majority of drivers were described as professional and polite.
- Vehicle standards: all vehicles were found to be clean and well-maintained.
- Route knowledge: drivers generally had "good local

knowledge," with minimal reliance on satnavs.

- Compliance: the survey found "little evidence of overcharging" and confirmed that licence plates were clearly displayed.

The survey found a few areas needing improvement. Some drivers failed to clearly display their ID badges or tariff cards, making them difficult for passengers to see. The report also noted that HCVs were "difficult to access at certain times and locations," particularly on weekday mornings and late nights. Also, instances of too many taxis at ranks, and the misuse of ranks by taxis for non-public hire purposes were observed.

Further, drivers did not routinely offer assistance to passengers with visible physical impairments. A small number of tests were also conducted to check for illegal "plying for hire" by PHVs. In all cases, the drivers declined to accept unauthorised fares, which the council saw as a "positive indication of compliance."

## INVERCLYDE:

### FOREIGNERS CRIMINAL CHECKS REVIEWED

Inverclyde councillors are set to review the rules on criminal record checks for taxi driver applicants who were born outside the UK, with officials noting an increase in applications from foreign nationals.

A report presented to the council's "general purposes board" on August 13 highlighted that while a Police Scotland criminal record check is mandatory, it "does not reveal details of any convictions outside the UK."

The current policy requires applicants to provide a criminal record check for any country where they have lived for six months or more. However, the report states that "applicants from countries such as Syria, Afghanistan etc. have told licensing staff they are unable to obtain a criminal record check from their country of origin due to the conflict within such countries."

The council's licensing staff have faced "increased challenges from both applicants and their advisers" when rejecting these incomplete applications. The report proposes three options to address this:

**Option 1:** maintain the status quo; **Option 2:** case-by-case consideration. **Option 3:** waive the requirement for long-term UK residents.

The report also mentions that at least 12 other Scottish councils have specific policies on this issue; e.g. Edinburgh's policy allows an exception for applicants who have lived in the UK since childhood and cannot get a criminal record check from their home country for the period they were a minor.



# ROUND THE COUNCILS

## CHELTENHAM:

### MANDATORY CARD PAYMENTS BY 1 SEP

Starting on September 1, a new rule from Cheltenham Borough Council will require all licensed taxis and private hire vehicles in Cheltenham to accept card payments.

This change marks the end of “cash only” rides across the borough, ensuring that drivers can no longer refuse fares from customers who wish to pay by card. The council announced the new policy as a way “to ensure everyone gets home safely.”

All taxis and private hire vehicles will be mandated to have card payment machines.

They will also be unable to charge extra for card payments.

Additionally, the council noted its “commitment around public safety” by also introducing mandatory safeguarding training for all private hire operators, which will be in effect by January 1, 2026.

## COVENTRY:

### WHEELCHAIR FRIENDLY RANKS IDEA

A Coventry councillor is advocating for designated spaces at city taxi ranks for wheelchair-accessible vehicles. The proposal comes as part of a wider effort to improve taxi services for people with disabilities.

During a meeting of Coventry City Council’s licensing and regulatory committee, Councillor Christine Thomas, who chairs the Disability Equality Action Partnership, praised the council’s work to increase the number of accessible vehicles.

However, she highlighted an ongoing issue, stating: “We seem to have a problem at the moment with a lot of drivers refusing to take wheelchairs.”

She recalled a recent incident where “a gentleman in a wheelchair at a rank and the first four taxis said they all had exemption certificates, but not all had a sticker in the window.”

Councillor Thomas’s comments followed a report outlining changes to the city’s licensing policy, including the removal of the London Conditions of Fitness, a rule that previously restricted the types of vehicles used as taxis.

Thomas described the removal of the rule as “absolutely brilliant,” noting that it will allow for a greater variety of vehicles, including more wheelchair-accessible models.

To further support these vehicles and their passengers, Councillor Thomas suggested creating specific spots at taxi ranks for accessible taxis.

She explained that vehicles with rear ramps would need more space, and that this measure would help prevent “a person with a disability who is constantly being told by drivers that they cannot take them” from being humiliated.

Councillors were told that while the suggestion could be explored, legal experts might need to be consulted to ensure such a move would not be viewed as discriminatory.

The updated policy, which also included changes to emissions rules and the permitted age of vehicles, was approved by councillors and will now go before the council’s cabinet later this month.

## NORTH NORTHANTS:

### POLICY DELAY; KNOWLEDGE CONSULTATION

North Northamptonshire Council has postponed the launch of its new taxi licensing policy until November 3, after a planned September start date was made unfeasible by a delay in government approval.

The council is now awaiting sign-off from the DfT on new byelaws, a process that has been put on hold during Parliament’s summer recess.

The new policy will create a single hackney carriage zone across North Northamptonshire.

In the interim, the council has opened a public consultation on its proposed “knowledge” test for drivers, which will apply to both HC and combined HC/PH licence applicants. The test will cover local geography and other taxi-related requirements.

Cllr Kirk Harrison, Executive Member for Regulatory Services, said: “We know this topic has been a talking point within the industry for some time, which is why it’s important we provide this update and next steps.” He added that he hopes “everyone can understand and appreciate that the go-live date is dependent on the DfT approving the byelaws.”

The new regulations are part of a broader effort to standardise taxi licensing following the 2021 reorganisation that formed North Northamptonshire. The council also plans to conduct a post-implementation review of the policy to specifically examine requirements for WAVs and transitional rights for existing drivers.

The consultation, which closes on 29 September, can be found here: <https://shorturl.at/vDDCc>

# ROUND THE COUNCILS

## LICHFIELD:

### NEW SIGNAGE BOOSTS PASSENGER SAFETY

Lichfield DC is introducing new, distinctive plates and signage for all licensed taxis and PHVs to improve passenger safety and make it easier for the public to provide feedback. The new system, which will be implemented across the district's 114 licensed vehicles and 131 drivers by April 1, 2026, includes new plates for the rear, front, and sides of vehicles. Hackney carriages will also have council-set fares clearly displayed in the inside rear window.

All vehicles will now feature contact information for the council - including an email address, phone number, and a QR code - so passengers can easily share feedback or report concerns.

Drivers will also be issued new identification badges that must be worn at all times. Both the plates and badges feature built-in security measures to prevent counterfeiting.

Councillor Brian Yeates, Chair of the Regulatory & Licensing Committee, highlighted the importance of the new measures. He said: "These changes are about making it easier for passengers to recognise licensed taxis, feel confident in their journey, and know how to get in touch with us if needed - while also supporting our local taxi trade."

## DUNDEE:

### SUSPENSIONS FOR DRESS CODE VIOLATIONS

Dundee taxi drivers are being warned that they could have their licences suspended or revoked if they fail to adhere to a strict dress code.

A recent email sent to drivers on Monday, August 25, reminded them they must present a "professional image" at all times, cracking down on concerns that some have been working in "football attire," shorts, and tracksuits.

The new enforcement, which references Section 21 of the licensing rules, prohibits drivers from wearing casual items such as T-shirts, shorts, tracksuits, training shoes, baseball caps, and denim shirts/jeans. Instead, the council mandates that drivers wear a dress, a collared shirt or blouse, a polo shirt, dress-type skirts or trousers, and dress shoes, boots, or dress sandals.

The move has been welcomed by some drivers. One driver told The Courier: "It's poor that drivers think it's

acceptable to be dressed like this when operating a taxi...I've seen drivers in baseball caps and tracksuit bottoms.

"I'm pleased efforts are being made to address the issue."

Drivers anticipate that rank inspections will begin in the coming weeks to enforce the new standards.

A spokesman for Dundee City Council encourages anyone with concerns about a driver's attire to report them directly to the licensing board.

## ANGUS:

### SHOCK FIGURES SHOW ONLY NINE WAVs

A long-delayed consultants' report has revealed a severe shortage of WAV taxis in Angus, with only nine such vehicles operating across the entire area. This figure represents under 7% of the district's taxi fleet, falling significantly short of the Scottish Government's 20% target and starkly contrasting with Dundee's 40% accessibility rate.

The report, commissioned in 2020 and delayed by the Covid-19 pandemic and staff shortages, highlights major issues for the area's estimated 2,000 to 3,500 wheelchair users.

A study of 56 people found that 89% believed WAV availability was poor, and eight out of ten reported frequent booking difficulties. Some towns, including Arbroath and Montrose, have no WAV taxis at all.

Taxi operators cited high vehicle costs and low perceived demand as reasons for the shortage, suggesting little scope for major change without external support.

The consultants' report, from The TAS Partnership, recommends a "national-level financial intervention" to help Angus meet accessibility targets, as the local taxi trade "does not have the economic scale to achieve accessibility targets without support."

The report was delivered to the council in July and it showed 85 taxis and 55 PHVs in Angus. There are four WAV taxis and five WAV PHVs which equates to just 6.4% of all cabs. In contrast, the percentages for neighbouring council areas are:

- Perth and Kinross 19.5% (65 WAVs)
- Stirling 8.4% (24 WAVs)
- Fife 8.2% (66 WAVs)
- Dundee 40% (197 WAVs)

The findings were considered by councillors on Thursday, August 14, with a recommendation to form a working group to develop an action plan by early 2026.

# ROUND THE COUNCILS

## TfL:

### SOCIAL MEDIA CONTACT CONDUCT

Transport for London (TfL) has issued a formal warning to all licensed taxi and PHV drivers, reminding them that their conduct on social media, as well as in-person interactions with TfL staff, could result in licence revocation. The notice comes in response to a rise in concerns over inappropriate online behaviour.

TfL's warning emphasises that while drivers are entitled to free speech, using social media for harassment, bullying, or making offensive remarks toward passengers, other drivers, TfL staff, or the public can lead to a review of their licence.

This includes comments that target individuals based on "protected characteristics such as age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion, sex or sexual orientation."

The regulatory body also highlighted the serious safety risks and potential criminal offences associated with "live streaming or vlogging while driving."

Misconduct can result in a range of actions, including a written warning, a temporary licence suspension, or a full revocation. The final decision is based on the specific circumstances of each case.

An FoI request for the year ending May 31, 2022, revealed that TfL revoked 2,178 private hire driver licences, though social media misconduct was not listed as a specific category. The most common reasons for revocation during that period included:

Medical reasons (over 1,100 cases)

Dishonesty (407 cases)

Misconduct and abuse towards passengers (32 cases)

TfL's notice indicates that social media abuse will likely be considered under the broader "behavioural" or "complaints" categories when assessing a driver's fitness to hold a licence.

## HARTLEPOOL:

### LICENSING POLICY CHANGES APPROVED

Hartlepool council chiefs have given their unanimous approval to a new taxi licensing policy, introducing significant changes to the borough's hackney carriage and private hire rules. The move comes after a consultation with drivers and residents, despite some drivers appealing for more time to prepare.

A key change is the removal of all vehicle age limits, a shift from the previous requirement that vehicles be

under five years old. Additionally, all licensed vehicles must be Euro 6 compliant by September 1, 2025. This deadline was extended from an initial April 1 date, with an additional year granted for WAVs.

The council's decision was made despite calls from some drivers for another extension. A December petition and several cabbies at the meeting raised concerns about the costs of upgrading vehicles and the impact of Uber's recent licensing in the area.

However, council officers stated that the Euro 6 standard was first introduced into council policy in 2019 but was delayed due to Covid. They argued this provided "the trade with six years to financially plan and implement the changes which the majority of vehicle owners have achieved."

Councillor Carole Thompson echoed this sentiment, stating the council had "put this off on several occasions" and that drivers have "had sufficient time to renew vehicles."

Of the 219 licensed taxis in Hartlepool, only 29 are not yet Euro 6 compliant.

Other policy updates include new rules on insurance write-offs and a requirement for new drivers to pass a council-approved driving assessment upon application, rather than within their first year.

## STIRLING:

### VEHICLE & DRIVER POLICY CONSULTATION

Stirling residents, and the local taxi trade, are being asked for their views on a new Taxi/PHV and Driver Policy. The policy will ensure minimum operating standards of taxi/PHVs and drivers in the interests of public safety and quality of service.

Proposed changes to the policy include:

- Requirements of age and colour of taxi and PHVs
- Requirements relating to CCTV/dashcam equipment
- Medical fitness standards for taxi and PHV drivers
- Certification requirements for taxi drivers
- Requirement of foreign conviction checks for taxi and PHV drivers.

The Council's Planning and Regulation Panel approved the consultation to update the policy on 20 May.

Cllr Neil Benny, Chair of the Council's Planning and Regulation Panel, said: "We will engage constructively with Stirling's taxi trade to help us shape this new policy in addition to the wider public."

The consultation is open until 24 September and can be completed here: <https://shorturl.at/k5j6C>



# WHATSAPP VOICE NOTES

## M2MTAXIBOT'S LATEST INNOVATION FOR OPERATORS

By M2M TaxiBot  
[www.m2mtaxibot.com](http://www.m2mtaxibot.com)



In an age where convenience and speed define customer expectations, taxi companies are constantly seeking smarter ways to streamline their booking processes. Enter M2MTaxiBot - a revolutionary voice automation solution that harnesses the power of voice notes to simplify and enhance customer bookings.

### Latest innovation alert

M2MTaxiBot is proud to announce its newest feature: **Voice Note Bookings**. This cutting-edge addition is part of the company's ongoing commitment to innovation and improving the customer experience. By listening to user needs and evolving the product, M2MTaxiBot continues to lead the way in smart taxi automation.

Instead of navigating apps or waiting on hold, customers can now send a quick voice note to book their ride. M2MTaxiBot listens, understands and responds - turning spoken requests into confirmed bookings with remarkable accuracy and speed.

### Why Voice Notes are the future

Voice notes are fast becoming a preferred communication method. They're natural, quick, and ideal for people on the go. With M2MTaxiBot, taxi companies can tap into this trend to:

- **Speed up the booking process:** customers simply record and send a voice note - no typing, no menus, no delays.
- **Reduce manual workload:** the bot automatically interprets voice messages and processes bookings without human intervention.
- **Minimise errors:** advanced speech recognition ensures accurate capture of pickup locations, times, and preferences.
- **Boost customer satisfaction:** the ease of sending a voice note makes booking a taxi feel effortless and intuitive.

M2MTaxiBot integrates with popular messaging platforms and dispatch systems. When a customer

sends a voice note, the bot uses AI-powered natural language processing to extract key details - such as pickup address, time and destination. It then confirms the booking and dispatches a driver, all within moments.

The system is designed to handle a wide range of accents and speaking styles, making it accessible to diverse customer bases. It can also respond with voice or text confirmations, keeping the interaction smooth and user-friendly.

### Real-world benefits

Taxi operators using M2MTaxiBot have seen dramatic improvements in efficiency and customer engagement. One fleet reported a 30% increase in completed bookings and a 50% reduction in manual input errors after switching to voice note automation. Customers love the simplicity - especially those who find typing inconvenient or prefer speaking naturally.

### Scalable and secure

M2MTaxiBot is built for scalability. Whether you're managing a handful of vehicles or a large fleet, the system adapts to your needs. It also prioritises data privacy, ensuring all voice notes are processed securely and in compliance with industry standards.

### Ready to modernise your booking experience?

Getting started with M2MTaxiBot is easy. The setup is straightforward, and the support team is ready to help you customise the system to suit your operations.

Whether you're looking to reduce costs, improve accuracy, or simply offer a more modern booking experience, voice note automation is the way forward.

With voice note bookings, you're not just keeping up with demand - you're staying ahead of it. It's time to make taxi bookings as simple, smart, and effortless as sending a message.

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## GETT ACQUIRED BY ISRAELI CONSORTIUM FOR \$188 MILLION

A consortium of Israeli institutional financial investors has announced the acquisition of Gett from its current shareholders VNV, Access Industries and MCI Capital for \$188 million. The new owners group consists of some of the largest and most experienced institutional investors in Israel with proven track record of investing in and fostering companies.

The new shareholders have expressed their interest in retaining Gett's wider global teams and supporting the company in the long-term development of its strategy as a leading mobility platform in Israel and abroad.

A representative of the new owners said: "We are excited to join forces with Gett. This acquisition reflects our confidence in the company's innovative technology, growth potential and talented employees and management team. Together, we aim to expand services, deliver exceptional value for drivers and customers, and seize opportunities in the rapidly transforming transportation industry"

Per Brilioth, CEO of VNV, said: "We are proud to have supported Gett's transformation and expansion. As the company transitions to a new era, we are confident it will build

on its strong foundations and play a defining role in the future of mobility. Thank you to everyone at Gett: you have been amazing! It has been great to work with you all, good luck with everything and see you down the road!"

Matteo de Renzi, CEO of Gett, added: "We are delighted to begin this exciting new chapter for Gett alongside our new shareholders.

"As we look ahead, we remain confident in our strong operational foundation, cutting-edge technology advancements, and the exceptional talent across our organisation - all of which will power the next phase of growth"

## CRESTA CARS BOSS VOWS TO OPEN FLINT OFFICE DESPITE VANDALISM AND THREATS

The director of a growing North Wales taxi firm says he will not be intimidated after a series of attacks and threats targeted a new office in Flint. Xristos Tsorvas, one of the three directors of Cresta Cars, revealed that the company's new office on Chester Street was vandalised with smashed windows and white paint.

In addition, Tsorvas, who is originally from Athens, Greece, has received threatening messages, including warnings to "go back to my own country" and that the office would be set on fire.

"You'd be shocked if you saw the messages I've been sent," Tsorvas said. "They threatened my life...This is not normal in 2025." He described the attacks, which he



said were carried out by people in balaclavas, as "gangster behaviour" and "really sad."

Cresta Cars, which launched in Mold in 2019, has expanded rapidly, now operating a fleet of 160 vehicles with offices in Mold, Buckley, Connah's Quay, Broughton, and Chester. The planned Flint office would be its sixth location.

Following the initial attacks, Cresta Cars was asked to leave the

Chester Street premises. Tsorvas has since secured a new location in the town and plans to open for business in September, with increased security measures.

Despite the intimidation, Tsorvas remains resolute. "I am not stopping - I will open an office in Flint," he insisted. "I am not scared, I am more determined now. This behaviour is not right and it will not deter us from operating."

He added that he cannot stop the business because 280 people, including drivers and office staff, "rely on the business."

North Wales Police confirmed it's investigating reports of criminal damage and harassment related to the incidents, which occurred between August 4 and August 8.



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## CABBIE IN **RANGERS** SHIRT DENIED TAXI LICENCE RENEWAL AFTER ZIG ZAG STOP

A taxi driver who wore a Rangers football strip and stopped on zig-zag lines has been refused a licence renewal after he failed to appear at a North Ayrshire Licensing Committee meeting to explain his actions.

Gareth Wilkinson had applied for renewal of his taxi driver's licence and PHV licence, but his application was rejected unanimously.

Police Scotland told the committee that on September 2, 2024, officers found Mr. Wilkinson's taxi stopped on zig-zag lines while he was "sounding his horn". When approached, he did not have insurance for the vehicle, which was then removed. At the time of the incident, Mr. Wilkinson was "dressed in a Rangers strip" and not wearing his taxi driver's ID.

Cllr Cameron Inglis stated that the driver's behaviour was "well out of the law and also our own policy," adding that the wearing of a football top was what "annoyed me most." The committee noted that Mr. Wilkinson had been given two opportunities to attend but chose not to.

A motion to refuse both licences was passed unanimously.

## DRIVER WHO PERFORMED SEX ACT IN PUBLIC DENIED LICENCE BY **STOCKTON** BOROUGH COUNCIL

A man who had his PH licence revoked in Middlesbrough after a hospital worker reported seeing him perform a sex act has been denied a licence by Stockton BC.

The driver claimed he was suffering from a medical condition that caused "uncontrollable itching," but his explanation was rejected by both councils.

In an interview with council

officers, the driver claimed he had a medical condition that caused "bobbles on his penis" and discomfort when sitting. But he could not provide evidence of a diagnosis.

The driver had applied for a new licence with Stockton council without declaring the 2024 revocation of his Middlesbrough licence. The licensing committee

"felt very strongly" that whether the driver was performing a sex act or itching, his behaviour was "completely unacceptable and wholly inappropriate."

They were concerned about his "lack of insight" and "lack of remorse," and found that the applicant was not a "fit and proper person to hold a private hire vehicle driver licence."

## **STOCKTON** MAN REFUSED PRIVATE HIRE LICENCE FOR CAUSING DEATH BY DANGEROUS DRIVING

A Stockton businessman who served a four-year prison sentence for causing the death of another motorist by dangerous driving has been denied a private hire licence. The man, who killed another driver in a head-on collision in 2013, was found guilty by a jury in 2015 after a trial and had applied for the licence from Stockton BC.

According to council minutes, he "now accepted that the collision

was his fault."

He told councillors that the crash "was not an intentional collision" and that if the victim had not died, he would not have gone to prison. The applicant regained his driving licence in April 2019 after taking an extended driving test.

The man told the committee he wanted to become a PH driver to provide for his family and described himself as a "confident

driver" who was "fit" and "healthy." However, the council's general licensing committee unanimously refused the application, stating that they did not believe he was a "fit and proper person" to hold a PHV driver's licence.

The committee found no "exceptional circumstances" to deviate from their policy of refusing a licence to someone with such a conviction.

# FIT AND PROPER

## LONDON PRIVATE HIRE DRIVER TO PAY OVER £2,000 FOR ILLEGAL READING FESTIVAL PICK UP

A London-licensed private hire driver, Abdul Mashud from Tower Hamlets, has been fined and received six points on his licence for illegally "plying for hire" during last year's Reading Festival. Mashud was caught after he agreed to take undercover

Reading Council licensing officers to Slough Train Station for an inflated fare of £120. This was done without a pre-booking which voids the vehicle's insurance.

On August 5, 2025, at Reading Magistrates' court, Mashud was found guilty of both plying for hire

and using a motor vehicle without insurance.

He was fined £399, ordered to pay a £160 surcharge, and an additional £1,500 in costs, bringing his total to £2,059. His licence was also endorsed with six penalty points.

## STRATFORD TAXI DRIVER SUSPENDED FOR FAILING TO REPORT CONVICTIONS

A taxi driver licensed by Stratford-on-Avon DC has been suspended for 12 weeks by the council's licensing panel on 23 July 2025, for failing to report three driving convictions to the local authority. The 65-year-old driver had failed to inform the licensing authority of these convictions, which totalled nine penalty points on his licence.

The points were only revealed as part of his application to renew his Dual Driver's licence and had been incurred between the period of April 2023 to March 2025.

The council's licensing policy states that 'the proprietor of a licensed vehicle should notify the council in writing of any conviction or caution recorded against him or

of any penalty points incurred within 7 days of such a conviction being imposed.'

The driver was also requested to provide a DVLA share code to the licensing department every 3 months for the duration of the next 18 months, so that his driving licence can be checked for penalty points that may have accrued.

## READING PH OPERATOR FINED AFTER ADVERTISING UNINSURED AIRPORT TAXI TRANSFERS ON FACEBOOK

An unlicensed PH operator has been ordered to pay more than £1,400 after he was found to be running an illegal airport transfer service in Reading.

In September 2024, Reading Council licensing officers were made aware of a post on Facebook for 'easy airport transfers from Reading', by an account in the name of Samuel Szymczyk, offering chauffeur-driven rides to all major London airports. However, there was no record of Mr Szymczyk being licensed by the council to run a private hire firm.

An officer, acting as a member of the public, booked a journey with Mr Szymczyk to Gatwick Airport in January, for an agreed price of £75. A driver that Mr Szymczyk had arranged arrived at the pick-up point. They did not hold a PH driver's licence and the vehicle was not licensed for PH work.

At Reading Magistrates' court on 8 August, Mr Szymczyk admitted operating a PHV without an operator's licence and causing the use of an uninsured motor vehicle. For the first offence magistrates imposed a fine of £400. For the

second, Mr Szymczyk was fined £120 and given six penalty points on his driving licence. He had to pay a victim surcharge of £208, plus £690 towards the prosecution costs, bringing the total he was ordered to pay to £1,418.

Lead Councillor for Transport, John Ennis said: "The serious risks posed by unlicensed transport services and the deliberate deception used to promote them will not be tolerated in Reading. Unlicensed drivers are also able to undercut legitimate businesses, which work hard and within the rules."

# SHAME SHAME

## SCOTTISH PAEDOPHILE CABBIE CAUGHT IN POLICE STING AFTER SICK MESSAGES TO DECOY

A taxi driver from Lanarkshire, Scotland, has been placed on the sex offenders' register after being caught in an undercover police sting.

Aaron Burnicle, 36, was snared in a cross-border investigation after he sent explicit messages and images to what he believed was a 13-year-old girl on the messaging app Kik. The "girl," however, was a specially trained undercover police officer. Information from the chats, which took place between December 2023 and January 2024, was

handed over to Police Scotland. Following his arrest, Burnicle, a father of one, contracted to convey primary school age children to school with a chaperone, wept and claimed, "I would never touch a wean." Burnicle admitted to indecent communications with a child.



The court heard that a search of his phone revealed the Kik chat and images he had sent.

Depute fiscal Rosemary O'Neill noted that data from his IP address showed he had been on the Kik app more than 2,900 times in less than a month.

Burnicle's defence lawyer, Eddie Robertson, stated that there were "issues with drink and cocaine."

Sheriff Liam Murphy has deferred sentencing for reports, warning Burnicle: "You have pleaded guilty to a very serious offence."

## LIVERPOOL CABBIE JAILED FOR 12 YEARS AFTER ENCROCHAT MESSAGES EXPOSED DRUG DEALING

A Liverpool drug dealer and taxi driver has been jailed for 12 years after a slew of incriminating Encrochat messages, including a photo of his own driveway, led to his arrest.

Rudi Caldwell, 37, from Woolton, was arrested at his home in April 2025 as part of Operation Venetic, a widespread international effort targeting criminals who used the encrypted Encrochat platform to evade police.

On Friday, August 1, Caldwell appeared at Liverpool Crown Court and pleaded guilty to conspiring to supply Class A drugs (cocaine and heroin) and a Class B drug (cannabis).

Caldwell, who used the Encrochat handle 'box-bat', was caught out after detectives uncovered messages that identified him as a leading figure in the supply of large quantities of drugs. In his

messages, he gave up personal details, including the name of one of his children, and sent a picture of his own CCTV system showing his front driveway.

He also discussed trading his licensed taxi vehicles.

Det Insp James Boardman said: "Through our investigation, we were able to identify Caldwell as being the person behind the 'box-bat' handle after he used the device and disclosed personal details."

Between March and June 2020, Caldwell was linked to supplying 16kg of cocaine, 2kg of heroin, and 14kg of cannabis. Messages showed him working closely with an associate named "BondBat" to source and supply kilogram amounts of drugs.



The court heard that Caldwell even plotted to build an underground drug factory and planned to buy a house with a greenhouse specifically to grow cannabis. He also spoke of attacking a rival dealer and his partner to steal their stock.

When officers arrested Caldwell, they seized two Rolex watches from his home. He has nine previous convictions for 13 offences, including possession of drugs.

Caldwell, appearing via video link from HMP Liverpool, showed no reaction as he was sentenced.

Detective Inspector Boardman said of the case: "Caldwell is just the latest person to be brought to justice for their involvement in the wide scale peddling of drugs on the streets of Merseyside," adding that the work to target other criminals would continue



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## WINNING OVER THE NEXT GENERATION OF TAXI CUSTOMERS

Article by Phil Holloway  
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September marks a pivotal moment for taxi operators across the UK. As schools and colleges return, a new wave of 16–18 year-old students are stepping into independence at college, and 18–24 year olds at University. For many, this will be the first time they're booking taxis themselves, without parents involved. Shortly after, thousands of university students will descend on towns and cities for Freshers' Week, exploring their new surroundings and figuring out who to trust when it comes to getting from A to B.

For local taxi companies, this presents a massive opportunity - but also a serious challenge. Most of these young people will already have heard of (and downloaded) global ride-hailing apps. These brands are familiar, convenient, and well-marketed. If you want to win their business, you must stand out in ways that feel relevant to their lifestyle.

**So, what do young customers actually want from a taxi company?**

### 1. Trust and safety

Students, particularly first-time users, need reassurance. They want to know your drivers are professional, your cars are licensed, and your service is reliable. Make safety a cornerstone of your marketing. Clear messaging around licensed drivers, 24/7 customer support, and app features, such as driver tracking, builds confidence.

### 2. Digital first

This generation lives on their phones. If you don't already have an app, now is the time to invest in one. If you do, your priority is to get downloads. Promote it heavily on social media, and make sure the experience is seamless - from booking to payment to notifications.

### 3. Student-friendly branding

Global ride-hailing brands are sleek and corporate. You can compete by being local, friendly and approachable.



Show your face in the community: sponsor student events, partner with colleges, or offer discounts to student societies. Your brand should feel like it belongs in their town, not a faceless app from elsewhere.

### 4. Promotions that matter

Students are price-sensitive but also love a good deal. Simple, clever promotions can tip the balance. Ideas include:

- "Download our app and get your first ride half price."
- "Refer a friend and both get £5 off."
- "Freshers' Week offer: £10 credit when you sign up."

These short-term incentives are often the nudge needed to try a local service instead of sticking with what's familiar.

### 5. Be visible where they are

In September, your audience is everywhere - on TikTok, Instagram, at student union fairs, and outside bars and clubs. Smart taxi firms will create tailored content for these platforms, hand out flyers with QR codes linking directly to their app, and put their name in front of students the moment they arrive.

The truth is simple: if your company doesn't make itself known early, students will default to the apps they already have. But with clever marketing, strong branding, and targeted offers, you can become the trusted, go-to taxi service for a whole new generation of customers.

Don't wait until October to start. September is your window of opportunity - make sure your business seizes it.



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## WITNEY MAN GIVEN COMMUNITY ORDER FOR VIOLENT ATTACK

A Witney man has received a community order after threatening a private hire driver and damaging his vehicle last year. Szabolcs Pap, 39, was sentenced at Oxford Crown Court on August 15 for a series of offences that occurred on October 22, 2024, in Littlemore.

According to court records, Pap threatened PH driver Waqas Ahmed with a knife and caused damage to his Royal Cars taxi.

He was also charged with damaging a traffic bollard and using threatening behaviour towards another individual, Osman Asif, during the same incident.

The court record stated that Pap used "abusive or insulting words or behaviour with intent to cause that person to believe that immediate unlawful violence would be used against him by any person, or to provoke the

immediate use of unlawful violence by him whereby that person was likely to believe that such violence would be used, or it was likely that such violence would be provoked."

Despite the charges, Pap avoided a custodial sentence.

He was instead given a 12-month community order and he has been ordered to complete 50 hours of unpaid work within that period.

## THUG JAILED AFTER VICIOUS ATTACK ON TAXI DRIVER IN WEDNESBURY OVER CRASH PHOTO

A man has been sentenced to 34 months in prison after a violent assault on a taxi driver who simply tried to take a photograph following a minor collision.

Kyle Henry, 32, punched Miah Muktar so hard he collapsed to the ground "like a sack of potatoes," leaving him with what the court called "permanent and it seems irreversible injuries."

The attack occurred on August 8, 2023, in Wednesbury, after a van clipped Mr. Muktar's taxi. When the van failed to stop, the taxi driver pulled in front of it to take a picture of its licence plate.

Henry, a passenger in the van, "took exception" and "marched" up to Mr. Muktar. He then struck the victim in the face with both hands, using "significant force."

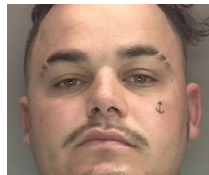
A witness at the scene told Wolverhampton Crown Court, "I genuinely believed he was going

to pass away," as Mr. Muktar lay on the ground "bubbling with blood."

The court heard how Henry showed "absolutely no concern for his welfare" and returned to the van after the assault.

Mr. Muktar was rushed to Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham with a fractured skull, a broken nose, a swollen left eye and a fractured ear drum. He "cannot remember anything" from the attack and his wife has become his full-time carer.

In a statement, his wife described the trauma, saying: "I remember the surgeon told me there was a chance he would not make it." She added: "My whole family's life has changed because of this."



During the sentencing on Tuesday, August 5, District Judge Grego described the assault as "unprovoked violence," stating Henry was "no stranger to the use of violence when you deem it relevant."

Henry, has 12 previous convictions for 17 offences, including three for common assault, assault occasioning actual bodily harm, affray, breach of suspended sentence and robbery. He pleaded guilty to inflicting grievous bodily harm.

His defence claimed the attack was "impulsive," and that he "regrets his actions" and is "devastated" by the victim's injuries.

However, the judge dismissed this, saying it was not an instance of "self-defence that went too far." Henry was also ordered to pay a £184 victim surcharge.



# JUST DESERTS

## NORTH TYNESIDE WOMAN GUILTY OF RACIALLY ABUSING TAXI DRIVER

A North Tyneside woman has been found guilty of a racially aggravated assault on a taxi driver following a dispute over a fare.

Paige Harvey, 30, was accused of spitting on the driver, pushing him, and using “horrible, racist language” after a night out in Newcastle.

The incident occurred on May 27, 2022, after Harvey and her mother got into a taxi.

According to the court, Harvey disputed the £40 fare, arguing it should be closer to £22. The disagreement quickly escalated, with Harvey becoming “aggressive,” spitting on the driver, pushing his shoulder, and calling him a “f\*\*\*ing Chinese.”

When police arrived, they witnessed Harvey kicking the driver. An officer told the court that she continued to be abusive and use racist slurs even after she was arrested.

Miss Harvey, who had been drinking for several hours, told the court she had no recollection of using such language, in the taxi or on the way to the police station. Emily Sanderson, prosecuting, said: “The defendant suggested that the complainant has made all this up.”

The victim, who has been a taxi driver since 2008, testified: “It was awful, I was scared. When people talk like this, it’s absolutely disgusting.”

“I have been driving taxis for a long time, I have got experience, I know how to deal with customers but unfortunately she was being very aggressive.”

He added that while he has dealt with similar situations, he has “not [had] someone who has spat or been aggressive like that.”

Harvey, pleaded not guilty to the charge, however, magistrates found the evidence from the victim and the arresting officer to be “consistent and credible,” while ruling Harvey’s testimony was not. Harvey, who has two previous convictions, was released on unconditional bail and will be sentenced at Newcastle Magistrates’ Court on October 3.

## ARCHITECT STRUCK OFF REGISTER AFTER RACIST ATTACK ON TAXI DRIVER IN MACCLESFIELD

An architect who had just celebrated qualifying for his profession has been struck off the register after a “moment of madness” where he racially abused and assaulted a taxi driver. A disciplinary hearing was told that Thomas Ford stole the driver’s car after the attack and crashed it into a fence.

The Architects Registration Board (ARB) Professional Conduct Committee decided to remove Ford from the register, stating the public would be “rightly appalled” by his actions.

The incident occurred in November 2022 after Ford had

been celebrating his new qualification with colleagues.

After his colleagues were dropped off, Ford was left alone with the driver. According to the hearing, he became “irate” after asking the driver where he was from and learning he was from Pakistan. Ford then hurled a racial slur, asking him to “go back where you came from,” before punching the driver and forcing him from the car.

Ford then stole the taxi, a Toyota Prius, and later crashed it “beyond repair” in a residential garden.

Police found him hiding nearby and arrested him for driving over

the legal alcohol limit. He later pleaded guilty to four charges, including racially aggravated harassment and assault, and was given an 18-week suspended prison sentence.

The committee acknowledged it was a “personal tragedy” that Ford was being struck off so soon after his hard work.

The panel concluded: “He is unable to explain why, when drunk, he would resort to racial slurs in order to insult. The conduct that led to the convictions is fundamentally incompatible with continuing to be an architect.”

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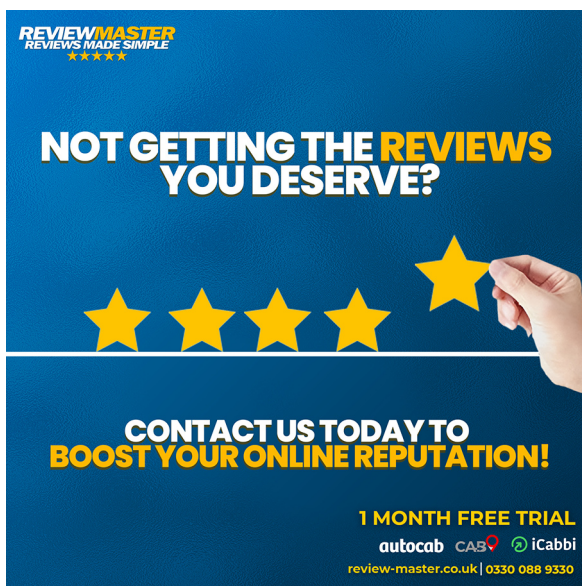
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## THREE ARRESTED IN RACIALLY AGGRAVATED ATTACK ON SIKH **WOLVERHAMPTON** TAXI DRIVERS

Three men have been arrested after two elderly Sikh taxi drivers were violently assaulted in a racially motivated attack outside Wolverhampton railway station on Friday 15 August.

The incident, which occurred around 1:45pm, left both men injured and “traumatised,” according to the Sikh Federation.

One of the victims, a man in his 70s, was reportedly kicked and punched, resulting in several broken ribs. The second driver, in his 60s, was also allegedly punched repeatedly.

Both men were taken to the hospital for treatment and have since been discharged.

The Sikh Federation said the drivers, who have lived and worked in the UK for over 30 years, had “never experienced such a violent



and scary attack.” Jas Singh, a principal advisor for the organisation, said: “These two elderly men have been left seriously injured and traumatised by this attack.”

According to the federation, the attack began when three men emerged from the station demanding a ride to Oldbury. When the drivers explained the need to use the official taxi rank system, the men became “increasingly

aggressive and abusive” before turning to physical violence.

Disturbing footage of the assault has circulated widely online, showing one of the victims on the ground with his turban removed. This act was condemned by Sikh political leaders who called the removal of the turban a grave violation of the community’s religious identity.

British Transport Police (BTP) confirmed they were called to a “racially aggravated assault” and have arrested three teenage boys in connection with the incident.

A BTP spokesperson said they “will not tolerate this sort of behaviour on the railway network” and have launched a “full investigation.”

The three suspects, aged 17, 19, and 25, have been released on bail as the investigation continues.

## **COUNTY DURHAM** MAN JAILED FOR DISGRACEFUL ATTACK ON PARTNER IN MOVING TAXI

A County Durham man has been jailed for 18 months after a “disgraceful” attack on his partner in the back of a moving taxi.

Cory Lavery, 30, attacked the woman during an argument, leaving her with a bloodied nose and bruises.

The court heard that on March 14, a taxi driver picked up Lavery and the victim, who both appeared intoxicated. The couple began arguing during the journey, and the driver’s attempts to calm them down were unsuccessful.

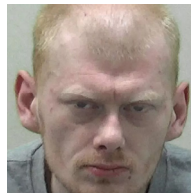
Lavery then punched the woman “two or three times and grabbed

her neck,” according to the court. Unable to stop the car, the driver

contacted his firm to alert the police.

When officers arrived at their destination, they found the victim “had a bloodied nose, several bruises and was upset.”

Judge Carolyn Scott condemned Lavery’s actions, telling him: “Your behaviour that evening was disgraceful. Not only was it an assault on your partner, it must



have also had a significant effect on the taxi driver.”

The judge highlighted the victim’s vulnerability, stating: “There was no opportunity for her to escape from you in that moving taxi. It was a prolonged attack and you had your hands around her throat.”

The victim was quoted as saying: “Please help me because he is going to kill me.”

Lavery, of Bishop Auckland, pleaded guilty to assault occasioning ABH. Lavery, who has 32 previous convictions, was on a community order for shoplifting at the time of the assault.



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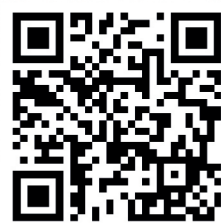
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# ALL THINGS LICENSING

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

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

## ANOTHER MONTH AND ANOTHER HOT TOPIC

Off the back of discussing the Casey Report in July and the call for evidence into licensing and standards in the taxi and private hire vehicles sectors and consultation on self-driving vehicles in August's editions of **PHTM**, at the end of July the Supreme Court handed down the important judgement in **D.E.L.T.A. Merseyside Limited and another v Uber Britannia Limited (UBL)**.

**In doing so, the Supreme Court has upheld the right of operators, drivers and passengers to contract as they wish for the provision of private hire services.**

There could have been a number of implications around contract law, operating models, licensing checks and crucially VAT as a result of this judgement, however the take home message following the ruling is that the status quo is maintained.

### Reminder – what was the case about?

The background was that since long before the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, there were several different contracting models.

These included:

- operators contracting as principal with passengers;
- operators contracting as agent for drivers;
- operators running an intermediary service, finding drivers with whom passengers contract;
- operators sub-contracting to other operators.

From 1976, the regulation of the PHV trade by local councils was introduced for the first time and all these

models continued more or less without question until app-based private hire services came along.

App-based private hire companies, and particularly Uber, have been very successful in changing the market with this success leading to a number of challenges, particularly around workers rights which succeeded in the Employment Tribunal.

In the further case of **Uber London Ltd v Transport for London & others [2021] EWHC 3290 (Admin)**, the Divisional Court ruled that in order to operate lawfully under the Private Hire Vehicles (London) Act 1998 (the legislation governing private hire in London) a licensed operator who accepts a booking from a passenger is required to enter as **principal** into a contractual obligation with the passenger to provide the journey which is the subject of the booking.

This case was part of a series of litigation which required the operator concerned to change its business model to contract directly with passengers rather than classifying itself as an agent. This has helped confirm the operator's driver status as workers with statutory protections and has also had VAT implications.

This has had implications for all London-based operators in respect of their operating model and being placed under an obligation for the operator to enter into a contract with the passenger as principal, where a passenger makes a booking, and their responsibilities under that contractual relationship.

Following the above, Uber decided to change its model nationwide, and not just in London, and in order to level the competitive playing field nationally, Uber sought a declaration at the High Court to the one imposed on it for London to cover the rest of England and Wales where operators are governed by the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. This was opposed by the Veezu Group, Delta Merseyside and a coalition of operators represented by these.

Initially in July 2023 the High Court ruled in Uber's favour but was rejected by the Court of Appeal. Uber then took the case to the Supreme Court, which has now ruled unanimously and conclusively that: **operators remain free to contract, or indeed not to contract, as they wish.**

# ALL THINGS LICENSING



contracting principles in section 55A, introduced by the Deregulation Act 2015, demonstrated Parliament's intention to restrict freedom of contract under the 1976 Act. None of these arguments swayed the

## What does the judgement say?

IoL Patron, Philip Kolvin KC, representing DELTA a Merseyside-based operator, has written that the court accepted argument on behalf of the Respondents, DELTA and Veezu, an increasingly growing national operator who put forward the argument that the only provision which could conceivably impose an obligation on the operator to contract as principal at the point of booking was section 56(1).

However, section 56(1) is to the precise opposite effect, since it provides that, whatever the contracting model adopted, the hirer's contract will be deemed to be with the operator who accepted the booking.

As Lord Briggs poignantly observed:

*"The one scenario where the deeming provision in section 56(1) has no role to fulfil is where the first operator actually does accept the booking by making a contract of hire with the applicant, as principal rather than as agent. Then the first operator is liable to fulfil the hire contract at common law, and the assumed statutory purpose of making the first operator liable for the fulfilment of the hire needs no statutory backing at all. And it would make no difference to the first operator's common law liability to fulfil the hire that it had sub-contracted the hire to be performed by a second operator. Yet that is precisely the hire contract model which UBL submit is actually mandated by the 1976 Act as the only permissible way for the operator to accept the booking."*

**Put shortly, UBL's construction would render section 56(1) completely pointless.**

Uber raised a series of other arguments, including that the 1976 Act was to be read in the same way as the later London legislation, that guidance as to construction was afforded by a 1970 departmental paper regarding London, and that the sub-

Supreme Court, whose conclusions were succinctly put:

- (i) There is nothing expressly provided in the 1976 Act which can be interpreted as imposing, or even supporting, the prohibition for which UBL contends.
- (ii) "Accepting a booking" does not, in context, mean only by contracting as principal to perform the hire.
- (iii) There is nothing in the Act or in its purposes from which such a prohibition could be implied, and the Act plainly seeks to achieve public safety by other means through licensing.
- (iv) The only provision in the Act which does impose contractual consequences, section 56(1), is wholly damaging to UBL's construction, and would be pointless if UBL were correct.

## What does this judgement mean?

For licensing authorities, operators and importantly passengers, the judgement means that nothing needs to change. Operators are free to contract with passengers as they wish under the many different models which have existed since before private hire services came under regulation.

Had the judgment gone the other way, it would have posed a significant threat to the provincial private hire industry, not least because of potential VAT implications of requiring the operator to contract, with the potential of uplifts in fares for passengers.

The judgment as delivered preserves the legal and practical ability of operators to run their service as they have always done, including by providing an alternative to the app-based private hire model now operated by Uber, an important consideration given that not all passengers have the ability to access private hire services digitally.



# ALL THINGS LICENSING



section 62 which allows action against a licence in the event of non-compliance with the requirements of the 1976 Act (such as conditions relating to honouring bookings) for 'any other reasonable cause'.

## What does the judgment mean for Licensing?

Certainly many licensing authorities have been keeping an eye on the judgment as had there been a requirement to have a contact in place between operator and passenger / operator and driver then it is likely that there would have been significant arbitration required by the local authority between all parties in the event of a dispute, such as a vehicle not arriving for a booking or a driver not being paid for a job.

There has been some concern that the lack of a contract required will mean less protections for passengers and how might this be resolved.

We need to remember that the 1976 Act was introduced to regulate the private hire service for reasons of public protection, and these principles still apply. Section 55(1)(a) obliges the council to ensure that the operator is a 'fit and proper person' and s.55(3) allows necessary conditions to be attached to a licence.

We also need to remember that section 56, as set out in the judgement above, means that whatever the contracting model used, the hirer's contract will be deemed to be with the operator who accepted the booking providing a degree of implied protection.

Many authorities already condition operator licences to the effect that when a booking is made that a vehicle should arrive at the appointed time and place as obliged and therefore these requirements have been providing passengers with protections for some time.

Operators who do not fulfil bookings are firstly, likely to get an adverse reputation which may impact future business, but also may be subject to licensing sanctions. It's arguable that an operator who continually lets passengers down cannot be considered to be 'fit and proper' and will likely have a licence suspended or revoked under the provisions of

## What happens now about VAT?

The position now outside London is that whatever model operators use will not need to change and I am sure the VAT implications will be explored in this edition of **PHTM** by others who are far more knowledgeable on taxation than I. (See pages 6-7)

What happens going forward is likely to be of interest as HMRC last year consulted on the VAT treatment of private hire vehicles, and now that this judgement has been settled definitively, it is entirely conceivable that we will see the results of this consultation with some further direction.

## To conclude

It will be really interesting to see how this judgement plays out with a distinct difference in contractual requirements and VAT between London based operators and those governed by the 1976 Act.

However, for those licensing authorities and operators involved with the regime, we can carry on as we are, knowing that there are existing legislative provisions which allow some protections for passengers.

## An important reminder!

Finally, if you have not already done so, it is VITAL that you respond to the current inquiry into the Licensing of Taxi and Private Hire Vehicles. Details were discussed in August's edition with the consultation online accepting submissions until the **8 September**: <https://shorturl.at/FD4a4>

The Institute of Licensing also has an upcoming Taxi Conference taking place online on 21 October, where these topical issues will be discussed in detail and members of the trade will be provided with a unique insight, so keep in the know and come along.

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## Chichester problems – update

My policy is that where I moan and complain I should always give praise where praise is due. So, having had a moan last month directed at Chichester licensing for not having any licensing enforcement officers checking up on their huge number of drivers/PHVs that predominantly work in Brighton, I am delighted to now give them praise.

After a series of reports against Chichester drivers for parking on, stopping on, teetering on our taxi ranks having been sent to Chichester licensing, we were assured that an email would be sent out to all their drivers. It was quite a good email too:

*“Dear Licensed Driver,*

*Due to a recent number of private hire drivers / vehicles using taxi ranks, it is necessary to remind you of the following:*

*Taxi ranks are exclusively for hackney carriage vehicles; under no circumstances may private hire vehicles stop, park, nor drop-off at a taxi rank;*

*It is illegal for any vehicle which is not a hackney carriage of the local licensing authority to stop, park or drop-off at its taxi ranks, and anyone doing so may be subject to enforcement action by that local licensing authority.*

*Instances of Chichester private hire drivers/vehicles using the taxi ranks are frequently reported to this licensing authority, and are causing the taxi ranks' local licensing authorities additional work: Take note that any incidences reported to this licensing authority are recorded against the individual concerned and may be used in any determination of them being 'Fit and Proper' to hold licences.*

*Regards Licensing Team”*

However, whilst that was an excellent warning, unfortunately it has not stopped persistent Chichester PHV drivers from carrying on regardless. So, another batch of complaints had to be sent. I have also suggested that as 99% the Chichester drivers / PHVs working in the city here are controlled by Uber

Chichester then the question should be raised about the company being 'Fit and Proper' to be a licensed operator.

I am looking to ask various other LAs that have their PHVs predominantly working here to send a similar email to their drivers.

## Bus lanes

Next door to Brighton in Peacehaven on the coast road, cameras were recently installed by East Sussex County Council in the bus lane with signage stating: 'Taxi'. If a taxi or PHV uses the lane an automatic fine is sent. If proof that vehicle is licensed is supplied then the fine is cancelled and the vehicle is added to an 'Approved' list.

I contacted ESCC and informed them that currently the signage only allows hackney carriages, and not PHVs as the signs state 'Taxi' and that a taxi is a hackney carriage and not a PHV and I provided the following information:

### Traffic Signs Manual -2019 Department of Transport Chapter 3 – Section 9 – 9.1.2

*“This section defines bus lanes and gates using prescribed traffic signs, primarily for buses, cyclists, taxis, and solo motorcycles. If certain vehicles like private hire vehicles are also permitted, it's indicated by “authorised vehicles” on the sign. For other vehicles, such as heavy goods vehicles, authorisation from the national authority is required. Working drawings for non-prescribed signs, including those for bus lanes allowing heavy goods vehicles and high occupancy vehicle lanes, can be requested from the Department.*

### Bus Lanes:

These lanes are often reserved for buses, and may also include cyclists, taxis and solo motorcycles, as indicated by the signs.

### Authorised Vehicles:

If a sign indicates “**Authorised Vehicles,**” it means that in addition to the primary vehicles, other specific types of vehicles, like **private hire vehicles**, are also permitted to use the lane.”

I informed them that if they wanted to allow PHVs to also use the bus lanes then the signage must be changed to include the wording “**Authorised Vehicles**” as stipulated by the DfT.





# Brighton & Hove Cab Trade View

I used London as the prime example where only 'taxis' are allowed to use bus lanes and this means all hackney carriages from anywhere, as my Brighton & Hove saloon hackney has used London bus lanes a few times with no problems, as well as saloon hackneys belonging to colleagues. Where there has been a PCN issued to a B&H hackney, this is cancelled when proof is submitted that it is a hackney carriage.

I also reminded ESCC that 'taxis' being hackneys can drop-off and set-down on bus stops, but not PHVs as further evidence of what a 'taxi' is.

ESCC initially politely resisted; but after further communication from me insisting that ESCC was wrong, I received an email effectively conceding that I was right and that all the signs along the coast road will be changed to include 'Authorised Vehicles'. and, again, praise to ESCC.

So, if your council allows PHVs to use bus lanes and only has the word 'Taxi' on it, then the council needs to change those signs. It is absolutely irrelevant if PHVs are generically/locally referred to as taxis as they are not hackney carriages, period.

And maybe...just maybe... whilst all 'taxis' can use bus lanes where indicated, also push your council to only allow locally licensed PHVs to be able to use bus lanes in an effort to curb out-of-town PHVs predominantly out of area working POAW, which is something I am currently working on here.

## English language test

Brighton and Hove has the requirement for a new taxi/PH driver licence applicant to take an English Language test, just like a lot of other areas. At Streamline here we had a Chichester driver making an enquiry about doing the Streamline knowledge test to become locally licensed, and good for him too.

He was advised by B&H licensing to use the online 'Practice English Language Test', as is now the standard requirement for all new applicants. He tried a few times but kept coming up with a low score of 40/90. I contacted B&H licensing because as far as I was concerned he was very capable of communicating with me during a telephone call I had with him, even though English was not his first language. I said that I would take the test myself to see what was involved, so got the link, paid the £13 fee, went online and started the test. Maybe try the practice test yourself [tiny.cc/english-test](http://tiny.cc/english-test)

I was greeted with a computerised audio message that was distinctively robotic 'Americaneese' and was directed through various tasks of reading and repeating paragraphs, plus what I thought was actually more of a memory test on the last three questions.

Having finished the test I eagerly waited for the results and got an average score of **55/90**. Well, that was very disappointing.

The comments on my test were:

**"Fluency:** GSE: 41/90 Versant: 45/80 CEFR: A2 Tips to improve:

*Candidate speaks with uneven or staccato pacing, although speech may contain some smooth phrases. Frequent obvious pauses result in an irregular speech rate and some disconnected phrases.*

*Join a conversation group and practice speaking on topics such as work and hobbies. Focus on speaking fluently rather than accurately. Practice giving descriptions of your friends and family without pausing or using fillers."*

**Cheek!** My natural speaking voice when I am facing questions is to pause and not gabble... learnt that from my old amateur dramatics days... but this was not recognised.

**"Pronunciation:** GSE: 38/90 Versant: 43/80 CEFR: A2+

*Candidate consistently pronounces certain consonants and vowels in a non-native manner. Stress may be placed incorrectly in some words, or stress placement may be ambiguous.*

*Tips to improve: practice reading a newspaper or magazine article aloud, placing stress appropriately throughout. Find a list of minimal pairs in English and practice reading them aloud, noting the different sounds between the words."*

**Double cheek and what a load of tosh!**

I screen recorded the practice test, sent it to licensing and put it to them that the practice test is flawed and needs revising and also asked if any licensing officer has taken the test.

At the time of writing this I have not had a reply.

**I presume wot I rote in thut emale woz in perfic englesh....**



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NATIONAL AVERAGE  
2 MILE  
HACKNEY FARE  
TARIFF ONE  
£7.34

POSITION	TARIFF ONE 2 MILE FARE	
	COUNCIL	
17	MID SUSSEX	£9.00
18	ORKNEY	£9.00
19	READING	£9.00
20	TONBRIDGE & MALLING	£9.00
21	BRENTWOOD	£8.90
22	GLASGOW	£8.90
23	REIGATE & BANSTEAD	£8.90
24	SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE	£8.90
25	STROUD	£8.90
26	UTTLESFORD	£8.90
27	VALE OF WHITE HORSE	£8.90
28	MIDLOTHIAN	£8.80
29	BRIGHTON & HOVE	£8.70
30	RESTORMEL	£8.70
31	SEVENOAKS	£8.70
32	SWINDON	£8.70
33	WOKING	£8.70
34	EAST DEVON	£8.69
35	CAMBRIDGE CITY	£8.60
36	TEST VALLEY	£8.60
37	TUNBRIDGE WELLS	£8.60
38	WEST BERKSHIRE	£8.60
39	BCP	£8.52
40	PENWITH	£8.52
41	ARUN	£ 8.50
42	CLACKMANNAN	£8.50
43	SLOUGH	£8.50
44	COLCHESTER	£8.40
45	EAST LOTHIAN	£8.40
46	EAST SUFFOLK (NORTH)	£8.40
47	EASTLEIGH	£8.40
48	LEEDS	£8.40
49	SOUTHAMPTON	£8.40
50	WATFORD	£8.40
51	DARTFORD	£8.30
52	HUNTINGDONSHIRE	£8.30
53	LINCOLN	£8.30
54	RUNNYMEDE	£8.30
55	SWALE	£8.30
56	TORBAY	£8.30
57	WILTSHIRE	£8.25
58	BASINGSTOKE & DEANE	£8.20
59	BROXBOURNE	£8.20
60	EAST HERTS	£8.20
61	GRAVESHAM	£8.20
62	HART	£8.20
63	MANCHESTER	£8.20
64	NORTH HERTS	£8.20
65	WOKINGHAM	£8.20
66	FOREST OF DEAN	£8.13
67	HASTINGS	£8.10
68	OXFORD CITY	£8.10
69	PLYMOUTH	£8.10
70	MOLE VALLEY	£8.08
71	BRECKLAND	£8.00
72	BUCKINGHAMSHIRE	£8.00
73	CHICHESTER	£8.00
74	COVENTRY	£8.00
75	EAST LINDSEY	£8.00
76	HARLOW	£8.00
77	HORSHAM	£8.00
78	MAIDSTONE	£8.00
79	MEDWAY	£8.00
80	NORTH YORKSHIRE	£8.00
81	NOTTINGHAM	£8.00

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

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

POSITION	TARIFF ONE 2 MILE FARE	
	COUNCIL	
147	SOUTH NORFOLK	£7.50
148	TAMESIDE	£7.50
149	THANET	£7.50
150	BRAINTREE	£7.40
151	CANTERBURY	£7.40
152	EAST HAMPSHIRE	£7.40
153	EAST RENFREW	£7.40
154	LEWES	£7.40
155	LIVERPOOL	£7.40
156	PORTSMOUTH UA	£7.40
157	SOLIHULL	£7.40
158	STAFFORD	£7.40
159	TWICKESBURY	£7.40
160	WEST OXFORD	£7.40
161	NEW FOREST	£7.35
162	NEWARK & SHERWOOD	£7.32
163	BLACKBURN	£7.30
164	DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL	£7.30
165	KINGSTON-UPON-HULL	£7.30
166	NORTH DEVON	£7.30
167	NORTH KESTEVEN	£7.30
168	NORWICH	£7.30
169	SOUTH CAMBRIDGE	£7.30
170	VALE OF GLAMORGAN	£7.30
171	CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE	£7.25
172	MORAY	£7.26
173	TEIGNBRIDGE	£7.26
174	NUNEATON & BEDWORTH	£7.25
175	BASILDON	£7.20
176	CASTLE POINT	£7.20
177	DERBY	£7.20
178	FAREHAM	£7.20
179	HAVANT	£7.20
180	LUTON	£7.20
181	NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE	£7.20
182	NORTH WARWICK	£7.20
183	SUNDERLAND	£7.20
184	SOUTH LAKELAND	£7.20
185	WEST NORTHANTS	£7.20
186	CHESTERFIELD	£7.16
187	TAMWORTH	£7.14
188	ARGYLL & BUTE	£7.13
189	CANNOCK CHASE	£7.10
190	COTSWOLD	£7.10
191	CRAWLEY	£7.10
192	DOVER	£7.10
193	HIGHLAND	£7.10
194	ISLE OF WIGHT	£7.10
195	OLDHAM	£7.10
196	RUGBY	£7.10
197	WINDSOR & MAIDENHEAD	£7.10
198	HARBOROUGH	£7.09
199	ABERDEENSHIRE	£7.06
200	BABERGH	£7.00
201	BROMSGROVE	£7.00
202	CARLISLE	£7.00
203	CARMARTHENSHIRE	£7.00
204	INVERCLYDE	£7.00
205	MACCLESFIELD	£7.00
206	NEWPORT	£7.00
207	PEMBROKESHIRE	£7.00
208	SWANSEA	£7.00
209	WELWYN HATFIELD	£7.00
210	COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR	£7.00
211	SANDWELL	£6.92

POSITION	TARIFF ONE 2 MILE FARE	
	COUNCIL	
212	BURY	£6.90
213	CLYDEBANK	£6.90
214	FYLDE	£6.90
215	NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME	£6.90
216	EAST DUNBARTONSHIRE	£6.90
217	WORCESTER CITY	£6.90
218	PERTH & KINROSS	£6.82
219	ABERDEEN CITY	£6.80
220	BARROW IN FURNESS	£6.80
221	BLACKPOOL	£6.80
222	BOSTON	£6.80
223	BRIDGEND	£6.80
224	BROXTOWE	£6.80
225	CEREDIGION	£6.80
226	EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE	£6.80
227	EAST STAFFORDSHIRE	£6.80
228	EAST SUFFOLK (SOUTH)	£6.80
229	EDEN	£6.80
230	ELLESMERE PORT	£6.80
231	MANSFIELD	£6.80
232	MID DEVON	£6.80
233	NORTH NORFOLK	£6.80
234	NORTH NORTHANTS	£6.80
235	S. LANARKSHIRE (CAMBUS/R'GLEN)	£6.80
236	SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE	£6.80
237	TENDRING	£6.80
238	TRAFFORD	£6.80
239	WEST Lothian	£6.80
240	WIGAN	£6.80
241	WIRRAL	£6.80
242	WOLVERHAMPTON	£6.80
243	CHARNWOOD	£6.75
244	WALSALL	£6.75
245	MALVERN HILLS	£6.72
246	ANGUS	£6.70
247	BLABY	£6.70
248	CONGLETON	£6.70
249	OADBY & WIGSTON	£6.70
250	ROTHERHAM	£6.70
251	STIRLING	£6.70
252	DUDLEY	£6.60
253	FOLKESTONE & HYTHE	£6.60
254	KNOWSLEY	£6.60
255	LANCASTER	£6.60
256	NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE	£6.60
257	S. LANARKSHIRE (E. KILBRIDE)	£6.60
258	SOUTH TYNESIDE	£6.60
259	ST HELENS	£6.60
260	WAKEFIELD	£6.60
261	BASSETLAW	£6.50
262	CALDERDALE	£6.50
263	DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY	£6.50
264	EREWASH	£6.50
265	GEDLING	£6.50
266	HALTON	£6.50
267	ROSSENDALE	£6.50
268	SEFTON	£6.50
269	TORFAEN	£6.50
270	DONCASTER	£6.48
271	HYNDBURN	£6.42
272	BLAENAU GWENT	£6.40
273	COUNTY OF HEREFORD	£6.40
274	CREWE & NANTWICH	£6.40
275	DERBYSHIRE DALES	£6.40
276	NORTH AYRSHIRE	£6.40

POSITION	TARIFF ONE 2 MILE FARE	
	COUNCIL	
277	NORTHUMBERLAND	£6.40
278	SALFORD	£6.40
279	WEST LINDSEY	£6.40
280	WYRE	£6.38
281	WARRINGTON	£6.35
282	ANGLESEY	£6.30
283	BARNLEY	£6.30
284	DARLINGTON	£6.30
285	GATESHEAD	£6.30
286	SOUTH HOLLAND	£6.30
287	SOUTH RIBBLE	£6.30
288	REDDITCH	£6.25
289	CHORLEY	£6.20
290	COPELAND	£6.20
291	FALKIRK	£6.20
292	FENLAND	£6.20
293	NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE	£6.20
294	S. LANARKSHIRE (HAMILTON)	£6.20
295	SPELTHORNE	£6.20
296	WYCHAVON	£6.20
297	WYRE FOREST	£6.14
298	BRADFORD	£6.10
299	NEATH PORT TALBOT	£6.10
300	S. LANARKSHIRE (CLYDESDALE)	£6.10
301	NORTHERN IRELAND	£6.06
302	ALLERDALE	£6.00
303	BOLTON	£6.00
304	DENBIGHSHIRE	£6.00
305	GWYNEDD	£6.00
306	KIRKLEES	£6.00
307	NORTH WEST LEICESTER	£6.00
308	PETERBOROUGH	£6.00
309	POWYS	£6.00
310	PRESTON	£6.00
311	RHONDDA CYNON TAFF	£6.00
312	TELFORD & WREKIN	£6.00
313	THURROCK	£6.00
314	HARTLEPOOL	£5.90
315	NORTH LANARKSHIRE	£5.90
316	STOKE-ON-TRENT	£5.90
317	VALE ROYAL	£5.90
318	EAST RIDING	£5.85
319	AMBER VALLEY	£5.80
320	FLINTSHIRE	£5.80
321	LICHFIELD	£5.80
322	MERTHYR TYDFIL	£5.80
323	NORTH EAST DERBYSHIRE	£5.75
324	CAERPHILLY	£5.70
325	STOCKTON ON TEES	£5.70
326	ASHFIELD	£5.60
327	MIDDLESBROUGH	£5.60
328	WREXHAM	£5.60
329	PENDLE	£5.50
330	REDCAR & CLEVELAND	£5.50
331	ROCHDALE	£5.50
332	SOUTH KESTEVEN	£5.30
333	STAFFS MOORLANDS	£5.20
334	WEST LANCASHIRE	£5.20
335	CHERWELL	£5.08
336	BURNLEY	£5.00
337	BOLSOVER	£4.60
338	MALDON	N.S.F.
339	RUTLAND	N.S.F.
340	SOUTH DERBYSHIRE	N.S.F.
341	WEST DEVON	N.S.F.

# KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

In August, the UK Government announced major plans to overhaul driving laws to improve road safety and reduce deaths on the UK's roads. In this month's edition we have a look at those proposals and what they could mean for professional drivers. It is worth noting that no dates have been released as to when these laws will be implemented.

## Not wearing a seatbelt to carry penalty points

Currently, failing to wear a seat belt carries a fine only. It is usually dealt with by way of a fixed penalty of £100 (or higher at court).

**The proposals suggest making this offence endorsable, meaning not wearing a seatbelt would carry penalty points as well as a fine.**

It is suggested that fines alone are not stopping repeat offenders. The Department for Transport recently released figures showing that around one third of deaths on UK roads involved either the driver or a passenger not wearing a seat belt, and a significant number of those had previously received fines for that exact offence. And so the idea behind the increase is to deter drivers continuously failing to wear a seatbelt and drive down fatalities.

As **PHTM** readers will no doubt be aware, there are seatbelt exemptions for taxi and PH drivers. Looking at the initial proposals, there is no suggestion that these exemptions are going to be affected by the changes.

There is also no clear guidance whether this will simply be for drivers or for passengers as well. It will be interesting to see exactly what stance the law takes.

## Lowering the drink drive limit

**The next major proposal is to reduce the drink drive limit down from 35 micrograms of alcohol per 100ml of breath to 22.**

This will bring it in line with Scotland, which made the reduction some years ago.

We always say at Patterson Law that you should never count units before driving – it's safest not to drive if you've had even one drink.

It's incredibly difficult to guess the level of alcohol in your body after even a couple of drinks, as it depends on your height, weight, gender, what you've had to eat, and any medication taken. But, even with that in mind, lowering the drink drive limit to 22 could mean even one glass of wine or a pint of lager could see a person exceed the limit.

The idea of the reduction is obvious – just like with seatbelt offences it's designed to deter drivers from driving if they've had any alcohol whatsoever – and therefore make the roads safer.

## Mandatory eye tests for over 70s

The proposal that has caused the most controversy, and the one that grabbed the most headlines, is the proposed mandatory eye tests for over 70s.

Current DVLA guidelines state that once somebody has a driving licence, as long as that licence is renewed every few years a person can drive. Should the driver suffer a medical condition which may affect their ability to drive e.g. a deterioration in eyesight – either the driver or another person such as a doctor, optician or police officer, must report that to the DVLA. The DVLA would then investigate and decide whether to revoke that person's licence on medical grounds.

One of the major concerns of the government is that quite simply, people are not reporting when their eyesight gets worse. Nobody wants to voluntarily give up their driving licence, and so drivers may tend to stumble on with bad eyesight. And a lot of the time that never gets picked up unless the person visits the doctors or the opticians.

**And so this is a major shift in law, as it would require drivers over 70 to pass an eye test every three years to renew their licence. And if they don't pass an eye test their licence would not be renewed.**

The proposals don't necessarily make any plans to alter any other medical condition, all of those will still require self-reporting – this is a shift just for eyesight tests, and specifically for over 70s.



# KNOW YOUR RIGHTS



## Removing blood tests for drug-drivers

The last major proposal could remove the requirement to take blood from alleged drug drivers. This is a major change to the current law, but to understand why it is being proposed we must firstly look at the current drug drive procedures and compare that to drink driving.

When a person is stopped for drink driving, the police will take them into the station and require them to provide breath on an evidential breath machine. The breath machine is simple to use. The driver provides two specimens of breath, and the machine will immediately produce a printout showing exactly how much alcohol is in the offender's body.

The machine self-calibrates before and after each use and will reject any reading if there are interfering substances. It's quick, accurate and gives the police an immediate reading – so they know whether to charge or release.

The problem with breath machines is that they can only detect alcohol, not drugs.

When somebody is arrested under suspicion of drug driving, they provide a roadside saliva swab. If that is positive for drugs, they are arrested and taken into the station but instead of giving breath, they must give blood. That's where it gets a little more complicated.

Firstly, there cannot be any medical reasons why the person cannot give blood. Then, a healthcare

professional must take blood on one occasion and separate it in half – offering half to the driver. That blood must then be stored correctly by the police and securely couriered to a laboratory, where it is independently tested for drugs. And it is only months later when those results come back do the police know whether they can charge the driver.

The issue the police have is that these added layers of procedure make it easier for mistakes to be made, and on occasions, if there are delays at the laboratory or in the posting of the blood sample, the delays could mean the police fall out of time to prosecute. And of course, it could be months and months between the arrest and the court date.

**These new proposals seek to remove all of those problems. They would allow the police to charge somebody based purely on a roadside swab.**

In theory, this will speed up prosecutions, reducing the amount of time between arrest and the court hearing, it will remove a significant amount of the police station procedure and therefore the potential for mistakes, and it will save a considerable amount of public money by removing the need for blood testing at independent laboratories.

It isn't clear, however, exactly how the police are going to prosecute based on a roadside saliva swab alone. Blood tests give the police a specific reading, telling the court exactly how much drugs were in a person's body and whether they were above/below the limit. Giving the driver half also allows the driver the opportunity for the driver to have their own specimen tested as a failsafe to ensure they are being fairly prosecuted. The current swabs don't do either of these things, so it remains to be seen exactly how the government is going to ensure accuracy and fairness.

**We will have to wait to the autumn, and possibly beyond, to see exactly how these new laws are going to work in practice.**

**If you need any advice on motoring matters or you have any questions about the proposals and how they could affect you, please email**

**[advice@pattersonlaw](mailto:advice@pattersonlaw)**

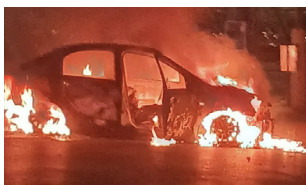
**PattersonLaw**  
THE DRIVER DEFENCE SERVICE

## from South Africa



### DEADLY FEUD BETWEEN TAXI AND E-HAILING DRIVERS LEAVES ONE DEAD

A brutal conflict between minibus operators and e-hailing drivers has escalated in Soweto, resulting in the death of a 27-year-old Uber driver and the



torching of two cars. The violence, which saw an e-hailing driver ambushed and killed and a minibus burned in retaliation, has prompted outrage from community members and government officials.

The victim, Siyanda Mvelase, was killed on the night of August 13, at the entrance of Maponya Mall. His aunt shared that Mvelase had bought his car just two weeks prior and had only been working as an Uber driver for two days.

According to police, four gunmen approached Mvelase's car, opened fire, and then set the vehicle ablaze. A second e-hailing car was also shot at and torched, with the driver managing to escape. A passerby and the second driver sustained gunshot wounds and were hospitalised.

The violence quickly escalated on Thursday morning when angry local residents retaliated by setting a minibus taxi on fire near the mall. The deadly clashes are believed to be linked to long-standing tensions over competition for passengers and routes.

The South African National Taxi Council has called on the government to speed up the implementation of new regulations, with a SANTACO spokesperson stating that a "regulatory vacuum" has created an unchecked influx of unlicensed e-hailing operators, leading to "hijackings, abductions, and violent crimes linked to the sector."

### COMMUNITY OUTRAGED AFTER CHILD SEEN DRIVING TAXI FULL OF PUPILS

A video showing a child in a school uniform driving a taxi full of students has sparked outrage and calls for accountability in Pietermaritzburg. The footage, recorded by a concerned citizen on her way to work, shows the boy dropping off pupils at Silver Heights

Secondary School in Northdale.

The video has prompted the local Department of Transport to launch an investigation. According to the witness, who followed the taxi, the driver moved from the passenger seat to the driver's seat after they stopped, and the boy moved to the passenger seat.

"The combi was full of pupils, and they did not even seem nervous or scared with the child driving, so this seems like it's been going on for some time," she said. The DoT stated there will be "severe consequences for the owner of the taxi for allowing an underage, unlicensed driver to transport pupils."

SANTACO has also condemned the incident, with provincial office manager Sifiso Shangase calling for a "swift investigation." Shangase stated: "This act endangers the lives of the pupils in the taxi and those of other road users - this is gambling with lives."

## from Spain



### MADRID TAXI DRIVERS TO FACE NEW EDUCATION AND TECH RULES

Madrid is over-hauling its taxi regulations with a focus on modernisation, professionalism, and accessibility. The new rules will require aspiring drivers to have a high school education and rely on mandatory GPS technology instead of memorising city streets.

A key change is that new applicants must prove they have completed their ESO, or compulsory secondary education. City officials state this move is designed to "boost standards," signalling an end to the era of the "old-fashioned, streetwise taxi drivers."

At the same time, the city is dropping the traditional municipal test that required drivers to know the city's complex street network by heart. This change is being made possible because all 15,000+ taxis in Madrid will now be required to have a GPS system, providing "pinpoint accuracy" for both drivers and passengers. The new regulations also aim to make the service more accessible. The city council is setting a new target to increase the number of WAV "eurotaxis" from just over 2% to a minimum of 5% of the fleet. New licences will be issued exclusively for these vehicles. As an added incentive, these eurotaxis will be allowed to operate seven days a week - while regular cabs will still be limited to five days - a perk also extended to 100% electric cabs under ten years old.

## from Italy



### UBER DRIVER ASSAULTED BY TWO TAXI DRIVERS IN MILAN

An Uber driver in Milan has accused two taxi drivers of chasing and violently assaulting him in an alleged attack that left him in the hospital. According to the driver, the incident began near Milan's central station, when he picked up two foreign passengers. Two taxi drivers approached his car, insulting and threatening him as he loaded the luggage. He drove away without reacting but was pursued by the same two men.

The chase escalated when one of the taxi drivers allegedly got out of his car and attempted to open the Uber driver's door. The Uber driver managed to escape, but the pursuit continued. The victim claims that while he was helping his passengers with their luggage, one of the men attacked him "with kicks and punches," causing him to fall. He called police and took a photo of his alleged attacker before the man snatched his phone and continued the assault.

Police have since identified the alleged attacker as a 30-year-old from Naples.

locations to ensure drivers follow fare regulations.

**Stricter penalties:** fines for violations such as overcharging and refusing short trips.

**QR code surveys:** to involve tourist, the city will provide QR codes at major transport hubs to allow tourists to report violations in real-time.

**Improved fare transparency:** information on standard taxi rates will be made more accessible to help tourists understand the fare structure.

The city hopes the crackdown will restore trust in its transportation services for visitors.

## from Hong Kong



### PUSH FOR SUBSIDISED HEALTH CHECKS AMID CALLS FOR STRICTER RULES

In the wake of a fatal taxi crash involving an 80-year-old driver, the Hong Kong government is facing renewed pressure to implement stricter health checks for elderly cabbies. However, the taxi industry is pushing back, warning of a potential manpower shortage and demanding that the government fully subsidise the cost of these medical screenings.

Calls for tougher regulations intensified after a taxi mounted a pavement in Tsuen Wan, killing a 35-year-old Filipino tourist. The 80-year-old driver was arrested on suspicion of dangerous driving causing death, reportedly telling police he felt "dizzy and lost control of the vehicle."

This incident has reignited calls for compulsory annual health screenings for drivers aged 65 and older. A government proposal from May 2023 to lower the age threshold from 70 to 65 for annual fitness certification was delayed. The current regulations require only drivers aged 70 or older to submit a fitness report every three years.

Statistics reveal a troubling trend: the number of traffic accidents involving drivers aged 70 or older has been steadily increasing, rising from 454 in 2022 to 651 last year.

The Transport and Logistics Bureau spokeswoman acknowledged "a broad consensus in society on bringing in new physical examination requirements" and stated that authorities were "preparing the necessary legal amendments and guidelines to move forward."

## from South Korea



### SEOUL LAUNCHES 100-DAY CRACKDOWN ON TAXI SCAMS

The Seoul Metropolitan Government has initiated a 100-day crackdown on illegal taxi practices in a major effort to protect foreign tourists from scams. The campaign aims to combat issues such as overcharging and trip refusals that have plagued the city's tourism sector for years.

The initiative comes after the Korea Tourism Organisation reported that nearly one in five complaints in 2024 were related to taxi services, with foreign visitors being particularly vulnerable.

The crackdown, which will run from August to November 2025, will focus on high-traffic areas such as airports and popular tourist destinations.

Key measures include:

**Enhanced monitoring:** with increased random inspections and enforcement officers at strategic



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- ✓ Access Ramp
- ✓ Choice

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# THE BERNIE THE BOOK COLUMN

## DONALD TO PUT SCHEFFLER & CO TO THE SWORD... AGAIN; AS FURTHER DINES ON SMORGASBORD SNACKS

CAN IT REALLY only be two years since Luke Donald and the Europeans stuffed the fancy dan Americans in Rome at the Ryder Cup? Well it was, and this year we are looking at the usual pre event jingoism from those over the pond and I am certain the same fate will become reality with a comfortable win for **TEAM EUROPE** at a juicy 6/4.

This time around, it is being played at Bethpage Black in New York at the end of the month, on American soil. Nevertheless, my conviction is absolute because of these salient facts. Firstly, they are comparing current World No 1 Scottie Scheffler to Tiger Woods!!!! And there's a good few majors yet before that argument can be proffered. In addition, Tiger didn't have a great win/loss record and neither does Scottie... Why? Because it's a team game and all the Americans are motivated by the mighty dollar and (I might be wrong this time), participants of the Ryder Cup play purely for the badge and do not receive financial reward.

The Europeans are also in a rich vein of form and their team looks top heavy with players in form. Fleetwood, Rahm, Hatton, Rose, McIntyre, notwithstanding Rory and Shane, whilst some of the Americans are clearly not. But here's the real rub...the format of pre singles over the first two days ensures you only play your best eight out of twelve and the Europeans have the clear edge. **BACK EUROPE WITH CONFIDENCE.**



### NFL

Continuing the American theme, the NFL is back with the first regular season games this week. Regular readers will note the Book is very much clued in on our American sports and I confidentially predict the following....and this comes with a money-back guarantee\*! (\* see small print in T/Cs!!!!)...one of these four teams **WILL WIN THE SUPERBOWL** and all the three fancied teams below **WILL NOT**



#### Super Bowl **fancies**

<b>DENVER BRONCOS</b>	<b>33/1</b>
<b>BALTIMORE RAVENS</b>	<b>15/2</b>
<b>SAN FRANCISCO 49ers</b>	<b>25/1</b>
<b>PHILADELPHIA EAGLES</b>	<b>8/1</b>

If you put £20 on each, your outlay = £80 and minimum returns = £170 (double your money) and maximum returns = £680 (over 7/1)...**GUARANTEED**

#### Super Bowl **lays**

<b>KANSAS CITY CHIEFS</b>	<b>8/1</b>
<b>BUFFALO BILLS</b>	<b>6/1 favs</b>
<b>DETROIT LIONS</b>	<b>12/1</b>

I always like to augment this and pre season predict the eight Divisional winners, so combine my four fancies with the Bills, the Texans, Green Bay and Atlanta in a combo bet as follows..

28-6 folds x £1                      8-7 folds x £2  
1 Accumulator x £1                      total 45 bets

**The Acc pays over £1,100 to a £1 stake**

### HORSE RACING

The big Autumn meetings are amongst us and we start with the oldest classic, the St Leger at Doncaster mid month. Yes, we have another O'Brien hotpot in Scandinavia at the top of proceedings at evens, but be cautious as its stock is so good it might be redirected to Champions weekend in Ireland. It could be that the underperforming Lambourn (Derby winner! but soundly trounced in its prep race the Voltigeur) might turn out to be the first string, and at 8/1!! It is certainly of interest, but my eye is taken to Andrew Balding's **FURTHER** who was ultra impressive in his own prep race at Newbury and at a general 16/1 (20/1 if you shop around), represents a rock solid each way wager.

Hope you got the Nordic theme in the header!!

The Arc is also taking shape and my two against the field are **MINNIE HAUKE** and **GEZORA** for France's now pre-eminent trainer, Francis Graffard. I was visually impressed with Minnie Hauk in the Yorkshire Oaks and she must be high on Ballydoyle's training plans. **CAUTION:** She needs to be supplemented and also won't run on soft ground, so keep stakes to a minimum, but at 12/1 represents good value. The fillies are also represented by Gezora who powered away from a good field in the Diane. At 20/1, she will certainly out run her odds

Next month, European footy and domestic EFL.

Until next time

Good punting

**Bernie the Book**



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